Massachusetts Institute of Technology



Manager and Supervisor 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 **faculty and administrative managers and supervisors** (with direct reports at MIT) to make decisions about and work effectively within a flexible work environment. We recognize that managers and supervisors are critical change agents, and we want to help them navigate this change.

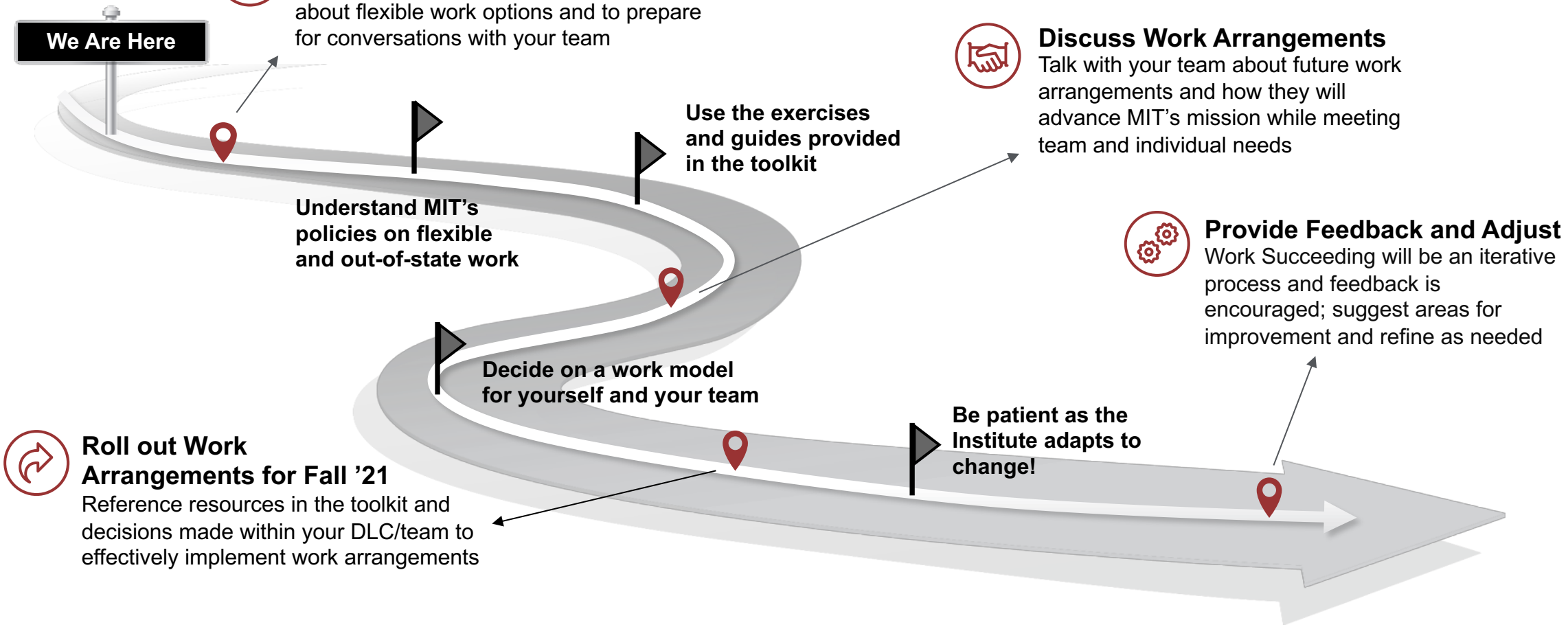
While the general guidance in this toolkit can be used by union employees, the specific recommendations regarding flexible work environments are not intended for this population.

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.



Read Toolkit Materials
Use the toolkit to understand how to think about flexible work options and to prepare for conversations with your team

Understand MIT's policies on flexible and out-of-state work

Use the exercises and guides provided in the toolkit

Discuss Work Arrangements
Talk with your team about future work arrangements and how they will advance MIT's mission while meeting team and individual needs

Provide Feedback and Adjust
Work Succeeding will be an iterative process and feedback is encouraged; suggest areas for improvement and refine as needed

Decide on a work model for yourself and your team

Be patient as the Institute adapts to change!

Roll out Work Arrangements for Fall '21
Reference resources in the toolkit and decisions made within your DLC/team to effectively implement work arrangements

Why YOU are Critical to Work Succeeding

Managers/supervisors are going to be invaluable in driving the success of the Work Succeeding initiative.

Why managers of all levels will be important to driving the initiative's success:

- Work Succeeding will **not produce Institute-wide policy that dictates where employees should work**. Managers will make these decisions with their teams.
- Individuals on teams will have **a variety of preferred work locations**. Managers will have to balance their team's needs with employee desires. Being mindful **of equity,** and communicating that issue, can help managers and employees work better together.
- By ensuring their team is successful in a remote environment, **each manager will help MIT achieve our shared mission**.

HOW?

Promote positive team culture

Show that you are supportive of your team and **want them to be both happy and successful**. Try to create an **environment** where team members can **bring their challenges to you**.

Drive team productivity

Managers are tasked with **ensuring the team continues to be productive** in a flexible work environment. This will require **balancing** team needs with individuals' preferences and (sometimes) **leading challenging performance conversations**.

Challenge longstanding norms

New working styles will be created, tested, and improved. You will be **responsible for ensuring these working styles are effective**. Challenge how your team works to improve overall efficiency.

This Work Succeeding Toolkit will help you transition to or update your team's flexible working environment

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 your team moving forward, it's important to first understand the context. **Read through Section 1 to ground your understanding of the flexible work options available.**

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

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, talk with your team, and make decisions. Note that **this section contains policy and guardrails as well as processes and forms** to assist in sharing your team's decisions with your manager and DLC leader.

- Strongly recommended steps to decide on your team's work model, including:
  - Preparing for team-wide and team member conversations
  - Completing team member work plans with each individual
  - Completing a team-wide work plan
- Frequently asked work planning questions

SUPPORT YOUR TEAM

Sections Included

Section 3: Technology and Equipment
Section 4: Culture, Well-Being, and Inclusion
Section 5: Communication and Collaboration
Section 6: Performance Management

The final four sections of this document provide **guidance and tips for successfully enabling your team** to support MIT's mission in a flexible environment. Use these resources to help facilitate a positive work environment for your team.

- Guidance on using and obtaining technology and equipment for your team
- Resources to promote an inclusive team that prioritizes well-being and culture
- Best practices on communicating and collaborating in a flexible work environment
- Considerations for performance management in a flexible environment

Table of Contents

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Work Decisions and Design	**Work Planning Protocols**	**Technology and Equipment**	**Culture, Well-Being, and Inclusion**	**Communication and Collaboration**	**Performance Management**
*Section 1 is designed to **provide a framework** for understanding various work models and which may work best for different types of teams.*	*Section 2 can be used to **guide managers as they plan** their team's future work model(s). It includes policies and guardrails related to flexible work.*	*Section 3 guides managers in how to **lead effective meetings** with a virtual component and provide **guidance on technology/equipment** for team members.*	*Section 4 provides managers 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.*	*Section 6 introduces **considerations for performance management** and provides managers with best practices and methods to solicit feedback.*

Work Decisions and Design

A framework for understanding various work models, and which may work best for different types of teams.

