Planned absence/Vacation policy for Staff

For planned absences of one day or more a staff member should generally first seek approval for their absence from their supervisor(s). (For medical absences, jury duty and other mandatory absences a notification to, not approval from, the supervisor(s) is sufficient.)

Following approval/notification the staff member should notify both the AO and HR Coordinator (where possible 2 weeks in advance) and enter the information in the Staff Absences Exchange calendar [See endnote for more detail/instructions].

Where the absence is for vacation, Administrative/Technical Instructor Staff should also enter the request into the Vacation Tracker system (https://vacationrequest.mit.edu/index2.html), including a note stating that the vacation has been approved by their supervisor (if other than the AO.)

For support and SRS staff, vacation will be electronically tracked either via weekly timesheet (support) or in the SRS Vacation Tracker system.

For any planned absence (and illness if possible) staff should also turn on an out-of-office email auto responder, and where appropriate add an out-of-office message to their phone. (The Staff Absence

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1 Instructions http://kb.mit.edu/confluence/display/rg/My+SRS+Vacation++Tracker
calendar cannot appropriately substitute for these mechanisms of informing people of appropriate steps to take in cases of absence.)

Support staff policies

1. Per Massachusetts General Laws and MIT policy, support staff may not work more than 6 straight hours without taking a 30 minute break.
2. Lunch breaks are unpaid.
3. The Department takes responsibility for ensuring that every hourly employee’s work can – except in rare circumstances – be reasonably accomplished within their allotted weekly schedule. Accordingly support staff should work overtime only in very limited circumstances. Overtime should be worked only with the express approval of the supervisor, or – where charging a Department account – with the express approval of the Department Head, Associate Department Head, or AO.
4. Per Institute Policy², during weather or other emergencies only with official MIT (not Departmental or Supervisor) approval are support staff allowed to leave the Institute and report the time as worked. Even where all supervisors are absent, unless alternative instructions are issued, MIT requires that support staff should remain and work their full complement of hours; or if appropriate, leave and use personal/vacation time.

Timesheet review policy

1. For any support staff who are supervised by other staff (not faculty), the support staff member should print out (or PDF) a copy of their hours and have the timesheet authorized by a supervisor and send/bring it to the HR Coordinator who will approve it online.
2. For any support staff who are supervised by faculty, the HR Coordinator will approve the hours. It is expected that any noted irregularities in the support staff’s hours will be reported by the faculty to the HR Coordinator immediately.

Guidelines for Staff Making Purchases/Placing charges on accounts

1. It is necessary for financial staff to account for all transactions on AeroAstro accounts. During monthly reconciliation, where they see a charge for visiting students, parking fees, Copytech, etc., unless they have been given an alert, they need to investigate the appropriateness of the charge. In aggregate, over many accounts this can be a time-consuming process, so assistance in reducing this burden is appreciated.

   Accordingly, for every charge that staff incur, they should send some documentation (even if just an email saying to expect it) to the appropriate financial staff person.

2. For any significant shipping expenses (~$75+) staff should send an email to the FO watching the account letting them know what has been shipped and when. As a rough guideline, such shipments could include
   - 150 * regular envelopes
   - 30 * brochures
   - 1 * 15lb item

3. When charging research accounts, staff must provide an explanation of the specific relevance of the item to the research. Usually general purpose items like paper, toner, MS Office are

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assumed to be shared for multi-research and for non-research purposes also. If charging them to research – particularly to a single research project – you should provide a full explanation as to why it is an exception. If you are making a purchase/completing an RFP/travel voucher on behalf of a faculty/student/researcher and are told to charge a research account, you should be proactive and ask them at that time for the justification so that it arrives alongside the initial submission.

4. If making a purchase on an internal MIT account (discretionary or general), you should include an explanation of “MIT business purpose” with your submitted documentation.

5. If buying a PC/laptop include in the requisition notes the name of the intended user.

6. Notify the appropriate FO of any planned foreign trip on research – there may be restrictions on the account even the faculty is not aware of.

7. Never share your procard or procard number with another person. Doing so is regarded by MIT as a serious breach and is grounds for revoking the card.

Proposal submission/lead time Policy

Based on Claude Canizares’ memo of September 19, effective Friday, September 26, 2008, OSP will not process proposals that are not received at least 5 working days in advance of sponsor deadlines, and which are not complete and final.

