

TWENTY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MIT OPENCOURSEWARE

1. What is MIT OpenCourseWare?

MIT OpenCourseWare makes the course materials that are used in the teaching of almost all MIT's undergraduate and graduate subjects available on the Web, free of charge, to any user anywhere in the world. Available online at <http://ocw.mit.edu>, MIT OpenCourseWare is a large-scale, Web-based publication of MIT course materials. You do not have to register to make use of MIT OpenCourseWare course materials. Educators are encouraged to utilize the materials for curriculum development, and self-learners are encouraged to draw upon the materials for self-study or supplementary use. Therefore, course materials contained on the MIT OpenCourseWare Web site may be used, copied, distributed, translated, and modified, but only for non-commercial educational purposes that are made freely available to others.

2. Why is MIT doing this?

In 1999, former MIT Provost Robert A. Brown asked a faculty committee to provide strategic guidance on how MIT should position itself in the distance/e-learning environment. The resulting recommendation — the idea of MIT OpenCourseWare — is in line with MIT's mission (*to advance knowledge and educate students in science, technology, and other areas of scholarship that will best serve the nation and the world in the 21st century*), and is true to MIT's values of excellence, innovation, and leadership. MIT OpenCourseWare provides a new model for the dissemination of knowledge and collaboration among scholars around the world, and contributes to the "shared intellectual commons" in academia, which fosters collaboration across MIT and among other scholars.

3. How do I register to use MIT OpenCourseWare materials?

MIT OpenCourseWare is available free, and requires no registration.

4. Where should I start?

A Guided Tour is available for the MIT OpenCourseWare site. You can also browse courses by department or use the advanced search to locate a specific course or topic.

5. Why doesn't every course have solutions to assignments, quizzes, and exams?

In some cases, solutions to homework assignments, quizzes, and exams are only discussed and presented in the classroom, and not made available in print or electronic format. In other cases, the instructors plan to re-use in their MIT classroom the assignments, quizzes, and exams, and so they do not wish to widely publish their solutions.

6. Why doesn't every MIT OpenCourseWare course offer video lectures?

MIT faculty and instructors publish only as much content as they are comfortable having on a Web site that is freely accessible worldwide.

Where possible, we have included pre-existing video on this site, and we continue to invest in video recordings. Video, however, remains a supplement to our mission of publishing and updating core teaching materials. Video is among the most costly types of content to produce and distribute, and including more video would impact the depth and currency of the publication, affecting the many other ways visitors use our site. At present our focus remains on making the courseware used in all MIT courses available as a resource to educators and learners around the world.



7. How do I get a copy of the course pack for a particular course?

The course-pack materials that accompany most MIT courses often contain proprietary information and copyrighted materials that MIT Faculty only use in their classroom interactions with MIT students. We cannot, therefore, make these materials openly available to MIT OpenCourseWare users.

8. What are the prerequisites to use MIT OpenCourseWare materials?

Because MIT OpenCourseWare is not a distance-learning, credit bearing, or degree-granting initiative, there are no prerequisites to use MIT OpenCourseWare materials. To learn about MIT's curriculum visit the curriculum guide.

9. Can I get a certificate after completing these courses?

No. MIT OpenCourseWare is a publication of the course materials that support the dynamic classroom interactions of an MIT education; it is not a degree-granting or credit-bearing initiative.

10. Does MIT approve or recognize individuals, organizations, or institution that offer to teach MIT courses or tutor students based on MIT materials?

No. MIT has no relationship with, grants no special permission to, and does not approve, endorse, or certify any organizations, teachers, tutors, or other service providers who use educational materials available on the MIT OpenCourseWare site in connection with their services. Except for students admitted to MIT and enrolled at the Institute, MIT does not authorize the granting of any kind of degree, certificate, or other recognition for participation in or completion of any course of study based on or using published MIT course materials.

11. Can I/my organization state on our Web site or in our literature that we make use of MIT OpenCourseWare course materials?

In accordance with the terms of the MIT OpenCourseWare Creative Commons license, you must give credit to MIT and the faculty author of the course materials anytime you use MIT OpenCourseWare materials. However, any reference to MIT (including the MIT name in any of its forms or MIT seals or logos) that deliberately or inadvertently claims, suggests, or in MIT's sole judgment gives the appearance or impression of a relationship with or endorsement by MIT, is prohibited.