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 the work models available to your team (on-site, hybrid, remote) alongside a discussion of which models work best for different types of teams

3

Employee Personas

A collection of illustrative employee personas that can aid in understanding various employee perspectives. Managers can reference these personas as a visual of how different roles and team 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 process for determining 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 the 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

There are three primary work models to consider when planning for your team's future work arrangement. Keep these options in mind as you read the rest of this section.

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 are currently being analyzed.*

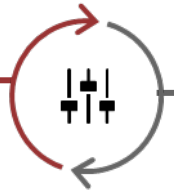
What Is the On-Site Work Model?

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

This model might work if your team if they:

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

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



This model might not be effective for your team if they:

Do Not Require In-Person Interaction
If your team's job function does not require in-person interaction to effectively perform activities, the on-site model may not be necessary for your team

Do Not Require On-Site Space or Equipment
On-site work may not be a good fit if your team 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

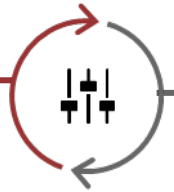
What Is the Hybrid Work Model?

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 your team if they:

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

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



This model might not be effective for your team if they:

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

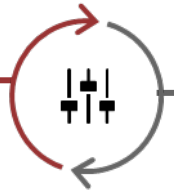
What Is the Remote Work Model?

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

This model might work if your team if they:

Know Flexibility Improves Overall Productivity
If your team, or specific team members, 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 when working, remote work may be optimal

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



This model might not be effective for your team if they:

Require Consistent In-Person Interaction
If your team places a lot of value on 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 your team if team members struggle to personally set work/life balance and maintain a good connection with the team and MIT in a virtual setting

Included Personas

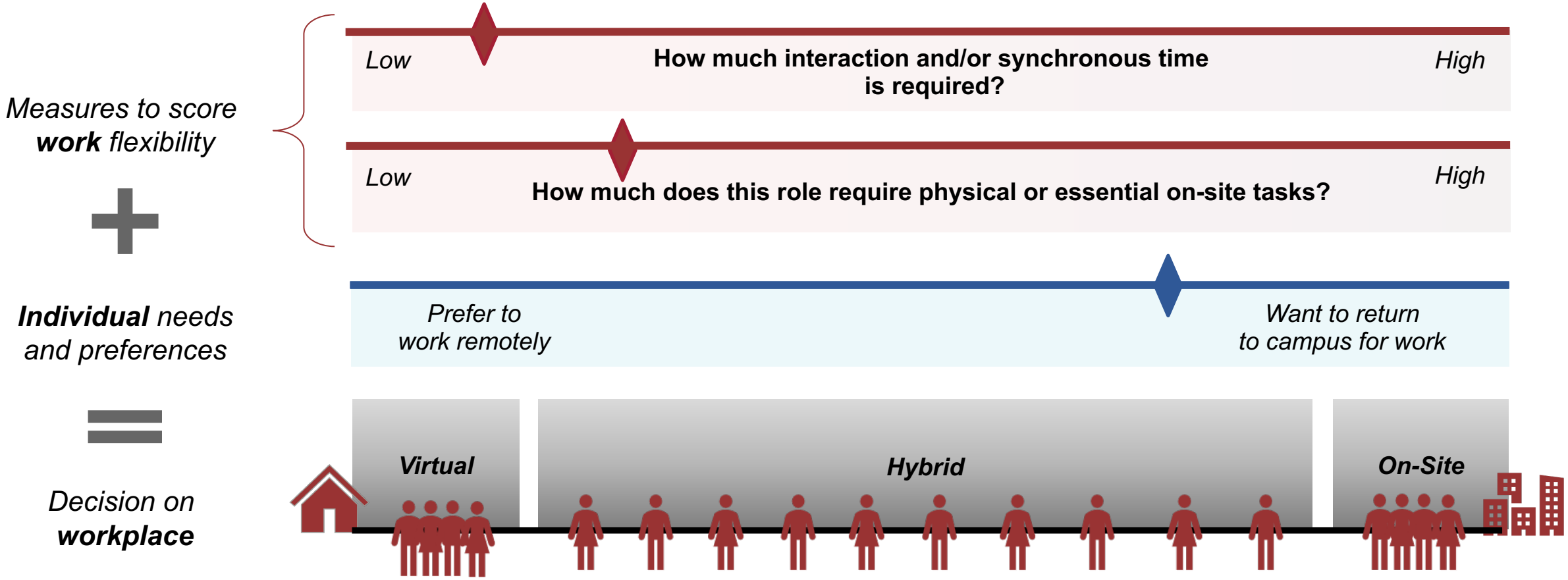
Persona #7: I Am Fully Remote and Love It

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.

