

1. What are the changes to dining plans and rates, housing rates, and financial aid for the 2019-2020 academic year?

In March 2019, MIT announced an increase to tuition, dining, undergraduate housing, and graduate housing rates for Academic Year (AY) 2019-2020. [The Institute also announced it will commit \\$136.3 million for financial aid next year](#), a 4.9 percent increase that will counterbalance a 3.75 percent increase in tuition and fees. The net cost for an average MIT student receiving need-based aid will be \$22,501 in 2019, a 28% reduction compared to 2000 when the net cost was \$31,300 (when converted to current-year dollars).

MIT is one of only five American colleges and universities that admit all undergraduate students without regard to their financial circumstances, that award financial aid based on need, and that meet the full, demonstrated financial need of all admitted students.

The estimated average MIT scholarship for students receiving financial aid next year is \$51,459. (Financial aid packages cover the cost of living in a double in a Tier 1 residence hall and enrollment in the most comprehensive meal plan.) About 30 percent of MIT undergraduates receive aid sufficient to allow them to attend the Institute tuition-free. For AY 2019-2020, tuition and fees will be \$53,790. With average housing and dining costs included, the total cost to attend MIT is \$70,180.

2. Who makes these decisions?

MIT's senior leadership—based on inputs from the Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid, the Enrollment Management Group, and the Division of Student Life (DSL)—makes recommendations to the Executive Committee of the Corporation. The Executive Committee then approves these recommendations as part of their review process for the Institute's overall budget.

3. What is the rationale behind maintaining the spring 2019 plans for fall 2019?

In meetings and conversations in late March and early April, Dean Suzy Nelson and DSL staff heard that members of the MIT community were surprised by and concerned about changes to the house dining plan structure. Taking that feedback to heart, Dean Nelson and DSL acknowledge that the process for considering and communicating these changes fell short; student and stakeholder input was not adequately factored into the decision.

For these reasons, Dean Nelson asked to pause the rollout of new meal plans. For fall 2019, students may choose from the same meal plans offered in spring 2019, including the 125-meal plan with \$290 Dining Dollars. The prices for fall 2019 will be adjusted in accordance with the schedule released in March (see Figure 1 and Question 4).

Dining and DSL are also assessing the feasibility of piloting a grab-and-go location on the east side of campus where plan participants can use a meal swipe for lunch. This was a feature in the 2018 dining RFP. The addition will provide a convenient option for students who have classes on the east side of campus while alleviating some of the lunch rush at Maseeh Hall. So that future meal plan changes are considered carefully—with student and community input—and then communicated fully, DSL will convene a working group comprised of heads of house, students, and staff to review the findings of the [2017 dining study](#) relative to house dining goals:

- Create a residential and retail dining landscape that maximizes choice, provides value, and addresses the needs of undergraduates and graduate students;
- Enhance the undergraduate residential dining experience that include options for flexibility and portability;
- Explore the potential of using meal plans across campus;
- Improve food quality;
- Foster community building;
- Increase dining participation; and
- Identify a potential financial model that generates a sustainable and strong dining program.

Figure 1 – Updated Dining Plans and Rates for Fall 2019

Meal Plans for Students in Residences with Dining Halls				
	Semester Rate	Meal per Semester	Dining Dollars per semester	Minimum commitment
Any 19 per week + eight guest passes + \$50 Dining Dollars per semester	\$2,980	299*	\$50	
Any 14 per week + six guest passes + \$175 Dining Dollars per semester	\$2,840	220*	\$175	First-years
260 meals + \$225 Dining Dollars per semester	\$2,981	260	\$225	
190 meals + \$250 Dining Dollars per semester	\$2,844	190	\$250	First-years
160 meals + \$275 Dining Dollars per semester	\$2,499	160	\$275	
125 meals + \$290 Dining Dollars per semester	\$2,065	125	\$290	All upper-level

*based on 15-17 weeks/semester

- First-year students have choice of two plans
- To suit their own nutritional needs, students may choose meal plans above the minimum commitment
- Students may choose between semester and weekly block plans
- All meals can be used for breakfast, lunch, dinner, late-night, or weekend brunch
- Dining dollars are accepted at most on-campus eateries with a 5% discount on food only (a \$1 food item will cost \$.95)

Voluntary Meal Plans			
	Semester Rate	Meals per semester	Dining Dollars per semester
90 meals + \$225 Dining Dollars per semester	\$1,526	90	\$225
60 meals + \$310 Dining Dollars per semester	\$1,198	60	\$310
30 meals + \$407 Dining Dollars per semester	\$885	30	\$405
45 meals + \$215 Dining Dollars per semester	\$885	45	\$215