12. Is it within the MIT OpenCourseWare license to translate the course materials into non-English languages?

Yes. However, MIT asks that any MIT OpenCourseWare materials translated into other languages from the original English must be accompanied by the following disclaimer: "These MIT OpenCourseWare course materials have been translated into [YOUR LANGUAGE] by [YOUR INSTITUTION]. The MIT faculty authors, MIT, or MIT OpenCourseWare have not reviewed or approved these translations, and MIT and MIT OpenCourseWare makes no representations or warranties of any kind concerning the translated materials, express or implied, including, without limitation, warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose, non-infringement, or the absence of errors, whether or not discoverable. MIT OpenCourseWare bears no responsibility for any inaccuracies in translation. Any inaccuracies or other defects contained in this material, due to inaccuracies in language translation, are the sole responsibility of [YOUR INSTITUTION] and not MIT OpenCourseWare."

13. How do I contact a specific member of the MIT Faculty?

MIT OpenCourseWare is intended as a publication of MIT course materials, not as an interactive experience with MIT faculty. MIT OpenCourseWare does not offer users the opportunity for direct contact with MIT faculty. It provides the content of – but is not a substitute for – an MIT education. Inquiries related to specific course materials will be forwarded to the MIT faculty member associated with that course for their consideration. However due to the tremendous volume of email inquiries received it is unlikely he or she will be able to respond personally.

14. Who owns the intellectual property published on the MIT OpenCourseWare Web site?

The intellectual property policies created for MIT OpenCourseWare are clear and consistent with other policies for scholarly materials used in education. Faculty retain ownership of most materials prepared for MIT OpenCourseWare, following the MIT policy on textbook authorship. MIT retains ownership only when significant use has been made of the Institute's resources. If student course work is placed on the MIT OpenCourseWare site, then copyright in the work remains with the student. Prior to making any course materials publicly available, the MIT OpenCourseWare team has reviewed all material extensively to determine the correct ownership of the material and obtain the appropriate licenses to make the material openly available on the Web. We will promptly remove any material that is determined to be infringing on the rights of others. If you believe that a portion of MIT OpenCourseWare materials infringes another's copyright, please notify MIT OpenCourseWare at <http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/jsp/feedback.jsp>.

15. What are the requirements of use for MIT OpenCourseWare?

The underlying premise and purpose of MIT OpenCourseWare is to make course materials used in MIT courses freely and openly available to others for non-commercial educational purposes. Through MIT OpenCourseWare, MIT grants the right to anyone to use the materials, either "as is," or in a modified form. There is no restriction on how a user can modify the materials for the user's purpose. Materials may be edited, translated, combined with someone else's materials, reformatted, or changed in any other way. However, there are three requirements that an MIT OpenCourseWare user must meet to use the materials:

1) Non-commercial: Use of MIT OpenCourseWare materials is open to all except for profit-making entities who charge a fee for access to educational materials.

2) Attribution: Any and all use or reuse of the material, including use of derivative works (new materials that incorporate or draw on the original materials), must be attributed to MIT and, if a faculty member's name is associated with the material, to that person as well.

3) Share alike (aka "copyleft"): Any publication or distribution of original or derivative works, including production of electronic or printed class materials or placement of materials on a Web site, must offer the works freely and openly to others under the same terms that MIT OpenCourseWare first made the works available to the user.

Please refer to the MIT OpenCourseWare Privacy and Terms of Use page for our specific licensing terms and conditions. If you would like to use MIT OpenCourseWare course materials, but you are unsure whether your intended use qualifies as non-commercial use, please contact MIT OpenCourseWare at <http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/jsp/feedback.jsp>.

16. How does MIT define non-commercial use?

Non-commercial use means that users may not sell, profit from, or commercialize OpenCourseWare materials or works derived from them. That said, we have found that there are certain "gray areas" in interpreting the non-commercial provision of OCW's Creative Commons license. The guidelines below are intended to help users determine whether or not their use of OCW materials would be permitted under the "non-commercial" restriction. Note that there are additional requirements (attribution and share alike) spelled out in our license.

1) Commercialization is prohibited. Users may not directly sell or profit from OCW materials or from works derived from OCW materials.

