Massachusetts Institute of Technology



Employee Toolkit

Work Succeeding Initiative

Summer 2021

Introduction

Understand the goals of Work Succeeding and how to use the materials and guidance provided in this toolkit.

Understanding the Work Succeeding Initiative

In the Summer of 2020, MIT launched Task Force 2021 and Beyond – a two-phased approach to using the lessons learned from COVID-19 to explore how the Institute will create a new future of working, teaching, and conducting research.

In May 2020, President Reif charged 'Task Force 2021 and Beyond' to…

explore how MIT might invent a thriving new future in a post-COVID environment

The Administrative Workstream of the Task Force focused on…

administrative functions and their implications as MIT plans for the future

One of the Workstream's recommendations was to…

explore flexible and sustainable work practices at MIT that will continue to enable teams to further the MIT mission.

★ ***The Work Succeeding initiative was launched to realize this goal***

Through the Work Succeeding initiative, MIT is working to…

- Empower teams to **work collaboratively and effectively** to further the MIT mission
- Support employees' **varied needs** and emphasize **job satisfaction** and personal **well-being**
- Position the Institute to **retain and attract the best talent**

by…

- Leveraging lessons learned from the past year to **design a strategy for the future**
- Outlining potential **flexible work options and arrangements**
- **Realizing financial, sustainability, and efficiency benefits** from adapting our workplaces
- Establishing the foundation for **a more accessible, equitable, fluid, and effective working environment**

Flexible Work Priorities

Prioritizing flexible work options has a positive effect on the MIT workforce, which helps the Institute achieve its mission and values more effectively.

Flexible Work Priorities	MIT Mission and Values
Improve **Productivity**, **Effectiveness**, and **Impact** of MIT	Combine rigorous academic study with the excitement of discovery
Increase Employee **Wellness** and **Satisfaction**	Promote a workplace of inclusion that welcomes and supports people of all backgrounds, viewpoints, experience, talents, and ideas.
Improve Employee **Recruitment** and **Retention**	Bring knowledge to bear on the world's great challenges
Lower **Environmental** Impact	Extend the horizons of human intellect through research
Maintain MIT's Ties to the **Community**	Generate, disseminate, and preserve knowledge

"We seek to develop in each member of the MIT community the ability and passion to work wisely, creatively, and effectively for the betterment of humankind." – *MIT Mission and Objectives*

Purpose of These Materials

Emerging from ideas gathered by Task Force 2021, the Work Succeeding initiative was created to develop and refine guidance, tools, and policies to support new ways of working at the Institute.

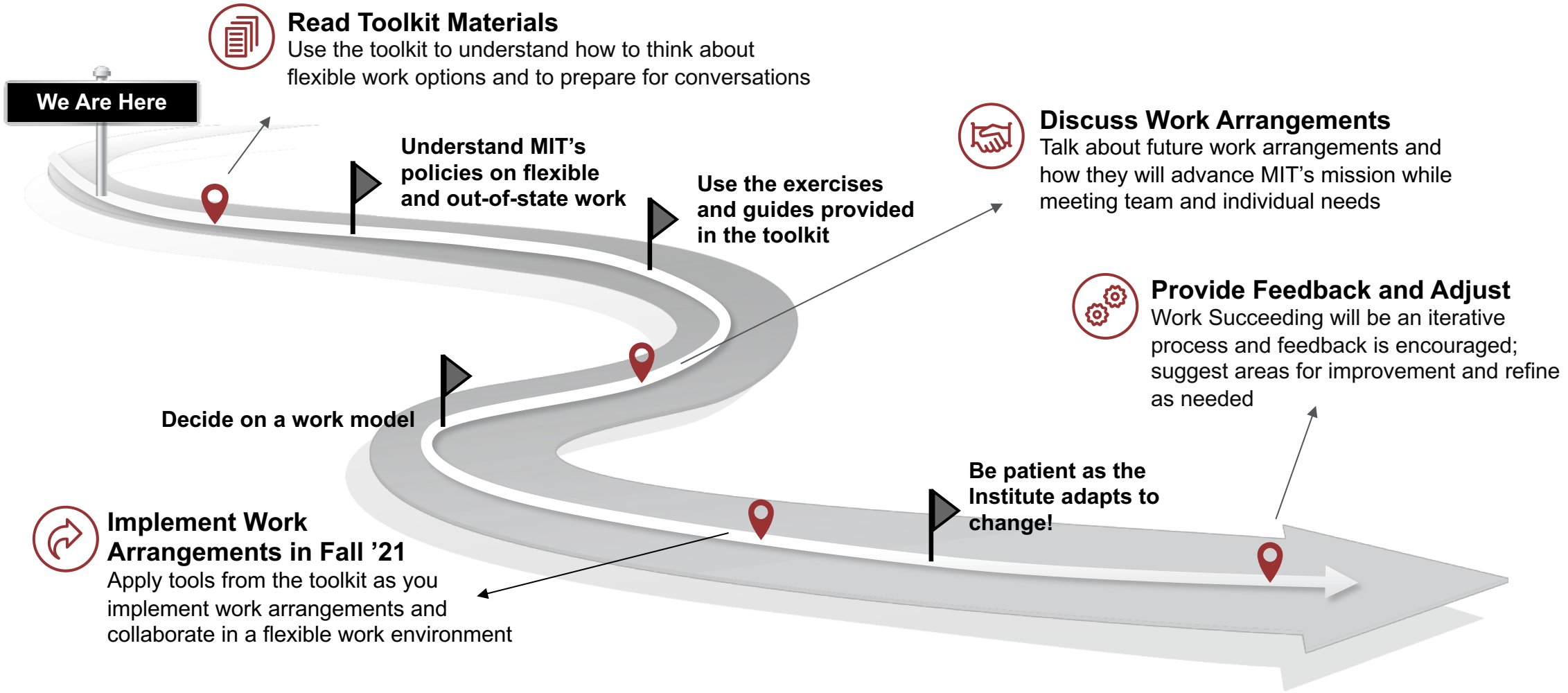
These materials are intended to provide resources for MIT employees to make decisions about and work effectively within a flexible work environment. While the general guidance in this toolkit can be used by union employees, the specific recommendations regarding flexible work environments are not intended for this population.

Every team has diverse needs. Team members should work together to determine work arrangements that best meet MIT's mission while considering individual preferences, community culture, and other factors.



Work Succeeding Journey Map

As you prepare for the Fall 2021 semester, reference the below roadmap to understand the recommended sequence of Work Succeeding activities.



Why YOU are Critical to Work Succeeding

Due to the decentralized nature of MIT's flexible work policy, team members will have more ability than ever to voice their opinions about where to work while advancing MIT's mission.

Why team members will be important to driving the initiative's success:

- Work Succeeding will **not produce Institute-wide policy that dictates where employees should work**. You have the ability to voice your preferences to your manager. Show them how you will continue to work effectively in support of MIT's mission and your role's needs in whichever environment you prefer
- Individuals on your team will have a **variety of preferred work locations and styles**. To help your whole team succeed, you will have to adapt to the range of work situations your team chooses
- MIT needs **each of you to work effectively and sustainably** to achieve our shared long-term mission

HOW?

Communicate what works for you

Determine which **work model is optimal for you**, and **communicate your preference and reasons** to your supervisor. Everyone can promote MIT's mission by optimizing their working styles.

Adapt to working norms

Collaborating with teammates will **feel different in a flexible environment** than it did either on campus or when the Institute was primarily remote. Adapting to the team's new working styles will ensure everyone can be effective at their jobs.

Trust and appreciation

It is possible that many of your team members will want to work in a different environment than you. Show them that you **trust them to complete their work** and you **appreciate their contributions** to the team and MIT's mission.

This Work Succeeding toolkit will help you prepare for discussions regarding flexible work arrangements

How to Use These Materials

UNDERSTAND THE OPTIONS

Sections Included

Section 1: Work Decisions and Design

As you consider the work practices that may fit best for yourself (within the context of your team) moving forward, it is important to first understand the context. **Read through Section 1 to ground your understanding of the options available.**

- Overview of potential work models (on-site, hybrid, remote)
- Approach for how to balance job requirements with preferences
- Illustrative employee personas

PREPARE TO MAKE DECISIONS

Sections Included

Section 2: Work Planning Protocols

After you understand the context for how to make decisions, use Section 2 to organize your thoughts in preparation for meeting with your manager. Note that **this section contains policy and guardrails as well as processes and forms** to discuss with your manager.

- Strongly recommended steps to take with your manager regarding you and your team's work arrangement, including the following:
  - Preparing for a conversation
  - Completing your work plan (e.g., work model decisions)
- Frequently asked work planning questions

SUPPORT YOURSELF

Sections Included

Section 3: Technology and Equipment

Section 4: Culture, Well-Being, and Inclusion

Section 5: Communication and Collaboration

The final three sections of this document provide **guidance and tips for successfully** supporting MIT's mission in a flexible environment. Use these resources to help facilitate a positive work environment for yourself and your colleagues.

