



Guide for
MIT
Postdocs

**Faculty
Advisors**

**Partnership on the
road to professional
independence**

November 2025



This guide was conceived by the MIT Faculty Postdoc Advisory Committee (FPAC) (active 2013–2025), with valued input and advice from postdoctoral scholars, faculty, and the MIT Office of the Vice President for Research. The goal of this publication is to support a productive and mutually fulfilling interaction between postdocs and faculty mentors during the term of the postdoctoral appointment.

Those who mentor postdocs may find it useful to review the guide periodically, such as when welcoming new postdocs to the group. If you are a postdoc, you should receive this guide during your onboarding. We encourage you to take advantage of natural opportunities to discuss the topics raised here to foster mutual understanding and a strong mentoring relationship.

This guide often refers to faculty mentors of postdocs but acknowledges with gratitude the non-faculty principal investigators who fulfill the same mentoring responsibilities: the guide is equally intended for you.

The copy of the guide you are now reading was updated in August 2025. The guide will be published on the MIT Postdoctoral Services website alongside materials on orientation and mentoring.



postdocs.mit.edu

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Introduction

Our community of postdoctoral scholars is a vital part of the life, culture, and spirit of MIT. For more than 20 years, faculty and postdocs at MIT and at institutions across the nation have engaged in advocacy for enhancements to the postdoctoral experience that are benefiting researchers everywhere. At MIT, we are committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment in which all postdocs can do their best work, in a diverse community of scholars. [MIT's Values Statement](#), with its pillars of excellence and

curiosity, openness and respect, and belonging and community, encompasses our commitment to postdoctoral training.

This guide strives to describe the postdoctoral experience from the perspectives of the faculty mentor and the postdoctoral scholar, in an effort to help set expectations for a positive and productive relationship leading to the postdoc's growth to professional independence.

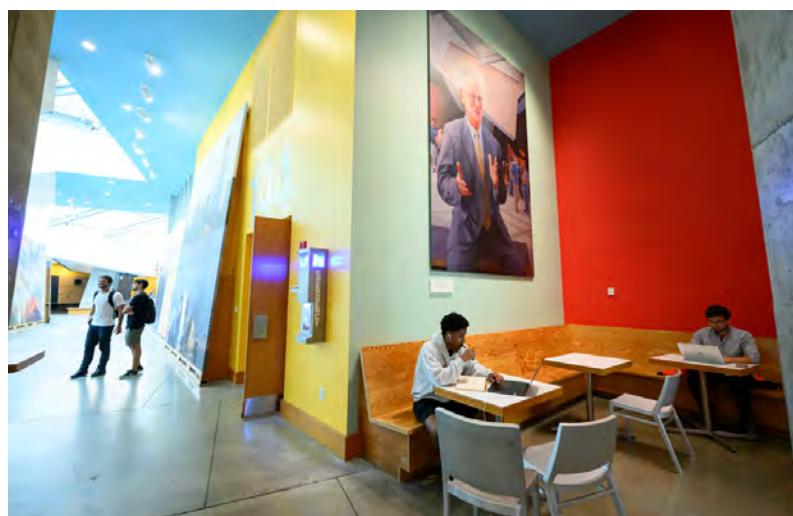


Information for MIT postdocs

What does it mean to be a postdoc?

As a postdoctoral scholar, or postdoc, you are at MIT for a defined period of time to receive advanced training, mentorship, and new research opportunities to optimally position yourself for an independent career in academia, government, or industry. Postdocs are essential, valued contributors to the MIT community, providing fresh perspectives, contributing energetically to knowledge creation and innovation, and enriching the academic environment.

MIT is committed to ensuring that postdocs receive [mentoring and guidance](#) throughout the postdoctoral period, and numerous opportunities



exist for career development and additional informal training.

Postdocs typically join the MIT community soon after receiving a doctoral degree, and the length of stay varies depending on area of interest and individual circumstances. The appointment is always created for a term of one year, subject to renewal, and since it is not intended to be a long-term position, MIT limits the postdoctoral period to four years. Extension for a fifth year or promotion to research scientist may be requested, but is not routine. It requires a justification letter from your supervisor and approval by the dean.



Associate or fellow?

Your initial appointment to MIT will be as either a postdoctoral associate or postdoctoral fellow. The “associate” appointment applies to those who are paid a salary directly by MIT, typically charged to a grant or contract secured by the faculty mentor. “Fellows” are scholars who receive financial support in the form of a fellowship, typically from an outside agency or foundation, which may be administered by MIT or paid directly to the fellow.

The type of appointment impacts the benefits available to you; associates are designated as MIT employees, whereas fellows are not. MIT makes every effort to minimize the benefits differences between these appointments.

The postdoctoral career trajectory

The postdoctoral period is a unique time in your professional life: you are no longer a student, but are not yet challenged with the full responsibilities of funding and directing a research group, teaching courses, serving on committees, and so on. Ideally, this is a time when you can do pure research, sheltered from outside distractions, and enjoy the outstanding infrastructure MIT provides.