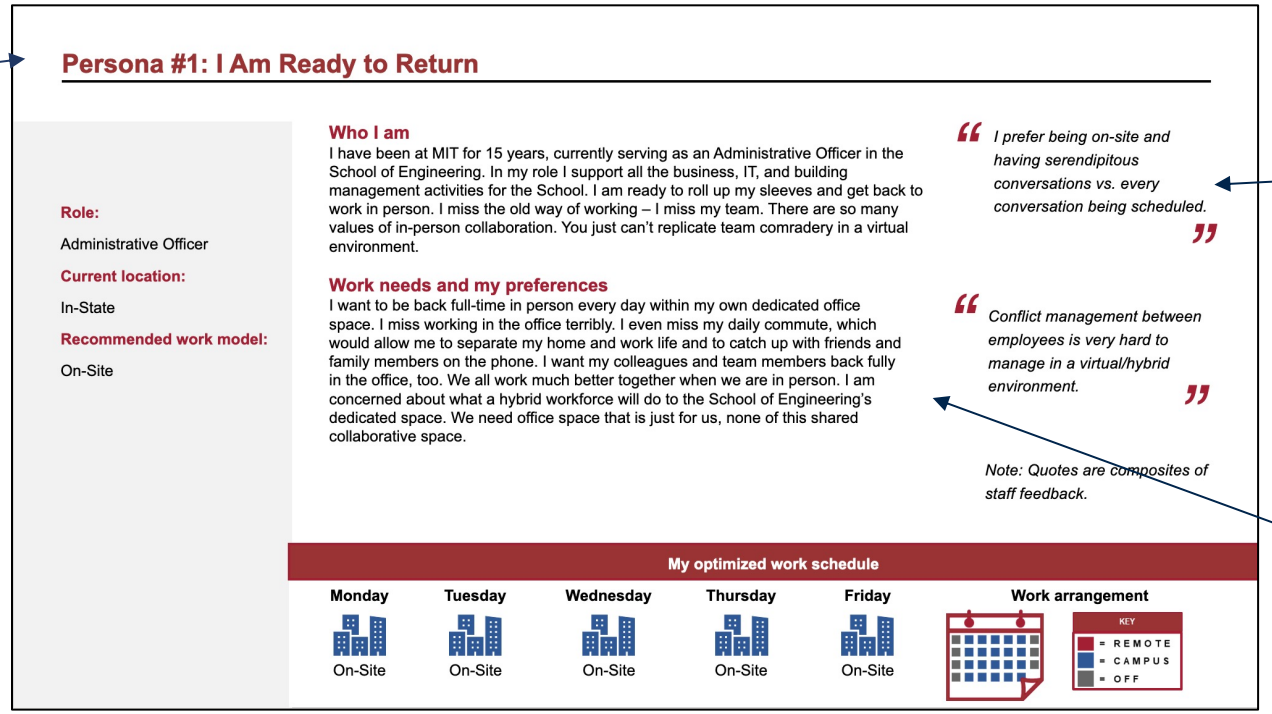


Work Succeeding Personas: Overview

The following slides will reference personas, which depict examples of how job responsibilities may intersect with individual needs and produce a range of workplace decisions across MIT. Note that these personas are illustrative, and do not represent actual employees at the Institute. The purpose of these personas are to give you, the manager, a visual of how different roles and team needs may align to the various work models.

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."*

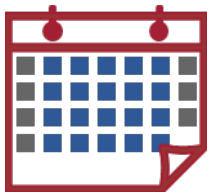
> *"Conflict management between employees is very hard to manage in a virtual/hybrid environment."*

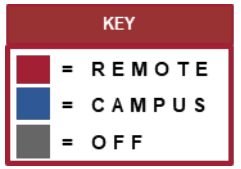
Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

My optimized work schedule

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

Work arrangement





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."*

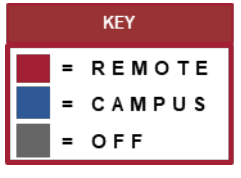
Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

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

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.

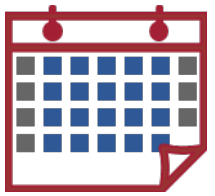
> *"Certain roles must be on campus no matter what. Although some teams require shiftwork and a physical presence, they still deserve a working experience that is equitable since remote work is not an option for those teams."*

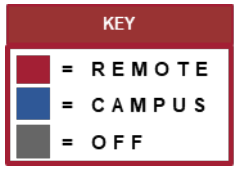
Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

My optimized work schedule

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

Work arrangement





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).

***Note**: If you have a team member who needs to be on campus due to the nature of their role but would rather be flexible – you will most likely discover that in future conversations with your team and individual team members. The [Work Planning Protocols] section of this toolkit provides more guidance on how managers should approach situations like these.*

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

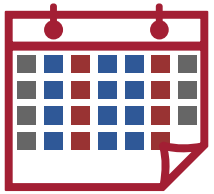
> *"My schedule shifts some based on the administrator I support. If the dean is going to be in and have a big event, I will be on campus. I hope to support her needs remotely many days, but some days I do need to be there."*

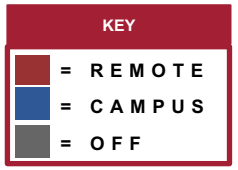
Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

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."*

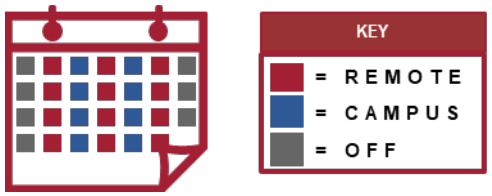
> *"I have noticed we have become more efficient. Less time is spent commuting, giving us more time to get to the work and daily tasks."*

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."*

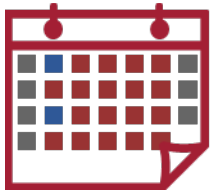
> *"I know the hours I'm expected to be present and available. I know the expectation for responding to emails and taking meetings as well as when I need to physically come to campus."*

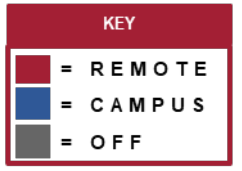
Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

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."*

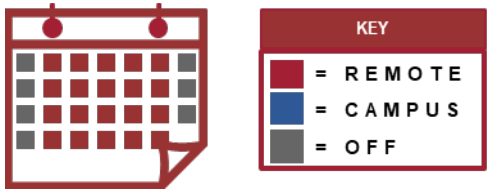
> *"I love being 100% remote. I am an introvert. The pandemic has been great for me."*

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.

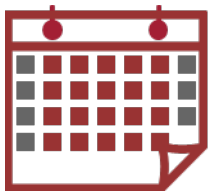
> *"I have found it much easer to communicate with others across campus in a remote work environment because everyone is only an email, Slack message, or Zoom call away."*

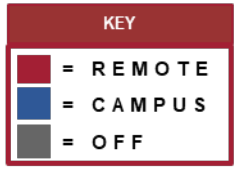
Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

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 e in-person?

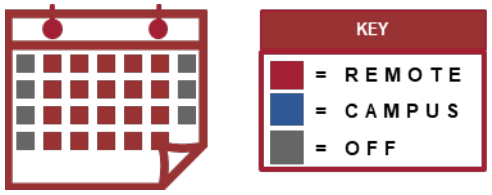
> *"I accepted my job offer because of its remote nature. I would like it to stay that way moving forward given that I was hired with that understanding. However, if my manager or team may need me to come on site, I am open to it – I just need advance notice."*

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 managers as they plan their team's future work model(s).

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 in more detail 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. Read through the section for details and links to helpful activities and templates; the steps include the following:

- Prepare for team-wide and individual conversations (note: conversation guide and work planning exercise included)
- Conduct team-wide and individual conversations
- Complete team member (e.g., individual) work plans (note: template included)
- Submit team-wide work plan to manager and leader of DLC (note: template included)

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
- Guidelines for Remote Work for Employees (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
- Managing Teams in Remote or Hybrid Mode

MIT's Flexible Work Policy

MIT's flexible work policy (EPM Sec. 3.1) encourages DLCs to consider flexible work arrangements for non-academic employees, when such arrangements meet the DLC's operational needs and allow it to maintain its effectiveness in support of MIT's mission.