- Guidance on using and obtaining technology and equipment
- Resources to promote personal well-being and positive, inclusive team practices
- Best practices on communicating and collaborating in a flexible work environment

Table of Contents

1	2	3	4	5
Work Decisions and Design	**Work Planning Protocols**	**Technology and Equipment**	**Culture, Well-Being, and Inclusion**	**Communication and Collaboration**
*Section 1 is designed to **provide a framework** for understanding various work models and which may work best for employees given their role and preferences.*	*Section 2 should be used to **guide employees in their work planning conversations** with their manager or supervisor. It includes policies and guardrails related to flexible work.*	*Section 3 guides employees in both how to **work effectively** with a virtual component and how to provide **guidance on technology/equipment.***	*Section 4 provides employees with tools and resources to foster an **inclusive team environment** that prioritizes well-being and a positive team culture.*	*Section 5 provides resources and best practices related to **communication and collaboration** within and across teams while navigating a flexible work environment.*

Work Decisions and Design

A framework for understanding various work models, and which may work best for employees given their roles and preferences.

1

What's Included in this Section?

1

Expectations, Processes, and Guiding Principles

A collection of the roles and expectations, decision-making processes, and guiding principles for DLCs, managers, and employees to consider in developing their future work arrangements

2

Overview of Potential Work Models

A summary of available work models (on-site, hybrid, remote) and a discussion of which models work best for different types of teams

3

Employee Personas

A collection of employee personas that can provide examples to help you articulate your needs. Employees can reference the personas as a visual of how different roles and individual needs may align to different work models.

Understand Roles and Expectations

Recognize the different responsibilities across DLCs, managers/supervisors, and employees in the decision-making process for your team's future work arrangement.

1 Departments, Labs, and Centers (DLCs)

- Empowered to plan and implement flexible work options based on DLC needs and culture
- Determine guiding principles and processes for making flexibility decisions
- Communicate guiding principles and processes to managers/supervisors and employees
- Encourage periodic evaluation and adjustment of flexible work agreements

2 Managers and Supervisors

- Manage flexibility decision-making according to DLC process
- Balance employee needs and preferences with the needs of the job and team
- Approach process with an open mind
- Recommended: document and maintain agreements
- Both the department head and direct supervisor must approve all flexible work arrangements
- Manage employee performance
- Monitor agreements and revisit as needed

3 Employees

- Articulate work flexibility needs and preferences
- Be mindful of job and team needs
- Recommended: document agreements
- Follow and monitor agreements, and revisit as needed

Understand the Decision-Making Process

Know which decisions should be made by both DLCs and managers/supervisors in the decision-making process for your team's future work arrangement.[1]

1 Departments, Labs, and Centers (DLCs)

- Determine guiding principles for flexible work (see next page)
- Determine process for making work decisions and managing work agreements
- Vet process with local managers; adjust process as needed
- Calibrate decision-making with managers, using personas (included in this section of the toolkit) to prompt discussion and assist with calibration

2 Managers and Supervisors

- Meet with team members to learn individual needs and preferences
- Identify flexibility implications of individual job requirements and team needs
- Make decisions in accordance with DLC process and guiding principles
- Both department head and direct supervisor must approve all flexible work arrangements; more detail is available in the "Work Planning Protocols" section of the toolkit
- Create team calendar that can be shared with the team; more detail is available in the "Work Planning Protocols" section of the toolkit
- Periodically revisit work arrangements for team

[1] *Recommended steps for managers to follow to plan their team's future work model are in the Work Planning Protocols section of the toolkit.*

Follow the Guiding Principles

All Institute employees should follow these guiding principles as they relate to flexible work and future work arrangements (on-site, hybrid, remote).

Guiding Principles

- Flexible work should be job-appropriate based on the operational needs to **advance the mission of the Institute**
- Decisions are made based on individual requests, **team needs, and the nature of the work**
- The process is **equitable for similarly situated staff**
- Transparency is critical to creating an **environment of trust**

DLC leadership is encouraged to build off of these foundational guiding principles to develop and socialize additional principles as needed

There Are Three Primary Work Model Options for the Future

When considering your future work arrangement, understand the three primary work models. Keep these in mind as you read through the rest of the section and ask yourself which may work best for you, given your role and preferences.

On-Site

Team members work entirely, or almost entirely, on-site, either due to team needs or the nature of the work

3% of staff surveyed would prefer to work on campus 5+ days per week*

Hybrid

Team members work in a hybrid environment consisting of on-site and remote work, either due to team needs or the nature of the work. We focus on two types of hybrid models:

- **Hybrid-formal**: location is based on a consistent, set schedule
- **Hybrid-flex**: employee determines where to work each day/week

76% of staff surveyed would prefer to work in a flexible environment (e.g., partially on-campus and partially remote)*

Remote

Team members work entirely, or almost entirely, remotely, either due to team needs or the nature of the work

21% of staff surveyed would prefer to work completely remote*

**Note: Statistics come from the 2021 MIT Work Succeeding Admin and Support Staff Survey. Data from Research Staff, Instructional Staff, and Faculty is currently being analyzed.*

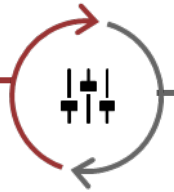
What Is the On-Site Work Model?

Team members work entirely on-site, either due to team needs or the nature of the work

This model might work if you:

Greatly Value In-Person Interactions
On-site work is well suited for an individual that derives a large amount of value out of interacting with colleagues and customers in person

Are Essential On-Campus Personnel
If your job consists of shiftwork (e.g., dining, groundskeeping), this work model may be necessary to perform job functions



This model might not be effective if you:

Do Not Require In-Person Interaction
If your job function does not require in-person interaction to effectively perform activities, on-site work model may not be your preference

Do Not Require On-Site Space or Equipment
On-site work may not be a good fit if your job does not require or prefer specific on-site working space (e.g., dedicated desk) or equipment (e.g., scanner)

Included Personas

Persona #1: I Am Ready to Return

Persona #2: I Am On Campus Due to the Nature of my Role and Love It

Persona #3: I Am an Essential On-Campus Operations Staff Member

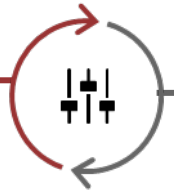
What Is the Hybrid Work Model?

Team members work in a hybrid environment consisting of on-site and remote work, either due to team needs and the nature of the work.

This model might work if you:

Know Flexibility Advances MIT's Mission
Hybrid work is well-suited for individuals who work more productively while remote because it helps him/her advance MIT's mission more effectively

Have Minimal Campus Access Requirements and Prefer Some Flexibility
If your role does not frequently require you to be on-site to perform job functions/collaborate with team members and you prefer some time working remotely, hybrid work may be a good fit



This model might not be effective if you:

Work in Person with Others On Site
If your team consistently works with others on-site, either through collaborating with other DLCs or working in person with customers (e.g., students), you may want to prioritize working on-site

Access Confidential Information On Campus or Campus-Based Resources/Equipment
Hybrid work may not be suited for your team if your job function requires accessing confidential information only accessible on-campus

Included Personas

Persona #4: I Am On Campus Due to the Nature of my Role but Would Prefer Some Flexibility

Persona #5: I Want a Consistent Hybrid Schedule

Persona #6: I Prefer Working Remotely, but I Need to Be On-Site Occasionally

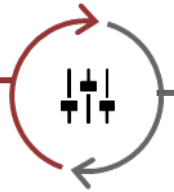
What Is the Remote Work Model?

Individuals work entirely, or almost entirely, remotely, either due to employee needs or the nature of the work.

