

MIT Campus News Guidelines

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Thank you for submitting articles to the campus news section of MIT News. The guidelines below should answer many questions about what to submit, and how, for best results in gaining an audience for your news. Please note that exceptions to these guidelines will occasionally be allowed, depending on the circumstances.

Below you will find guidelines by story type, and general submission/formatting guidelines.

GUIDELINES BY STORY TYPE

Awards and Honors

MIT News welcomes articles about awards and honors bestowed upon individuals in the MIT community. The MIT News Office writing staff covers only very major awards; when in doubt, feel free to check in before submitting a campus news piece on an award.

Multiple MIT winners: In the event an award/honor is given to multiple members of the MIT community, please be sure all MIT members are mentioned. The same is true of when an organization gives out different awards at the same time/ceremony or with the same press release: You should only submit one story on recent awards given by any one organization. Also, when submitting a piece to campus news with multiple winners hailing from different areas of MIT, be sure to check in with communications representatives from the other relevant schools/DLCs to decide who will write what and submit to campus news (and to make sure no one else has started working on a similar piece to be submitted). Please note: Alumni recipients of an award with multiple MIT winners may (and should) be included, although we generally prioritize current community members in headlines and in the order and breadth of discussion. Finally, be sure to submit one image including all winners for a story with multiple winners. See section on images later in this document for formatting guidelines.

Alumni and/or former staff members: For the most part, we focus on current faculty, students, and staff — but we are happy to include alumni or former staff if there are multiple MIT recipients and at least one is a current MIT affiliate. Exceptions for MIT News coverage of singular alumni or former staff awards might include major national or international awards and awards given to recent alumni for work done at MIT. It is best to check with Maia first if your story falls into one of these categories.

Events

Overall, we prefer event recaps, with one or more photos showing what happened and explaining why it was important, exciting, or especially “MIT.” In fact, at this time we are actively discouraging event previews, but in rare cases we will process preview articles for individual events, keeping in mind that a) with few exceptions, such previews don’t get much traffic; and b) previews usually become obsolete as soon as the event is over. It is best to check with Maia in advance if you’d like to submit an event preview article.

If you do submit an event recap, please make sure that the event has taken place on (or near) campus, that it happened within 2-3 weeks of your post submission, and that it does not focus on alumni. Exceptions to this may occasionally be hosted on MIT News, depending on the situation, but check with Maia first.

Note also that the MIT Events website is getting a much-needed overhaul, and we envision that this will be the best place to promote events moving forward.

Getting additional visibility for your event:

- If it’s not already added to the [MIT Events calendar](#), add it.
- Request a “spotlight” headline placement on MIT.edu. You’ll need to fill out the [request form](#) (available from MIT.edu > About the Spotlight > Request a Spotlight or Event Headline). If you have questions, you may also email spotlight@mit.edu. Note there are only a few spots each day and they fill up, so get your requests in as soon as you can.
- Let Emer Garland in Communication Production Services know so she can tweet about it on [@MITevents](#) and/or reach out to the Social Media Working Group for help with a signal boost across related social channels around the Institute.

Courses and Programs of Study

Individual course announcements: With the exception of online courses or professional education courses that are free for anyone to take, we don’t publish articles about individual classes at the start of a semester with the goal of getting people to enroll. For those we do host, please use news-like language (“A new course exists.”) as opposed to marketing-style language (“Ready to take this new course?”).

Independent Activities Period: We accept previews of IAP courses, but prefer recaps with images, exploring what students did.

New majors / minors: It is preferred that individual departments refrain from submitting news covering a single or batch of new majors/minors within a specific program, unless they are doing so at a time when there are no other new major/minor announcements. In short, we

would prefer fewer articles on new courses of study that many individuals will find relevant rather than more articles that fewer individuals will find relevant.

New programs: We welcome articles on new special programs, provided they don't read like direct advertisements for students to take part: Impact and importance of the program overall should be emphasized over specific course requirements, grading schedules, etc.

