

MIT TRAVEL POLICY: FALL 2020

FINAL DRAFT OPTIONS JULY 17, 2020

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BACKGROUND

On March 5, [President Reif suspended all international travel](#) on MIT business or with MIT programs for all faculty, students, postdocs, and staff; discouraged personal travel to international locations by any MIT community member; and encouraged community members to explore alternatives for non-essential domestic travel.

In April, a planning team developed [options for student summer travel guidance](#) that were submitted to the senior team for their review. The senior team ultimately chose to [suspend all MIT-sponsored student international or domestic travel](#) (with a narrow exception process for graduate students doing “essential” research). This guidance is effective through August 31, 2020. With the fall semester fast approaching, we now need to develop travel guidance for the fall semester and beyond.

In June/July 2020, an ad hoc committee¹ was convened to draft comprehensive and specific Institute guidance on travel for the fall including:

- Travel by staff, faculty, and students;
- Local, domestic, and international travel;
- MIT-sponsored and personal travel; and
- Related requirements and processes for travel registration, high-risk waiver applications, post-travel quarantine, etc.

¹ Members of the ad hoc committee responsible for drafting these options include: Robin Elices (Executive Director, EVPT); Kim Haberlin (Senior Advisor, Chancellor’s Office); Todd Holmes (Program Manager, International Safety and Security); Robin Lemp (Director, Office of Provost); Christina Lo (Director of Strategic Sourcing and Contracts, VPF); Doreen Morris (Assistant Provost); April Julich Perez (Executive Director, MISTI); Kate Trimble (Senior Associate Dean, Experiential Learning); and Elizabeth Wood (Professor, History and Faculty Co-Director, MISTI-Russia).

After consulting with Suzanne Blake (Emergency Management) and Cecilia Stuopis (MIT Medical) about the public health risks to individuals, the MIT community, and the global community, the group has drafted several options for each of four stakeholder groups. These groups are undergraduate students; graduate students; administrative staff; and faculty/research staff/postdocs.

We have circulated these options to a wide range of key stakeholders for feedback including the Undergraduate Association; Graduate Student Council; faculty from MISTI, the Thunder Committee, and LGO program; administrative staff from Admissions, DSL, Office of the General Counsel; and others. The feedback from these groups is reflected in the final set of options below, which we now present to senior leadership on the Implementation Team for review and decision.

PROPOSED DEFINITIONS

"Local" travel: Travel within the six New England states (CT, RI, MA, NH, VT, ME)

"Essential" travel: Satisfies one or more of the following criteria:

1. Advances critical research in the national or global interest;
2. Preserves continuity of research that cannot be repeated, replaced, performed remotely or by proxy, or that is necessary to preserve safety/well-being of research subjects;
3. Supports a critical MIT research, educational, or administrative/operational function that cannot be deferred or accomplished remotely; or
4. [FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS] Maintains progress toward academic degree and that cannot be postponed, replaced, or accomplished remotely or by proxy.

"MIT-related" travel: Travel funded entirely or in part by MIT sources; travel organized primarily by MIT (e.g., MIT selects the participants); travel conducted at the behest of MIT or in furtherance of MIT objectives; travel related to scholarly activities (whether paid for by MIT or not); and/or travel that requires the use of MIT equipment, supplies, or personnel.

PROPOSED REQUIREMENTS + GUIDANCE FOR ALL TRAVELERS

PLEASE NOTE that this travel guidance is supplemental to existing/normal Institute travel policies and is subject to change at any time based on local, national, and/or global public health conditions and governmental restrictions.

1. Travelers should be informed of and abide by all applicable governmental guidance and policy restrictions [important links: [Commonwealth of Massachusetts](#); [Centers for Disease Control](#); [US State Department](#)].

2. Before accessing MIT's campus, all non-local travelers (domestic and international; MIT-related and personal) must quarantine upon return for seven days² and then be tested for COVID-19 with a negative result. Student travelers living in MIT Housing must be tested as soon as they return to campus (note that travelers should check the operating hours for MIT Medical and complete the daily COVIDpass attestation prior to arriving at MIT Medical for the test), quarantine for seven days, and then be tested a second time with a negative result.
3. All non-local MIT-related travel must be registered in MIT's [travel registry](#). This includes international and domestic travel. For individuals with access to MIT's campus, all non-local personal travel must also be registered.
4. Whenever possible/allowable, all MIT-related travel should be booked through MIT's preferred provider (the Travel Collaborative).³ (Please visit these links to book [domestic](#) or [international](#) travel.)
5. Local travel (within New England) is permitted so long as it is in keeping with the current [COVID guidelines from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts](#).
6. Travelers are urged to take precautions and follow the latest public health guidance before, during, and after traveling.

PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE OPTIONS

NOTE: The current MIT [summer student travel policy](#) is effective through August 31, 2020.

- START DATE: "Effective immediately"
- END DATE: "Effective until further notice"⁴

² Per Suzanne Blake: "We may need to change this to 14 days to be consistent with the state guidelines, which are currently not 'required' but travelers are 'instructed' to do it. I am hearing this may become more strict as the start of the semester draws closer. I'm trying to get clarification on it. In any case, 14 days is more consistent with the state guidance."

³ Use of the Travel Collaborative for booking is advantageous from a safety and risk-management perspective, providing more detailed and real-time visibility into where people are traveling than the MIT Travel Registry. Mandated use is likely to be unpopular with some students and faculty members. Furthermore, some funders (World Bank, US govt) require travel to be booked through a specific travel agency designated by the funder.

⁴ The Undergraduate Association was the only group in favor of a hard expiration date (12/31/2020) by which the guidance would require reevaluation.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT OPTIONS

The travel policy for undergraduate students applies to currently enrolled students as well as students on leave and recent graduates if the travel is MIT-related.

Option A:

- All MIT-related international and domestic travel is suspended.
- Non-local personal travel is suspended for students residing on MIT's campus; if students travel domestically or internationally for personal reasons, they may not be permitted to return to campus.

Option B:⁵

- All MIT-related international and domestic travel is suspended.
- Non-local personal travel is strongly discouraged.

Option C:

For Remote Students Only

- For remote undergraduates located in the U.S. or abroad, MIT-related domestic and international travel is suspended unless it is through an approved and established MIT program to locations specifically recommended by the High-Risk Travel Committee⁶ and approved by the Vice Chancellor. A complete list of authorized programs will be made available to students as they are approved.

For Programs

Permission to sponsor MIT student travel will be subject to the following procedure:

1. The sponsoring program must submit a request to the High-Risk Travel Committee. The request must outline the reasons the program believes travel to the particular program location(s) does not pose an undue risk to student health and safety. The request must include: program description, program dates, number and class level of participating students, and precautions that the program will take to ensure student health and safety.
2. The Committee will review the factors below and make a recommendation to the Vice Chancellor to approve or deny the request based on the risk assessment. Risk factors to be considered include:
 - a. Prevalence of the disease in the destination state or country;
 - b. Department of State and CDC travel warning levels;
 - c. Medical capacity in the destination state or country;
 - d. Visa, quarantine, or other entry restrictions in the destination state or country; ability of travelers to enter or leave the state or country; and
 - e. Availability of commercial flights to and from the destination state or country.
3. The Vice Chancellor will either approve or deny the request.

⁵ This option is consistent with the recently-released guidance from the Division of Student Life.

⁶ The High Risk Travel Committee includes Sarah Brown (Risk and Insurance Analyst, Insurance Office); Griselda Gomez (Managing Director, MISTI-Mexico and MISTI Assistant Director, Student Health and Safety); Todd Holmes (Program Manager, International Safety and Security); Alison Hynd (Assistant Dean, PKG Center); Colleen McDonald (Associate Chief of Nursing and Nurse Practitioner, MIT Medical).

GRADUATE STUDENT OPTIONS

Option A:

- All MIT-related international and domestic travel is suspended.
- Non-local personal travel is strongly discouraged.

Option B:

- All MIT-related international and non-essential domestic travel is suspended. Graduate students may request a waiver for essential domestic travel from the High-Risk Travel Committee.
- Non-local personal travel is strongly discouraged.

Option C:

- Non-essential MIT-related international and domestic travel is suspended. Graduate students may request a waiver for essential international or domestic travel from the High-Risk Travel Committee.
- Non-local personal travel is strongly discouraged.

Option D:

- In conjunction with one of the above options, MIT-related travel may be permitted if it is through an approved and established MIT program to locations specifically recommended by the High-Risk Travel Committee and approved by the Vice Chancellor (*see Undergraduate Option C/Programs above*). A complete list of authorized programs will be made available to students as they are approved.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OPTIONS

Option A:

- All MIT-related international and domestic travel is suspended.
- Non-local personal travel is strongly discouraged.

Option B:

- All MIT-related international and non-essential domestic travel is suspended.
- Administrative staff may request an exception for essential domestic travel. Exceptions must be approved by the appropriate Academic Council member with responsibility for the area requesting the approval to travel.
- Non-local personal travel is strongly discouraged.

Option C:

- All non-essential MIT-related international and domestic travel is suspended.
- Administrative staff may request an exception for essential international or domestic travel. Exceptions must be approved by the appropriate Academic Council member with responsibility for the area requesting the approval to travel.
- Non-local personal travel is strongly discouraged.

