

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS

Undergraduate Study

An undergraduate degree in mathematics provides an excellent basis for graduate work in mathematics or computer science, or for employment in such fields as finance, business, or consulting. Students' programs are arranged through consultation with their faculty advisors.

Undergraduates in mathematics are encouraged to elect an undergraduate seminar during their junior or senior year. The experience gained from active participation in a seminar conducted by a research mathematician has proven to be valuable for students planning to pursue graduate work as well as for those going on to other careers. These seminars also provide training in the verbal and written communication of mathematics and may be used to fulfill the Communication Requirement.

Many mathematics majors take 18.821 Project Laboratory in Mathematics, which fulfills the Institute's Laboratory Requirement and counts toward the Communication Requirement.

Bachelor of Science in Mathematics (Course 18)

General Mathematics Option

In addition to the General Institute Requirements, the requirements consist of Differential Equations, plus eight additional 12-unit subjects in Course 18 of essentially different content, including at least six advanced subjects (first decimal digit one or higher) that are distributed over at least three distinct areas (at least three distinct first decimal digits). One of these eight subjects must be Linear Algebra. This leaves available 84 units of unrestricted electives. The requirements are flexible in order to accommodate students who pursue programs that combine mathematics with a related field (such as physics, economics, or management) as well as students who are interested in both pure and applied mathematics. More details can be found on the degree chart (<https://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/mathematics-course-18/#generalmathematicstext>).

Applied Mathematics Option

Applied mathematics focuses on the mathematical concepts and techniques applied in science, engineering, and computer science. Particular attention is given to the following principles and their mathematical formulations: propagation, equilibrium, stability, optimization, computation, statistics, and random processes.

Sophomores interested in applied mathematics typically enroll in 18.200 Principles of Discrete Applied Mathematics and 18.300 Principles of Continuum Applied Mathematics. Subject 18.200 is devoted to the discrete aspects of applied mathematics and may be taken concurrently with 18.03 Differential Equations. Subject 18.300,

offered in the spring term, is devoted to continuous aspects and makes considerable use of differential equations.

The subjects in Group I of the program correspond roughly to those areas of applied mathematics that make heavy use of discrete mathematics, while Group II emphasizes those subjects that deal mainly with continuous processes. Some subjects, such as probability or numerical analysis, have both discrete and continuous aspects.

Students planning to go on to graduate work in applied mathematics should also take some basic subjects in analysis and algebra.

More detail on the Applied Mathematics option can be found on the degree chart (<https://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/mathematics-course-18/#appliedmathematicstext>).

Pure Mathematics Option

Pure (or "theoretical") mathematics is the study of the basic concepts and structure of mathematics. Its goal is to arrive at a deeper understanding and an expanded knowledge of mathematics itself.

Traditionally, pure mathematics has been classified into three general fields: analysis, which deals with continuous aspects of mathematics; algebra, which deals with discrete aspects; and geometry. The undergraduate program is designed so that students become familiar with each of these areas. Students also may wish to explore other topics such as logic, number theory, complex analysis, and subjects within applied mathematics.

The subjects 18.701 Algebra I and 18.901 Introduction to Topology are more advanced and should not be elected until a student has had experience with proofs, as in Real Analysis (18.100A, 18.100B, 18.100P or 18.100Q) or 18.700 Linear Algebra.

For more details, see the degree chart (<https://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/mathematics-course-18/#theoreticalmathematicstext>).

Bachelor of Science in Mathematics with Computer Science (Course 18-C)

Mathematics and computer science are closely related fields. Problems in computer science are often formalized and solved with mathematical methods. It is likely that many important problems currently facing computer scientists will be solved by researchers skilled in algebra, analysis, combinatorics, logic and/or probability theory, as well as computer science.

The purpose of this program is to allow students to study a combination of these mathematical areas and potential areas of application in computer science. Required subjects include linear algebra (18.06, 18.Co6[J], or 18.700) because it is so broadly used, and discrete mathematics (18.062[J] or 18.200) to give experience with proofs and the necessary tools for analyzing algorithms. The required subjects covering complexity (18.404 Theory of Computation or 18.400[J] Computability and Complexity Theory) and

algorithms (18.410[*J*] Design and Analysis of Algorithms) provide an introduction to the most theoretical aspects of computer science.

We also require exposure to other areas of computer science (6.1020, 6.1800, 6.4100, or 6.3900) where mathematical issues may also arise. More details can be found on the degree chart (<https://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/mathematics-computer-science-course-18-c>).

Some flexibility is allowed in this program. In particular, students may substitute the more advanced subject 18.701 Algebra I for 18.06 Linear Algebra, and, if they already have strong theorem-proving skills, may substitute 18.211 Combinatorial Analysis or 18.212 Algebraic Combinatorics for 18.062[*J*] Mathematics for Computer Science or 18.200 Principles of Discrete Applied Mathematics.

Minor in Mathematics

The requirements for a Minor in Mathematics are as follows: six 12-unit subjects in mathematics, beyond the Institute's Mathematics Requirement, of essentially different content, including at least three advanced subjects (first decimal digit one or higher).

See the Undergraduate Section for a general description of the minor program (<https://catalog.mit.edu/mit/undergraduate-education/academic-programs/minors>).

Inquiries

For further information, see the department's website (<http://math.mit.edu/academics/undergrad>) or contact Math Academic Services, 617-253-2416.