Position Statement:

Creating and communicating a clear and consistent set of norms and behavioral expectations for implementing a culture of flexibility in the Libraries IT Directorate which will support the Libraries’ overall culture and goals, enhance the Libraries’ ability to recruit, retain and engage critical talent, and position us to respond creatively and flexibly to increasing space constraints.

Definitions:

There are two types of flexible work:

- **Occasional** flexibility is a one-time or intermittent situation that only requires a conversation with your manager for approval. We understand that unanticipated situations arise; however, use of occasional flexibility should be requested in advance whenever possible.

- **Formal** flexibility is an ongoing change to one’s regular way of working and requires a formal proposal. An ongoing change is defined as 90 or more days.

Occasional, day-to-day flexibility and formal Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) will be utilized as creative, flexible ways of working to meet business needs while accommodating individual circumstances. They should have either a positive or neutral effect on business results, but not a negative effect.

Formal flexible work arrangements are meant to be responsive to the changing needs of the workplace, and as such should not be considered permanent. Instead, they should be included regularly in ongoing open discussions about performance and organizational priorities, and they should be formally reviewed annually.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

Communication and responsiveness are critical to the successful implementation of flexibility.

Lack of responsiveness is inefficient, disrespectful, creates additional work for those who have to follow up to get a response, and impedes the work of the organization. Lack of responsiveness, if it is an individual or team norm, can be exacerbated when people are on flexible work schedules.

- The Libraries Director and the ADs agree to convene a cross-functional committee of key stakeholders library-wide to develop draft Communication Norms and present them to Library leadership by 4/28/17. All staff in the Libraries IT Directorate will be asked to review the draft and provide input by
5/12/17. Library leadership will also communicate the goals of this pilot to all library staff, and will make the norms and accountability expectation documents available to all staff.

- Staff are expected to be responsive to all work-related communications, regardless of their work location per the established communication norms.

**Equality of access for all – individual arrangements may vary.**

Everyone (both administrative and support staff) is entitled to request flexible work arrangements, based on specific job responsibilities, per existing [MIT Job Flex Policy 3.1.1](#). Factors to be considered in determining whether the requested arrangement is granted will include the needs of specific jobs/roles, the staff member’s record of responsiveness and timely communication, and the performance of the individual in general and in using flex work in particular. Any such regular (formal) arrangement is subject to written agreement with/by the manager with sign-off by the appropriate Department Head and AD(s), and in consultation Libraries’ HR. The personal circumstances of the individual will not be part of the decision to approve or deny the FWA. Occasional flexibility will continue to be available as usual without need of the FWA, at the discretion of managers and with appropriate consideration of the impact the arrangement will have on business needs, colleagues, and library patrons.

**Flexibility refers to where staff work (location) or the hours staff work (time).**

- Option for where staff work is **Off-Site Work** – also known as **Telecommuting**.
- Options for the hours staff work are - **Compressed Workweek**, **Part-Time**, and **Flexible Schedules**.

**Where Staff Work – Location**

- Subject to the MIT Job Flex Policy 3.1.1 and request/approval process, and based on job responsibilities, individuals (administrative and support staff) can request to work off-site up to 2 days per week on a regular basis (i.e. a fixed schedule).
  - Exceptions for more than 2 days per week require the approval of the Director of Libraries.
  - The Director and the ADs will consider increasing the number of off-site work days that can be approved by supervisors once healthy and productive norms of responsiveness and communication are well established and practiced, as articulated in the forthcoming **Communication Norms** document.
- Staff working off-site must forward their office phone to their personal home or cell phone.
- **The IT Directorate will occasionally schedule all-staff meetings or events to which all IT staff are expected to be physically present.**
• Staff must come into the office on any day that is determined to require physical presence, regardless of the person’s formal flexible work arrangement.
• If environmental issues arise in or around Building E25 (noise, temperature, etc) which make the office unsuitable, any staff member can choose either to work from home or from alternative library location (e.g. Hayden Reading Rooms), depending on other meeting commitments and their own preference, following the norms for occasional flexible work. As much as possible, problematic conditions would be relayed to staff with enough lead time to allow decisions prior to arrival at E25.