FACULTY, RESEARCH STAFF, POST-DOC OPTIONS

There are a number of constraints on traveling: location-specific restrictions, quarantines on either end, ability to meet in groups, and flight availability. You will need to check the requirements for your destination. We encourage faculty members, research staff, and postdocs to consult with their department heads or lab directors prior to booking travel; permission may be required as described below. Furthermore, we urge faculty members, research staff, and postdocs to exercise caution and follow the latest public health guidance in their personal travel.

Option A:

- All MIT-related international and domestic travel is suspended.
- Individuals may request an exception for essential domestic or international travel. All requests for travel exceptions must be reviewed and approved in writing by the relevant department head/lab director and School Dean/VPR. The Dean's Office/VPR will forward the approved requests to the COVID Travel group (which may, if necessary, consult with the Provost and Chancellor) for final review and approval.
- Non-local personal travel is strongly discouraged.

Option B:

- All MIT-related international travel is suspended unless the travel meets one or both of the criteria below:
 - If you will be staying in one location for more than 30 days, you may travel without further review and approval.
 - If you are working remotely 100% of the time (that is, you are not on campus and do not have plans to return to campus), you may travel without further review and approval.
- Individuals may also request an exception for essential international travel that does not meet either criterion above. All requests for travel exceptions must be reviewed and

approved in writing by the relevant department head/lab director and School Dean/VPR. The Dean's Office/VPR will forward the approved requests to the COVID Travel group (which may, if necessary, consult with the Provost and Chancellor) for final review and approval.

- MIT-related domestic travel is permitted but strongly discouraged.
- Non-local personal travel is strongly discouraged.

Option C:

- MIT-related international and domestic travel is permitted but strongly discouraged.
- Non-local personal travel is strongly discouraged.

SUMMARY CHART OF OPTIONS

[LINK TO GOOGLE SPREADSHEET](#)

	MIT RELATED				PERSONAL		Waiver or Exception Approval Process	Endorsements
	International		Domestic		Essential	Non-essential		
	Essential	Non-essential	Essential	Non-essential				
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS								
Option A	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended	N/A	Robin Lemp
Option B	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended	Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	N/A	Cecilia Stuopis; Kate Trimble; DSL/Residential Life (MIT Medical/Sean Ferullo, Heads of House, students, others)
Option C: remote students only	Remote students may participate in select approved MIT programs		Remote students may participate in select approved MIT programs		Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	Program Approval: High Risk Travel Committee >> Vice Chancellor	Jessica Landry (OGE); Robin Lemp; April Julich Perez (MISTI); Elizabeth Wood (History); Undergraduate Association
GRADUATE STUDENTS								
Option A	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended	Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	N/A	
Option B	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended w/waiver option	Suspended	Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	High Risk Travel Committee	Suzanne Blake; Cecilia Stuopis
Option C	Suspended w/waiver option	Suspended	Suspended w/waiver option	Suspended	Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	High Risk Travel Committee	Suzanne Blake; Jared Curhan (Sloan); Graham Jones (Anthro); Jessica Landry (OGE); Robin Lemp; Ben Olken (Econ); Madeleine Sutherland (GSC); Kate Trimble; Ariel White (PolSci); Elizabeth Wood (History)
Option D	May participate in select approved MIT programs		May participate in select approved MIT programs		Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	Program Approval: High Risk Travel Committee >> Vice Chancellor	Jared Curhan (Sloan); Graham Jones (Anthro); Jessica Landry (OGE); Robin Lemp; Ben Olken (Econ); April Julich Perez (MISTI); Ariel White (PolSci)
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF								
Option A	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended	Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	N/A	
Option B	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended w/exception option	Suspended	Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	Responsible Academic Council member	Suzanne Blake; Stu Schmill; Cecilia Stuopis
Option C	Suspended w/exception option	Suspended	Suspended w/exception option	Suspended	Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	Responsible Academic Council member	Suzanne Blake; Robin Lemp; Ben Olken (Econ); April Julich Perez (MISTI); Tony Sharon; Kate Trimble; Elizabeth Wood (History)
FACULTY/RESEARCH STAFF/POSTDOCS								
Option A	Suspended w/exception option	Suspended	Suspended w/exception option	Suspended	Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	Dept Head/Lab Dir >> School Dean/VPR >> COVID Travel Committee	
Option B	Suspended unless 30+ day stay; no campus return; or approved exception for essential travel		Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	Dept Head/Lab Dir >> School Dean/VPR >> COVID Travel Committee	Suzanne Blake; Jared Curhan (Sloan); Iqbal Dhaliwal (J-PAL); Graham Jones (Anthro); Robin Lemp; Richard Lester; Elizabeth Lennox (SoE); April Julich Perez (MISTI); Cecilia Stuopis; Kate Trimble
Option C	Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	Strongly discouraged	N/A	Elizabeth Wood (History)