

PLAN YOUR MISTI

MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives (MISTI) is MIT's flagship international education program that matches MIT students with a fully-funded international internship, research and teaching opportunities, and academic study abroad programs.



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Available in more than two dozen countries, from Argentina to Uganda, MISTI is the opportunity to develop hands-on professional experience and apply new skills in an international context. A majority of MIT students participate in MISTI at some point during their MIT career.

Am I eligible?

Yes! All undergraduate and graduate MIT students and recent alumni are eligible to participate in MISTI programs. Each country and program has its own set of requirements, so make sure to check the specific requirements for the opportunity you are interested in applying to. MISTI programs provide students with in-depth training and support to help students navigate their professional experiences abroad.

Internships: MISTI’s award-winning international internship program provides MIT students the opportunity to gain real-life work experience in leading companies and labs around the world. The most popular term to participate is over the summer, for a duration of at least 10 weeks. However, you are welcome to spend 3-12 months in a program, provided you meet eligibility requirements. You can choose to apply to programs in any country that MISTI has opportunities available. Lastly, all internships provide funding so you can participate at no cost.

Teaching: Global Teaching Labs (GTL) is MISTI’s popular teaching program during January’s Independent Activities Period (IAP). GTL challenges you to synthesize and present what you know, work in a team, and communicate with peers of a different cultural background, all while sharing MIT’s unique approach to science and engineering education with high school students around the world. GTL students are matched with foreign high school hosts for three weeks, prepare tailored courses on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects that complement the school’s curriculum, and highlight MIT’s hands-on approach to education. Subjects taught, style of teaching and type of accommodation vary by country.

Entrepreneurship: Through MISTI Global Startup Labs (GSL), MIT student teams partner with universities around the world to deliver incubator programs focused on mobile technologies or machine learning. Teams lead local student entrepreneurs through a real-world technology venture experience, mentoring the development stages of a startup, and teaching appropriate technical platforms, culminating with a pitch and prototype competition.

Study Abroad: MISTI can help you find exciting study abroad opportunities almost anywhere within the MISTI country programs. You can study abroad in any term: summer, fall, spring, or the full year, and can earn transfer credits toward degree requirements. Financial aid travels with you for the semester or year.

Faculty-led Programs: You can learn abroad with MIT faculty through hands-on research and fieldwork.

WHERE DOES MISTI HAVE PROGRAMS?

MISTI finds opportunities for students all over the globe. Major programs are listed below. Sometimes, MISTI program managers may also send students to nearby regions not listed below.

COUNTRY/REGION	INTERN	GTL	GSL	STUDY
All Africa (South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Morocco +)	●	●	●	●
Argentina	●			●
Australia	●			●
Belgium	●			
Brazil	●	●	●	
Chile	●	●		●
China/Hong Kong/Taiwan	●	●		●
Colombia	●	●		
Denmark	●			●
France	●	●		●
Georgia	●	●	●	
Germany	●	●	●	
India	●		●	
Israel	●	●		

COUNTRY/REGION	INTERN	GTL	GSL	STUDY
Italy	●	●		
Japan	●			●
Jordan		●		
Korea	●	●		
Mexico	●	●		
Netherlands	●			
New Zealand	●			●
Peru	●	●		●
Portugal	●			
Russia & Eurasia (Kazakhstan, Georgia)	●	●	●	
Singapore	●			●
Spain	●	●		●
Switzerland	●			●
United Kingdom	●	●		●
Uruguay	●		●	

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS?

All MISTI country programs require a minimum 4.0 GPA and serious preparation for you to achieve the type of meaningful, in-depth experiences MISTI aspires to, but specific requirements vary by country location and program type.

Application Requirements

Students will be required to fill out the MISTI application and provide at least one letter of recommendation (see program-specific requirements on page 9). All applicants participate in an interview prior to placement.

Language Requirements

Internships: If English is not commonly spoken in a MISTI country, then you should plan to invest time and effort needed to learn that language; graduate students might be exempt depending on available opportunities. If you feel you already speak a language at the level shown in the table below, contact that country's manager to confirm you meet the requirement.

Global Teaching Labs: There is no general language requirement for GTL in any MISTI country. But you may be prioritized in placement if you've taken a language course relevant to that country, and some countries prioritize advanced speakers for specific placements.

Global Startup Labs: There is no general language requirement for GSL in any MISTI country, but you may be prioritized for placement if you already know the language and/or culture.

Study Abroad: Some programs may require language proficiency.

