

Hi Prospective Students!

We are excited that you are considering applying to MIT's Department of Materials Science and Engineering. Below are a few suggestions and ideas to consider when compiling your application, but keep in mind that every application and circumstance is unique and may not apply to your situation. The below guidelines are solely meant to provide some tips, but there are many ways to be a successful applicant!

1. PhD programs are all about future research promise! Make sure to emphasize that and why you are interested in doing research.
2. Your letters of recommendation are really important. Make sure to ask people who know you well and can especially speak to your research capacity, and have been to grad school themselves. It's generally helpful to include letters from research faculty and professors, industry internship project leaders who have PhDs, and/or academic advisors. If you have worked closely with a postdoc, consider having them co-write a stronger letter with the professor of your lab! However, depending on your unique situation, you may want to ask other letter writers.
3. You do not need to come from a materials science background to apply for a materials PhD program. Materials science and engineering is very interdisciplinary and many of our students come from different backgrounds.
4. Focus on a research theme in your essay, what your research and academic experiences are, and how they have uniquely prepared you for a graduate career. If you haven't had an opportunity to engage in a research lab, talk about your class projects or other internships and explain how you creatively solved problems and persevered through challenges that they presented. If you have had many different research experiences in different areas, focus on the ones that mean the most to you and explain why they matter.
5. Publications are not required to be admitted to MIT's DMSE graduate program! Most of our admitted students do not have publications. It's more important to show research promise, and make sure to include any research accomplishments (such as end of summer student presentations) in your resume and essay.
6. Use the other section in application form to explain any circumstances (such as babysitting siblings, taking care of elders, situations around grading, access to opportunities, or more).
7. It's ok to take a break (even many years) between undergrad and grad school, because then you know why you want to be in grad school. This decision should be explained in the written statements, and should be a strong indicator of your commitment to getting a PhD.
8. Students will come to MIT's DMSE and often change research areas drastically. You are not expected to already have a professor in mind!

There is no single type of admit we are looking for and several admits don't necessarily have experiences that meet the above guidelines. That being said, overall, MIT's DMSE looks to build

a graduate class who is committed to research excellence and we are excited you are considering our program!

DMSE Graduate Students