Of course, career advancement will be on your mind. During the postdoctoral training period at MIT, you should work with your faculty mentor to develop a strategy to transition to independence, not only focusing on research, but also on acquiring and developing critical professional skills for the career of your choosing. Along the way, you'll contribute to discovery, innovation, and the application of cutting-edge research; and you'll learn how to effectively and appropriately communicate research findings.

There are steps you can take to chart a path toward your goals. A priority, when you first arrive at MIT, should be to discuss the **mentoring plan** that was initiated by your advisor and establish a mutual understanding of the research, training, and mentoring objectives. You should also create an **Individual Development Plan** (IDP) to help guide your career objectives. IDPs are strongly encouraged for all, and are required by some sponsors. At the end of your first year, there will be a written review and meeting in which your research and career objectives will be reaffirmed or modified. The review and reappointment process repeats annually. Depending on the feedback you receive from your advisor and your own evolving interests, you may wish to address areas identified as needing development, or you may begin to explore alternative career paths. The duration and trajectory of each postdoc's stay at MIT will be unique, but all postdocs should always keep sight of a timely transition to their next position.

Interacting with faculty

[MIT's core values](#) — excellence and curiosity; openness and respect; belonging and community — should guide all interactions on campus.

The formality of the relationship between postdoc and faculty may depend on the culture and traditions of each research group and department, but in the United States, postdocs and faculty generally are on a first-name basis. This informality reflects an understanding that both are members of a team to advance knowledge, with the freedom to express ideas and constructive criticism. Postdocs, while their primary role is that of a trainee, can expect to be treated as team members and collaborators, with their level of independence growing over time.

Of course, team members do have different roles, and it is important to understand that final decision-making authority belongs to the faculty (or principal investigator). They have earned their seniority through a history of achievement, experience, and leadership. **Be sure to consult with your advisor on key matters** — for example, before initiating any new collaboration, planning a conference submission or paper, or sharing information outside the research group.

On top of managing the research program, faculty must tend to many needs. Untenured professors are anxious to establish a track record that justifies promotion, and all faculty, regardless of rank, experience the stress of dividing their time among administrative, teaching, and scientific duties, as well as mentorship and obtaining grant funding for the research group. Many faculty also have family responsibilities. Mutual understanding of each other's perspective and stressors is important to the postdoc-mentor relationship.

Expectations and responsibilities

The postdoctoral appointment is formally defined in [MIT Policies & Procedures \(P&P\) 5.3.2](#) (postdoctoral associate) and [5.3.3](#) (postdoctoral fellow). And, of course, postdocs must follow all [MIT policies](#).

In general, however, you can expect the following:

Communication. As a postdoc, you share responsibility with your principal investigator to create and maintain open lines of communication. This may be different from your previous role in graduate school, which may have been more one-way. Here, you are encouraged to discuss communication preferences with your mentor early in your postdoctoral term and to take an active role in initiating communication.

Work effort: As a postdoc, the assumption is that 100% of your professional activity is dedicated to your postdoctoral research, as currently funded, and related Institute activities. Regardless of the source of funding, faculty must certify that allocated funds are used appropriately to advance knowledge and address the stated aims of the grant or fellowship. Postdocs should discuss planned activities with their mentor before making commitments.

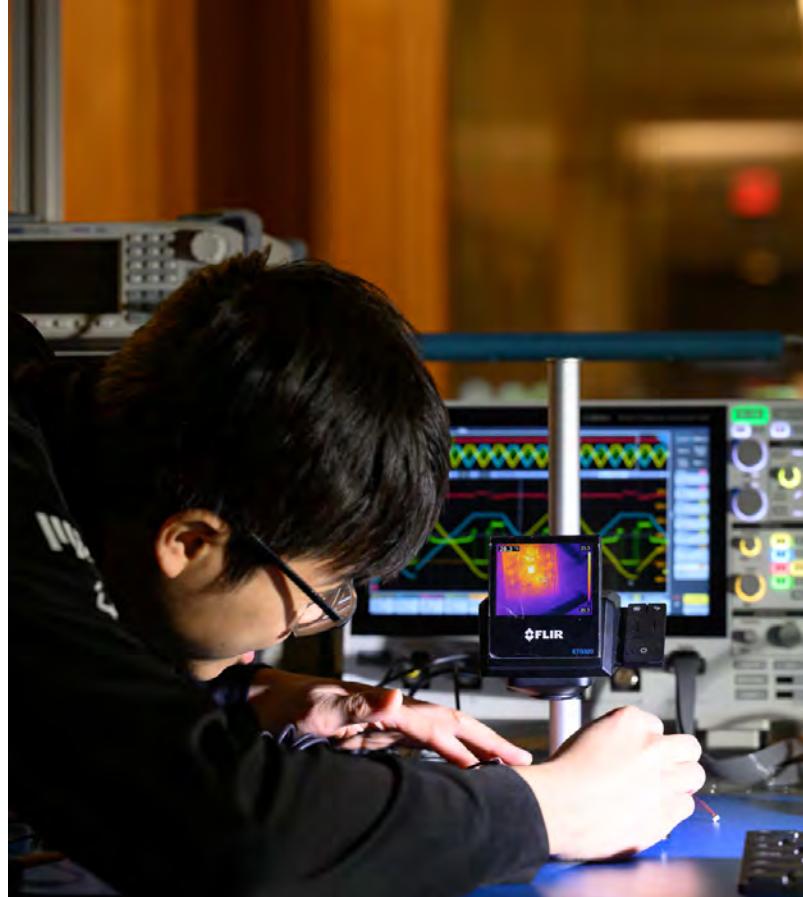
Time off: MIT has generous vacation and sick time policies as well as several paid holidays throughout the year. Postdoctoral fellows, while not employees, are expected to take time away from research that is comparable to that of postdoctoral associates. Given the nature of research, there will be times when your project requires you to be on site on weekends or holidays. Your time away should be approved in advance by your faculty mentor, and the department's human resources officer should also be notified.