Important Policy Details

- Decision should be **equitable** and take into consideration **job requirements** and **operation needs** to meet the MIT mission
- A flexible work arrangement is not an **entitlement**
- Work flexibility may include **different schedules** (e.g., flex time, compressed workweek) and **off-site work**
- **Not all jobs lend themselves to off-site work**, and in some cases, some but not all members of a group may work off-site
- Off-site work arrangements may be hybrid or fully 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
- 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 at least 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.
- Clear, consistent communication is essential for successful flexible work arrangements.
- 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
- 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
- **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
- Administrative Officer or departmental HR 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

What to Keep in Mind

- If out-of-state work comes up as a possibility as you have conversations with your team, contact your Human Resources Officer or DLC HR representative. Additional restrictions may apply to employees on visas or to sponsored work done outside the United States.
- 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

If you have already conducted conversations prior to this toolkit release, we recommend conducting new conversations following this updated guidance

Step One: Prepare for Conversations	**Step Two:** Conduct Conversations	**Step Three:** Complete Team Member Work Plans	**Step Four:** Submit Team Work Plan to DLCs Leadership
• **Use the Work Planning Conversation Guide** (Exercise A) (Word document, 3 pages, direct download) to prepare for and facilitate a team conversation and individual team member conversations about future work arrangements • **Complete the Work Planning Exercise** (Exercise B) (Word document, 2 pages, direct download) to help support your understanding of the various work models for your team	• Conduct a **team meeting** to understand the perspectives of your team members • Conduct **meetings with each team member** to discuss and align on future work arrangements	• After (or while) facilitating a conversation with each team member, 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. • Using the Weekly Calendar in the Team Work Plan Template, populate the “Exercise: Template for Scheduling” in this section and share with your team

Exercise: Template for Scheduling

Using the Weekly Calendar that you completed in the Team Work Plan Template as a reference, populate this blank template and share with your team[1,2].

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
On-Site Employees					
Remote Employees					
Total Count of On-Site Employees					
Total Count of Remote Employees					

1. *Depending on the team's working arrangements, time zone and employee working hours may be helpful to include as well*
2. *A set team schedule should NOT mean that there is no flexibility in adjustments for personal obligations, emergencies, or other reasons (e.g., a doctor appointment). Flexible and supportive work is also about shifting hours (alongside) location, as needed and when feasible*

Aligning Work Arrangement Decisions

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

1 Speak with Your Team Members

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 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 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 to complete both the Team Member and Team Work Plans?	No, but it is recommended. Managers are encouraged to complete the Team Member Work Plan alongside each team member, document the work plan decision, and retain locally Additionally, each manager should complete the Team Work Plan or comparable documentation and share with their DLC leadership.
Is it mandatory that managers meet with their team before conducting individual conversations?	No, but it is strongly 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 DLC's leadership.

Reference the Work Planning FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions	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 each manager's Team Work Plan be made public and/or be shared once it is submitted to the manager and/or leader of DLC?	No, Team Work Plans will remain with each DLC's leadership. Each DLC's respective leadership will receive your Team Work Plan for awareness purposes and for future reference, if needed.
Will this process of making work decisions be iterative?	Yes, you and your team members should feel empowered to re-visit, discuss, and adjust work arrangements, as necessary. At a minimum, you should check in formally with your team members 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 lead effective meetings with a virtual component, and guidance on technology and equipment for team members.



What's Included in this Section?

1

Best Practices for Using Technology

Guidance on how team members can effectively use technology in a flexible environment, and tips for managers to support this process

2

Overview of Technology and Equipment Available to DLCs

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

3

Common Guidance on Technology and Equipment

Information about technology and equipment, including ADA* compliance, with links to relevant Institute resources

** Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*

Use Technology Effectively in a Flexible Environment

In a flexible work environment, it's important to effectively engage on-site and remote employees. See below for some tips to consider while utilizing your technology and equipment in a flexible environment.

Teams with flexible work arrangements may often hold meetings with both on-site and remote employees. It is important for managers to ensure that their teams are equipped with the technology and knowledge to collaborate and connect efficiently and seamlessly.



Equip your employees who are on-site with **space to conduct virtual meetings with remote employees** (e.g., "Zoom Rooms[1]")



Encourage your remote employees **to create a comfortable "work from home" space** that is effective for a hybrid work model (e.g., desk, whiteboards, strong internet connection)



Ensure **all employees** are adequately trained to use the specific video conferencing platforms your team uses



Use **video conferencing bonus features** like breakout rooms, reactions, and the share screen feature to ensure equal engagement of remote employees

[1]*Rooms that are specifically dedicated for video conferencing and/or hybrid meetings*

Understand What Technology and Equipment Is Available

Items and resources available to employees.[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/plan; 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

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 that may be 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 their employees' 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 to clarify questions.
Where can I find information on MIT's disability policies/services (e.g., an ADA request*)?	MIT HR has provided guidelines on their website here. If you have any questions on this process after reading the guidelines described on the webpage, please contact the Disabilities Services and Medical Leaves Office.
What steps should I take if one of my team members is eligible for an ADA request?	An employee disability should be clearly documented. They must complete a Reasonable Accommodation Request Form, alongside full documentation of the disability in the link above, and share it with you.

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

Culture, Well-Being, and Inclusion

Tools and resources to further efforts toward inclusive team environments that prioritize well-being and a positive team culture.

4

What's Included in this Section?

1

Guidance on Promoting Team Culture

Tips on how to cultivate and support a positive, welcoming culture within a team that prioritizes empathy and supports team members' needs

2

Best Practices for Supporting Team Well-Being

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

3

Resources for Ensuring Inclusive Practices on a Team

Advice for managers on ensuring that inclusive practices are a priority within and across their teams (e.g., "courageous conversations," "real talk")

Promote Team Culture in the Workplace

You should prioritize practicing empathy and developing a positive team culture. Recognize that a power imbalance exists between managers and their direct reports; managers can mitigate this by showing empathy and understanding.

Flexible work environments require empathic managers

- They hone their ability to **contextualize performance** and behavior
- They proactively ask questions and seek information to place themselves in their **direct reports' contexts**
- They develop **high levels of trust and care** and a culture of acceptance within teams

Develop empathy by practicing vulnerable conversation

- Create cohorts of managers who engage in **small-group conversations** with their peers to talk through common issues and best practices
- Offer frequent opportunities to engage in conversations focused on how managers can commit to specific actions to **care for themselves** and support the well-being of their team
- **Practice empathy with manager peers**, asking specific questions to understand their own challenges

Empower a new mindset by creating a network of support

- Create a dedicated role (e.g., **team success partner**) whose responsibilities include fostering trust and supporting team health
- Work with team success partners to respond to the unique challenges that employees are facing
- Develop a **support system** and foster how organizations invest in roles designed to support them

Create capacity for empathy by optimizing reporting lines

- **Prioritize your workload** to focus on fewer, higher-impact relationships with individuals and teams
- Achieve outsized returns by being empathic and holistically addressing the three common barriers in employees — **skill, mindset, and capacity**

Source: Harvard Business Review; What Does It Mean to Be a Manager Today?

