

MIT ANALYTICS LAB (A-LAB)

ACTION LEARNING SEMINAR ON ANALYTICS, MACHINE LEARNING, AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

In the MIT Analytics Lab (A-Lab), Master's (or graduate) level student teams select and deliver a project using analytics, machine learning, and other methods of analysis to develop results that diagnose, enable, or uncover solutions to real business issues and opportunities. The course, which runs each fall semester, is presented by the MIT Initiative on the Digital Economy (IDE) and is part of MIT Sloan School of Management's suite of Action Learning offerings. The course is led by MIT Sloan faculty Sinan Aral, Director of the IDE.

Over the last 12 years, A-Lab has attracted almost 1000 students from a dozen MIT programs to work on over 200 projects spanning IoT, platforms, finance, e-commerce, retail, manufacturing, medical supply chains, workplace safety, and global health.

PROJECTS

We are looking for projects that fit in a variety of industries and sectors; address a diversity of problem types; require advanced depth of analysis; and have ensured availability of clean and rich data at the outset of the project. We also seek to closely match the students' capabilities and variety of skills, experience, and interests.

The best projects require descriptive, predictive, or causal analysis and have a few things in common:

- Large "n" with clean data – 100,000 or more records with little missing data
- A real problem that can be solved (or mitigated) with analytic efforts
- Clear relevance of the project to organizational success
- Well-defined and scoped to be "shovel-ready" – students have just over two months to complete the project

Many, but not all, projects will be selected to advance to the fall semester, and a smaller subset of those will be matched to a team comprised of three or four students.

Organizations are encouraged to submit multiple proposals.

STUDENTS

This is a graduate-level course, open by selective admission to students within the Sloan School of Management and across other schools at MIT.

All admitted students have completed relevant coursework drawing from statistics, computer science, management, and economics. Students are proficient in at least one programming language (typically Python or R) and at least half of the students have a strong background in machine learning and predictive analytics (working with libraries such as Pandas, Scikit-learn, and NLTK).

Each team is mentored by an MIT IDE-affiliated faculty member, research scientist, postdoc, or PhD student, and teams have regular check-in meetings with their project sponsor across the semester.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Organizations are invited to provide their data, time, and insights to enable student teams to develop actionable solutions and impactful findings that provide value far beyond the fall semester.

We encourage interested organizations to take advantage of this opportunity and join in what has proven to be one of the most popular courses among MIT students pursuing careers in data science.

There is no fee for proposing a project, but project sponsors are responsible for covering any project-related expenses.

If your organization would like to submit one or more proposals for consideration, please contact the A-Lab team (a-lab@mit.edu).

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAM AND PAST PROJECTS, VISIT

[IDE.MIT.EDU/ANALYTICS-LAB](https://ide.mit.edu/analytics-lab)

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2025 TIMELINE

We are available to discuss the course and the requirements for proposing a project, as well as advise on how to position your project idea for maximum appeal to the students.

JULY 1

PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS DUE

Preliminary proposals (using the required template, and including data samples) are due.

AUGUST 15

FINAL PROPOSALS DUE

Final proposals are due, as are jointly executed MIT Sloan non-disclosure agreements. Final proposals will be distributed to all students enrolled in the course prior to the first class session.

SEPTEMBER 11

PITCH DAY AT MIT

Representatives from each proposing organization pitch their project in person, then meet and mix with students as they finalize their project preferences.

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 14

PROJECT-TEAM MATCHING FINALIZED

Projects are matched to teams based on student bids and ranks of projects.

DECEMBER 11

FINAL PRESENTATIONS AT MIT

Teams present their findings to an audience of experts, entrepreneurs, and executives during a special class session; project sponsors are invited to send representatives to observe and participate in the discussions of all presentations.

MIT INITIATIVE ON THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

ABOUT MIT IDE

We conduct groundbreaking research, convene the brightest minds, promote dialogue, expand knowledge and awareness, and implement solutions that provide critical, actionable insight for people, businesses, and government. We are solving the most pressing issues of the second machine age, such as defining the future of work in this time of unprecedented disruptive digital transformation.

SUPPORT MIT IDE

The generous support of individuals, foundations, and corporations are critical to the success of the IDE. Their contributions fuel cutting-edge research by MIT faculty and graduate students, and enables new faculty hiring, curriculum development, events, and fellowships. Contact Albert Scerbo (ascerbo@mit.edu) to learn how you or your organization can support the MIT IDE.