This model might work if you:

Know Flexibility Improves Overall Productivity
If you need to consistently work from a location other than MIT in the long-term for personal- or work-related reasons that lead to increased productivity and impact on mission while working, remote work may be optimal

Work Independently
Remote work may be a good fit for you if they do not require in-person or hands-on collaboration



This model might not be effective if you:

Require Consistent In-Person Interaction
If you places a lot of value in in-person interactions, either planned or spontaneous, remote work may not be a good fit

Struggle To Maintain Culture and Balance
Remote work may not be a good fit for you if you struggle to personally set work/life balance and maintain a good connection with your team and MIT in a virtual setting

Included Personas

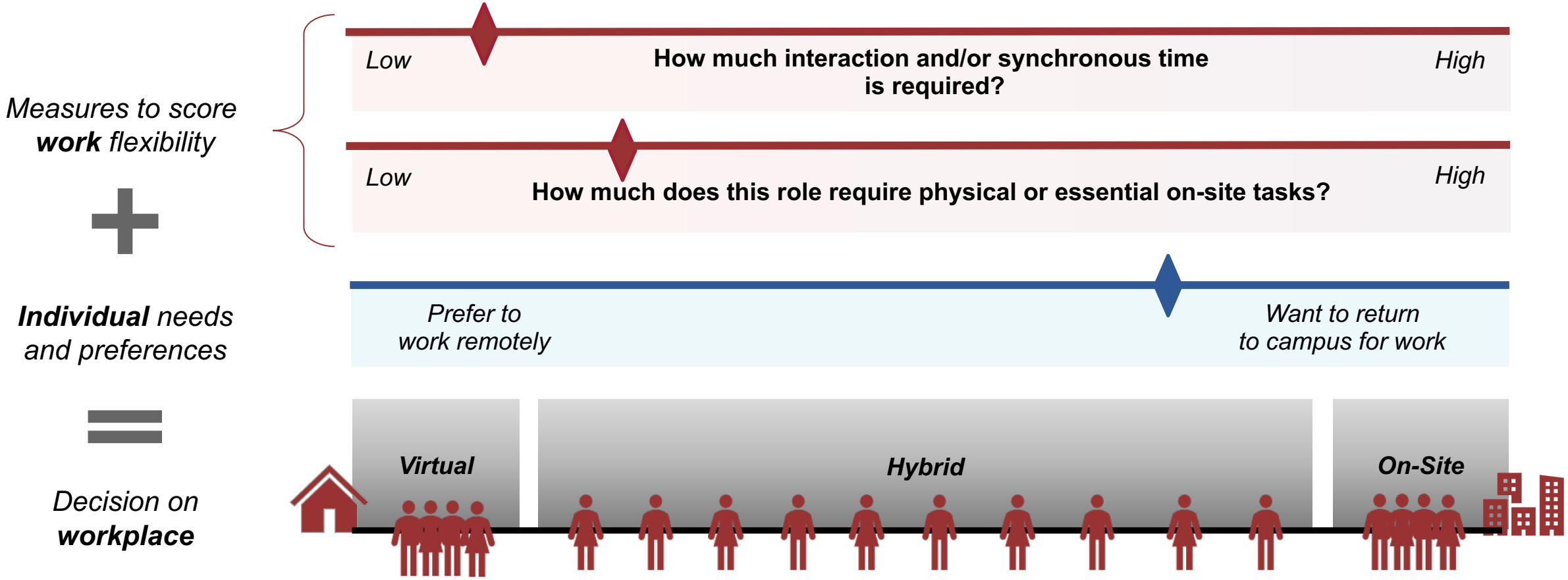
Persona #7: I Am Fully Remote and Love It

Persona #8: I Am Fully Remote and Living Out-of-State

Persona #9: I Need to be Remote Due to Location Flexibility

Balance Job Requirements with Individual Needs

An adaptable approach to work will produce a spectrum of workplace options. The role of each manager is to consider MIT's mission alongside the needs of the team and individual, and to promote open conversation and collaboration.

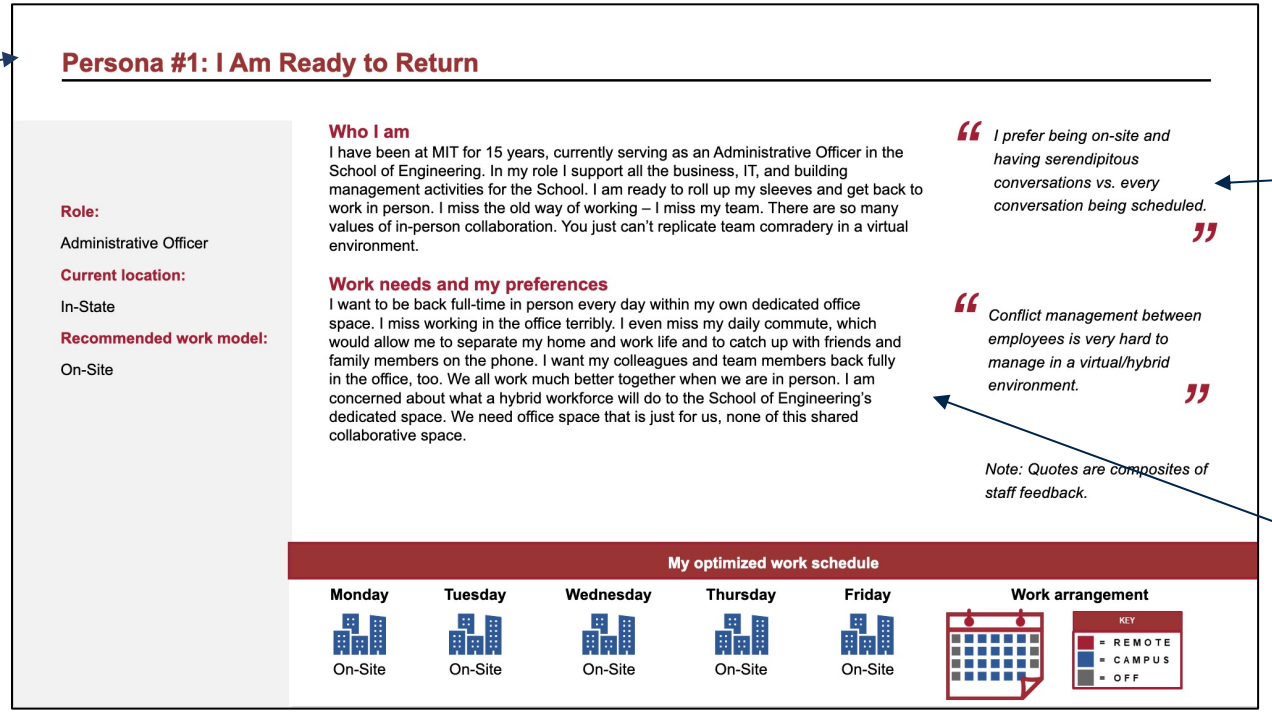


Work Succeeding Personas: Overview

The following slides reference personas, which depict examples of how job responsibilities may intersect with individual preferences and produce a range of workplace decisions across MIT. Note that these personas are illustrative and do not represent actual employee opinions at the Institute.

Title of the persona and workplace characteristics

The persona's example role, department unit, and location from which they are currently working/commuting



Illustrative quotes that fit this criteria to further the persona's wants and needs

A deep dive into the persona, what their role entails, and what they need as MIT returns to campus

The persona's preferred work schedule, broken out by days of the week, hours, and a monthly calendar to show week by week variation

Persona #1: I Am Ready to Return

Role:

Administrative Officer

Current location:

In-State

Recommended work model:

On-Site

Who I am

I have been at MIT for 15 years, currently serving as an Administrative Officer in the School of Engineering. In my role I support all the business, IT, and building management activities for the School. I am ready to roll up my sleeves and get back to work in person. I miss the old way of working – I miss my team. There are so many values of in-person collaboration. You just can't replicate team comradery in a virtual environment.

Work needs and my preferences

I want to be back full-time in person every day within my own dedicated office space. I miss working in the office terribly. I even miss my daily commute, which would allow me to separate my home and work life and to catch up with friends and family members on the phone. I want my colleagues and team members back fully in the office, too. We all work much better together when we are in person. I am concerned about what a hybrid workforce will do to the School of Engineering's dedicated space. We need office space that is just for us, none of this shared collaborative space.

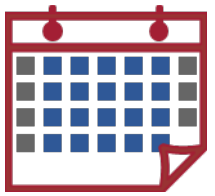
> *"I prefer being on-site and having serendipitous conversations vs. every conversation being scheduled."*

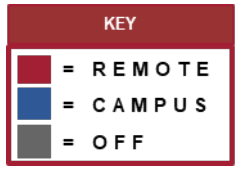
> *"Conflict management between employees is very hard to manage in a virtual/hybrid environment."*

Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

My optimized work schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Work arrangement
On-Site	On-Site	On-Site	On-Site	On-Site	





Persona #2: I Am On Campus Due to the Nature of my Role and Love It

Role:

Director of Student Housing

Current location:

In-State

Recommended work model:

On-Site

Who I am

My role at MIT has me in front of students, staff, executive leadership, parents, and external constituents every day! Overseeing student housing can be very challenging, as there are many stakeholders involved with the success of student housing. I am often responsible for meeting with the VP and Dean for Student Life, student conduct, as well as student leaders for highly confidential meetings. My job is very demanding and working remotely has been a challenge for me to engage with these individuals.

Work needs and my preferences

I need a consistent and private space to have meetings and maintain confidential information. Additionally, I need to maintain a presence in case any student issues arise. I also teach leadership sessions to help prepare my student leaders. Being available and on campus just makes my job so much easier!