Promote Team Culture

Foster meaningful connections

1

Breaking the Ice During Meetings

Spend the first five minutes of a meeting “breaking the ice” by asking fun questions to help your employees learn about each other.

2

Hosting Team Lunches

If you can’t go out to lunch, bring lunch to you! Schedule time to “virtually eat” lunch together or challenge your team to cook a different meal each week.

3

Team Trivia or Game Sessions

Gather for a few minutes after the workday and participate in a virtual trivia session or other online game.



Share Life Experiences

Share moments that matter

Let your employees share moments that matter most to them in their lives outside of work—whether by sending photos of their workspace or people/experiences that bring them joy.

Create a team newsletter

Another alternative is to create a team newsletter or email that summarizes your team’s accomplishments, life updates, and shares other helpful information.

Make time for ‘special guests’

Many employees who are working from home are doing so with children, pets, and significant others. Carve out time for team members to introduce those who are at home with them.

Promote Team Culture through Team Member Appreciation

You should be purposeful about showing appreciation for your employees so that they are proud and feel valued for their contributions.



Everyday Recognition Means a Lot

While you may already be in the habit of recognizing employees for big achievements, sharing your appreciation for the little things they do each day can be even more meaningful in the long run. See MIT Recognition/Thanks page



Tune into Ways to Show Appreciation

When employees feel engaged by their managers, they produce a better work product. Be aware of what they're working on, what they're struggling with, and where they are succeeding, and opportunities to show appreciation will emerge.



Be Consistent

If you're leading a blended team, "out of sight, out of mind" shouldn't apply to your remote employees. When you consistently show appreciation regardless of where your employees are located, your team will be more motivated.



Be Timely

Recognition that arrives months after the fact isn't nearly as meaningful as recognition received promptly. Make employee recognition a priority and have systems in place so you can strike while the iron is hot.

Celebrate your employees

Share a Word of Thanks

Whether via a team-wide email or a shout-out during your regular staff meeting, take time to plan how you will thank your employees for their work.

Empower Your People to Celebrate Each Other

Give your people the opportunity to nominate a team member who deserves recognition. Consider utilizing the Direct Appreciation message generator

Celebrate on a Whim

Send the team a calendar invite for an impromptu Google hangout. Don't give too much advance notice or explanation—the idea is to catch them off guard with some positive feedback.

Roll Out the Red Carpet

If you want to take recognition to the next level, plan a virtual awards celebration to honor your team's accomplishments, both big and small.

Recognize via Public Channels

Public recognition helps your remote employees feel more connected, giving them a chance to celebrate wins from wherever they are located.

Promote Team Culture by Prioritizing Wellness

Below are a few quick starter ideas for you to consider implementing on your teams to promote a team culture that prioritizes wellness.

Establish Team Norms/Well-Being Commitments: As a team, establish expectations and understanding around when and how people prefer to work and personal commitments that the team should be aware of

Conduct All-Hands Meetings: Conducting weekly all-hands meetings where the agenda can split between work and team-time. Suggest team members owning fun, non-work ice breakers at the start of each to get the team to laughing and/or continuing relationship building

Block "Heads-Down Time" on Team Calendars: Whether in a remote, hybrid, or on-site setting – a packed schedule of meetings can sometimes mean less time for your team to prioritize their individual work. Blocking "heads-down time" can help ensure team members have time to do work in their working hours vs. overtime

Block "Wellness Time" on Team Calendars: Scheduling time in the week for your team to discuss anything other than work, take a walk, or do anything that allows them to check-in with their wellness gives your team time to take a mental break

Foster a Culture of Recognition: Consider ways in which you can continuously show your team appreciation. Team dinners, applause awards, utilizing the praise/celebrate zoom function, etc.

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…

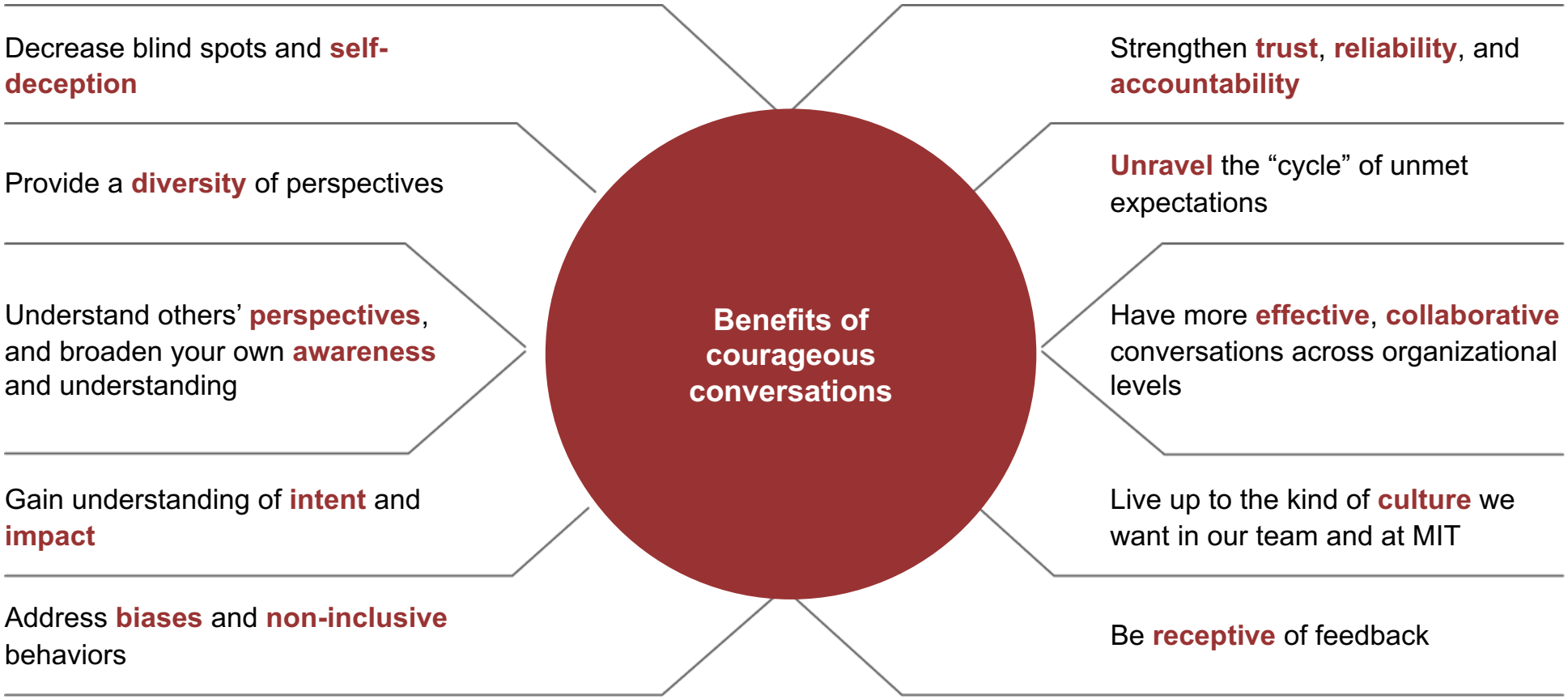
- Focus the discussion to be action-oriented in a way that makes MIT as a workplace more inclusive
- Honor and respect everything shared within the context of this conversation
- Listen with curiosity
- Acknowledge and be open to new perspectives, learning from one another

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 your ability to lead and how your team members 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

When to Consider Working Together In Person

While many tasks can be completed remotely, there are five types of tasks that are best to do in person.

