Bylaws of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Postdoctoral Association (MIT PDA)

The MIT Postdoctoral Association (PDA) is a postdoc-led organization with the goal of providing support for all postdoctoral scholars appointed at MIT. All postdoctoral scholars at MIT (associates and fellows) are automatically members of the PDA.

One: The MIT PDA Executive Board

A) Definition

The MIT PDA Executive Board is responsible for the general operations of the MIT PDA. The MIT PDA Executive Board will be composed of 5 positions: (i) President, (ii) Vice President, (iii) Treasurer, (iv) Corresponding Secretary, and (v) Recording Secretary.

B) Duties of the members of the Executive Board

1) The President shall:
   a. Be the executive officer of the MIT PDA
   b. Preside over and chair all General Meetings and set the agenda for General Meetings
   c. Act as a liaison between the MIT PDA and the Office of the Vice President for Research at MIT
   d. Act as a representative of the MIT PDA in the Faculty Postdoc Advisory Committee (FPAC)
   e. Be responsible for the condition of the MIT PDA and the proper discharge of the duties of its Officers
   f. Hold regular Executive Board meetings to coordinate the operations of the MIT PDA
   g. Call for the formation of a temporary Election Committee to run the general elections
   h. Ensure that officer positions are filled.
   i. Coordinate the training of incoming Officers.

2) The Vice President shall:

a. Assist the President
b. Act as President in the absence of the President
c. Assume the duties of the President in the case of extended absence or vacancy

3) The Treasurer shall:
   a. Follow all MIT financial procedures and keep a systematic financial record of the MIT PDA's finances
   b. Report on the PDA's finances upon the request of the President
   c. Coordinate the generation of a working budget for the MIT PDA, which will be presented and voted on at an MIT PDA General Meeting within 60 days of the general election
   d. Facilitate and coordinate purchases and reimbursements for the MIT PDA

4) The Corresponding Secretary shall:
   a. Carry out the MIT PDA's correspondence with MIT and the external community including: advertising, social media, etc.
   b. Coordinate with the President and provide oversight for internal correspondence between MIT PDA Officers regarding official MIT PDA activities and meetings.

5) The Recording Secretary shall:
   a. Keep the minutes of General Meetings, including attendance
   b. Be responsible for the PDA records and internal documents, including a good working knowledge of the MIT PDA Constitution and Bylaws.
   c. Ensure that the PDA Constitution and Bylaws are kept up to date and ensure the Constitution and Bylaws are properly followed,
   d. Maintain an active list of all Officers of the PDA

C) Postdoc Initiative Grants (PInG);

The MIT PDA Executive Board shall:
   a. Coordinate the solicitation and selection of seed funding awards of initiatives consistent with the MIT PDA mission to benefit the postdoc community
   b. Coordinate ongoing and new PInG initiatives

Article Two: Standing Committees and Committee Chairs

A) Definition

Standing Committees are responsible for fulfilling a specific set of responsibilities consistent with the MIT PDA mission. Committee Chairs shall be responsible for fulfilling the duties of their Committees and the recruitment of postdocs into their committees, as needed. Committees may have up to two additional Co-Chairs assisting the Chair.

B) Duties of the Standing Committees

1) The Advocacy Committee shall:
   a.
   b. Identify and address issues pertaining to careers, health care, benefits, salary, immigration, child care, grant-funding mechanisms, etc.
   c. Establish a unified postdoc voice and increase the profile of postdocs within the MIT community
   d. Coordinate all advocacy efforts with other committee chairs
   e. Coordinate and maintain communication with postdoc representatives to institute committees

2) The Professional Development Committee shall:
   a. Promote the ethical conduct of research
   b. Establish mutually rewarding mentoring relationships with members of the MIT community through programs and events
   c. Organize events such as career-building workshops, research symposiums, industry ventures, etc.

3) The Community Building Committee shall:
   a. Encourage participation and involvement of postdocs within the MIT community
   b. Enlist the support of MIT postdoctoral trainees towards PDA efforts through committee participation and involvement

c. Organize networking and social events that create a supportive peer group and integrate postdocs into the larger MIT community

d. Support the involvement of postdocs in outreach programs at MIT

4) The Information Flow & IT Support Committee shall:
   a. Set up efficient data, communication and social media systems (e.g.,Slack, G-Drive, Email Listserv, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook groups, etc.)
   b. Coordinate with the Corresponding Secretary for distribution of advertisements and information
   c. Maintain an up-to-date internet site of resources and information
   d. Coordinate with the Recording Secretary to maintain the internal documents of the MIT PDA

5) The Alumni Committee shall:
   a. Serve as liaison between the PDA and the MIT Alumni Association.
   b. Work with the Director of Postdoctoral Services to ensure and maximize inclusion of postdocs in the Infinite Connection
   c. Foster an MIT postdoctoral alumni network, including events and communication