> *"I miss interacting with my students directly everyday and I have heard from them they feel less engaged without staff on campus."*

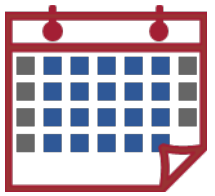
> *"While some of my work could be done virtually, but given the nature of my role, it is much easier to be successful on campus."*

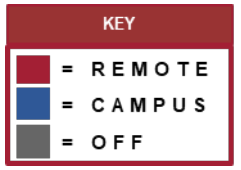
Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

My optimized work schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
On-Site	On-Site	On-Site	On-Site	On-Site

Work arrangement





Persona #3: I Am an Essential On-Campus Operations Staff Member and I Have Shiftwork

Role:

Groundskeeping Manager

Current location:

In-State

Recommended work model:

On-Site

Who I am

I have worked at MIT for 15 years starting as a groundskeeper and worked my way up to a manager role. I am currently overseeing a large team of 25 and am responsible for ensuring all grounds-related needs are consistently covered through my staff's different shifts, but I also have a number of meetings with administrators and other units on campus. My level of interaction with both my staff and others across campus is very high so it is imperative that I maintain a consistent and daily presence on campus. However, as I discovered over the past year, I do appreciate having a couple of days each month to complete staff scheduling and catch-up on planning.

Work needs and my preferences

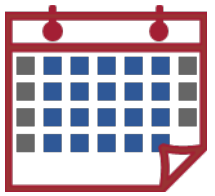
I need to be on campus to interact with my staff and other departments across campus. I also need to perform quality assurance of my team's work by physically moving around campus daily. One thing that would help me achieve this in the most efficient way possible is with portable technology and open spaces/offices in all buildings so I can move around campus freely and be able to plug into any location should I need to have a virtual meeting or complete a task on my computer.

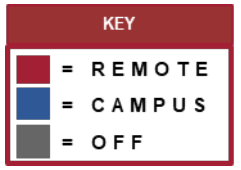
> *"Certain roles must be on campus no matter what. Although some teams require shiftwork and a physical presence, they still deserve a working experience that is equitable since remote work is not an option for those teams."*

Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

My optimized work schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Work arrangement
On-Site	On-Site	On-Site	On-Site	On-Site	





Persona #4: I Am On Campus Due to the Nature of my Role but Would Prefer Some Flexibility

Role:

Faculty Support Assistant

Current location:

In-State

Recommended work model:

Hybrid

Who I am

I work in faculty support, and I am responsible for supporting the dean and professors within this department. I schedule meetings with students, facilitate reimbursements and travel, and coordinate various administrative tasks (e.g., prepare meeting materials), along with welcoming visitors to the office.

Work needs and my preferences

I need to have space on campus to execute on various in-person administrative duties. I serve as the gatekeeper for people who need to meet with various faculty members within my department. My role requires me to be in person most of the time, but I'd like the option to be able to perform some tasks remotely (e.g., scheduling meetings).

> *"Most of my role can be performed remotely. I learned that this past year."*

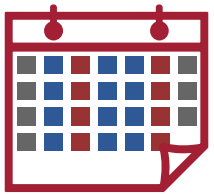
> *"My schedule shifts some based on the administrator I support. If the dean is going to be in and have a big event, I will be on campus. I hope to support her needs remotely many days, but some days I do need to be there."*

Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

My optimized work schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
On-Site	Remote	On-Site	On-Site	Remote

Work arrangement



Persona #5: I Want a Consistent Hybrid Schedule

Role:

HR Business Partner

Current location:

In-State

Recommended work model:

Hybrid

Who I am

I work in the HR department, have enjoyed working remote, and have found that I can get all of my work done and do just as good of a job as I did when we were in the office. I do miss campus life and seeing my co-workers during the week.

Work needs and my preferences

I want a predictable schedule that allows me to both work from home and campus. I don't necessarily need my own desk, but I want to know that on the days that I am on campus it will be easy to find a place to work. In a perfect world I would work from home M/W/F and from the office on T/TH. My supervisor would be prepared to support me with this hybrid set up and the people I work with would be willing and able to collaborate in both work environments. I still want access to all the things that make campus life so great but would prefer to have time to myself at home to get deep thinking and more complicated work done.

> *"I still see the value in being able to go to an office from time to time. But still feel as though a balance between remote and on-site is optimal for me."*

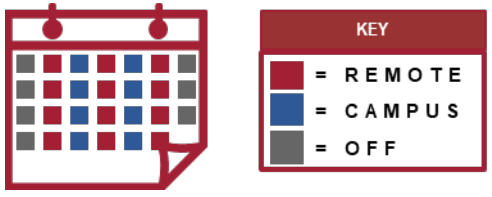
> *"I have noticed we have become more efficient. Less time is spent commuting, giving us more time to get to the work and daily tasks."*

Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

My optimized work schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Remote	On-Site	Remote	On-Site	Remote

Work arrangement



Persona #6: I Prefer Working Remotely, but I Need to Be On-Site Occasionally

Role:

Accounts Receivable

Current location:

Out-of-state

Recommended work model:

Hybrid

Who I am

I work in the Finance department and believe that 100% of my job can be done remotely. I recently moved out of state to be closer to my elderly parents and would prefer not to have to come back to the city. I know I need to be on campus from time to time, but I will just stay with friends in the city when needed. Otherwise, I plan to be remote.

Work needs and my preferences

I don't need much, just the assurances from my manager that they don't truly need me on campus, as well as some insight into when exactly I would be expected to show up. I hope to continue to work at MIT for a long time. To make that a reality, the Institute needs to make sure its supervisors are accepting of hybrid work employees and that there is no negative connotation associated with being flexible.

> *"I prefer a mostly remote environment where flexibility is a given, we collaborate online and only meet when truly necessary."*

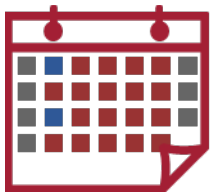
> *"I know the hours I'm expected to be present and available. I know the expectation for responding to emails and taking meetings as well as when I need to physically come to campus."*

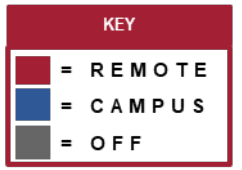
Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

My optimized work schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
On-Site	Remote	Remote	Remote	Remote

Work arrangement





Persona #7: I Am Fully Remote and Love It

Role:

Application Developer

Current location:

In-State

Recommended work model:

Remote

Who I am

I've been at MIT for the past five years as an Application Developer in IS&T. Prior to March 2020 I was in the office everyday even though most of my work was done on a computer.

Work needs and my preferences

I want to stay fully remote even when campus reopens. These past months have had a huge positive impact on my mental health and allowed me to finally achieve work-life balance. Collaboration with my team is easy with virtual collaboration software I don't know how I will handle having to be on campus multiple days each week if my manager requires it, as coming to campus everyday was exhausting for me and my commute is an hour each way in traffic. That decision might make me start looking for other jobs in my field that would allow me to work fully remote.

> *"After working remote this past year, my work life balance is in a good place, and I'm worried about that being taken away."*

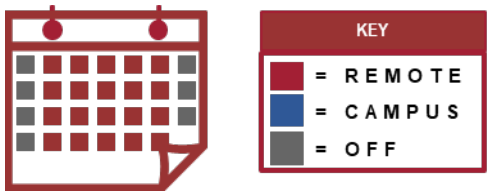
> *"I love being 100% remote. I am an introvert. The pandemic has been great for me."*

Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

My optimized work schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Remote	Remote	Remote	Remote	Remote

Work arrangement



Persona #8: I Am Fully Remote and Living Out-of-State

Role:

Accountant

Current location:

Out-of-state

Recommended work model:

Remote

Who I am

I've been at MIT for the past three years and most of my job is spent in our Accounting software, in Excel, and holding meetings online. In the middle of the pandemic, my wife's mother got sick, so we relocated to California to help take care of her. I have been working East Coast hours despite the time difference since moving almost a year ago and no one on my team has had any complaints about my performance.

Work needs and my preferences

I will need to be mostly remote when campus reopens. I am willing to come to campus once or twice a month from California for key team meetings. My family doesn't plan to move back to the Cambridge area anytime soon. I really enjoy my job at MIT and would love the opportunity to continue working with the Institute. However, finding a balance in separating personal and professional time has been a struggle for me.

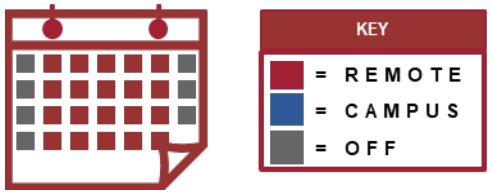
> *"I have found it much easer to communicate with others across campus in a remote work environment because everyone is only an email, Slack message, or Zoom call away."*

Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

My optimized work schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Remote	Remote	Remote	Remote	Remote

Work arrangement



Persona #9: I Need to Be Remote Due to Location Flexibility

Role:

Program Assistant

Current location:

In-State

Recommended work model:

Remote

Who I am

I joined MIT during the pandemic. I was onboarded fully remotely and am enjoying the work that I do.