To accommodate this requirement, department policy effective October 10, 2008 is that proposal requests (with RFP and budget information) must be received by Financial Officers no later than 10 working days prior to sponsor deadlines via the Proposal Request Website. The SOW must be received by the Financial Officers no later than 8 working days prior to sponsor deadlines. This allows Financial Officers four days to prepare and process proposals, two days to incorporate the SOW, and HQ one day to review and approve proposals.

It has always been department policy that HQ will have up to 24 hours to review and approve a proposal for sponsored research. However, Financial Officers have been at the mercy of Principal Investigators for lead-time to prepare and process proposals. This has caused significant stress on FOs, particularly since they are often responding to requests from multiple PIs. Therefore, the four working day rule will be enforced, and FOs will appeal to me if they do not have sufficient lead-time to prepare proposals. Requests to FOs for proposals should include a copy of the RFP (if relevant) and budget information. The Statement of Work should be given to the FO as soon as possible, but two days allows incorporation into the proposal (especially for electronic submissions). By the time a proposal reaches HQ, it is expected that the SOW and all supporting materials will be complete.

Principal Investigators are encouraged to tell their FO’s about planned proposal submissions as soon as they are aware of them. Any advance material or budget planning will allow FOs to prepare as much supporting documentation as possible in advance of deadlines and to plan their workloads.

As per the policy established by the School of Engineering for Late Proposal Submissions Appeals Process, to request an appeal for exception to the five-day-in-advance requirement, a PI must petition (via e-mail) the department head and the administrative officer explaining why the proposal is late and the reasons why it could not be submitted on time. The request, if approved by the Department Head, will be forwarded to the Dean of the School of Engineering. Please note that the request for exception to the 5-day rule must be made by the Principal Investigator, NOT by the Financial Officer.
Please note that days are working days and do not include weekends or holidays.

Example:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
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AeroAstro Pet Guidelines

The AeroAstro Pet guidelines are based on two premises:
• AeroAstro is first and foremost a place to accomplish work.
• There is no reason to forbid activities that provide pleasure to some, as long as they don’t interfere with others’ well-being or ability to work productively.

Policy
1. Pets that are inappropriate for public environments, e.g., alligators, should not be in the building.
2. If the presence of a pet affects the health of a colleague, the situation should be resolved by having the pet owner relocate to a different part of the building before the pet will be allowed into AeroAstro – provided such relocation is feasible within other administrative constraints.
3. Pets should not interfere with people's ability to work by making excessive noise.
4. Pets should not contribute to the degradation of our environment by soiling the floor or scratching furniture. In the event a pet does contribute to the degradation of the environment, the pet's owner is responsible for repairing any damage.
5. In public areas, pets must be under the control of the person responsible for them. Dogs should be on leashes or in cages.
6. In shared space, each resident of the space has veto power over the presence of a pet.

Please note that the option to bring a pet to the office remains a privilege, rather than a right; and HQ reserves the right to periodically revisit any decisions made in the past to ensure that the premises outlined above continue to apply.

Budgeting Policy

In order to better monitor Departmental spending, to plan for future commitments, we introduced in 2019 a new budgeting policy going forward, impacting staff outlays of Departmental funds at the $10K or higher level.
In the past, most high level departmental expenditures were approved either after the fact (e.g. travel) or as discrete items of expenditure (e.g. a single item of furniture for a room under renovation, catering for a lunch) which often did not provide a full picture of the cost of the project outlay.

This made planning ahead or evaluation of the cost/benefit of the outlay difficult or impossible for HQ.

Accordingly, any time a staff member either initiates or is given responsibility for a +$10K Project (e.g. conferences, large trips, events, promotional activities, renovations), they should compile a rough line item budget, and submit it to the AO to review/discuss with the Department head.

For each project a single staff person should be designated as responsible for tracking spending versus budget; and for bringing any overrun to the attention of the AO and/or DH.

Color Printer Policy
AeroAstro remains committed to reducing unnecessary waste; and asks that all printing that can be appropriately done in black-and-white should be done in black-and-white. Routine use of color toner for all documents is unnecessary and expensive. So please exercise restraint in this regard.

However we recognize that over-zealous restrictions on color printing, can create undue inconvenience for staff.

Accordingly, if you have a color printer which you use significantly for academic/departmental purposes the Department will resume covering the cost of the color toners, and not ask that those charges be put on faculty discretionaries.