Featured Video

A new campus news "featurette" highlights a video with a long (at least 90-word) caption. Videos must be on YouTube; MIT Video, Vimeo, or other outlets won't be accepted.

Videos may be from any source, but will be selected for quality and subject matter, which may include campus life, popular presentations, media appearances, etc. We are aiming for at least two featured videos per month, and will in some cases add the video to the weekly campus newsletter.

To suggest a video, email Maia or scenatmit@mit.edu. Please don't submit to campus news until/unless your video has been OK'd to run.

Scene at MIT

A new campus news "featurette" highlights crowdsourced images from around the Institute. Captions must be at least 90-100 words long and may be written in the first person; those that are will be set in quotation marks.

We are looking for images that capture the beauty of MIT — remarkable scenes of people, objects, settings, and goings-on both serious and silly at the Institute — and we want the stories behind those images.

Images may be taken and submitted by anyone, including individuals with no connection to MIT. We are aiming for one image per week, and will in some cases add the image to the weekly campus newsletter.

Email Maia or scenatmit@mit.edu if you have a photo you'd like to suggest.

Faculty Appointments

For departments: Please gather faculty appointments together into one story for campus news. For institutes, centers, or labs: Please coordinate with the relevant department(s) before submitting your piece. If the department has no plans to cover the appointment(s), then go ahead and submit. But the preference is for departments to submit this news.

Tenure

Please coordinate with the communications lead for your school if you would like to publicize a faculty member's having received tenure. Since the News Office will profile all newly tenured faculty with a unique article in the year following awarding of tenure, we aim to publish at most one campus news article per school when tenure announcements are made.

Research

The MIT News Office staff writers don't have time to cover every important scholarly work that comes out of MIT labs, centers, and institutes. As such, MIT News welcomes research articles on campus news. It's always a good idea to check with the MIT News staff writer of the beat your researcher(s) fall under to make sure there's no overlap. (Maia can tell you who that is.) Also, articles should be fairly timely: Scholarly work published no more than a few weeks prior is ideal.

For consideration of elevation to top news, a homepage headline, and/or inclusion on the Infinite Corridor display TVs or on social media: The article should be very timely; have significant impact in the relevant field; have a strong image or video; and ideally should have outside comment from someone not involved in the research (preferred to be someone not at MIT). Contact Maia for tips on soliciting outside comment.

Obituaries

In some cases, the MIT News Office will take the lead on writing and producing an obituary; please check in with us if there's any question. In most cases, however, we must rely on DLC contributors to write obits. We recommend working with former colleagues and family members for information and images.

We accept obituaries for: current faculty/staff (student deaths are generally handled by the News Office); professors emeritus; former faculty/staff (the individual should have had a relatively long or impactful tenure at MIT for placement on campus news); alumni, but only in rare circumstances, such as their being very high-profile or having a current MIT connection.

GENERAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES/TIPS:

Submitting via the MIT News content management system (CMS)

How to submit: Whenever possible, please use the CMS to submit campus news. This cuts down significantly on processing time. In addition, make sure to submit only once you have all of your content ready, including: article, image(s), any necessary videos, related links, etc. We can accommodate late changes/additions, but it is far easier and faster to produce your piece if all of the content is ready to go when you submit it.

Who can submit: With a few exceptions, we generally only grant campus news submission privileges to MIT communications professionals, and to only one person per DLC. If you do not have but would like campus news submitting privileges, you may request access through Maia. Note: For someone who goes on temporary leave with an expected return date (such as maternity leave), you may designate another individual to submit on your behalf during that time. That person can send materials via email, and we will process manually for the duration of the leave.

What to submit: Be sure when you submit that you send a) an article of at least 250 words — or 90 words, for Featured Video or Scene at MIT; b) an image (see image guidelines below); and c) as much metadata as possible. That means you should fill in all fields in the form; more information on each field type is listed below.