My needs

I need a clear understanding of the expectations for my role moving forward. Although my role is completely remote, my managers need to be aware that if for any reason I may be required to be on site, I need to know well in advance as I may have to adjust my location to be closer to campus. Commuting can be difficult for me, and I am much more productive when I don't need to add that stress to my day. I am also concerned about what happens if I work from home and the rest of my team is in-person. Is the Institute prepared to host inclusive hybrid meetings? Will my manager evaluate my performance equitably if majority of my team decides to be in-person?

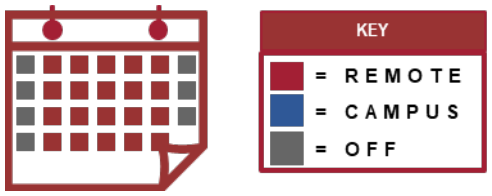
> *"I accepted my job offer because of its remote nature. I would like it to stay that way moving forward given that I was hired with that understanding. However, if my manager or team may need me to come on site, I am open to it – I just need advance notice."*

Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

My optimized work schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Remote	Remote	Remote	Remote	Remote

Work arrangement



Work Planning Protocols

A guide for employees in their work-planning conversations with their manager or supervisor.

2

What's Included in this Section?

1

Policies and Guidelines Related to Flexible Work

A collection of the Institute's policies and guidelines related to flexible work, including links to MIT websites that detail the processes, and specific considerations for managers and employees to consider

2

Recommended Work Planning Steps

Steps and associated activities/templates for you to use when planning for the future work model

3

Frequently Asked Work Planning Questions

A collection of common questions regarding the work planning process

Policies and Guidelines Related to Flexible Work

Familiarize yourself with existing and current MIT policies and guidelines relevant to Work Succeeding.

Policies

- 3.1 Flexible Work Arrangements
- Employment Policy Manual (EPM) 3.1.1 Alternative Schedules
- Employment Policy Manual (EPM) 3.1.2 Off-Site Work
- 3.2 Performance Feedback, Performance Reviews, and Corrective Action
- 7.10 MIT Employees Working Outside Massachusetts (Domestic or International)

Guidelines

- Guidelines on Providing Equipment for Working Remotely
- Resources for Working Remotely (e.g., data security and compliance, communication, and remote work equipment and technical assistance)
- Obtaining Disability Services
- Guidance on Purchasing and Tracking Items Shipped to Employee Homes for Remote Work

Be Aware of MIT's Flexible Work Policy

MIT's flexible work policy (EPM Sec. 3.1) permits non-academic staff to work alternative schedules or in remote locations when such arrangements meet the DLC's operational needs and do not diminish the DLC's ability to support MIT's Institute's mission.

Important Policy Details

- Decision should be **equitable** and take into consideration **job requirements** and **operation needs** to meet the mission the Institute
- A flexible work arrangement is not an **entitlement**
- Work flexibility may include **flex time**, compressed workweek, job sharing, and **off-site work**
- Remote work arrangements may be hybrid (some on-site/some off-site) or completely remote
- Off-site work must be sufficiently free from distractions, and may not be regularly performed while caring for a **child/dependent adult** or while undertaking other significant responsibilities
- **Not all jobs lend themselves to off-site work**, and in some cases, only some but not all members of a group may work off-site
- Both the **department head and direct supervisor** must approve all flexible work arrangements

What to Keep in Mind

- Employees working in a flexible arrangement are expected to be as productive as if they were working on-site during normal working hours; you must oversee your employees' performance to ensure the quality and quantity are sufficient
- You (the manager) are generally responsible for defining flexible work and establishing the working hours for the employees who report to you, consistent with the practices of your DLC; arrangements should be reviewed initially within 3-6 months and then at least annually

Understand the Approval Process for Working Outside of Massachusetts

Policies & Procedures Sec. 7.10 explains the approval process.

Important Policy Details

- Work in domestic out-of-state locations **must be approved in advance by you** (manager), in accordance with your DLC processes
- **Employment policies** apply regardless of whether the out-of-state work is required by MIT or whether it reflects the personal preference of the employee
- The Administrative Officer or Departmental Human Resources representative must promptly notify Payroll (payroll@mit.edu) of an employee's new work address
- Employees must change their home address in Atlas; the DLC must check that this is done
- Employees working outside the New England area for **more than three consecutive months** must contact the Benefits Office if they participate in MIT's health care plans
- In addition to DLC approval, international work of longer than 30 consecutive days **must be approved in advance by the Provost or by the Executive Vice President and Treasurer,** or by their designees

What to Keep in Mind

- If out-of-state work comes up as a possibility as you have conversations with your team, you should bring your Human Resources Officer (or DLC HR representative) into the discussion to ensure you cover all necessary details as there might be additional requirements and costs.
- The Administrative Officer or departmental human resources representative should inform their Human Resources Officer as soon as they know of any proposed international program or activity. Please refer to this guidance on employees working abroad.

Follow the Recommended Work Planning Steps

You are strongly encouraged to follow these steps to plan your future work model.

Step One: Prepare for Conversations	**Step Two:** Conduct Conversations	**Step Three:** Complete Team Member Work Plan	**Step Four:** Manager Submits Team Work Plan to Leadership
• Use the **Work Planning Conversation Guide** (Exercise C) (Word document, 2 pages, direct download) to prepare for a conversation with your manager • **Complete the Work Planning Exercise** (Exercise D) (Word document, 2 pages, direct download) to evaluate your ideal working arrangement based on your job responsibilities	• Participate in a **team meeting** to understand the perspectives of your team members and manager • Participate in a **meeting with your manager** to discuss and align on future work arrangements	• After (or during) your conversation with your manager, work together to **complete the Team Member Work Plan Template** (Form A) (Word document, 2 pages, direct download) to document future work preferences	• After meeting with all team members, managers may **complete the Team Work Plan Template** (Form B) (Word document, 2 pages, direct download) to evaluate possible work arrangements for each employee and to update DLC leadership. • **The department head, as well as the direct supervisor, must approve all flexible work arrangements.** The department head may delegate this approval responsibility to an administrative officer, a human resources administrator, or other administrator in the department. In all cases, **someone in addition to the direct supervisor must approve the flexible work arrangement.** • Department heads will also report to their dean, vice president, or other member of Academic Council about the flexible work arrangements in their areas.

Aligning Work Arrangement Decisions

The opportunity to openly discuss your future work arrangements with your manager, or other leadership at the Institute, is essential. If you experience difficulties or would simply like a secure outlet to talk, follow the steps below.

1 Talk with Your Manager

We are all expected to have conversations about future work arrangements with our supervisors or managers. It is important for both parties to consider individual needs and preferences, the needs of the unit, and the needs of the full team in working toward MIT's mission. Each of us may request a conversation with our manager to communicate our needs and interests in how work arrangements are structured. The purpose of these conversations is to provide a constructive forum to discuss work arrangements, scheduling, safety and health, and other issues for the individuals and the team(s).

2 Discuss with Your DLC's HR Administrator or Leadership

Employees and managers may need additional support to align work arrangements. In such instances, the employee, either on their own or together with their manager, should set up a meeting with either their unit's human resources administrator or department leadership (e.g., administrative officer, department head, or assistant dean) for further discussion.

MIT HR and others will facilitate dialogue to find the best solutions.

3 Additional Resources

The Institute is also in the process of identifying facilitators to support flexible work arrangement alignment conversations. Employees, managers, or whole teams will be able to reach out to these facilitators for assistance as needed.

If you need additional guidance, MIT Human Resources (HR) can facilitate conversations or recommend other Institute support options. For example, the MIT Ombuds Office is a confidential and independent resource for all members of the MIT community to constructively manage concerns and conflicts related to your experience at MIT.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question	MIT Guidance
Does this toolkit apply to union employees?	No. If you are a union employee and have any questions regarding this, please reach out to your Human Resources Officer.
Is it mandatory that managers meet with their team before conducting individual conversations?	No, but it is encouraged. It is recommended for managers to have a meeting with their team to gather perspectives on the team's future work arrangements. Research shows that employee input brings benefits to both the individual and organization. Managers should incorporate as much employee input as possible to provide the most effective, sustainable experience.
Is it necessary that managers meet with individual team members before completing the Team Member Work Plan?	Managers and team members are encouraged to align on and document a work plan together before the manager completes and submits the final work plan to their direct supervisor and DLC leadership.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question	MIT Guidance
If a team member and a manager cannot agree on a work plan, what are the next steps?	See "Aligning Work Arrangement Decisions" page in this toolkit for guidance.
Will my work plan be made public and/or be shared outside of my manager and need-to-know leadership?	No, your work plan will remain with your manager, DLC's leadership, and similar levels of leadership. Your DLC's leadership will receive your team-wide work plan for awareness purposes and for future reference if needed.
Will this process of making work decisions be iterative?	Yes, you and your manager should feel empowered to re-visit, discuss, and adjust work arrangements, as necessary. At a minimum, you should check in formally with your manager after six months to re-evaluate and address any issues within your team or issues working with other teams at MIT.
Does flexible work include the option to flex working hours as well?	Yes. Supervisors are generally responsible for establishing the working hours for the employees who report to them, consistent with the practices of their DLC. Reference MIT's Flexible Work Arrangements policy (EPM 3.1) for additional information.