(Color printing for the primary purpose of supporting research should be covered by the supervisor, and not the Department)

If you do not have easy access to a color printer but believe it would be a significant benefit to your work to have one, please discuss with the AO.

MIT's policy on Gifts and Gratuities.

Institute and federal policies prohibit the acceptance of personal gifts or gratuities from vendors, subcontractors, and contractors (referred to in this section as "suppliers").

It is the Institute's objective to award business to suppliers on the basis of considerations such as quality, service, competitive pricing, and technical abilities. Acceptance of personal gifts or gratuities from suppliers that could be construed as a means of inducing business with the Institute is totally inconsistent with this objective.

Institute policy prohibits Institute employees from accepting personal gifts or gratuities of any kind from suppliers. This includes the use of property or facilities, gift certificates, entertainment, or other favors of value extended to employees or their families.

Federal regulations, which govern procurement under contracts and grants, impose a like prohibition mandated by Public Law 99-634, known as the "Anti-Kickback Enforcement Act of 1986." "Kickback" is defined
as any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, thing of value, or compensation of any kind that is provided by a supplier, directly or indirectly, to any employee for the purpose of improperly obtaining or rewarding favorable treatment in connection with procurement under a federal contract or grant.

One area where Aero staff may need to be vigilant relates to food vendors who will often seek to “reward” employees who use their services, with a free meal. Because of the potential for misunderstanding, where it could be perceived that our employees might favor one vendor over another based on this personal inducement, in this situation staff should decline the free meal.

Department Event Policy

The department hosts many events throughout the year that celebrate the community. Some events are open to everyone, whereas other gatherings are geared specifically to one or more groups, which may be broadly defined as faculty, students, and staff. Here is a listing of different events that occur each year, and the intended participants:

Fall Term

There will be a Fall Kickoff event each year, to bring together the faculty, staff and their families to help everyone feel a stronger connection to the department community.

- Fall Kickoff participants include faculty and staff, and each may invite a guest. Children are welcome at the Fall Kickoff.

During the fall, there are periodic lunch meetings sponsored by the department head with each of these groups:

- Faculty Lunch, Wednesdays 12–1 pm. Faculty, financial officers, and the HQ team participate in sharing news and information.
- Monthly Lunch, last Thursday of the month, 12-1 pm. All non-faculty researchers are welcome to attend this monthly gathering to strengthen the research community in the department.
- Periodic Lunch, schedule TBD, with the department head and all non-faculty, non-research staff to get to know the administrative and support staff community.

There will be a Holiday Party each year, to bring together the faculty, staff and their families to help everyone feel a stronger connection to the department community.

- Holiday Party participants include faculty and staff, and each may invite a guest. Children are welcome at the Holiday Party.

Spring Term

Rewards and Recognition annual luncheon, to recognize members of the community who have been nominated by their peers for excellence. The program encourages AeroAstro community members to publicly recognize outstanding work and service to the department and expresses gratitude for help and support. Nominations are usually solicited in late winter/early spring for presentation in May.
• Annual Rewards & Recognition Luncheon, mid-May. Faculty, staff, and, if an award recipient, students.

The Senior Dinner is an opportunity to celebrate the students who will be receiving their Bachelor’s degree in Aeronautics and Astronautics.

• Senior Dinner. Late May. Faculty and students are welcome.

BBQ to celebrate the end of the academic year. This traditionally takes place on the very last day of class.

• All Course 16 students, staff, and faculty are invited to the annual all-department end-of-year BBQ

Hooding and Commencement

The celebrations around Hooding and Commencement are intended for faculty, staff, and of course all students in the department. Families of graduating students are encouraged to attend.

• Celebrations include a luncheon following the Hooding Ceremony: Doctoral degree recipients and their families, faculty, staff
• Ice cream social, following Commencement: all graduates and their families, faculty, staff, students in course 16
• Alumni Reception, late afternoon, following Commencement: faculty and alumni

Class Budgeting Policy

When a faculty or lecturer initiates or plans to initiate class expenditures which will bring the total cost to $300 or more for the semester, they should compile a rough line item budget for the semester costs for the class, and submit it to me for review/discussion with Faculty Leadership (Associate Department Head and Department Head).

