

International Scholars Office

The International Scholars Office (ISchO) facilitates the visas for international researchers and faculty, who come to MIT for a variety of purposes. 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 all incoming scholars and family members. Orientation specifically for new international, tenure-track faculty members is held biannually. Workshops and question-and-answer sessions are held throughout the year for personnel administrators who work to process visas with ISchO for the many departments, labs, and centers hosting internationals. 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 regulations, and clarify and improve related regulations and procedures.

MIT's International Scholar Population, FY2009

ISchO served 1,944 international scholars affiliated with MIT as well as their accompanying family members during AY2009. This reflects an increase of approximately 11.2 percent over last year (1,748). According to the most recent Institute of International Education Open Doors report (2007–2008), MIT ranked 12th nationally with regard to the numbers of international scholars at US institutions. Postdoctoral associates and postdoctoral fellows accounted for 50 percent of MIT international scholars.

Foreign national scholars came to MIT from 75 countries, with the highest numbers coming from the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, India, Japan, Germany, Canada, Italy, Spain, France, and Israel. Scholars from these top 10 countries constituted 72 percent of MIT's international scholar population. This distribution of countries and percentages closely mirrors that of the entire international scholar population in the US.

ISchO worked closely with administrators in 76 departments, laboratories, and centers to prepare the appropriate visa documents and petitions for incoming and continuing scholars and their families. The areas hosting the largest number of scholars were, in descending order, the Broad Institute, the Department of Chemistry, the Research Laboratory of Electronics, the Department of Mechanical Engineering, the Department of Materials Science and Engineering, the Department of Chemical Engineering, the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, the Department of Biology, the Department of Biological Engineering, and the Sloan School of Management. Seventy-eight percent of international scholars were male and 22 percent were female.

The majority of MIT's international scholars in AY2009—946—were sponsored on MIT's J-1 exchange visitor program. An additional 141 scholars were here through other J sponsors. There were 336 scholars on campus in H-1B status, sponsored by MIT. This reflects a 2.5 percent decrease since last year (344). Forty scholars were in TN status and 4 in O-1 status sponsored by MIT. The rest of the scholar population had other sponsors or nonimmigrant categories. ISchO submitted permanent residence petitions

to US Citizenship and Immigration Services on behalf of numerous tenure-track faculty members and upper-level researchers.

According to data from MIT's Human Resources, 68 percent of MIT's postdoctoral associates and fellows are non-US citizens/permanent residents, as are 58 percent of "visiting" appointees.

Penny Rosser
Director

More information about the International Scholars Office may be found at <http://web.mit.edu/scholars/>.