Mentoring and resources: You will be mentored by your faculty advisor in the skills required to advance your career, and will be provided with adequate resources to achieve the aims of your research. Faculty/PIs develop a mentoring plan

for each postdoctoral scholar at the time of the appointment. Review this plan with your mentor soon after you arrive, and discuss the skills and resources needed for your career advancement. Although you have a primary mentor, it can be very beneficial to seek informal mentoring and advice from others on different aspects of your career.

Credit: All data and intellectual property generated at MIT belong to MIT and the sponsoring research group, but you can expect to receive credit for your work, including paper authorship and inventorship, according to criteria that should be discussed with your mentor early in your postdoctoral term.

Safety: Members of the MIT community have the right to a safe work environment. MIT has policies on [laboratory/research safety](#), as well as [policies strictly prohibiting harassment and discrimination of any kind](#).



Information for MIT faculty advisors

What does it mean to appoint a postdoc?

Faculty typically are motivated to recruit postdocs to increase their research group's productivity, diversify expertise, enrich the intellectual environment, and contribute to the mentorship of graduate students. A paramount motivation, however, should be a desire to **train early-career researchers in the skills required for them to launch their independent careers**.

“That’s the most important professional skill for the postdoc to develop in this phase — the ability to develop and execute an independent research plan. If you are known as a good mentor, people will be more willing to join your lab and seek you out.”

— Laura Maiorino, Former MIT postdoc (2019–2024) and vice president of the MIT Postdoctoral Association (2021–2022)

A good postdoc–faculty relationship is symbiotic. It is important to recognize that this is a pivotal time of life for postdocs, who are preparing to launch a career and in some cases also have young families. The faculty mentor should take time to understand the postdoc's career objectives and provide regular feedback on how these can be achieved.

Common concerns of postdocs

The postdoctoral period can be a time of great intensity. Postdocs have a finite period of time to accomplish a scientific objective, test their ability to function independently, impress and build a professional relationship with their mentor, and position themselves for career advancement. Some postdocs might also be adjusting to living in a new culture, or may be feeling financial strains.

Surveys* conducted both nationally and locally at MIT in recent years point to three topics of primary concern to postdocs:

- Earning an adequate salary during the postdoctoral period
- Identifying and progressing toward realistic career opportunities, whether in academia or elsewhere
- Quality of mentorship and access to multiple sources of advice

* For example: [2025 NPA Postdoctoral Needs Assessment Report](#) (National Postdoctoral Association), [2024 MIT Quality of Life Survey](#) (MIT Institutional Research), and feedback from MIT Postdoctoral Association.

Compensation

Trainee-level salaries and the high costs of housing and childcare have been longtime stressors for postdocs, particularly in the Greater Boston area. Since 2023, MIT has made significant progress towards aligning [postdoctoral salaries and stipends](#) with the cost of living in the Cambridge/Boston area.

Annually, MIT reviews postdoctoral salaries and stipends and sets an Institute-wide minimum salary/stipend. The review includes input from the Postdoctoral Association and MIT leadership, with consideration to the local cost of living, equity across the Institute, and flexibility within individual labs/fields. Departments and PIs should consider the competitive landscape and postdocs' years of experience when choosing to provide salaries/stipends above the current minimum.

Career paths

Postdocs today might arrive at MIT with considerable career anxiety. Many aspire to tenure-track faculty positions. However, with an estimated 65,850 postdoctoral scholars in the United States alone,* postdocs are faced with the difficult reality that they cannot all become faculty.** The journal *Nature* conducted an international survey of postdocs in 2023 and reported that 65% of respondents aspired to a career in academia. However, with respect to their job prospects, 41% felt "positive," and 42% felt "negative." Of those surveyed, globally, 56% cited a lack of funding in their field among the causes for concern, and 47% cited a shortage of faculty jobs.**

Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that many MIT postdocs will actively pursue, or at least entertain, other career paths during their time here, including in industry and entrepreneurship. Indeed, part of the value of MIT research is that it creates opportunities to apply knowledge in

impactful ways. Nevertheless, this trend presents challenges for faculty advisors, as postdocs today need access to a broader range of advice. In addition, career opportunities outside academia may sometimes appear suddenly and lead to the departure of a postdoc sooner than expected. Fostering open communication will help to avoid surprises, and one-on-one meetings to discuss career goals at regular intervals, at least quarterly, are advised.

