

FIRST YEAR

Design Plus

DesignPlus (<https://design.mit.edu/about/designplus>), which stands for “Design + any discipline,” is a flexible, interdisciplinary learning community for first-year undergraduate students interested in learning about the design process and how to integrate design into their MIT education. Through hands-on experimentation and exploration, approximately 50 students each year acquire technical skills, mentorship, and mutual support in learning both the theory and practice of design before selecting an area of study at MIT. Based in the Morningside Academy for Design (<https://design.mit.edu>), this learning community allows students to build connections with peers and faculty through required weekly seminars and lunches as well as group discussions on general topics in student life.

Students have full-time access to a supporting makerspace (with conventional wood/metal working tools, 3D printing and modeling software, laser-cutting, and more), dedicated and passionate technical instructors, faculty mentoring, and a community of like-minded peers. Faculty, advisors, and associate advisors work with students to identify the classes within their anticipated area(s) of study and emphasize making as a critical part of the learning process. Students fulfill General Institute Requirements (GIRs) (<http://catalog.mit.edu/mit/undergraduate-education/general-institute-requirements>) by attending mainstream core subjects with other first-year students.

The DesignPlus curriculum includes:

- DesignPlus Core: one-hour weekly all-student lunch, each with regular programming (seminars, tours, maker activities).
- DesignPlus Track: one-hour weekly small group meeting with faculty and peer advisors; several design tracks are currently offered, including product design, structures and buildings, jewelry and metal smithing, UI/UX, and global design challenges.

No previous experience in design is required—all students have the potential to be makers and designers. For more information about the program, contact Paul Pettigrew (paulpett@mit.edu), John Ochsendorf, (jao@mit.edu) or Bill McKenna (wdmc@mit.edu).