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.*

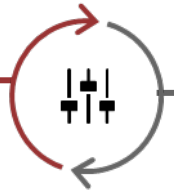
What Is the On-Site Work Model?

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

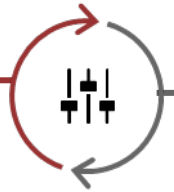
What Is the Hybrid Work Model?

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

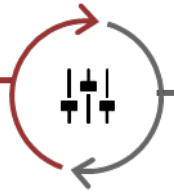
What Is the Remote Work Model?

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

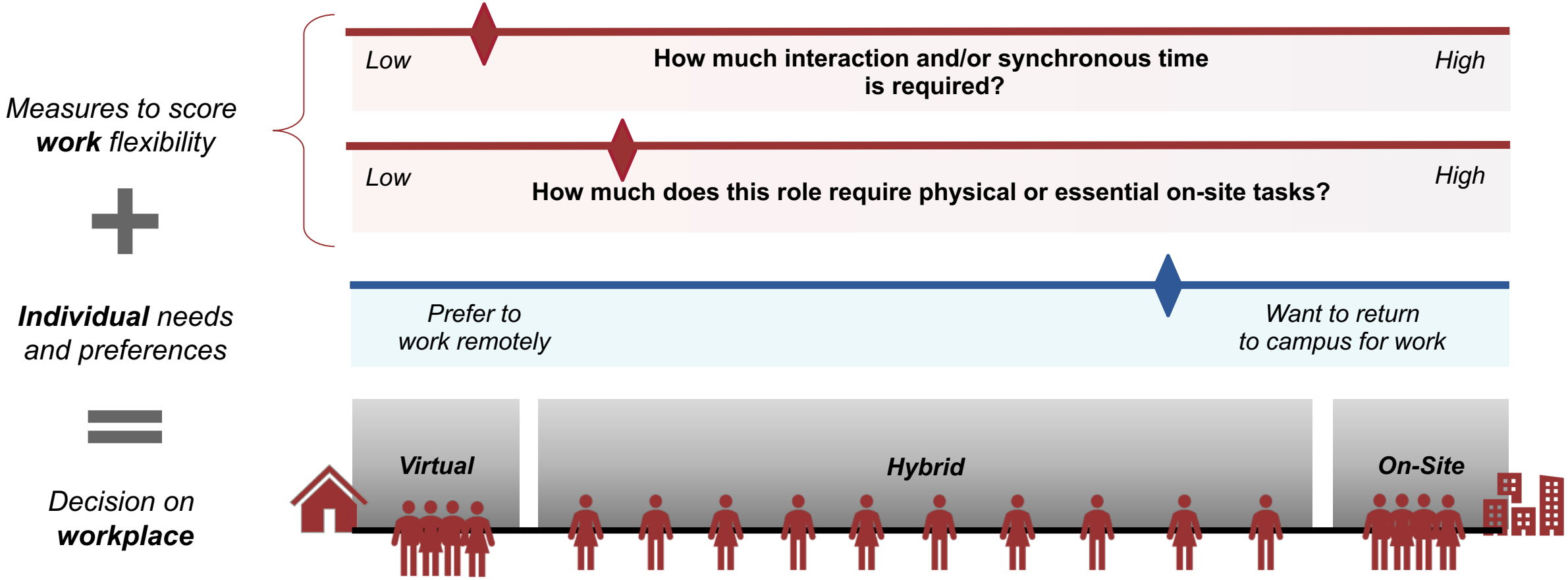
Persona #7: I Am Fully Remote and Love It

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.