- Students living in residences without dining halls or in FSILGs have the option to purchase voluntary meals plans of any of the meal plans designed for dining dorm residents
- All meals can be used for breakfast, lunch, dinner, late-night, or weekend brunch

Social Awareness: Last fall, DSL opened the [TechMart](#) at-cost grocery store in Walker Memorial, and we are looking for more ways to enhance the shopping experience (please email foodstuff@mit.edu or fill out a comment card in the store). The store—like the [SwipeShare](#) program—derived from the

recommendations of the [Food Insecurity Solutions Working Group](#), and we are looking to implement more of their ideas this semester and in the future. [Click here for more information.](#)

The SwipeShare program has really taken off since its introduction in AY 2017-18. As of the beginning of spring 2019, we have received more than 3,000 swipe donations from 600 meal plan subscribers and helped almost 400 students.

4. Aren't costs for MIT housing and dining already high?

The Institute believes that housing and dining need to improve continuously to better serve current and future students, and those enhancements require additional investment. In recent years, housing rate increases have ranged from 4-7 percent and dining rates have increased about 3 – 6 percent. In comparison with peers and other institutions, MIT's dining rates are low. When setting housing rates, we consider the rates of peer institutions, particularly those in similar settings, as well as the market and other internal factors.

5. What improvements will be made to the student experience?

Rate increases are necessary to allow the Institute to address an annual rise in standard operating costs, however, they also provide MIT and the Division of Student Life with opportunities to improve housing facilities and the dining program to better serve current and future students. DSL continues to make enhancements to student life on campus by working in partnership with student groups, student leaders, and student residential governments and heads of house.

Housing: As a multi-year housing renewal program continues – with projects like the renewal of New House, the upcoming renewal of Burton Conner, and new construction at Vassar Street and the graduate student residence in Kendall Square – DSL continues to make enhancements to residential spaces. Some examples of projects include the renovation of kitchens in MacGregor House this summer to complete a three-year effort to ensure that every entry has an updated kitchen to support students who cook for themselves; the addition of a makerspace in Next House this spring; and updates to Tang Hall kitchens and bathrooms that were completed this winter.

Dining: Following the rollout of more flexible meal plan offerings that include dining dollars and voluntary opt-in meal plans for residents of FSILGs and cook-for-yourself communities, MIT Dining and Bon Appétit (BA), MIT's campus foodservice management partner, have been incorporating student feedback to continue making improvements to dining across campus.

Earlier this year, BA successfully launched the OASIS Station at Maseeh Hall to provide safer meal options for diners with food allergies. Plans to add an OASIS station to Next House this fall are in the works. In addition to the prospective east campus grab-and-go lunch pilot, new menu options are planned for late-night dining including a stir-fry station at Maseeh Hall and noodle bowls and bubble tea at Simmons Hall. MIT Dining and BA remain committed to working with students on continuous improvements and providing healthy, nutritious, and flexible options.

6. What is the rationale behind the different levels of increases by unit type in graduate housing?

Ensuring that our rates remain affordable for MIT graduate students while at the same time support MIT's ability to effectively operate and invest in our graduate student housing stock remains a top priority for the Institute. Housing & Residential Services (HRS) has been working with a consultant to analyze our rates in relation to the Cambridge/Boston area rental market.

Area institutions price graduate housing according to rental market trends. MIT is committed to remaining competitive considering rental trends in Cambridge over the past three to five years. Analysis determined, however, that some unit-types were farther below market than others. To address this imbalance and to help achieve a more consistent and rational relationship to the market, rates are being increased at different levels across each unit-type in the graduate housing portfolio. The weighted average increase will be 4.3% with a range of increases between 3.5-5.6%.

HRS has been working with the Graduate Housing Implementation Team to discuss this strategy along with a series of improvements to policies and procedures, to make living in MIT housing even more attractive to graduate students. Information about graduate housing and these improvements can be found at <http://studentlife.mit.edu/housing/graduate-family-housing>.

7. Why announce this now?

MIT's housing and dining plans are built around choice, offering a range of pricing and amenity options. Rate decisions are made and announced in the spring semester, which gives students time to consider housing and dining options for the fall before the confirmation deadline.

Students with questions about how the new housing and dining rates will affect their financial aid package can contact [their Student Financial Services counselor](#). [Housing & Residential Services](#) and the [MIT Dining](#) are also available to help answer questions.