How often to submit: Most campus news contributors submit between one and five articles per calendar year. If this is you, you are good to go! Due to an increased number of campus news submissions overall and a limited amount of time available to process everything, we are asking that those who contribute more frequently limit submissions to at most four per month. One reason we are implementing this limitation is to ensure fair representation of DLC's on campus news. A second reason is that the more articles there are in our queue, the longer it takes to edit and process any one of your pieces from the time you submit — with current wait times averaging 2-3 full business days. Note that MIT News Office-produced content makes up about 40 percent of the content on MIT News, and each of our articles is edited and processed by at least four different people. At the same time, there are over 100 active campus news contributors who collectively submit some 60 percent of the content appearing on MIT News — and all of this 60 percent is edited, formatted, and produced by one person. If desired, please feel free to brainstorm with Maia and/or Kathy as to which pieces might make the most sense to select for campus news submission to ensure you are submitting no more than four per month. As a general rule, we prefer articles that have a broad audience and strong art.

When to submit: If you would like an article you've submitted to go live on a certain date, it is best to get it to us 3-4 business days in advance, and it's best to email Maia so she is aware of this request. (Do also mention it in the "notes" section of the submission form, but know that Maia doesn't check that field until she actually goes to edit the piece.) If something is coming down the pike for posting on a certain day, but you won't have the final copy or images until shortly before, reach out to Maia to explain; often we can accommodate such "rush" situations.

Submission errors: The most common reason for an error in submission is the CMS timing out after 10 or more minutes between when you start to fill out the form and when you press "submit." For best results, have all of your materials — all copy, all images, all captions, all metadata — at the ready before you start. If you have an error, save a screen grab of what happened and email Maia for further guidance.

Basic Formatting

See the MIT News Style Guide for detailed guidance, but note that we do not:

- Use italics, except for genus/species, journal/news outlet names, and *MITx*.
- Use bold, except for subheds.
- Use press release boilerplates. (The same language can appear, but it should be shown as an extension of the article rather than separated by “About Program X.”)

Headlines and Deks (subheadlines)

MIT News articles tend to feature shorter, more generally worded headlines and longer, more specifically worded deks. However, for campus news, it may benefit you to include a headline with a tad more specificity, because only headlines, and not deks, appear on the MIT News homepage (unless they are temporarily elevated to top news). Either way, the headline should give some direct (rather than abstract) indication of what the article is about.

Headlines should ideally be two to 10 words. In no circumstance can a headline take up three lines. Deks should similarly be no more than two lines long — usually less than 20 words — and will be cut to fit, where necessary.

Images

To get people to read your story, images are often more important than the content of the piece itself. Some guidelines for sending in properly formatted images:

- Use horizontal images of the highest resolution possible. We prefer original images, not cropped images. Ideal aspect ratio is 3:2 (horizontal:vertical). Any of the following sizes is perfect: 3000x2000 pixels, 2000x1333, 1500x1000, or 1000x667
- The smallest size we can consider for adding to the Infinite Corridor displays is 948x632.
- We will often crop vertical images, and they may not render well on the MIT News homepage. But we can include them on the main story page if needed.
- In most cases it’s best to avoid images with text; images with a lot of text may not be usable.
- Some sources of free images: [MIT Image Library](#), [Wikimedia Commons](#), [Flickr](#) (please only use images that have Creative Commons licenses on them). Images found via

Google or Yahoo image search cannot be used unless there is an appropriate license attached or unless you've contacted the photographer/author to get permission.

- A simple logo or stock image is sufficient if you can't think of anything else to use; be sure you have exhausted all other options for photographs before using a logo. Keep in mind you may request a generic campus shot, or you can find generic images using the free image resources above. If you do use a logo, be sure it has been sized properly according to the image size requirements above.
- Give images file names with keywords, for better search engine optimization, and use dashes to separate terms.

Good examples:

MIT-2016-NCAA-Scholar-Athletes.jpg
Mildred-Dresselhaus-MIT.jpg
MIT-J-WAFS-Conference.png
Eric-Lander-MIT-Killian-Award.jpg

Avoid:

SO4_MIT_News.jpg
IMG_6743.jpg
Photocredit_JacksonLynch.png
RandallForWeb.jpg

Captions

Captions should be written in lay terms so that they can be understood by the general public. Aim for captions of 40 words or fewer. Do not submit captions pulled from research articles that are intended to be read by other scientists or engineers.