Technology and Equipment

How to work effectively with a virtual component,
and guidance on technology and equipment.

3

What's Included in this Section?

1

Overview of Technology and Equipment Available to DLCs

A summary of the items and resources available to MIT employees who utilize some portion of remote work, recognizing that processes will differ by DLC

2

Common Guidance on Technology and Equipment

Questions and answers about technology and equipment, including ADA* compliance – and links to resources

3

Best Practices for Using Technology

Guidance on how you can effectively use technology in a flexible environment to promote efficient collaboration

**ADA" refers to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*

Understand What Technology and Equipment Is Available

The following reflects the items and resources available to administrative and support staff members.[1] The purchase of these items must be approved in advance by the DLC.

Technology

Typically provided by DLC

- Computer (with standard software)
- Keyboard and mouse
- Cables
- Headset (phone or computer)

Provided at DLC discretion when required by the role

- Printer
- Extra monitor
- Docking Station
- Whiteboard
- Noise-cancelling headphones

Not typically provided by DLC

- Home Internet connection
- Upgraded cell phone; cell phone costs
- Increased utility expenses
- Air conditioner

Office Supplies

Office supplies are usually not provided by the DLC, but DLCs may choose to provide:

- Printer supplies such as paper and cartridges
- Paper, pens, stickies, etc.

Technical Support

DLC and/or IS&T provides technical support for MIT-owned technology.

MIT does not generally provide support for personally owned equipment, even if used for MIT work.

Furniture/Equipment

Generally, MIT does not provide office furniture for remote work.

Exceptions made by some DLCs include office chairs, laptop stands, or standing desk converters for employees working remotely, for ergonomic concerns.

[1] *The availability of and process to obtain technology and equipment differs across DLCs.*

Reference Common Guidance for Technology and Equipment

Human Resources and other areas at MIT have provided guidance for DLCs to provide technology and equipment to their remote employees.

Frequently Asked Questions	MIT Guidance
Are employee technology and equipment paid for by the DLC, regardless of work model?	Yes, technology and equipment are paid for by each DLC's budget. Administrators should use their departmental spending guidelines when reviewing/approving purchases. For research funded areas, DLCs may not purchase equipment for remote work using grant/contract funds unless such purchases are explicitly budgeted and approved in the award agreement.
What is the correct process to log/document technology and equipment with MIT?	Certain MIT-owned equipment must be tagged by the Property Office and logged in its database, whether that equipment is on-site or remote. Vice President for Finance (VPF) provides guidance for this and offers for department administrators and staff on purchasing work-related items that are shipped to an employee's home. See Guidance for Purchasing and Tracking Items Shipped to Employee Homes for Remote Work on the VPF website.
Is there guidance for employee ergonomic concerns?	EHS has an Ergonomics page with many helpful materials, including a self-assessment tool and some tips that do not require the purchase of equipment. EHS also provides group training for DLCs by request. A remote home workstation ergonomic review and assessment may be requested through the Ergonomic Evaluation website.
Where can I find general guidance on providing my team equipment for working remotely?	Find guidance from Human Resources and other areas in handling requests for equipment and supplies from employees who are working remotely on this Human Resources webpage.

Reference Common Guidance for Technology and Equipment

Human Resources and other areas at MIT have provided guidance for DLCs to provide technology and equipment to their remote employees.

Frequently Asked Questions	MIT Guidance
Does IS&T provide any guidance on the resources that MIT staff and affiliates can use to work remotely?	IS&T provides MIT staff and affiliates with a selection of IT resources that can be leveraged to prepare for and facilitate remote working at MIT on their webpage on working remotely.
Does every DLC have the same budget and process for employee technology and equipment?	Every DLC should follow similar high-level processes, but each DLC is different and has nuances. Follow the guidelines that your specific DLC has shared. When having technology and equipment conversations with your employees, be fair and consistent. When in doubt, reach out to your manager and/or leader of your DLC.
Where can I find information on MIT's disability policies/services (e.g., an ADA request)?	MIT HR has guidelines available. If you have any questions on this process after reading the guidelines, please contact the Disabilities Services and Medical Leaves Office.

Use Best Practices for Virtual Presentations

Whether in a hybrid or fully remote environment, ways to improve the effectiveness of meetings and presentations



Turn Off Notifications

Prevent distracting pop-ups on open applications by turning off notifications or setting them to “Do not disturb.”

- Make sure you mute your mobile phone to prevent any calls or messages from interrupting your meeting



Limit Open Programs

Minimize unrelated open windows and applications on your desktop to ensure confidential information and/or contact details are not visible to participants.

- Make sure your desktop is uncluttered, and that there are no confidential files visible
- This will make it easier for you to toggle between content that you’re planning to share and lower the likelihood of distractions during your meeting



Turn on Video

Have everyone’s video automatically on at login. It improves concentration and participation.

- Find the setting in your meeting application where you can set video on for all participants
- Communicate that it will be a video call beforehand



Mute All Participants

Have everyone automatically on mute as they join the meeting. This will avoid feedback or loud background noises.



Use Additional Features

Where it makes sense, use the features that your virtual meeting technology has to maximize collaboration and interaction during the meeting.

- Consider features like polling, breakout rooms, and annotations that programs like Zoom or Teams can offer

Use Your Equipment Wisely

Be aware of best practices for using technology and related equipment and apply them in your day-to-day work environment.

Test your technology

- Reduce the likelihood of technical surprises by testing your video conferencing and internet/wireless connection
- Conduct an internet speed test on speedtest.net to ensure that your network can handle the requirements of your meeting (Zoom requires 1.2MB-1.8MB speeds for HD video)
- Free up bandwidth by removing non-essential devices from your wireless network for the duration of your calls

Use a laptop, not a mobile phone, for video

- Whenever possible, join a virtual call on a laptop or desktop computer to ensure a stable image
- Avoid moving around your house during video calls. If you must change locations, turn your video off first

Use a headset or external microphone

- Stay muted when not speaking to avoid external noise
- Use a headset or external microphone for the best audio quality. If using a wireless headset, make sure it's fully charged
- If you have issues with using your laptop for audio, dial in with your cell phone and place your computer on mute
- If using your laptop's speaker and microphone, be careful about ambient sounds such as typing on your keyboard

Password-protect your meetings

- Keep your meeting safe from unwanted visitors
- Use a password to protect your meeting so that others cannot gain access or hijack your presentation

Position the camera

- Position your camera so it's just above eye level. Prop it up to reach that level if necessary
- Treat the camera's lens as if it were your audience

Culture, Well-Being, and Inclusion

Tools and resources to foster an inclusive team environment that prioritizes well-being and a positive team culture.

4

What's Included in this Section?

1

Best Practices for Supporting Team Well-Being

A discussion on wellness within a team and links to MIT resources that support employee physical and mental well-being

2

Resources for Ensuring Inclusive Practices on a Team

Advice on ensuring that inclusive practices are a priority within and across your team

Prioritize Well-Being

It's important to prioritize your mental and physical well-being to be the most effective team member possible.

Block time to eat

Whether in a hybrid, fully remote, or on-site environment, it is important to take time to fully ensure that you are nourishing your body. Do not allow your important to-do list to eliminate your time to refuel and recharge.

Stretch while working and take mental breaks

Take time from your computer, tablets, and phones to move your body. Create time to take mental breaks as well, whether that be going for a walk or listening to some music.

Ask for video-off meetings

Screen time can take a major toll on your eyes and energy levels. It is okay to request certain meetings to be video off if you need some time to not have to engage with your computer screen full-time.

Honor your time off

If you are taking time off for a personal commitment or just logging offline to fulfill a personal commitment, feel empowered to fully be offline once you have communicated your time off to your manager.

Speak up about burnout

If you start to notice that you are nearing burnout, please prioritize speaking up to your manager about it. Your manager should work with you to help you get back to a healthy work-life balance.

Reference MIT Well-Being Resources (1 of 2)

The MIT HR Center for Work Life and Well-Being offers a wide range of programs and resources that address specific life issues and events.

