Postdoctoral FAQs:

1. **What is the difference between a Postdoctoral Associate and a Postdoctoral Fellow position?**

Postdoctoral researchers at MIT are appointed to one of two titles, depending on the funding source:

Postdoctoral Associates are employees of the Institute who receive a salary from MIT (typically through sponsored research grants of the hosting faculty member), and are eligible for MIT employee benefits, if an appointment is at 50% effort and above.

Postdoctoral Fellows usually receive financial support in the form of a fellowship stipend from an outside agency, either directly from the agency or administered through MIT on behalf of the sponsor. Postdoctoral Fellows are not employees of the Institute and are not employee benefits eligible. For more information, please see http://web.mit.edu/policies/5/5.3.html and http://postdocs.mit.edu/home/postdoctoral-position/defining-postdoc-fellows-and-associates

2. **What are the implications of changing from a Postdoctoral Associate to a Postdoctoral Fellow Position, and vice versa?**

Changing from one postdoctoral status to another has several implications, including eligibility for certain benefits, visa types, tax withholdings, medical insurance rates, and more. Please see the Office of the Vice President for Research notice for more information. When changing status, please be sure to contact Irina Singh, Sr. HR Assistant to discuss how the change may impact your benefits and tax status.

3. **What are the salary levels for Postdoctoral Associates and Fellows at MIT?**

MIT's minimum salary and stipend rates for Postdoctoral Associates and Fellows are consistent with those set by NIH for the Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) stipends. Please consult the Vice President for Research's webpage for more information on the current postdoc minimum salary levels.

4. **How long do postdoctoral appointments at MIT last?**

Postdoctoral researchers are appointed for a one-year term renewable by mutual agreement and funding availability. Appointments are normally not renewed beyond a total of four years as either a Postdoctoral Associate or Fellow. An appointment extension for a fifth year requires approval of the cognizant dean.

5. I will be leaving prior to my appointment end date. Whom do I notify?

Please notify your faculty supervisor and your group's administrative assistant as far in advance of your end date as possible (at least 2 weeks prior to your end date). Please also notify Irina Singh, department's HR Assistant of your ending appointment, and she will guide you through the exit procedures at the Department of Biological Engineering.

If you are a **J-1, H1B, or F-1 visa holder** and will be leaving prior to your current appointment end date, please notify Irina Singh at least 30 prior to your departure. She will work with the MIT International Scholar's Office to ensure your immigration documentation is adjusted accordingly, if needed.

6. I am an international postdoc and will be travelling internationally. What do I need to do?

At least 30 days prior to travelling, it is important to discuss your travel plans with the International Scholars Office, so that they may advise you on any additional steps to prepare for your trip.

7. As a Postdoctoral Associate, when do I get paid?

Payment is issued twice per month via direct deposit, on the 15th and on the last business day of each month. You may view your paystubs via *Atlas-Money Matters-Paystubs*.

8. As a Postdoctoral Associate/Postdoctoral Fellow, what benefits am I eligible for?

A comprehensive benefits summary chart for both Postdoctoral Associates and Fellows can be found here.

Postdoctoral Associates can enroll in the following benefits within 30 days of their appointment start date via Atlas (atlas.mit.edu)

• Health Plan
• Dental Plan
• Vision Plan
• Flexible Spending Account
• 401(k) Plan
• Supplemental Life

Postdoctoral Fellows can enroll in the following Benefits:

Health plans

9. What are the policies regarding paid time off?

Vacation: Benefits eligible Postdoctoral Associates on a 12-month appointment accrue 15 days of vacation in their first year, and 20 days of vacation in subsequent years. Postdoctoral Fellows do not formally accrue vacation time. However, MIT expects that fellows receive the same vacation time as associates. Vacation days are subject to approval by the faculty supervisor.

Holidays: Postdoctoral Associates and Fellows are entitled to observe MIT's recognized Institute holidays. These holidays and the days on which the Institute is closed to observe them are listed at http://hr.mit.edu/holidays.

Sick Time: For Postdoctoral Associates eligible for MIT employee benefits (50% effort and above), a reasonable number of justifiable absences are paid at 100% of the regular pay. Sick time must be recorded via the Sick Leave Tracker (attn. question 11).

Please refer to the following website for more information regarding postdoc time off benefits: http://postdocs.mit.edu/postdoc-time-benefits

For Postdoctoral Fellows, fellowship terms and provisions must be taken into consideration. Some fellowships may specify time off and other leave provisions. Please discuss your individual situation with the department's HR Assistant.

10. How do I report vacation days?

Postdoctoral Associates should consult with their supervisors to arrange time off and submit a *vacation form* to the lab's Administrative Assistant prior to taking the leave. The department's HR Assistant is responsible for reporting vacation days in the SRS Vacation tracker.

Postdoctoral Fellows do not formally accrue vacation time. However, MIT expects that fellows receive the same vacation time as associates. Postdoctoral Fellows should consult with their supervisors prior to taking time off from the laboratory, and submit a *vacation form* to the lab's Administrative Assistant prior to taking the leave.

11. How do I record my sick time?

For **Postdoctoral Associates,** to report a sick day, please go to http://absence.mit.edu, or access the tracking tool through *Atlas – Sick Time Reporting. Note: Access to the tracking tool is Touchstone enabled and requires two-factor authentication with Duo.* Select a day on the calendar by single clicking the day when you want to report sick time usage. A pop-up window appears with a default of 8 hours of sick time. You can confirm or change the hours to reflect the sick time you want to report. Click to save a change of hours (or cancel if you decide not to change the hours). After you do so, the date/hours information will appear in the "Report of Sick Time" section on the right side of the page. Sick time recorded will show on the calendar as "draft" until you hit "submit."

For **Postdoctoral Fellows**, fellowship terms pertaining to sick time must be taken into consideration.