Captions should be written in complete sentences when possible. Extremely short captions — for example, a person's name — are fine, but shouldn't take a period.

See the MIT News Style Guide for details on photo credit wording.

Video

YouTube or Vimeo video that's directly relevant to the story may be embedded. If you wish for a video to be embedded, be sure to include the URL and any captioning/credit information that you want. (If no caption/credit information is given, any such information on the YouTube/Vimeo landing page will be used.)

Video that's only peripherally related, or that lives on a platform other than YouTube or Vimeo, may be listed as a related link.

If you'd like your video to be the centerpiece of the story, that's fine; consider submitting as a Featured Video if you don't have a full article to support the video.

Related Links

We like to include a few related links for each article, but we don't just show any link. The following guides are for the "Related links" area of our CMS; you should feel free to hyperlink at will within the body of the article (in fact, there's reason to believe hyperlinks are far better for SEO than our related links).

What to link:

- Think of related links area like a return address on a snail mail letter: You should include (and they will usually appear this way from top to bottom) any relevant research paper(s); the MIT person/people involved; directly relevant websites, videos, or related non-MIT News articles; relevant MIT center/lab/program(s); all relevant MIT department(s); and all relevant MIT school(s). We generally don't link out to external (non-MIT) people, schools, or companies, except in stories related to MIT spinoffs/startups.
- As many as 5 related MIT News articles can be submitted with your related links, but they will appear in a separate section below the other links. More on that below.
- Important: We limit related links (i.e. non MIT News archived links) to 10 total links. For certain articles this may be fewer, especially if the piece is particularly short. Note that when space is tight, we prioritize MIT links over external links, so if you want to link to an external entity, it's best to do this in the article.
- With certain exceptions, we don't usually include links to people or entities that are not mentioned at all in the story. To add a related link, be sure that person/thing is mentioned explicitly in the article. If it's not, and you don't have a way to squeeze it into the piece, it's probably best to skip it.

Who to link: To keep the number of related links manageable, we usually only link to the main researcher(s) or person(s) in a story. If more than a few people are listed, either pick the most central to link on the right or don't list anyone and instead link within the article.

Archived MIT News: When possible, it is helpful to include a few archived MIT News pieces as related links. When time allows, we will generally search for relevant items on your behalf if you don't provide any, but submitting the ones you want gives you more power to choose this content. (The links do not show up automatically by connecting with tags or keywords.)

Keywords/Tags

In the campus news submission form, there is only one place for “keywords,” but the MIT News Office uses both keywords and tags, which serve different purposes. So, please feel free to submit both keywords and tags — we will figure out which go where.

Here is the distinction:

Keywords: Keywords are the terms that we will feed to search engines external to the MIT News site. These should be as specific as possible and written in consideration of what you might search for on Google or similar if you were trying to get this story to come up. We include the name(s) of listed people in the story; MIT + generalized department name (example: MIT architecture, not MIT Department of Architecture); any related or technical terms; etc.

Tags: Tags are a set listing of terms that the MIT News Office uses to a) organize content on MIT News; and b) feed related MIT News RSS feeds, which often feed into other Institute websites. The tags we use are more general in scope and aren't perfect, but we're not likely to change the ones we use because their functionality is for organization, not search. (There are actually more than 2,200 tags in our system, but the vast majority are used <5 times, so we don't actively use them.) Maia can provide a listing of the most commonly used tags so that you can highlight the ones you might want to include in your campus news stories. But keep in mind there are many other tags beyond the most common ones that we do also employ, so suggest away, and if there's a relevant tag, we will add it. Note also we do occasionally create new tags — for example, if there's a new MIT entity or initiative that will likely be written about extensively — but we are actually trying to consolidate our tag list, not expand it.