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 labs/workshops
- Site walk-throughs or demos that occur on-site
- Onboarding of new team members to introduce and show them site locations

Critical-thinking



Some types of work are best done in-person to promote ideation and innovation.

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 promote social bonding and networking.

Examples:

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

When to Consider Working Virtually

Many activities that used to be in person can be more effective in a virtual format.

Individuals and Teams → **Size of group for the activity** → Large Groups

Individual tasks

Individual tasks such as proofreading and reviewing documents, approving requests, building spreadsheets, or managing personal email.

One-on-ones

Schedule a casual check-in with a colleague with whom it is difficult to see in-person due to distance or challenging schedules. Virtual coffee chats can help maintain lasting relationships.

Webcasts

Live webcasts are great for leadership presentations about important news or sharing updates without interruptions. Use polls or surveys to collect participant input and feedback.

Conferences

Virtual conferences allow attendees to participate in leadership conversations or skill development without coordinating travel, taking time off, or leaving their families. Breakout rooms can facilitate small discussions.

Virtual trainings

Self-paced virtual trainings allow employees to learn key skills on their own time and from the comfort of home. Even live instructor-led courses can be adopted to a virtual or hybrid setting.

Forums

Zoom and Teams are great for small workshops or roundtables meant to discuss specific topics or connect participants. Using video helps keep participants accountable and engaged!

Public meetings

Live, virtual public meetings have been shown to expand constituent access to leadership by enabling participation from anywhere.

Balance a Hybrid Remote and On-Site Team

Balancing the needs of a hybrid, remote, and on-site team can be daunting. These tips can help you maintain a great natural flow and overcome the challenges that teams may face when some employees are at home and others are on-site.



Vary Your Interactions

Zoom fatigue is a common side effect of working from home. Mix up your interactions with remote team members by **communicating through a blend of channels** that make sense for their lifestyle and home office set up (e.g., Slack, texts, email, phone calls)



Keep Content Highly Visual

The online world favors visual media that amplify the underlying message – not detailed blocks of text. **Keep meeting slides simple** and send more detailed reports or lengthy documents separately for offline review.



Prepare Your Audiences

Find fun ways to help your team members understand new information, engage with their peers, and get comfortable with the hybrid environment (e.g., live polls, ice breaker games, surveys sent in advance). If an in-person meeting requires participants to look at something physical (e.g., reports), make sure a digital copy is available so remote attendees can follow along.



Re-Create a Natural Rhythm

To the fullest extent possible, **try to recreate the ebb and flow of face-to-face discussions**. Always invite remote team members to join in-person meetings via Zoom, and make sure the webcam is set up so the whole team is visible and able to talk as if they were together in person.



Check in with Your Team

Make sure everyone is comfortable and always give quiet voices a chance to be heard, especially when teammates are off-camera. **Encourage team members who are not on-site to use the meeting chat feature to share thoughts** if they are anxious about speaking up.

Lead Successful Meetings with a Virtual Component

As a team leader, you already have plenty on your mind. Follow these simple steps before and during your virtually enabled meetings to ensure they run smoothly.

Before the Meeting



Be consistent. Establish a team meeting cadence, such as daily or weekly stand-ups or monthly all-hands meetings, and define objectives for each. Vary interaction methods (e.g., Zoom) for meetings to increase engagement.



Be mindful of your audience. Consider who you invite to the meeting—the smaller the group the greater the interaction. Are all team members required? Can some team members be kept up to date via email?



Be prepared. Send an agenda with relevant discussion materials and expectations in advance of the meeting. Test your technology and identify and address accessibility issues.

During the Meeting



Be present. Put your webcam at eye level or higher. When speaking, use the gestures and mannerisms that you would typically use in person, and make eye contact – try to look at your webcam versus the screen.



Be inclusive. Encourage everyone to participate. Invite, listen, and respond to different perspectives. Tip: users with disabilities can participate in video meetings using accessibility features.



Be proactive. Let attendees know that collaboration can, and should, continue after the call ends by setting expectations for follow-up notes and actions.

Define Your Team's Rules of Engagement

Work becomes more productive and meaningful when managers set expectations for how their employees will work together. Discuss the following with your team members to define your own rules of engagement.[1]

Reignite Your Team's Purpose

Revisit your team's purpose to reinforce a sense of direction and belonging among your employees. Ensure that your team collectively understands their role and how they deliver their agency's mission.

Establish Structured Team Connections

Decide how often and when you'll connect as a team: daily, weekly, bi-weekly, etc. Predictable connections provide stability and routine for your remote teams and help keep everyone on track to meet your goals.

Define Your Team's Norms

With your team, discuss your boundaries for:

- Team work hours
- Individual availability
- Meeting attendance
- Tracking projects and deadlines
- Timely response to emails

Confirm Individual Roles and Responsibilities

Confirm that each of your team members understand their individual role and responsibilities, their work schedule, how their role impacts your team as a whole, and performance expectations.

Create a Feedback Loop

Establish open lines of communication between yourself and your team:

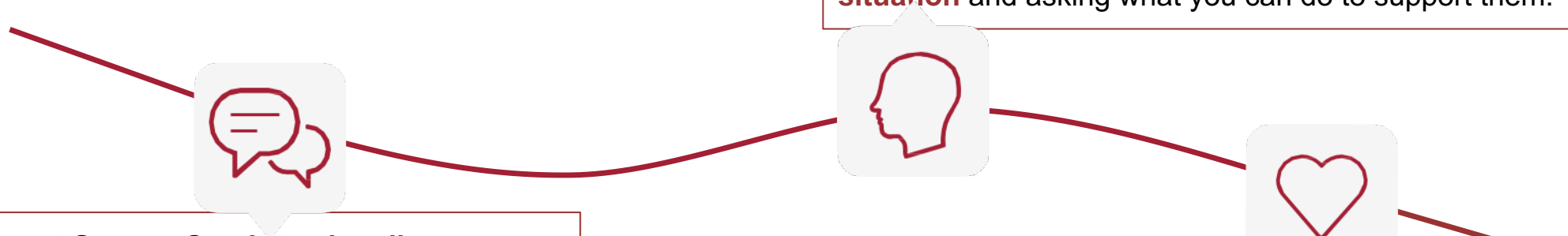
- Establish a culture of feedback
- Keep an open mind when receiving feedback
- Show empathy and understanding when giving feedback

[1] See "Team Work Plan Template, Form B" for Rules of Engagement format. The Rules of Engagement will help teams establish working norms in a hybrid environment.