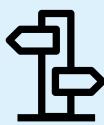
As a supervisor, observe and assess whether the postdoc yet possesses the range of skills required for an independent career in academia or another stated career goal, and set aside time to discuss this with the postdoc. It is recommended that this discussion take place 5–6 months into the appointment, with a follow-up discussion at the annual development meeting. Depending on the outcome of these discussions, the postdoc should be encouraged to further develop certain skills or consider diversifying their professional training and career goals.

When relevant to the postdoc's career interests, encourage them to:

- mentor graduate and undergraduate students
- gain [teaching experience](#) and [certification](#)
- engage in training or workshops to improve their written and oral communication skills (such as those offered by the [Writing and Communication Center](#)), and/or their computational and statistical skills
- assist in or observe the generation of the PI's grant applications
- gain exposure to [technology development](#), [entrepreneurship](#), and [venture capital](#)
- engage with [science policy](#)

* [2023 Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering \(GSS\)](#) (National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics).

** ["Postdoc career optimism rebounds after COVID in global Nature survey"](#) (*Nature*, 2023).



Where do postdocs go next?

Outcome data on the career trajectories of MIT postdocs — including the percentage who secure tenure-track faculty or industry positions, and the length of time it takes them to do so — are important for setting realistic expectations for both the postdoc and the advisor. At MIT, the **median length of the postdoctoral appointment is 2.06 years.***

As for employment outcomes, available data on national and international trends vary tremendously by source, but they support a widespread belief that fewer than 20% of PhDs in science, engineering, and health-related fields will stay in academia. At MIT, success rates may be greater: placement data** suggest that **56.1% of our postdocs find employment in academia**; 36.5% at for-profit employers; 3.7% at non-profits; 3.5% in government; and 0.6% elsewhere.

Nevertheless, even with the most optimistic of projections, it is clear that a significant fraction of postdocs who come with the dream of an academic position will not attain this goal. As a mentor, it is important to be cognizant of this reality.

Mentoring

Establishing good communication between postdocs and mentors is vital for a successful relationship. As a starting point, a [mentoring plan](#) must be prepared for each postdoc with the initial appointment. The postdoc and mentor should discuss the mentoring plan so that the postdoc may add information about individual career interests.

In addition, MIT recommends that all postdocs complete an [Individual Development Plan](#) (IDP), and an IDP is required by some sponsors. The IDP can be used to refine the mentoring plan and provides a roadmap to initiate and maintain good communication, identify expectations, outline specific criteria for success, and highlight and emphasize the need for professional development. It should be sufficiently flexible to incorporate new opportunities, should they arise.

The IDP may include certain career development activities that are independent of the mentor's research, bearing in mind MIT's policies on Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment, which place limitations on [outside professional activities](#) (and a process for considering exceptions). MIT workshops on innovation, leadership, or teaching; serving on Institute committees; or taking a leadership role in the MIT Postdoctoral Association are considered Institute activities as part of a postdoc's professional work effort at MIT, and mentors should encourage participation.

Postdocs come to MIT to be mentored in the skills required to achieve their career goals, and a common concern is that routine interactions with the mentor may not cover every topic of interest, or the mentor may not possess some interests and experiences that are important to the postdoc's future plans. Mentors should make clear that there are no obstacles to seeking additional mentorship from faculty or others outside the sponsoring research group. Similarly, should a postdoc from another group seek advice, please welcome their interest.

* [2024 data on postdoctoral demographics and alumni outcomes](#) (MIT Institutional Research).

** Percentages are based on the 81.2% of former postdocs with known employers.



Recognizing excellent mentors

The MIT Postdoctoral Association, with the support of the Vice President for Research, has established an award for excellence in postdoctoral mentoring, with the recipients to be announced each year during Postdoc Appreciation Week. Candidates are nominated by current and former postdocs.

Helping postdocs manage stress and hardship

There may be times when you become aware that a postdoc in your research group needs additional help to manage stress around personal, professional, or mental health concerns. Postdocs can access many resources, including mental health, finance, and parenting resources, through [MIT's MyLife Services](#). **All postdocs (associates and fellows) may access these benefits through MIT HR.** If you or a postdoc in your group have questions, your DLCI's HR administrator is an excellent source of information. Please note that student support services are only for undergraduate and graduate students.

"The main aspect of good mentoring, in my opinion, is not necessarily to provide nuggets of wisdom, but mostly to try to support mentees in what they wish to achieve, which may be quite different from one to another."

"The best outcome of a good mentoring relationship is if your mentee seems then called to be a mentor."

— Prof. Muriel Médard

Recipient of the first *Excellence in Postdoctoral Mentoring Award*



Some best practices for faculty mentors and postdocs

Appointment, initial review, and annual review

At the outset of the relationship, it is important to establish a mutual understanding of expectations and objectives. This starts at the very beginning, with the provision of a formal **offer letter** — a [template](#) for which is available to all departments — that describes the appointment and benefits. The offer letter should be sent to the new postdoc as early as possible, and at least three months prior to the start date.

