

## Postdoc Involvement in Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Consistent with MIT's research culture, MIT postdoctoral scholars are increasingly interested in directly creating or joining opportunities for entrepreneurship and innovation. If these would extend beyond the postdoc's current terms of appointment, several factors need to be carefully considered.

As opportunities become available, it is important to fully understand the details of any visa requirements and whether sponsored funding or fellowship terms impose restrictions on effort. Successful participation requires advance planning.

**Check with your faculty supervisor, the [key administrative contact for postdocs](#) in your area/your area's HR representative, and the [International Scholars Office](#) to fully understand the conditions of your current visa (if applicable), and any issues with research sponsors that must be taken into account.**

Activities with minimal time requirements may not pose problems, while commitments outside MIT and/or more extensive arrangements require careful evaluation and planning. Keeping in mind that postdocs may not consult (see MIT Policies and Procedures [5.3.2](#) and [5.3.3](#)), reduction in effort in certain circumstances is one option to investigate. Careful review of [conflict of interest provisions](#) is also essential.

### Summary of Guidelines

Postdocs must consult with their supervisors, their department's HR representative, and, when applicable, the International Scholars Office, when considering changes or additions to their original terms of appointment. Activities of international scholars need to be aligned with the terms of their visa.

Postdoctoral Associates who are paid entirely from their supervisors' sponsored research funds devote full-time effort to their research activities unless adjustments are made to their effort and appropriate approvals are in place.

For Postdoctoral Fellows, fellowship terms and supervisor approval will determine changes that can be made in the postdoc's appointment.

MIT's conflict of interest and reporting requirements must be adhered to at all times.

See MIT Policies and Procedures [5.3.2](#) and [5.3.3](#) for more information.

### MIT Programs

Two MIT programs that foster innovation have integrated these considerations, and receive partial support from the Office of the Vice President for Research in the context of the [MIT Innovation Initiative](#).

[The Translational Fellows Program](#) funds its fellows for one day a week, providing them the opportunity to pursue commercialization of a technology that originated in MIT research. The program provides postdocs with mentoring resources, integrated conflict-of-interest (COI) management and other support. The 2014-15 pilot program is underway.

The [MIT IMPACT Program](#), in its pilot year, is also currently underway. Its goal is for postdocs to develop skills (including technical, organizational, entrepreneurial, and leadership) and professional networks that better prepare them for careers inside and outside of academia, through an experience that challenges them to explore and defend the real-world impact of their research.

Another program is [Start6](#), a 2.5 week intensive entrepreneurship workshop for engineers (January 12-27, 2015) run by the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, open to MIT undergraduate and graduate students, as well as postdocs.