**Hours People Work – Time**

• Staff may request, as part of the Formal FWA request/approval process, a “non-standard” schedule for doing their work. To facilitate teamwork and collaboration we will use the following agreed-upon principles:
  o Standard operating hours are 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Preference is to arrange internal team meetings during core hours but if necessary staff should make reasonable efforts to be available for teamwork during the “normal hours,” even if their flexibility arrangement is to work outside these times.
  o Core teamwork hours will be 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Whenever possible internal meetings will be scheduled between these times, whether people are participating in person or virtually.
  o **Transparency and consistency is critical to creating an environment of trust**

**Preparing for the pilot**

• The Libraries IT Directorate will begin the flexibility pilot by requiring all staff who are interested in flexwork (formal, as opposed to occasional, as defined on first page) to complete the *MIT Flexible Work Arrangement Proposal Form*, review it with their managers and ensure that it is aligned with the guiding principles. This review of all flexwork arrangements (existing and newly requested) is intended to ensure equity and alignment with MIT policy and these guiding principles. Staff with existing flexwork arrangements will review and renew their arrangements with their supervisor by May 19, 2017.

• The process for reviewing and formalizing flexible work arrangements is as follows:
  o Supervisors will receive training to clarify:
    ▪ The decision-making process for flexible work arrangement requests to ensure consistent implementation
    ▪ Their role in establishing and maintaining accountability and performance with these guiding principles
  o All staff currently working a flexible schedule must complete the MIT FWA proposal form, discuss it with their supervisor and submit it for review and approval by their department head and AD. During the pilot, Team
FlexWork coaches will review proposals and provide input and feedback to support consistency.

- Staff who are not currently utilizing an FWA can submit a proposal at any time, following the same process. So that we can accurately assess how well these principles work for the Libraries, we encourage ITDD staff who are interested in flexwork but not currently practicing it to submit an FWA proposal early in this pilot period.

**Technology and Accessibility are critical when working flexibly**

- Staff proposing an off-site flexible work arrangement must have the technology required to meet job responsibilities. This includes the ability to log into the VPN, print to the office and access shared files to ensure important information is accessible to those who need it *without having to ask colleagues in the office to pick up additional work or provide coverage.*
- The Libraries will equip staff members with a laptop computer, but other components of a home office (e.g. peripherals, phone, internet, etc.) are the responsibility of staff members who choose to work from home.
- Calendaring
  - The Communication Norms being established by 4/28/17 will include expectations for maintaining calendars to enable all library staff to easily access their colleagues. ITDD leadership will ensure all staff adhere to the communication and calendaring norms being established.

**Meetings**

- The Libraries IT Directorate will partner with MIT IS&T to equip all conference with proper conference phones as well as printed instructions to ensure a better communication experience for virtual participants by 6/15/17.
- Staff should assume that all meetings will have virtual participants. The Head, TS3 will ensure WebEx training is provided by 6/15/17.
- Following training – which is essential for all library staff – all scheduled meetings will include either a call-in number or a WebEx option virtual participation.
- It is up to the convener to determine whether a meeting requires physical presence, can be a mix of physical and virtual, or all virtual.
  - Generally, when there is no physical presence required and most participants are virtual, the convener will make the meeting entirely virtual.
  - Staff must plan to be in the office for meetings where physical presence is required, regardless of their formal flexible work arrangement.
  - Conveners will strive to give staff adequate notice about potential impacts to flexible work arrangements by communicating “in-person” expectations in a timely manner.
  - Conveners will be thoughtful about meeting participation and make it clear when staff do not need to attend in person.
  - Conveners will be responsible for meeting set-up prior to the start of the meeting. If needed, conveners who are not physically present may get help from an administrative assistant or another meeting attendee.
Accountability and trust are a shared responsibility between the Libraries IT Directorate staff and managers.

Everyone (leadership, managers, supervisors and staff) will begin with the assumption of positive intent when practicing a flexible work arrangement (FWA).

- This assumes that those working off-site are working and can be contacted and included in daily work as if they were physically present.
- Libraries IT leadership will measure productivity and accountability, regardless of work location, by the level of responsiveness and communication, job performance against established goals, and the level of support and customer service they provide.

Honoring the Principles

With the backing of the Director and the ADs, IT leadership and managers will support the creation and implementation of a consistent, transparent and open culture of flexibility aligned with business objectives, and will hold themselves and all Libraries IT staff accountable for honoring and supporting these guiding principles. The “Communication Norms” which accompany these guiding principles provide more detail regarding specific expectations around communication.

In addition to supervisors holding themselves and all staff accountable, the success of this pilot is dependent on staff being empowered to raise concerns appropriately with the expectation that they will be addressed.

- If a situation arises where a colleague is not honoring a flexible work principle, supervisors are responsible for a timely and direct conversation with that staff member to resolve the issue. In some circumstances that conversation may also include higher-level managers and Libraries HR staff, and may require revisiting and clarifying specific guiding principles contained in this document.
- If modifications need to be made to the guiding principles, or if a broad clarification and discussion of a principle is deemed necessary by IT leadership and managers, the entire IT Directorate staff will be included in the discussion.