Be Present and Check In Routinely

It's not only team collaboration that builds trust in a flexible environment – personal interaction is just as important. Team members look to you to help the team improve as it learns about working norms and needs over time.

General Reminder: Periodically check in with your full team to discuss working norms and suggested changes to help the team.



Connect One-on-One Intentionally
Schedule routine check-ins (15-30 minutes per week) with your direct reports to offer a **consistent time and space for them to share their experiences**, and assurance that you are listening.

Keep an Open Mind
Stay open-minded to the shift in each of your team members' working environments, schedules, and needs. **Lead with empathy and understanding by accepting your employee's situation** and asking what you can do to support them.

Be Flexible
Problems happen and your employees will not always follow through. If something is really bothering your employees or they're feeling under the weather, **look for the clues and give them a helping hand**.

Collaborate Consistently and Creatively

Proactively scheduling face-to-face time is the first step to building a connection, but it doesn't have to be a formal meeting. The next two slides offer several creative ways to connect through collaboration.



Encourage Virtual Coffee Chats

Establishing a routine connection builds trust and transparency among your employees. One way to do this is scheduling informal virtual coffee chats with your employees, either individually or as a team.



Brainstorm Spontaneously

Choose one person each week to facilitate a spontaneous brainstorm session to problem solve, uncover new ideas, and give your team a break from their routine. Whether meeting with virtual or remote team members, think about mimicking a "whiteboarding" session.



Review and Share Feedback Together

Use the "present" or "share my screen" tools to review documents with your team when video conferencing and to give them the opportunity to ask questions and share their feedback live. If participation is weak, asking directly for input helps team members feel engaged.



Schedule Optional Coworking Times

No agenda, just a set time for your team to work with cameras on or chat on if they'd like to recreate the experience of working side-by-side in the office. Just as in the office, folks can work in silence or shout out if they have a question.



Be Aware of Proximity Differences

If your team is partially remote, don't punish those who are not physically present by meeting only with the employees on-site, or letting them speak more than those who are video conferencing or dialing in. If somebody in the meeting room does something that can be observed only visually, make an effort to tell all those who dialed in what is happening.



Connect New Hires with Buddy

Starting a new job remotely adds an extra layer of challenges to building rapport with colleagues. When a new employee joins your team, assign them a virtual buddy to help them learn the ropes and have someone to connect with regularly.

Communicate Strategically and Frequently

In times of uncertainty, the more communication the better. All team members are responsible for consistently and openly communicating with their colleagues and with you. Here are a few ways to communicate with and engage your employees.



Delegate Messages

Coordinate and structure your communication. Delegate who in your team, including yourself, delivers what messages and when.



Celebrate Success

Remote victories deserve to be celebrated! Make time to recognize your employees' hard work, dedication, and overall success, and take time to celebrate professional and team milestones.



Get Creative

Sending traditional emails isn't your only option. Experiment using different formats and platforms to communicate, like a video newsletter.



Inform Employees

Your employees look to you for guidance about events outside of work, too. Make it a priority to be transparent about the latest updates related to COVID-19 and how MIT is taking action.



Ask For Feedback

Keep a pulse on your team and ask them how they prefer to receive information from you, and what they most want to hear.

Performance Management

Considerations for performance management and best practices and methods to solicit feedback for managers.

6

What's Included in this Section?

1

Performance Management Considerations

A discussion of common employee concerns about performance management during remote work and considerations for how to potentially adjust performance management in a flexible work environment

2

Best Practices for Performance Management

Guidance on how to balance performance management for a hybrid team (e.g., across on-site and remote employees) and tips for managers on how to incorporate them within their team

3

Guidance on Sharing Performance Management Practices with Team

Suggested steps to share performance management processes with a team, and ensure managers are prepared to incorporate feedback and adjust plans as-needed moving forward

Recognize Recent Performance Management Concerns

If your team decides to transition to a hybrid or remote work model moving forward, consider the following common employee concerns.

Comments from the 2021 MIT Work Succeeding Admin and Staff Survey

"I worry that leaving performance management up to a manager that doesn't agree with work from home (even pre-pandemic and even though we are getting more done now than before) leaves for some unfair practices."

"…there is a large amount of inequity in our office regarding privileges – some teams and directors seem to get unlimited freedom, while others are treated less equitably."

***Note:** 66% of survey respondents **strongly agree that their supervisor fairly judges what they contribute** to their team in a remote environment (19% somewhat agree)*

Performance management concerns in a remote or hybrid workplace:

Lack of qualitative feedback: In a hybrid or fully remote environment, there is a chance that managers will have less visibility into the daily activities of their employees.

Ensuring fairness: In a hybrid environment, employees may worry that – by not being physically in the presence of their manager – they may be at a disadvantage compared to their on-campus team members.

Virtual performance reviews: When conducting virtual performance reviews, managers have less of an ability to gauge body language. Managers must adapt to being patient and strong listeners in virtual performance review settings.

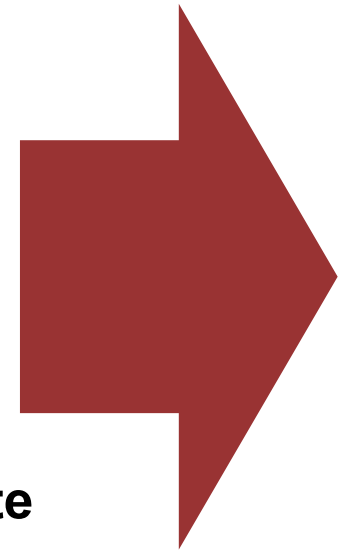
Equitable performance management practices: Review your performance management practices to ensure that they recognize and support your hybrid or remote work model. Update practices to ensure that all employees receive the guidance and feedback needed to be effective, regardless of work location.

Source: https://hbr.org/2020/06/how-to-do-performance-reviews-remotely

Consider Performance Management Questions

Think through the following questions as you consider performance management practices in a flexible work environment.

Traditional performance management assumes that managers are in the same location as those that they managed. As managers consider flexible ways of working for their teams, they need to re-consider how to **accurately and fairly evaluate** the contributions that team members make **regardless of their work location.**



Questions to Consider:

- What is the current culture of performance management on my team?
- Do my direct reports have a clear understanding of how they are evaluated in various work models (e.g., on-site, hybrid, or remote)?
- In what ways do my team's current performance management process ensure fairness?
- What adjustments need to be made to ensure fairness across all work models?
- How do I measure success for my team members? Does that definition of success assume physical proximity between myself and the team?