Resource	Description	Link
MIT MyLife Services	MyLife Services is a free, confidential MIT benefit for staff, faculty, postdocs and their families. One call puts you in touch with a network of experts who can provide emotional and behavioral counseling, work-life consultations, and personalized referrals.	MIT MyLife Services
MIT Staff Emergency Hardship Fund	The MIT Staff Emergency Hardship Fund provides financial assistance to MIT staff and postdoctoral scholars who are experiencing an immediate, severe, and temporary financial hardship due to a sudden or non-recurring emergency.	MIT Staff Emergency Hardship Fund
WorkLife and WellBeing Webinar Series	The MIT HR Center for WorkLife and Well-Being's Webinar Series provides employees and managers with research-based strategies, tools, and information on topics including coping and adapting to change, and fostering a supportive workplace culture. See link to the right for upcoming webinars	WorkLife and WellBeing Webinar Series
MyStressTools: Improve Your Wellness Anytime, Anywhere	MyStressTools, an online suite of stress management and resilience-building resources, helps MIT employees improve their overall well-being by providing a stress assessment, podcasts, webinars, relaxation exercises, and Q&A, from any device.	MyStressTools
Campus Lactation Rooms	MIT provides a supportive environment for nursing mothers and has 23 lactation rooms on campus, as well as lactation support guidelines and resources.	Campus Lactation Rooms

Reference MIT Well-Being Resources (2 of 2)

The MIT HR Center for Work Life and Well-Being offers a wide range of programs and resources that address specific life issues and events.

Resource	Description	Link
Technology Childcare Centers (TCC)	MIT has four on-site childcare centers – three on campus and one in Lexington – that accommodate infants, toddlers, and preschool children. All centers are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and overseen by the Center for WorkLife and Well-Being in collaboration with Bright Horizons.	Technology Childcare Centers (TCC)
Backup Child Care	Screened and trained caregivers are available to care for your children during the day or evening, seven days per week, at a subsidized rate of $8.00 per hour.	Backup Child Care
Backup Adult Care	Screened and trained caregivers are available to care for your aging loved ones during the day or evening, seven days per week, across the U.S., at a subsidized rate of $8.00 per hour.	Backup Adult Care
Peace at Home: Parent Coaching	Private consultations with a Peace at Home parenting coach are available to discuss your parenting questions or concerns.	Peace at Home
EdNavigator: School and Educational Support	Connect with an expert educational advisor to establish home routines to set-up your family for success, and develop a plan that will help your children – in elementary, middle, or high school – thrive in their current learning environment.	EdNavigator

Cultivate Inclusion

It is important that team members work toward creating inclusive teams. Below are ways in which you can commit to fostering inclusion.

Cognizance of bias

Be aware of your unconscious biases so that decisions can be made in a transparent, consistent, and informed manner.

Curiosity

Be curious and open to different ideas and experiences. Listen attentively and value the viewpoints of others.

Cultural intelligence

Not everyone sees the world through the same cultural frame. Seek out opportunities to experience, and learn about different cultures. Be aware of other cultural contexts.



Collaboration

Diverse-thinking teams are greater than the sum of their parts. Create teams that are diverse in thinking.

Commitment

Treat everyone with fairness and respect, and foster environments where team members can be themselves by modeling authenticity. Empower each other's well-being.

Courage

Talking about imperfections involves personal risk-taking. Engage in open and respectful dialogue. Identify opportunities to be more inclusive, take ownership and engage others.

Inclusion does not happen spontaneously. It must be intentional, cultivated, and nurtured. While it starts at the top, everyone plays a role in creating an inclusive culture. These six traits of inclusive leadership can help anyone to identify, personalize, model, and advance inclusion.

Create Space for “Real” Talk

Whether your team is hybrid, remote, or on-site, it is valuable to create space for honest and authentic dialogue regarding current events that may be affecting your team members’ well-being and ability to produce their best at work.

Ways managers can create space for real talk



Participate in courageous conversations

Team members should have courageous conversations amongst each other and should consider hosting team conversations on timely topics to promote courage and perspective sharing.



Share continuous learning resources

Continuous learning is a key part of creating inclusive environments. Employees should continue to self-educate on various current events and topics, while proactively creating an environment through resource sharing that values continuous learning.



Acknowledge current events in a timely fashion

Current events can affect an employee’s well-being in real-time. To the best of your ability, team members are encouraged to acknowledge the various ways in which a current event could be affecting team members and cultivate a working environment that allows for those team members to prioritize self-care, compassion, and communication when support is needed.

Conduct Courageous Conversations (1 of 3)

When courageous conversations are done effectively, they can have a dramatic impact on how you and your team members interact with one another.

Definition

Speaking up and expressing how you think or feel about something and risking the possibility of an awkward moment for the sake of clearing up misunderstanding, building relationships, and ensuring that those you work with know what you want and more importantly, what you don't. It requires us **to step out of our comfort zone** to discuss a topic that might well cause an emotional response.

A courageous conversation about inclusion may be uncomfortable to have, but is necessary to create a space for authenticity.

How to have a courageous conversation:

Have Respectful Dialogue: Engage in dialogue – not debate	• Talk about your own experiences or feelings, and stay away from opinion statements, judgement, or generalizations • Be open, transparent, and willing to admit mistakes or gaps in knowledge • Please consider how your words might be received and be respectful
Practice Active Listening: Suspend judgement and defensiveness	• Embrace humble listening: Put ego, assumptions, and viewpoints aside to reflect on and learn from someone else's experiences • Assume positive intent: Not everyone is going to say everything perfectly, so listen thoughtfully and for intent
Acknowledge Triggers: A trigger is something seen, heard, or read that causes a person emotional distress or to feel diminished	• Acknowledge when a topic might be triggering or upsetting, and how certain language or stories can be triggers or upsetting • Remind participants of the difference between intent and impact • Work with individuals impacted afterward to discuss

Conduct Courageous Conversations (2 of 3)

When courageous conversations are done effectively, they can have a dramatic impact on how you and your team members interact with one another.

These tips are meant to **create a safe space for employees to discuss topics of inclusion** and to determine how to make MIT and your individual teams a setting where everyone **feels courageous to share their perspective**:

Do…

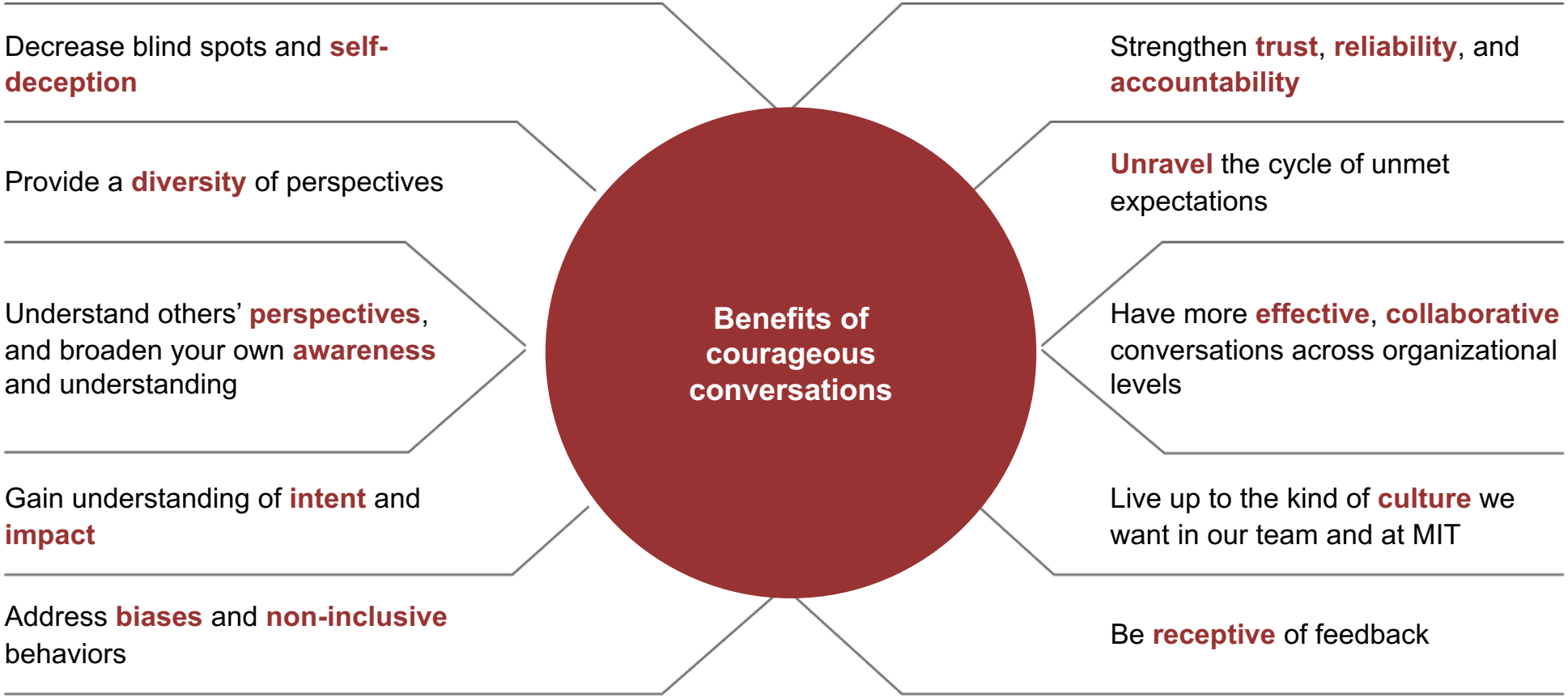
- Focus the discussion to be action-oriented in a way that makes MIT as a workplace more inclusive
- Honor and respect everything shared within the context of this conversation
- Listen with curiosity
- Acknowledge and be open to new perspectives, learning from one another

Don't…

- Critique others' experiences; everyone is the expert of their own experiences
- Be accusatory or assume negative intent
- Be defensive/deflective

Conduct Courageous Conversations (3 of 3)

When courageous conversations are done effectively, they can have a dramatic impact on how you and your colleagues interact with one another.