The majority of postdoctoral scholars come to MIT from other countries and require visa sponsorship. Your DLCI's HR administrator will work with MIT's International Scholars Office to initiate the visa process (note, this is **not** the responsibility of the incoming postdoc). This process can sometimes take several months to complete, so it is important for the PI to notify the HR administrator before an offer is extended to join MIT. Although the postdoctoral appointment is for one year, it is possible and beneficial to request a visa for 2–3 years, provided funding is available and the expectation is that the appointment will be renewed. This saves stress for the postdoc and work for the HR administrator. If the postdoc's appointment cannot be renewed, the visa will terminate when the appointment terminates.

Postdoctoral appointments may be renewed annually, pending funding availability and current research priorities. If an appointment will not be



renewed, MIT policy requires a **notice period** of 3 months prior to the end of the appointment, or 6 months for those with 3+ years of service. PIs should begin considering renewal well before the appointment end date. MIT requires an [annual development review](#) as part of the re-appointment process. For the review, the postdoc must provide a report outlining progress towards research and career goals. This report provides a substrate for an in-person meeting to review progress, set priorities, and discuss plans for career and professional development.

The PI is encouraged to add advice and expectations to the annual development review form and/or during the meeting, including a candid assessment of the postdoc's career goals, and whether remedial steps or additional career paths need to be considered. Since the purpose of the postdoctoral position is to receive additional training in preparation for an independent career, the advisor should outline in detail what skills need to be attained before a postdoctoral scholar can be considered adequately trained. Providing this outline will help the postdoc–PI team to jointly set goals, monitor progress, and set appropriate time limits for achieving these goals.

It is recommended that at the conclusion of this meeting, the postdoc send an email or memo to the advisor that outlines their understanding of the discussion and the plans that were agreed on. This document, along with the annual review form, can be used to review the main points of the discussion and create a common understanding of goals and expected progress.

Effective mentorship

Effective mentorship requires the advisor and advisee to establish a respectful professional relationship and to engage in an ongoing dialogue. This can occur in a group setting on a regular (e.g., weekly) basis, but should also include periodic one-on-one meetings over the course of the year, in addition to the prescribed annual review meetings.

The Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) has created a [postdoctoral mentoring and advising toolkit](#). OVPR also collaborates with Career Advising and Professional Development to sponsor periodic seminars to help postdocs gain information, insight, and perspective on [effective communication and mentorship practices](#). The Office of the Executive Vice Provost provides [mentoring resources for faculty](#).

“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.”

— From the MIT Mission Statement



Developing vital skills

Whether a postdoc is seeking a career in academia, industry, or another field focused on research and innovation, there are some core skills that will be expected.

Above all else, for any research career, it is essential to demonstrate creativity and productivity by publishing original research as a postdoc.* Without a publication record, there is little likelihood of advancing. Postdocs are encouraged to seek resources to enhance scientific writing skills if needed, including at the [Writing and Communication Center](#). The postdoc and mentor should discuss authorship expectations (see additional information below) soon after arrival at MIT, bearing in mind that changes in scope and effort as a project evolves may drive changes to original authorship plans.

Another critical skill is the ability to give a compelling research seminar on the work you have done. This skill should be honed during the postdoctoral period by taking every opportunity to give oral presentations at MIT and professional meetings off campus. Remember that the quality of your presentations will be considered a reflection of the quality and rigor of your science, and of your ability to communicate it. The Writing and Communication Center and [Career Advising and Professional Development](#) (CAPD) offer resources to develop these skills. Postdocs in the School of Engineering may also take advantage of the [Communication Labs](#).

A successful transition will require you to develop a clear scientific vision of what you hope to achieve as an independent scholar, scientist or engineer, and an ability to articulate clearly and convincingly why this direction is significant. Should you be interviewed for a faculty position or lab director role, this vision and your defense of it will typically be challenged at a “chalk talk” that is separate from a formal seminar. Prepare for the chalk talk by practicing with your faculty advisor and/or lab mates and peers. CAPD provides additional resources on the [job search](#).

* [“Postdoc publications and citations link to academic retention and faculty success” \(PNAS, 2025\)](#).



Can I teach?

Many postdocs want to gain additional experience in scientific communication through teaching. Interested postdocs are encouraged to apply for the [Kaufman Teaching Certificate Program](#), available through the MIT Teaching and Learning Lab. Additional opportunities to contribute to teaching MIT courses, tutoring students, or facilitating study groups may exist through your department or through the [MIT Undergraduate Advising Center](#).

It is important to recognize, however, that the postdoc is a full-time research position. Before pursuing a teaching opportunity, discuss with your faculty advisor and the key administrative contact the details and restrictions that may exist depending on your immigration status and funding source. Activities with minimal time requirements may not pose problems, while formal programs that specify regular participation over weeks or months require careful evaluation and planning.

Another key skill for aspiring faculty is writing grant applications. Effective written communication is an essential prerequisite for advancement on an academic track. Writing skills can be improved through practice, emulating the style of authors you admire, soliciting constructive criticism by your mentor, and seeking additional resources as appropriate. Postdoctoral Services and CAPD offer a [grant writing certificate series](#) annually to enhance this important skill.

