

International Scholars Office

The [International Scholars Office](#) (ISchO) facilitates the visas for international researchers and faculty who come to MIT for teaching, research, meetings, and programs. ISchO advises on immigration matters, issues visa documents, and provides guidance, workshops, and print and web-based information on a wide range of issues relevant to the international scholar population. Weekly orientation sessions are held for incoming scholars and family members. Orientation specifically for new international tenure-track faculty members is offered biannually. Numerous workshops are held for department, laboratory, and center personnel administrators about working with ISchO, MIT visa sponsorship policies, and visa processing. Additional programming for scholars and events open to the campus community are held throughout the year. ISchO also engages in advocacy efforts to protect international educational exchange, prevent burdensome government regulations, and clarify and improve related regulations and procedures.

MIT's International Scholar Population

During the year July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2016, ISchO served 2,436 international scholars affiliated with MIT and their accompanying family members ("international" is defined as being neither a US citizen nor a US permanent resident). This reflects an approximate increase of 1.4% over the previous year (2,403). According to the most recent Institute of International Education Open Doors report (2015), MIT ranked 11th nationally in numbers of international scholars at US institutions. International postdoctoral associates and postdoctoral fellows made up 57% of MIT's international scholars.

Foreign national scholars came to MIT from 96 countries with the highest numbers coming from the People's Republic of China, India, Canada, the Republic of Korea, Germany, Japan, France, Italy, Israel, and Spain. The top ten countries of origin of the international scholar population present in the US are roughly the same. Scholars from these top ten countries constituted nearly 65% of MIT's international scholar population.

ISchO worked closely with administrators in the 67 departments, laboratories, centers, and programs that hosted international scholars. The areas hosting the largest number of scholars were, in descending order, the Research Laboratory of Electronics, the Department of Mechanical Engineering, the Department of Chemical Engineering, the Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research, the Department of Chemistry, Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Sloan School of Management, the Department of Biological Engineering, and the Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences. Seventy-six percent of international scholars identify as men and 24% identify as women.

The majority of MIT's international scholars were sponsored on MIT's J-1 exchange visitor program. There were 1,397 scholars under MIT's J-1 program sponsorship during AY2016. An additional 105 scholars were here through other J visa sponsors (the Fulbright Program, Cultural Vistas programs, and other academic institutions). There were 304 scholars on campus in H-1B status sponsored by MIT, more than in the past four years and 34 more than last year. Forty-five scholars were in TN status and

five were on O-1 visas sponsored by MIT. The rest of the scholar population had other sponsors or were in other nonimmigrant categories. ISchO also submitted permanent residence petitions to US Citizenship and Immigration Services on behalf of tenure-track faculty members and upper-level researchers.

International postdoctoral fellows and postdoctoral associates accounted for 64% of MIT's total postdoc population. Fifty-four percent of people on visiting appointments at MIT were international.

Penny Rosser
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