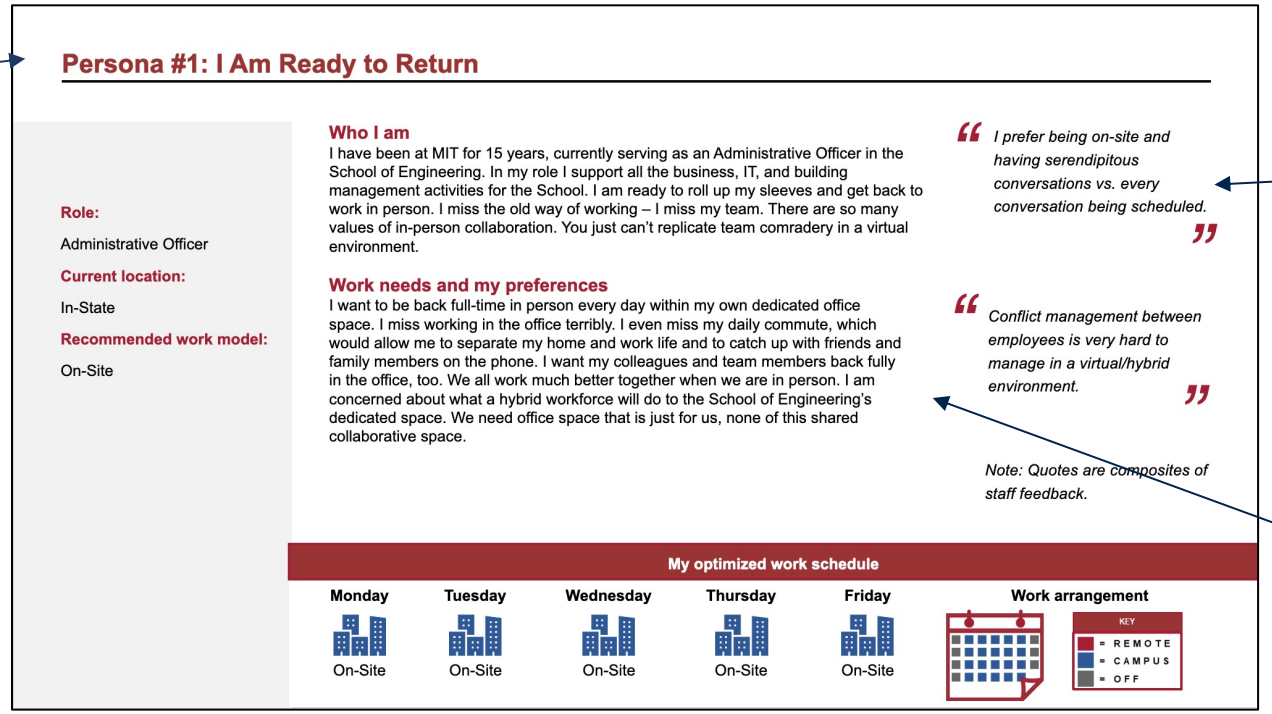


Work Succeeding Personas: Overview

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."*

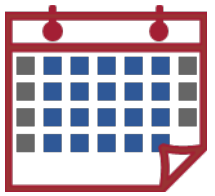
> *"Conflict management between employees is very hard to manage in a virtual/hybrid environment."*

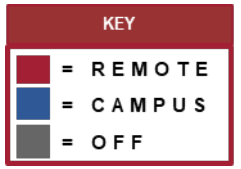
Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

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."*

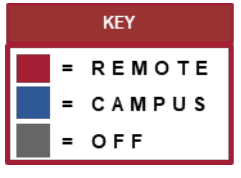
Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

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.

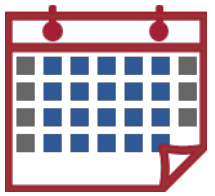
> *"Certain roles must be on campus no matter what. Although some teams require shiftwork and a physical presence, they still deserve a working experience that is equitable since remote work is not an option for those teams."*

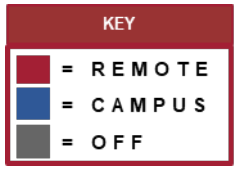
Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

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."*

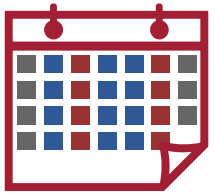
> *"My schedule shifts some based on the administrator I support. If the dean is going to be in and have a big event, I will be on campus. I hope to support her needs remotely many days, but some days I do need to be there."*

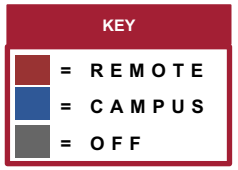
Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

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."*

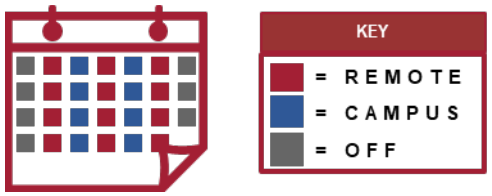
> *"I have noticed we have become more efficient. Less time is spent commuting, giving us more time to get to the work and daily tasks."*

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."*

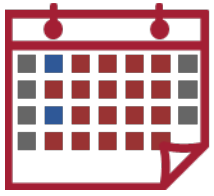
> *"I know the hours I'm expected to be present and available. I know the expectation for responding to emails and taking meetings as well as when I need to physically come to campus."*

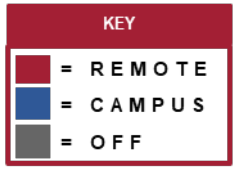
Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

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."*

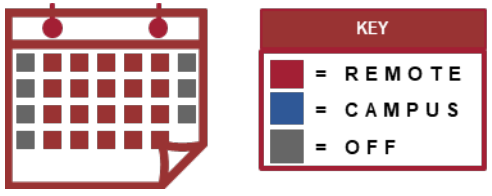
> *"I love being 100% remote. I am an introvert. The pandemic has been great for me."*

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.

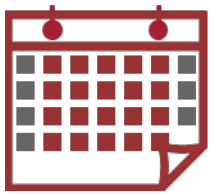
> *"I have found it much easer to communicate with others across campus in a remote work environment because everyone is only an email, Slack message, or Zoom call away."*

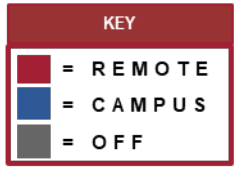
Note: Quotes are composites of staff feedback.

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