Authorship and intellectual property

Both postdoc and mentor share a clear objective: to disseminate new knowledge by publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals. Practices regarding [authorship](#) (inclusion criteria and author order) differ across disciplines and across research groups, and it is very important to clarify expectations at the outset of a project to avoid misunderstandings later. When a project takes place over an extended time period or involves multiple team members, it is advisable to revisit the authorship expectations periodically. It is appropriate that all individuals who contributed to the work be recognized either by authorship or

by acknowledgment. Every person listed as an author must review and approve manuscripts prior to publication, and the individual contributions of each author to the work should be disclosed. It is *inappropriate* to accord “guest” or “honorary” authorship to those who have made no discernable contribution to the study.

Discoveries can also lead to the generation of **intellectual property** (IP). Per [MIT P&P 13.1.4](#), everyone participating in MIT research, including postdocs, must complete an Inventions and Proprietary Information Agreement (IPIA). IP is owned by MIT when it is generated using MIT funds; in the performance of an MIT collaboration, research, or other sponsored agreement; and in the performance of MIT employment. Licensing IP to third parties may generate revenue, some of which is distributed to the inventors or contributors.

If an invention could be owned by MIT (per MIT policy), it should be disclosed to the [MIT Technology Licensing Office](#) (TLO) prior to any public disclosure. The TLO will review the IP to ascertain ownership. Be aware that sponsored research agreements often create contractual obligations with respect to arising intellectual property, which would apply to anyone working on the funded project. The principal investigator for the agreement is a good source of information on this topic. The TLO also hosts [office hours](#); sign up for these online.

Smooth transitions to the next career stage

When a postdoc moves on to independence

In an ideal world, the postdoc completes and publishes one or more research papers in the allotted time at MIT, and competes successfully for full-time employment in the career of their choice. In this case, the only potentially difficult issue to settle is “ownership” of any follow-on research projects. Sometimes, it can seem that the postdoc has transitioned suddenly from close colleague to potential competitor, and this can strain the mentoring relationship. Care on the part of both postdoc and advisor, and discussions in the time leading up to the postdoc’s departure, can help ensure a smooth transition.

Some advisors may elect to avoid, at least temporarily, the former postdoc’s research direction to give them some breathing room to get established. Others may take an approach of mutual freedom to pursue any research direction with no strings attached. Many may welcome the opportunity for continued collaboration. Regardless, it is important to have an open line of communication to ensure there are no misunderstandings.

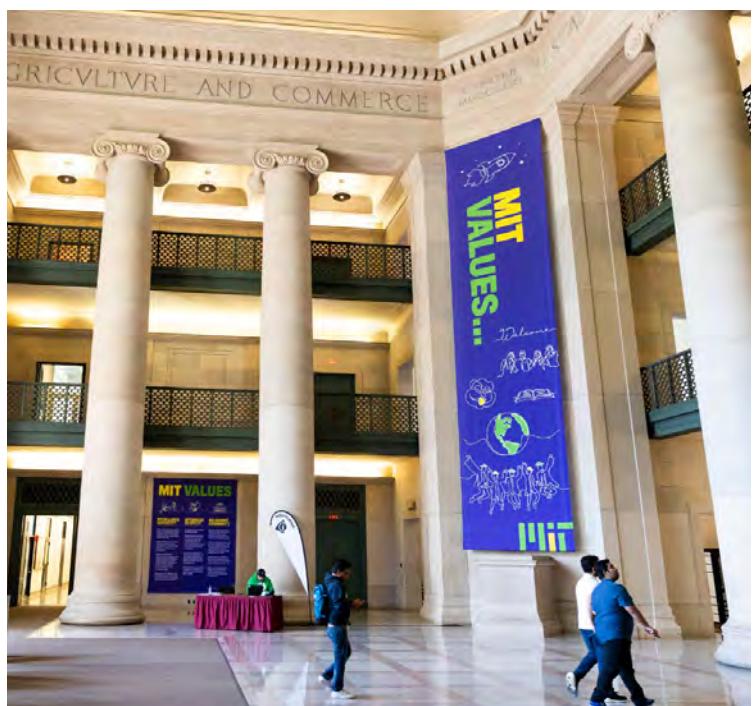
In the best case, mentors consider the successes of the transitioning postdocs as their own, and continue to provide support and guidance to them as they advance in their careers. This is predicated on the understanding that the transitioning postdoc will also agree not to poach projects that were otherwise ongoing in their host research group. **A healthy relationship benefits the postdoc for many years after leaving MIT, and it strengthens the PI’s network too.**

Ending appointments early

Occasionally, a postdoctoral appointment must be prematurely and involuntarily terminated due to a loss of the PI’s funding or a change in the direction of the research program. The advisor and postdoc need to anticipate and prepare for this possibility. The postdoc should be given the maximum runway — minimally 3–6 months (depending on length of service) and ideally more than 6 months — to secure another position and to bring projects to a satisfactory conclusion (see also [MIT P&P 5.3.2](#)). In rare cases, an appointment may be [terminated for cause](#).