However, human nature means we often avoid saying the things that need to be said…

- We often go to great lengths to avoid disagreement or confrontation
- We want to be liked most of the time and therefore may avoid conversations that endanger this need
- We often choose to postpone, avoid, deny, or rationalize behaviors rather than address it and risk upsetting someone

Reference Continuous Learning Resources (1 of 2)

Resources to read and share.

Inclusive leadership
Here are six attributes of leaders who display the ability to not only embrace individual differences, but to potentially leverage them for competitive advantage.

Five ways elite universities can be more inclusive
The country's top schools are admitting more diverse student populations. How can they be more welcoming?

Intersectionality
How can leaders build inclusive cultures that leverage employee potential at work? It is time to refresh corporate efforts by taking an intersectional approach.

This Google team leader sees diversity as a retention issue
AdviceMavens founder Anita Kibunguchy wants to see more structures in place to recruit and retain diverse hires – and help them succeed.

Uncovering talent
Rediscover inclusion by understanding how your employees cover – the process through which individuals manage or downplay their differences.

How to have productive conversations about race at work
Make these three social agreements: Listen to be changed, call in don't call out, and question your first assumptions.

Unleashing the power of inclusion
Every year, organizations allocate time, resources, and budget towards efforts to foster an inclusive culture—and interest is still increasing. Yet, there often remains a disconnect between the expectations of today's workforce and inclusion in organizations.

3 ways to combat gender bias in the workplace
Learn to say no, get comfortable talking about uncomfortable topics, and help others behind you.

Reference Continuous Learning Resources (2 of 2)

Below are some resources that you can read and share with your team.

Resource	Link
Human Rights Campaign's (HRC) Tools for Equity and Inclusion by Topic	Tools for Equality and Inclusion
Books on Race and Culture	Books on Race and Culture
Documentary Films on Race and Culture	Documentary Films on Race and Culture
Narrative Films on Race and Culture	Narrative Films on Race and Culture
Articles on DEI in Higher Education	Articles on DEI in Higher Education
Documentaries to Understand the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement	Documentaries to Understand the LBTQ+ Rights Movement
HRC Report: A Workplace Divided, Understanding the Climate for LGBTQ Workers Nationwide	HRC Report
***Forbes* Article: How to Make Workplaces More Welcoming for Employees with Disabilities**	Forbes Article

Communication and Collaboration

Resources and best practices related to communication and collaboration within and across teams while navigating a flexible work environment.

5

What's Included in this Section?

1

Guidance on How to Work in a Hybrid Environment

Considerations and advice for how teams should work in a flexible or hybrid format

2

Tips and Tricks for Effectively Working Together

Guidance on how team members can communicate and collaborate in order to foster an open, efficient, and creative work environment

How to Work Effectively in an On-Site Environment

If any portion of your work arrangement includes on-site work, consider prioritizing the following tasks.

Creativity



One of the values of a blended hybrid model is the unplanned encounters between coworkers that inspire big ideas.

Examples:

- Conversations in the elevator or in shared meeting spaces
- Spontaneous lunches or coffee check-ins with coworkers
- Brainstorm or design sessions

Communication



Though most conversations can be just as effective virtually, in-person chats may be necessary under some circumstances.

Examples:

- Disciplinary performance reviews or discussions about productivity, conduct, or growth areas
- Difficult conversations about well-being, mental health, or accessibility

Collaboration



Virtual and blended teams can be highly efficient and connected, but bringing everyone together in person can help to get the job done.

Examples:

- Team-building or strategic workshops
- Site walk-throughs or on-site demos
- Onboarding of new team members

Critical Thinking



Some types of work are best done in person.

Examples:

- Hands-on training
- Problem-solving sessions
- In-person technology troubleshooting or replacement
- Equipment maintenance

Celebration



In-person celebrations and parties are a great way to bond and network.

Examples:

- Employee birthdays
- Holidays
- Announcements for expectant parents
- Promotions or other career and development milestones
- Award ceremonies

How to Work Effectively in a Remote Environment

If any portion of your work arrangement will include a virtual environment, consider the following remote work best practices.

Designate a Workspace

If you designate a specific area in your home to get work done, it is easier to stay focused. That could be a home office, spare bedroom, or some other dedicated area that offers privacy. If you will be making video calls while working remotely, make sure you have a background that you won't mind if others see.

Keep a Routine

Set a work schedule for yourself and stick to it. Try to wake up at the same time every day and treat weekdays just as you did before. For most people, the morning is the time to get serious work done, so try to complete any difficult tasks as early in the day as you can.

Stay Connected

Online tools like Slack not only help with workflow but can also serve as social outlets. It's even better to actually speak to another human being, so make some phone calls to check in with people. Video conferences add another sensory element to your interactions.

Communicate Often

Because you are not in an office where people can see you, communication is more critical when working remotely. Communicate frequently and know what's expected of you. Ensure that although you are "out of sight," you are not "out of mind."

Balance Personal Life

Ensure you have a sustainable approach to balancing your personal and professional responsibilities. Set boundaries with work and give your family signals as to when to leave you be. Make time for physical exercise and get outside to enjoy fresh air when you can.

Communicate Consistently

In times of uncertainty, the more communication the better. You are responsible for consistently and openly communicating with your colleagues.

Share Your Work Arrangement

Regardless of your work arrangements, **sharing your work situation** (e.g., location, hours) within your team and across other groups is critical to maintain effective work.

Problem Solve within Your Team

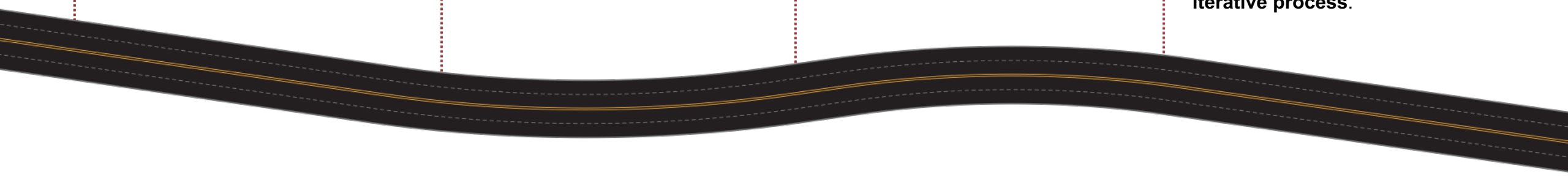
If any issues arise due to flexible (or simply new) work arrangements, **communicate openly** with your colleagues to solve the issue before escalating to leadership. Be patient, as working in a post-COVID world will be new for everyone.

Speak Up about Burnout

If you ever feel that your hours are increasing, becoming unmanageable, and pushing you towards burnout – be prompt and **raise with your manager** for proactive problem-solving and a return to healthy work-life balance.

Ask for Feedback and Iterate

Be open to new work arrangements and ideas for ways of working. Ask those you work with for feedback and **recognize that this is an iterative process**.



Engage Intentionally

Regardless of your work arrangement, it is important that you continue to collaborate with your team – consider the following tips for creative ways to do so.



Create a Slack Teams Channel

Use platforms like Slack to communicate and collaborate quickly – for example, as an alternative to email alternative – as you work. You can also use Slack to share fun pictures and encouragement with the team.



Schedule Optional Team Co-Working Times

Create time for team members who are hybrid or fully remote to connect informally. The time is meant to mirror the experience of working together in an office. No agenda needed, it's just an opportunity to work with cameras on or to chat with team members while you work.



Review Feedback Together as a Team

Instead of emailing feedback back and forth, consider creating time to review feedback for big work products as a team, whether virtually or in-person. Use the "share my screen" and "raise hand" feature for these reviews.



Schedule Regular Coffee-Chats

Schedule 30-minute coffee chats to check in with your team members on work activities or non-work activities. Use this time to create opportunities to connect outside of regularly scheduled all-hands meetings.