

GENERAL INSTITUTE REQUIREMENTS

HASS Requirement

MIT provides a substantial and varied program in the humanities, arts, and social sciences (HASS) that forms an essential part of the education of every undergraduate. This program is intended to ensure that students develop a broad understanding of human society, its traditions, and its institutions. The requirement enables students to deepen their knowledge in a variety of cultural and disciplinary areas and encourages the development of sensibilities and skills vital to an effective and satisfying life as an individual, a professional, and a member of society.

More specifically, the objectives of the program are to develop skills in communication, both oral and written; knowledge of human cultures, past and present, and of the ways in which they have influenced one another; awareness of concepts, ideas, and systems of thought that underlie human activities; understanding of the social, political, and economic framework of different societies; and, finally, sensitivity to modes of communication and self-expression in the arts. Work in these areas will, where appropriate, display a special concern with the relation of science and technology to society.

The student's program in the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (HASS) is based on the following Institute requirements:

Minimum. Every candidate for a bachelor's degree must have completed a minimum of eight subjects in the humanities, arts, and social sciences, including distribution and concentration components. Two HASS subjects that are designated Communication Intensive (CI-H/HW) may also be used toward the Communication Requirement.

Distribution. Three of the eight subjects must be selected from designated categories: humanities, arts, and social sciences.

- *Humanities:* Humanities subjects describe and interpret human achievements, problems, and historical changes at individual as well as societal levels. Although humanist inquiry employs a variety of methods, such disciplines as history, literature, and philosophy typically produce their accounts of cultural accomplishments through close analysis of texts and ideas: contemporary and historical, personal and communal, imaginative and reflective.
- *Arts:* Arts subjects emphasize the skilled craft, practices, and standards of excellence involved in creating representations through images, words, sounds, and movement (e.g., sculptures, stories, plays, music, dance, films, or video games). Although arts subjects also engage in critical interpretation and historical analysis, they focus more centrally on expressive and aesthetic techniques and tools, such as the uses of rhythm, texture, and line.
- *Social Sciences:* Social Science subjects engage in theory-driven as well as empirical exploration and analysis of human transactions. They address the mental and behavioral activities of individuals, groups, organizations, institutions, and nations. Social science disciplines such as anthropology, economics, linguistics, political science, and psychology seek generalizable interpretations and explanations of human interaction.

The three subjects may be taken at any stage of the student's undergraduate career, although students are encouraged to complete their distribution by the end of their junior year. Over 600 subjects may be used to fulfill this requirement. For a complete list of the subjects in each category (<https://catalog.mit.edu/subjects>), consult the Subjects.

Concentration. Each student should designate a field of concentration, in consultation with a designated advisor in the field, by submitting a Concentration Proposal Form no later than the end of the first week of classes in the second term of junior year. Concentration requirements are set by each field and consist of either three or four subjects. One of the subjects that counts toward the distribution may also be designated as a concentration subject with the permission of the concentration advisor. Upon completion of all of the subjects noted on the Proposal Form, each student should submit a Concentration Completion Form no later than the end of the first week of classes of the final term prior to graduation. For more information about concentrations (<https://registrar.mit.edu/registration-academics/academic-requirements/hass-requirement/hass-concentrations>), visit the website.

Currently, the following **fields of concentration** are offered:

- African and African Diaspora Studies
- American Studies
- Ancient and Medieval Studies
- Anthropology
- Archaeology and Archaeological Science
- Art, Culture and Technology
- Asian and Asian Diaspora Studies
- Comparative Media Studies
- Computing and Society
- Development Economics
- Economics
- Education
- English Language Studies
- Ethics
- Global Languages
 - Chinese
 - French
 - German
 - Japanese
 - Korean

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- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish
- Other Languages
- Studies in International Literature and Cultures
- Theory of Languages
- History
- History of Architecture, Art, and Design
- Latin American and Latino/a Studies
- Legal Studies
- Linguistics
- Literature
- Middle Eastern Studies
- Music
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Religious Studies
- Russian and Eurasian Studies
- Science, Technology, and Society
- Theater Arts
- Urban Studies
- Women's and Gender Studies
- Writing

In individual cases, a special concentration may be arranged with advance approval.

Electives. The remainder of the eight-subject requirement, above and beyond the Distribution and Concentration, may be fulfilled by subjects from any distribution category or by subjects that are designated as HASS electives.

HASS Information. For detailed information on distribution subjects and on the concentration requirements in any field, and for assistance with any aspect of the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences Requirement, including petitioning for a substitution, visit the HASS Requirement website (<https://registrar.mit.edu/registration-academics/academic-requirements/hass-requirement>). Students may also contact the Office of the HASS Requirement (hassreq@mit.edu) to discuss their individual circumstances.