There are times when an employment opportunity for the postdoc suddenly arises (e.g., an industry position), and there is pressure to transition on short notice. This transition time should be extended as long as practicable, to give the group time and opportunity to keep projects going after the postdoc’s departure. Substantial resources are allocated to postdoc research projects, and the PI has obligations to external funders that need to be fulfilled.

Issues may arise concerning authorship of papers that are completed after the departure of a postdoc. In academia, a prime incentive to work on a project is to earn authorship. If additional personnel need to be enlisted to bring a project to completion following a postdoc’s departure, the former postdoc may have to forfeit a first-author position. As with most other types of issues, a timely discussion can help to align expectations.





Conflict resolution

Conflict between a postdoc and faculty advisor can arise from time to time, and ideally can be resolved simply by asking good questions and realigning expectations in a one-on-one meeting. It is better to confront issues early, as they arise, rather than let things fester.

However, there are instances where conflicts or misunderstandings between faculty and postdoc are more serious and require remediation. In these instances, reach out to your key HR/administrative contact. They may recommend additional resources, including:

- The department head or faculty postdoc officer, if one is assigned, for your DLCI.
- The [MIT Ombuds Office](#), which has established an independent, neutral conflict management system that respects privacy and confidentiality.
- [The Institute Discrimination & Harassment Response Office](#), for those who may be experiencing discrimination or discriminatory harassment.

[MIT P&P 9.8](#) provides further information on complaint resolution.

Enhancing the postdoc experience

At MIT, we are committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment in which all postdocs can do their best work.

To put it another way: You belong here — no matter who you are or where you're from — and the experience and perspective you bring to our community are an asset to everyone at MIT. Use your voice, and don't hesitate to seek support when you need it.

[MIT Postdoctoral Services](#), under the purview of the Office of the Vice President for Research, exists to provide services, activities, and initiatives that support postdoctoral scholars. The office works closely with faculty advisors and administrators across the Institute, and with the MIT Postdoctoral Association, acts as a resource and liaison to promote the professional development and quality of life of postdocs across MIT.

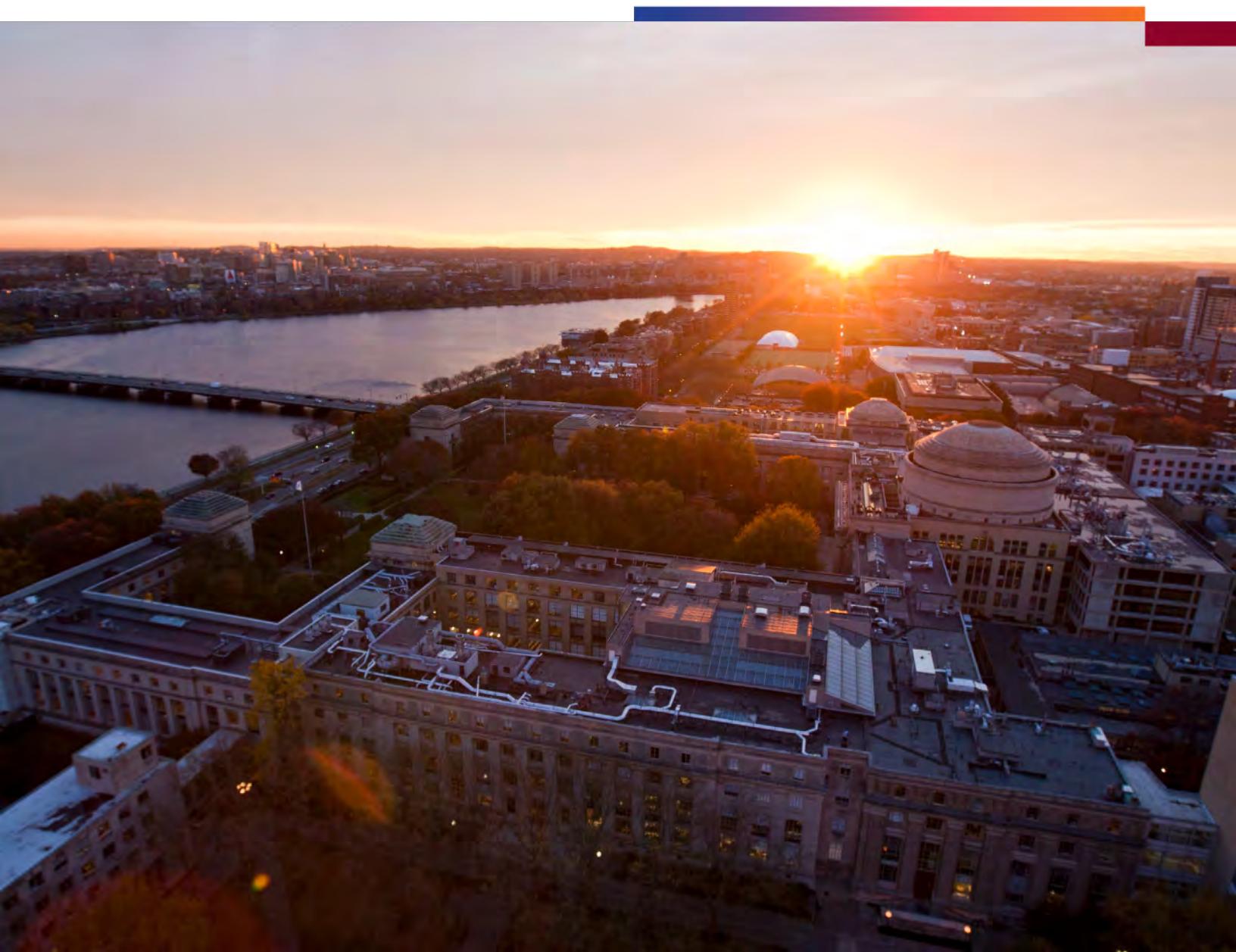
The [MIT Postdoctoral Association](#) (PDA) is a postdoc-led organization that liaises with MIT faculty and administration on behalf of postdocs and that fosters a sense of community and an environment of peer support. The PDA is structured according to the guidelines provided by the National Postdoctoral Association for forming and maintaining a PDA and is supported by the Office of the Vice President for Research.