MISTI REQUIREMENTS



Interview

Letter of Recommendation

Language

Cultural Courses

Special Prerequisites

Pre-Departure Training

Course Requirements

Internships: If a country-specific course is available at MIT, then you should plan to invest time to enroll and learn about that country's culture, history, and/or society; graduate students might be exempt depending on available opportunities.

Global Teaching Labs: There is no general course requirement for GTL in any MISTI country, but you may be prioritized for placement if you've taken a teaching-related course.

Global Startup Labs: There is no general course requirement for GSL in any MISTI country.

Study Abroad: There is no general course requirement for study abroad in any MISTI country.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS?

Other Prerequisites

Internships: All MISTI countries require 1-2 recommendations with your application, preferably from an MIT faculty member, so start developing relationships with potential recommenders now. Some countries also require you to complete a UROP before the internship starts or have prior internship experience, and you may need to complete a specific course(s) before starting an internship at some host companies or labs.

Global Teaching Labs: Many MISTI countries require or prefer that you have teaching experience as a TA, education-related club participant, etc.

Global Startup Labs: Students applying to the program are expected to have appropriate technical skills (app development or machine learning), strong interest or experience in entrepreneurship, and excellent communication skills. Teaching experience would be a plus.

Study Abroad: All study abroad programs require 1-2 recommendations with your application, preferably from an MIT faculty member, so start developing relationships with potential recommenders now. Study abroad courses rarely count towards GIRs, HASS distributions, CI-H units, and CI-M units, so we recommend these are completed before studying abroad or an academic plan is made.

Pre-Departure Training

Internships: We want you to experience your host country and culture as an informed, engaged participant--not a visitor. If you are accepted to any country program or placed in an internship, you must complete about 8-12 hours of training in the spring, which may include sessions on weekday evenings or day-long weekend retreats. You'll learn how to adapt to the country's culture, navigate the workplace, understand current events, and stay healthy and safe.

Global Teaching Labs: We want you to experience your host country and culture as an informed, engaged participant--not a visitor--and be prepared to share a mens et manus-style approach to learning. So if you're accepted to any GTL program, you must complete about 5-10 hours of training prior to departure. You'll learn how to adapt to the country's culture, navigate the workplace, understand current events, and stay healthy and safe as well as build effective teaching skills.

Global Startup Labs: All accepted students must attend trainings on teaching as well as country-specific cultural sessions.

Study Abroad: We want you to experience your host country and culture as an informed, engaged participant--not a visitor. If you are accepted to any country program or placed in an internship, you must complete about 8-12 hours of training in the spring or fall, which may include sessions on weekday evenings or day-long weekend retreats. You'll learn how to adapt to the country's culture, navigate the university culture, understand current events, and stay healthy and safe.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS BY PROGRAM?

PROGRAM	CULTURE COURSE	EXPERIENCE/ UROP	PRE-DEPARTURE TRAINING	UNDERGRADS LANGUAGE (OR EQUIVALENT)	GRADS LANGUAGE (OR EQUIVALENT)
All Africa	●	○	●	Highly encouraged (Languages available at Harvard)	None
Arab World	●	●	●	None	None
Argentina/Chile/Peru/Uruguay	●	○	●	Spanish 4	None
Australia/New Zealand	○	●	●	None	None
Brazil	○	○	●	Spanish/Portuguese 2	Spanish/Portuguese 2 recommended
China/Hong Kong/Taiwan	●	○	●	Chinese 4	None
Denmark	○	●	●	None	None
France & Belgium	●	●	●	French 4	None
Germany	○	○	●	German 2	None
India & South Asia	●	●	●	None	None
Israel	●	●	●	None	None
Italy	○	●	●	Italian 1 (WellesleyX online class OK)	None
Japan	●	○	●	Japanese 4	None
Korea	○	○	●	Korean 4	Korean 4 recommended
MEET	○	○	●	None	None
Mexico/Colombia	○	○	●	Spanish 4	None
Netherlands	○	○	●	None	None
Portugal	○	●	●	Portuguese 2	None
Russia & Eurasia	○	○	●	Russian 2 None for Kazakhstan and Georgia	Russian 2 recommended None for Kazakhstan and Georgia
Singapore	●	○	●	Mandarin recommended	None
Spain	○	●	●	Spanish 4	None
Switzerland	○	○	●	French, German, Italian, or Romansch 2	None
United Kingdom	○	○	●	None	None

○ Recommended ● Required

A MISTI experience should both complement and expand upon your MIT experience. To make sure your ideal MISTI experience(s) fit into your MIT calendar, it is important to plan ahead.