For each class, a single teaching faculty/staff member should be responsible for tracking spending versus budget; and for bringing any overrun to the attention of leadership.

Notes:
• Classes intending only incidental costs (under $300) need not submit a budget. But an email indicating that intent would be appreciated.
• the $300 limit is intended to be total costs, not individual items, so if you plan on (for example) 5 pizza events costing ~$100 per event a class budget should be submitted

External Account Oversight Policy

Summary: Where another DLC holds an award, and therefore receives credit for that award within its Research Volume, and particularly in the case where that DLC charges an allocation fee for holding the award -- that DLC should do the work associated with maintaining the award.

That means handling the proposal preparation, projecting, reconciling and maintaining all documentation. Reasoning:
1. if someone is being paid to do work (via allocation fees) they ought to do the work.
2. it is typically harder for an Aero financial officer to access data related to a non-Aero award so it is more work for the Aero person than it would be for the other DLC staff to do it.
3. In the past, Aero faculty would expect projections on their accounts done by Aero staff, but would discuss staffing changes and appointments only with the other DLC. This made projecting accurately close to impossible. At best the Aero FO can offer projections based on their understanding with the disclaimer that they could not vouch for their accuracy.
4. This also makes sense for the other unit because they are the Department of record for the accounts in their PC, and will be any auditor’s first stop, so they should not rely on the processes of another department – retaining responsibility without actual control.

Support during administrative assistant absence & reporting staff absence procedures
The AeroAstro Backup Admin is tasked with helping faculty and staff when colleagues are absent from the office – to keep the work flowing for faculty and researchers and provide a more civilized return to the office for admin assistants. Here is a review of procedures, and a suggestion to help make for more smooth transitions.

• When there is an absence, it’s requested that staff notify supervisors, and cc the AO/HR Coordinator with the email note.

• If your absence is unplanned, e.g., illness, the AO/HR Coordinator will arrange for coverage.

• Staff who plan to be away for only a day or two: if you are comfortable doing so, please ask a nearby colleague to step in to handle urgent needs, like receiving a FedEx package. Alternatively the Backup Admin may be asked to serve as a backup.

• With a planned absence of 3 days or longer: staff should reach out to the Backup Admin directly, with advance notice, alerting them to your vacation and anticipated group tasks, cc’ing the AO/HR Coordinator. It would be helpful to provide the Backup Admin with the tools that they’ll need to assist your faculty with common tasks like booking travel and/or preparing a report, scheduling a meeting, arranging for catering, buying supplies and equipment, reimbursing students, etc. Admins are encouraged to introduce people via email, and help set the expectations.

Staff Absence Calendar Instructions
The calendar is visible to all Aero staff and helps HQ to arrange for proper coverage if necessary, and for other staff to be efficient in trying to contact the individual.

• Staff can add/edit/view their own absences to aid in tracking and recording their own time for vacation, illness etc.
• Staff can view but cannot edit or delete an entry made by another person.
• It is not expected that staff provide any reason for the absence in the calendar. A typical entry should simply state for example “Jane Smith out.”
• Unexpected sick days will also be recorded by HQ Staff. Staff are not expected to access the calendar when out sick. An entry like “John Smith out” will be made on their behalf.

Staff are responsible for ensuring they can access the calendar.
Directions on Calendar use:

- For MS Outlook: Open Outlook > Navigate to Calendar > Right click “My Calendars” > click “Add calendar” > click “Open Shared Calendar”; In the textbox enter “Aero/Astro: Planned-Absence”.
- The calendar should appear. Select it and you should be able to view it in your list of calendars.
- For iCal: Open iCal, go to iCal > Preferences > Accounts > Delegation. Under Account I can Access, Click the + Button and under Users, type in the name of the Calendar “Aero/Astro: Staff Absences”. As you are typing it in, it should appear. Select it and you should be able to view it in your list of calendars.
- For other calendar applications please contact aa-help@mit.edu
- If you have any other issues accessing the calendar, again please contact aa-help@mit.edu
- For ease of reading please make the entry an all-day entry (i.e. don’t mark yourself out for 9-5:30 for example); and do not make multiple single day entries for consecutive days. (E.g. if you are the week of 9/9/19, make one all-day entry running 9/9/19-9/13/19)
- The calendar is not a substitute for reporting your vacation via timesheet, SRS tracker or using the vacationrequest.mit.edu website as applicable.