

Postdoc Housing Resource 2017

On-campus Housing for MIT Postdocs

The vast majority of MIT postdocs live off-campus. While we encourage you to explore on-campus options, at this time, MIT does not offer dedicated housing for postdocs. Since potential openings are highly time sensitive, we recommend you look through the following information as soon as possible.

MIT on-campus housing is primarily intended for MIT undergraduate and graduate students. Sometimes postdocs are able to obtain MIT Graduate Housing. **Postdocs may only apply for on-campus housing via fall and spring waiting lists.** Housing is assigned based on the space available; generally, openings are extremely limited.

Information for visitors and postdocs (On-campus): http://studentlife.mit.edu/housing/graduate-family-housing/get-housing/housing-visitors

Waiting List details (On-campus): http://studentlife.mit.edu/housing/graduate-family-housing/get-housing/waiting-list
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Contact the Graduate Housing Office (On-campus): Email: graduatehousing@mit.edu Phone: +1 (617) 253-5148

Off-campus Housing Options

It can be a challenge to find a place in the Boston area that best fits all of your criteria, especially if you are searching from outside the US. The goal of this section is to provide practical resources to incoming Boston postdocs so they can find a place quickly. To assist you, this section provides practical resources for incoming postdocs, including information on neighborhoods, transit layout, and living costs. This will help you develop your best housing strategy.

In major US cities, it is common and more affordable to share a house or an apartment with other people. When visiting a place, it is highly recommended that you make an effort to learn about (or contact) your potential housemates to ensure your lifestyles will be compatible, e.g., ask about age, hobbies, work schedule, diet, social life, etc.

In some cases, it may not be possible to find the right place in time for your start date. Vacancies can fill quickly, especially those with a move-in date in August. In this scenario, we suggest first finding a short-term place to stay (for a few days, weeks, or months). Once you are in the area, it is much easier to find, visit, and evaluate long-term options.

The following link explains your legal rights as a tenant in Massachusetts

<http://www.masslegalhelp.org/housing/legal-tactics1>

Lastly, if you have children under the age of six, ask your landlord whether the apartment complies with the Lead Law. Lead is especially dangerous for young children. More information can be found here:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/environmental-health/exposure-topics/lead/frequently-asked-questions-about-lead.html#10>

1. Introduction to Boston

This Jumpshell blog post has a nearly perfect introduction to finding a place in Boston:

<https://www.jumpshell.com/posts/how-to-find-an-apartment-in-boston>

Includes:

- ✓ Boston neighborhoods browser
- ✓ Interactive rent estimator tool
- ✓ T (Boston train system) information
- ✓ Explanations of Craigslist
- ✓ Advice on visits & recommending you act quickly

2. Housing websites

Disclaimer: Before we suggest specific websites to help you find off-campus housing, we urge you to stay vigilant and keep on the lookout for potential housing scams. This applies especially to persons coming from overseas. In particular, many postdocs successfully use Craigslist to find housing in the US; unfortunately, this website is also highly vulnerable to fraud.

Please see the following link for more information and two typical scamming examples:

<http://postdocs.mit.edu/home/campus-services-resources-and-tips/housing>

Finally, many people work with a real estate agent, but you must pay a “broker fee” for their services. The fee varies by company and situation; in general, it is similar to the cost of rent for one month.

2.1. List of long-term housing websites

- Boston Craigslist
<https://boston.craigslist.org/>
A variety of housing openings posted directly by a user (can be a future housemate, landlord, or real estate agent)
- Padmapper
<https://www.padmapper.com/apartments/boston-ma>
Modern web interface (similar to AirBnB), many listings with photos.

→ Official MIT Off-campus Housing
<https://www.mitoffcampus.com/>
Signup instructions are provided in the following section - note an MIT web certificate is needed.

→ Wicked Local
www.wickedlocal.com
Navigate to Homes > Rentals. Typically posted by real estate agents.

Other sites:

- > www.bostonapartments.com
- > www.boston.com/realestate
- > www.rent.com
- > www.apartments.com
- > www.bostonforrent.com
- > www.zillow.com

2.2. List of short-term housing websites

“Short-term” generally refers to housing for a period less than one year, but can also mean a few days. Many of the long-term websites above also include short-term housing options. Below are additional links

→ AirBnB:
<https://www.airbnb.com/>
Room or apartment rental for days, weeks, or months

→ Sabbatical Homes:
https://www.sabbaticalhomes.com/Home_Type.aspx
Academic community resource for home exchange, home rental, house sitting and sharing opportunities, in addition to finding home tenants and sitters.

2.3. Social media listings

Sometimes students/postdocs exchange housing information on social media platforms. Below is an incomplete list of Facebook groups, which are open to everyone, where you can (1) post what kind of place you are looking for and (2) search for individually-posted room openings.

“Harvard Housing” Group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/harvardhousing/?fref=nf>

“Boston Housing, Rooms, Apartments, Sublets” Group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/673389662794979/>

“Boston Housing & Apartments” Group
https://www.facebook.com/groups/225334081176150/?ref=br_rs

2.4. General email pointers

Below are some pieces of information you might want to include when responding to a housing post. Also keep in mind who you will be speaking with, e.g., landlord, potential housemate, outgoing tenant, real estate agent, etc. **Be sure to mention you’re going to start a postdoc!**

Postdocs are often perceived as highly responsible, thus desirable tenants.

First email

- ✓ Bio information: age, gender, nationality
- ✓ Workplace info: job location, start date, contract length, schedule
- ✓ Education background
- ✓ Hobbies and interests
- ✓ Experience living in shared spaces
- ✓ What you are looking for in roommates/housemates
- ✓ Include basic contact information

Subsequent email

- ✓ “It was nice meeting you”, “Thank you for your time”
- ✓ Logistical info: furniture, move-in timeline

Additional Info for MIT off-campus housing

<https://www.mitoffcampus.com/>

After you make a profile, you can check out listings and the Resources page, including information about:

- rental [scams](#) to watch out for
- tips on working with realtors
- your rights
- leases
- security, neighborhoods, and more

You will need an MIT web certificate, which you can obtain once you have an MIT identification number. (See [Information for New Postdocs](#))

- See the list of [key administrative contacts for postdocs](#). Your department, lab, or center may be able to help you get an ID number as soon as possible, and may have additional housing advice.
- See additional information from the [International Scholars Office](#) (helpful to all newcomers)
- Many postdocs recommend finding housing near public transportation.
- Tasha Coppett, Assistant Director of Off-Campus and Graduate Housing, may be able to help you with specific questions
tcoppett@mit.edu

Welcome to Boston! Get to know us!

MIT Postdoctoral Association (PDA)
Website: <https://pda.mit.edu/>
Email: contactpda@mit.edu

Boston Postdoctoral Association (BPDA)
Website: <http://bostonpostdocs.org/>
Email: bpdasocial@gmail.com