Faculty advisors have a unique and crucial role in shaping the postdoctoral experience, with the responsibility to ensure that every individual postdoc receives the highest quality of mentoring and advising. In addition, the heads of the major research labs, who make up the Research Council, provide a conduit for valuable input to the vice president for research in matters pertaining to the postdoctoral training environment at MIT.

Postdocs also serve on many of MIT's Institute committees, councils, and working groups, helping to guide the direction of the Institute for years to come. An annual self-nomination process is typically announced in June or July, and the President's Office makes the appointments.

"I hope you will engage with the PDA — as a valuable source of information, and as a way to share recommendations. I meet with the PDA leadership monthly, and the collaboration between the PDA and my office is an important avenue for improving the postdoctoral experience at MIT."

— Vice President for Research Ian A. Waitz



Resources

General

Postdoctoral Services:

<http://postdocs.mit.edu>
postdocservices@mit.edu

Director of Postdoctoral Services,
Ann Skoczenski, PhD: 617-324-9022,
annskocz@mit.edu

International Scholars Office:

<https://ischo.mit.edu/>

MIT Policies & Procedures:

<https://policies.mit.edu/policies-procedures>

Key administrative contacts for postdocs
by department:

<https://postdocs.mit.edu/about/key-administrative-contacts-postdocs>

MIT Postdoctoral Association (PDA):

<https://pda.mit.edu/> and contactpda@mit.edu

MIT Values Statement:

<https://www.mit.edu/values/>

Conflict resolution and other support

Ombuds Office:

<http://ombudsoffice.mit.edu/>

Institute Discrimination & Harassment
Response Office:

<https://idhr.mit.edu/>

Getting Help: Medical and Stress
Management Resources:

<https://postdocs.mit.edu/campus-services-and-resources/getting-help-medical-and-stress-management-resources>

Center for WorkLife and WellBeing:

<https://hr.mit.edu/worklife/>

Mentoring, IDPs, and career development

Career Advising and Professional
Development (CAPD)

<http://capd.mit.edu/channels/academia-education/>

Postdoctoral Mentoring and Advising Toolkit:

<https://postdocs.mit.edu/mentoring-and-advising/postdoctoral-mentoring-and-advising-toolkit>

Writing and Communication Center:

<https://cmsw.mit.edu/writing-and-communication-center/>

Teaching and mentoring opportunities for postdocs

MIT Communication Lab

<https://mitcommlab.mit.edu/>

MIT LEAPS program

<https://physics.mit.edu/academic-programs/subjects/mitleaps/>

MIT Teaching + Learning Lab – Kaufman Teaching
Certificate Program:

<https://tll.mit.edu/programming/grad-student-programming/kaufman-teaching-certificate-program/>

Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program:

<https://urop.mit.edu/mentors/>

Inventions and entrepreneurship

Technology Licensing Office:

<http://tlo.mit.edu/>
tlo@mit.edu

Postdoc Involvement in Entrepreneurship
and Innovation:

<https://postdocs.mit.edu/career-development/postdoc-involvement-entrepreneurship-and-innovation>

Research policies and guidance

Research Policies and Procedures:

<http://research.mit.edu/research-policies-and-procedures/>

Research Security, Integrity, and Compliance:

<https://research.mit.edu/security-integrity-and-compliance>

Guidance on International Travel and Conferences:

<https://research.mit.edu/security-integrity-and-compliance/foreign-engagement/international-travel-and-conferences>

International Travel Risk Policy:

<https://globalsupport.mit.edu/travel-safety-abroad/safety-abroad/international-travel-risk-policy/>

Foreign Engagement:

<https://research.mit.edu/security-integrity-and-compliance/research-security-and-foreign-engagement>

Managing Risk in International Collaborations:

<https://globalsupport.mit.edu/managing-project-risk/>

Financial Conflicts of Interest in Research:

<https://coi.mit.edu/fcoi>

Conflicts of Commitment:

<https://coi.mit.edu/coc>

Expectations (and Exceptions) Regarding Postdocs' Outside Professional Activities:

<https://coi.mit.edu/fcoi/community-coi-portal/permited-time/postdocs-researchers>

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