6) The Fundraising Committee shall:
   a. Secure funds for the PDA through solicitation and fundraising events

7) The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Committee shall:
   a. Encourage fair treatment, prevent and eliminate discrimination, and foster mutual understanding and respect among all postdocs
   b. Direct postdocs to resources for DE&I at MIT
   c. Advocate for changes alongside the Advocacy Committee to promote DE&I for postdocs at MIT
   d. Emphasize the role postdocs play in DE&I within academia broadly, and support training and resources that allow postdocs to promote DE&I after their time at MIT.
   e. Support programs for postdocs and postdoc groups related to the goals and missions of the DE&I Committee (health & wellness, diversity & inclusion, etc.)
   f. Act as the liaison between the PDA and Recognized Postdoc Groups (as defined in Article 8)

8) The Orientation Committee shall:
   a. Coordinate the MIT PDA Orientation for new postdocs
   b. Generate and maintain updated resources relevant to new incoming postdocs that includes but not limited to: housing, commuting options, benefits, child care support, etc.
   c. The orientation committee chair shall personally lead the presentation at the orientation sessions and in case of their absence is responsible for finding a suitable replacement to lead the session.

9) The Sports Committee shall:
   a. Organize sporting events for the postdoc community
   b. Help coordinate the participation of postdocs in MIT community sports events such as Intramural tournaments, etc.

C) Reporting of Committee Activities

Committees are encouraged to provide updates on their activities at monthly General Meetings. As such, Committee Chairs are expected to attend all monthly PDA General Meetings. Should the Chair be unable to attend, the Co-Chair may attend in their place. Should a Chair not provide an update for two consecutive months and efforts to contact the officer are unsuccessful, their position may be considered inactive and subject to termination according to Section B, Subsection 4 of the Constitution. A replacement Chair should be selected as an Interim Officer according to Article Four, Section C of the Bylaws.

Article Three: Temporary Committees

The MIT PDA may instate temporary committees to serve specific purposes, as needed. Examples of Temporary Committees include: Election Committee, Constitution & Bylaws Update Committee, Budget Committee, etc. Temporary Committees are not Standing Committees and do not require the election of Chairs.

Article Four: Elected Positions and Election Voting Procedures

A) Election to Office for members MIT PDA's Executive Board (EB) and Standing Committee Chairs; collectively referred to as the Officers of the MIT PDA

1) The term of office for all Officers of the MIT PDA shall be one year beginning in September.
2) To be eligible for the position of President, an MIT PDA Member must have previously served as an MIT PDA Officer for a minimum of 60 days or have attended a minimum of one third of all PDA monthly Meetings within a 12 month period immediately preceding the election. Article four, section A, subsection 2 can be lifted by a 3/5th vote of current (outgoing) Officers.
3) All members of the MIT PDA are eligible to serve as all other PDA Officers and Interim Officers
4) Officers may be re-elected to positions held in a previous term or to new positions
5) At the General Election, a maximum of one Committee Chair per Standing Committee can be elected
6) Officers vacating their position before General Elections shall provide formal notice to the Executive Board containing the date of their last day as a PDA Officer
7) Outgoing Officers (at any time of the year) shall complete a report detailing their accomplishments, ongoing initiatives, and feedback for future Officers. When possible, outgoing Officers should meet with incoming Officers to discuss the position and transfer knowledge, access relevant resources, etc.
8) Executive board members shall not remain in executive board positions for more than two consecutive terms.

9) The temporary election committee once formed shall be responsible for the conduct of the general elections including determining the timing, procedures, rules and regulation pertaining to the elections subject to restrictions specified elsewhere in the bylaws.

B) Voting for MIT PDA Officers in General Elections

1) All members of the MIT PDA may vote for PDA Officers during General Elections
2)
3) General Elections shall be held annually in July for the new term that begins in September
4) Election to an Office in the MIT PDA is achieved by a majority of votes from MIT PDA members during the General Election

C) Election of Interim Officers

1) If the position of the President is vacated, the Vice President assumes the role of the President for the remainder of the one year term and vacates the Vice President position
   a) If extenuating circumstances exist, the Vice President, in consultation with all current Officers of the PDA, may instead nominate a current PDA Officer to assume the role of the President for the remainder of the one year term. The nominee must have previously served as an MIT PDA Officer for a minimum of 60 days or have attended a minimum of one third of all PDA monthly meetings within the current term. Election to the office is achieved by a 3/5th vote by the PDA Officers at an MIT PDA General Meeting. Upon assuming the Presidency, the previous role occupied by this Officer is vacated.

