

Statement on the postdoctoral training period at MIT

The postdoctoral training period at MIT is part of the education of a researcher in STEM and other fields. This notion is in accord with MIT policy stating “Postdoctoral associates come to MIT to develop their scholarly competence, working under the supervision of MIT faculty members.” While no degree is offered, this period is nonetheless integral to preparation for a future independent research career. Thus, a postdoctoral scholar is not invited to join a group at MIT simply to perform a specific research project, rather, a broad training program should be in place, and encompass the following:

- learning techniques and experimental approaches relevant to the research project
- an annual review that includes input by both postdoctoral scholar and faculty mentor, with focus on
 - o productivity
 - o feasible career goals
 - o career development
- guidance in how to set up a research group including
 - o discussion of how to choose research questions
 - o practice in writing papers and research proposals
 - o development of supervisory skills
- development of a network of peers and contacts
- attendance, and presentation of research, at meetings and seminars
- support with regard to life events, such as childbearing

Duration of the postdoctoral period is variable, but is not intended for long-term, indefinite, or career appointments. Postdoctoral duration should take into account when the candidate is ready for the next step of a career pathway. MIT limits the postdoctoral period to four years, with promotion to the rank of senior postdoctoral associate possible after three years. Extension for a fifth year or promotion to research scientist requires a dean’s or VPR approval.