Understand the Balance of Performance Management for Flexible Teams

You may need to evolve traditional performance management for hybrid and remote teams.

Avoid measuring only:

Activities. Activities are the actions taken to produce results. Although it is easier to see the activities that in-person employees are performing, ***remote tasks are just as important to mission success.*** Don't forget to recognize and thank your employees for their work whether you can see the effort that went in or not.

Labor Hours. Labor hours are the measure of time spent at a desk. Productivity and performance are ***not*** driven by an employee's physical presence during work hours, but by the output created during their time working. Whether employees are in the office, at home, or elsewhere, taking breaks and establishing work-life balance should be encouraged.

Strive to measure holistically:

Accomplishments. Accomplishments are the products of employee activities or tasks. While activities are described as verbs (e.g., writing, filing, scheduling), accomplishments are described as adjectives and nouns – *timely* reports, *reliable* data, *exceptional* customer service, *proactive* solution development. Aim to measure employee performance by what was achieved.

Outcomes. Outcomes are the final results of an organization or team's work. Individuals and teams should also be measured by their ability to make progress towards outcomes over time through hard work and innovation, such as enhancing process efficiency, improving client satisfaction, reducing costs, etc.

Factors to balance

Skills-Based
The core competencies or skills necessary to successfully operate on a day-to-day basis

&

Results-Based
The indicators to measure progress based on outputs, outcomes, and impact

Qualitative
A variable, abstract, and typically more open-ended form of measurement

&

Quantitative
A data-driven, numerical, or statistical form of measurement

Objectivity
Impartial and concrete measurement without bias or prejudice

&

Fairness
Fair judgement of performance with acknowledgement of for the various struggles an employee may be facing

Incorporate Performance Management Best Practices

As you conduct performance reviews, consider incorporating the following tips and tricks to enable the best outcomes.



Consider new ways of gathering performance feedback

- Measure outcomes instead of only activities
- Encourage staff to reflect and evaluate themselves[1]
- Invite feedback on how you are doing as a manager to support the employee's performance and development.



Display patience and empathy

- Create space for team members to share their experience
- Refrain from interrupting and discrediting



Focus on being an active listener

- Practice eye contact and positive body language on camera
- Take notes to help you remember key feedback points



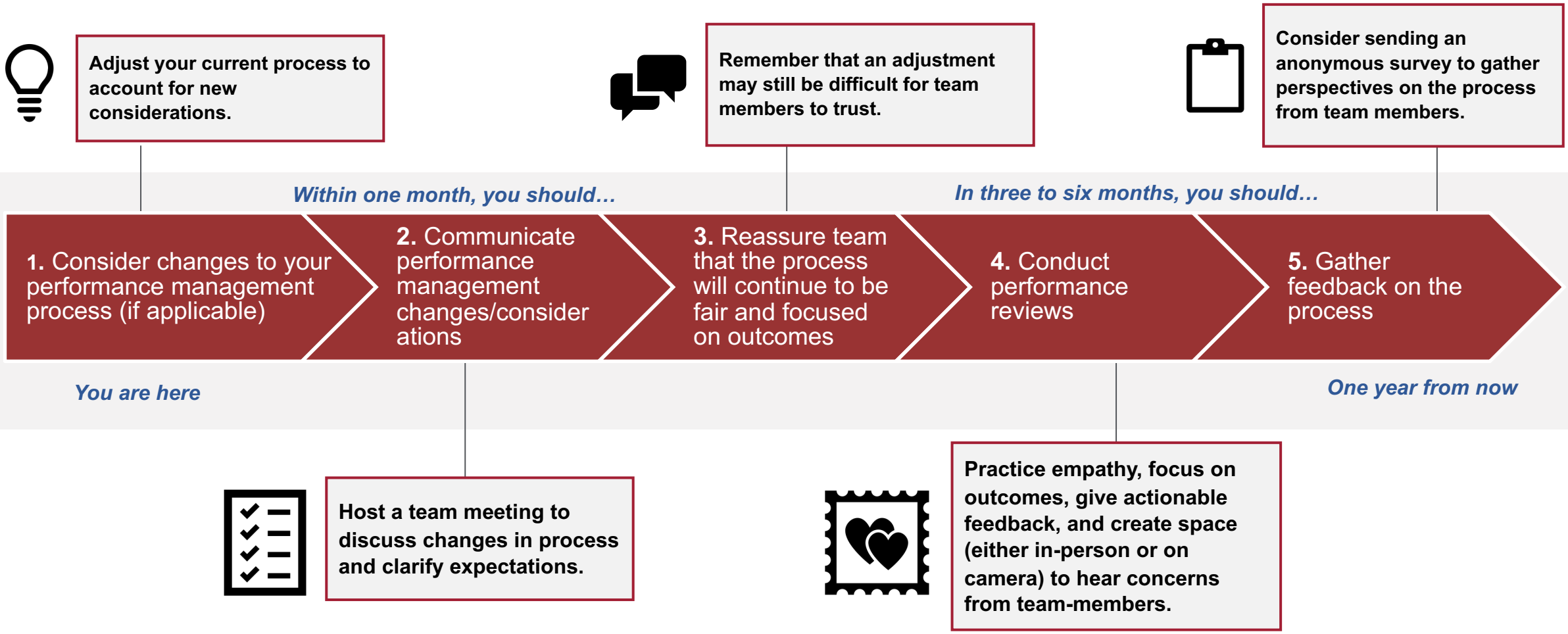
Deliver feedback purposefully and consistently

- Provide performance feedback on a monthly basis at a minimum
- Ensure feedback is actionable for staff to incorporate moving forward

Managers must be cognizant of cultural, gender, and any other factors that may act as implicit biases when evaluating the self-promotion efforts of employees. Ensure you are practicing consistency and fairness across all team members.

Share Your Performance Management Process With Your Team

Once you have thought through the key differences and considerations of your performance management process, ensure your team has a clear understanding.



Gather Feedback from Your Team

Once you have conducted performance reviews, solicit feedback from your team to improve the process.

Sample Questions to Gather Feedback on the Performance Management Process:

- Do you feel that the performance management process was clearly explained?
- Did you have a strong understanding of your performance expectations and how you will be evaluated?
- Did you feel comfortable asking for feedback to improve your performance?
- If anything, what would make the performance management process more equitable moving forward?
- As the manager, what might you continue doing or do differently to improve the process, outcomes and experience for your employees?
- [Depending on the work model] Over the performance review period, did you feel that all team members were evaluated equally regardless of their working arrangement (e.g., on-site, hybrid, and remote)?