Example: A commercial education or training business may not offer courses based on OCW materials if students pay a fee for those courses and the business intends to profit as a result.

2) Determination of commercial vs. non-commercial purpose is based on the use, not the user. Materials may be used by individuals, institutions, governments, corporations, or other business whether for-profit or non-profit so long as the use itself is not a commercialization of the materials or a use that is directly intended to generate sales or profit.

Example: A corporation may use MIT OpenCourseWare materials for internal professional development and training purposes.

3) Incidental charges to recover reasonable reproduction costs may be permitted. Recovery of nominal actual costs for copying small amounts (under 1000 copies) of MIT OpenCourseWare content on paper or CDs is allowed for educational purposes so long as there is no profit motive and so long as the intended use of the copies is in compliance with all license terms. Students must be informed that the materials are freely available on the MIT OpenCourseWare site and that their purchase of copied materials is optional.

Example: An institution in a remote area has limited Internet access and limited network infrastructure on campus, and a professor offers to create CDs of MIT OpenCourseWare materials relevant to her course. The professor may recover the costs of creating the CDs.

17. How do I properly cite my reuse of MIT OpenCourseWare materials?

If you choose to reuse or repost MIT OpenCourseWare materials you must give proper attribution to the original MIT faculty author(s). Please utilize the following citation "This material was created by or adapted from material created by MIT faculty member, (Name), (Title), (Year). Copyright © (Year) (Faculty Member's Name)."

As an example, the citation for "Course 18.06 Linear Algebra, Spring 2005" taught by MIT Professor Gilbert Strang would read, "This material was created or adapted from material created by MIT faculty member Gilbert Strang, Professor. Copyright © 2005 Gilbert Strang."

If you want to use the materials on your Web site, you must also include a copy of the MIT OpenCourseWare Creative Commons license, or clear and reasonable link to its URL with every copy of the MIT materials or the derivative work you create from it.

18. How can I contribute my own educational materials to MIT OpenCourseWare?

The intent of MIT OpenCourseWare is that our site should reflect the materials used in courses taught at MIT. The reason for this policy is that the materials presented on the MIT OpenCourseWare site are authored by members of the MIT Faculty, and thus, our faculty will take final responsibility for these materials. It would be difficult for MIT OpenCourseWare to guarantee the accuracy and originality of materials we received from outside sources. However, we encourage other universities to create their own "opencourseware" in which materials from their courses would be posted online and openly shared with the world. MIT OpenCourseWare is eager to link to other universities or institutions that have similar goals. For more information about how your institution can openly publish its course materials in an OpenCourseWare environment, please visit the OpenCourseWare Consortium site.

19. What are the technical requirements for viewing MIT OpenCourseWare course materials?

To best view and use the sites, MIT OpenCourseWare has adopted the following guidelines:

- Our course sites work on the Macintosh, Unix, and Windows platforms.
- Although higher-speed connections are preferable, slower connections, such as 28.8 kbps modems, should allow users to view most materials on the sites; however, downloading materials will take a longer period of time.

MIT OpenCourseWare has tested the course sites with the following browsers:

- Internet Explorer version 6.0+ (Windows)
- Safari version 1.2.2+ (Mac OSX)
- Firefox 1.0+ (all platforms)
- Mozilla 1.4+ (all platforms)

Some special content file types require specialized software to use; an extensive list is included on the MIT OpenCourseWare Technical Requirements page.

20. What technology is used to publish the MIT OpenCourseWare Web site?

The MIT OpenCourseWare technology solution supports a complex publishing process. This large-scale digital publishing infrastructure consists of planning tools, a content management system (CMS), and the MIT OpenCourseWare content distribution infrastructure. The current technical solution has been in use since April 2003 with a technical support team managing all aspects of this infrastructure.

The planning tools used by the MIT OpenCourseWare team to assist faculty in publishing their course materials include a custom application of FileMaker Pro, and several checklists and documents. For creating and managing content, we use several desktop tools (file conversion tools) as well as the CMS, a customized version of Microsoft Content Management Server 2002 that supports our publishing process. Our content delivery infrastructure includes a sophisticated publishing engine, content staging server, and a content delivery network utilizing Akamai's EdgeSuite platform.

For more information on the MIT OpenCourseWare publishing environment or technology, please contact MIT OpenCourseWare at <http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/jsp/feedback.jsp>.