2) If any Officer position (with the exception of the President) is vacated prior to the General Election, an interim officer shall be appointed by the president upon self-nomination. The interim officer can be elected as the chair of the position to serve the remainder of the one year term within 60 days after being appointed interim officer by a majority vote from PDA members present at an MIT PDA General Meeting

D) Election of Standing Committee Co-chairs

1) Should a Standing Committee Chair desire a Co-Chair for their Committee, the Chair can appoint an MIT PDA member for the position of interim Co-Chair upon self-nomination. Co-chairs need to be confirmed by a majority vote from PDA members present at an MIT PDA General Meeting.

Article Five: Budgetary Matters

A) Approval of proposed budget

1) The budget proposed by the treasurer shall be approved by a majority vote from PDA members present at a General Meeting.
2) Any MIT PDA member present at the General Meeting may propose changes to the proposed budget, the motion must be seconded by another PDA member. The motion will be discussed and voted upon at the same MIT PDA General meeting.
3) Events costing more than $1000 need to be specified in an approved budget.

B) Making changes to the approved budget

1) Budget reviews may be requested by the President (and a mid-year review is recommended)
2) Requests for changes to the approved budget may be made throughout the year to the Executive Board. The proposed change may be brought to a vote at a General Meeting. The proposed change is adopted by a majority vote of PDA Members present at a General Meeting.

Article Six: General Meeting Procedures

A) The MIT PDA General Meeting shall be held once per calendar month

B) Quorum is required for all agenda items requiring a vote by the MIT PDA Membership. Quorum is over 50% of all elected Officers. Proxy votes at General Meetings are not allowed.

C) The general meeting is led by the President

D) The goal and objective of the general meeting is to provide updates from the executive board and select committee chairs, updates from temporary committees and the VPR, tabled business and ample time to interact with and listen to all members of the PDA.

Article Seven: Bylaw Amendments

A) The MIT PDA Bylaws may be amended by a 3/5th vote by the MIT PDA Officers at an MIT PDA General Meeting.
B) Any proposed changes in Bylaws must be proposed in a PDA general meeting.
C) The vote for that proposed change shall be announced in the agenda for the following PDA general meeting and be voted upon during that meeting.

Article Eight: Recognized Postdoc Groups

A) Definition

Recognized Postdoc Groups (RPG's) are organizations of postdocs at MIT that are supported by the PDA. Such groups maintain authority for their own activities, but receive funding and can access the administrative support of the full PDA. Recognized postdoc groups are allocated a budget of $250 per year from the PDA (lower limit, requests to increase the budget can be considered). These groups are intended to continue beyond an individual postdocs' time at MIT, thus temporary organizations should be funded or supported by other means.

B) Expectations of an RPG

1) Expenditures of the allocated budget are processed by the PDA treasurer and are subject to the same rules as any other PDA expense. Within those constraints, an RPG may decide how their funding is used.

2) Yearly summary reports of RPG activities must be presented to the full PDA at a regular meeting, preferably in October of each year after new PDA officers have taken over for the year. These reports may be brief, but should serve to inform the full PDA of RPG activities.

3) An RPG is expected to select their own leader(s), but any change in leadership should be reported to the PDA as it happens. If an RPG fails to maintain leadership as a result of difficulties in finding an interested postdoc, the original sponsoring PDA Committee, with the help of the Director of Postdoctoral Services should assist in finding a replacement.

4) RPG's are responsible for maintaining their own website, documents, and email lists, but may request assistance from The Information Flow & IT Support Committee

5) Any disagreements that arise between RPG's and the PDA should be discussed with the Director of Postdoctoral Services with the aim of a mutual agreement. Both groups agree to follow recommendations from the Director of Postdoctoral Services and the Office of the Vice President for Research towards conflict resolution.

C) Creation of a Recognized Postdoc Group

1) Creation of an RPG requires a change to the bylaws to add the group in Article Eight, Section E and thus the procedure for a bylaw amendment should be followed. This includes review by the Office of the Vice President for Research.

2) Any Standing Committee Chair or Executive Officer may propose that a postdoc group receive recognition as an RPG.

3) Postdoc groups seeking status as an RPG must submit a document outlining the goals of the group and plans for continuity beyond the founding members.

4) In addition to the bylaws amendment, an officer proposing creation of an RPG must identify the source of the RPG's budget, at minimum $250.

D) Removal of a Recognized Postdoc Group

An RPG may be removed from Article Eight, Section E of these bylaws through a bylaw amendment. Such a removal is expected to be an unusual occurrence undertaken only if groups are inactive, or a change in organizational structure is necessary.

E) Current Recognized Postdoc Groups

1) The LGBTQ+ Postdoc Organization, qtPhD's,
    i. Founded originally in 2017 and sponsored as an RPG by the DE&I Committee in April 2021
2) The Black Postdoc Group (BPG),
    i. Founded originally in 2020 and sponsored as an RPG by the DE&I Committee in April 2021
3) The Postdoctoral Organization for Women Engaged in Research (POWER)
    i. Founded originally in 2015 and sponsored as an RPG by the DE&I Committee in April 2021