First Year

Congratulations--you're going to MIT! Learn more about MISTI on our website and read stories from MISTI students at Notes from the Field or the IdentityX Blog.

Fall semester: Your first semester will be action-packed--learning about the MIT ecosystem and getting used to the new pace of activity. Join clubs, pursue UROPs, dedicate yourself to your coursework. MISTI is a professional experience in addition to an intercultural one, and being able to demonstrate your interests via your activities helps you start building your resume. You might want to start taking language classes (or continue language learning from high school), as many MISTI programs require a minimum of 2-4 semesters of a language. There are accelerated language courses offered over IAP, if a language class does not fit into your fall schedule.

The deadlines for Global Teaching Labs and Global Startup Labs (over IAP), and early deadlines for some MISTI country programs are in the fall. Although it is possible to apply, recognize that these opportunities may not be the right fit for you as a first-year. You may want to focus first on developing relevant experience before you apply.

For study abroad, this is a great time to start speaking with your academic advisor and the study abroad program coordinator about creating a four year academic plan that includes one study abroad semester.

Spring semester: Learn more about MISTI in our joint activities with the Office of the First Year, and connect with other students in your clubs, teams or classes about their experiences with MISTI. This is a good semester to take a culture course, which is required for some MISTI country programs.

Sophomore year

Summer after sophomore year is a popular time for students to do a MISTI program, and to set yourself up for success, consider whether you have the necessary requirements. Does the country you wish to travel to require you to speak some of the language; does the MISTI program require a culture course; when are the application deadlines; in what subject area do you want to intern or conduct research? If you have multiple host location interests, consider which is your top choice, and apply online.

For students interested in non-internship programs, such as Global Teaching Labs (GTL) and Global Startup Labs (GSL), which are competitive programs, learn the deadlines and attend information sessions to determine which locations are offering programs this year. For study abroad, many students study abroad their Junior year. Some study abroad applications for Junior year Spring will be due the February of your Sophomore year. Speak to your department and reach out to MISTI regarding those deadlines, so you can plan ahead.

Junior year

Summer after junior year is also an excellent time to do MISTI, particularly for students who may be interested in global careers in the future. Meet with MISTI program staff to learn about specific companies that may be a good fit, based on your experiences at MIT and your professional goals for after graduation. Many MISTI hosts are international companies, with offices both in the US and abroad, and a summer internship may lead to a future career path.

Junior year is also a great time for students interested in GTL or GSL or semester exchange/study abroad programs. Attend information sessions and reach out to program staff to state your interest early as some programs may be competitive. For study abroad, this may also be the time to plan for Senior Fall or Spring.

Senior year

Internships and GSL are open to students even after graduation. Students may participate in MISTI for up to one year after graduation, as long as they meet application deadlines and start their program within three months of their graduation date. If you are interested in full time positions in a certain MISTI country, you might also reach out to staff to discuss opportunities and potential recruitment avenues.

Students can also apply to Spring study abroad up until mid-Fall semester of their senior year. Reach out to program staff to state your interest early.

Graduate study

While this timeline speaks specifically to the undergraduate timeline, MISTI programs are also open to graduate students at all stages of study, including both Master and PhD students.

First, decide which 1-2 MISTI countries you're interested in and read through their descriptions, requirements, and student stories on the MISTI website. If you meet a country's requirements and feel it may be a good fit for you, then start an application in the MISTI application portal. Click on the country, log in via your MIT certificates or Kerberos login, choose which program and term you'd like to apply for, and follow instructions to begin submitting documents.

You need to e-sign several documents and submit the MISTI application, the country/program-specific application, and a copy of your resume and transcript for all MISTI countries before making an appointment to meet with the country program staff to learn more. Some countries or programs may ask you to submit additional documents before making an appointment; follow instructions in the application portal carefully. Prepare for your appointment by thinking through your relevant interests, skills, experience, and goals for your experience abroad. For study abroad, we recommend making an appointment by contacting misti@mit.edu. The Study Abroad Program Coordinator will be able to answer your questions and walk you through the application process (speaking with your academic advisor, completing the MISTI application, deadlines to be aware of, etc.).

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

Explore the MISTI website, read student experiences in Notes from the Field or the IdentityX Blog, and sign up for our mailing list. Also check out our videos on YouTube, follow us on Instagram or Twitter, and connect with us on LinkedIn. MISTI's country managers are also always ready and willing to tell you more and guide you through the application and matching process, but first contact them via email to ask questions or make an appointment via MISTI's application portal.

MISTI

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