Postdoc Housing Resource 2025

1. On-campus Housing for MIT Postdocs

While on-campus graduate housing is prioritized for members of the MIT graduate student community, visitors, postdocs, affiliates, and cross-registered students who are seeking to live on-campus may select housing through a Self-Selection process, subject to housing availability. Please note that housing availability is typically very limited given the high volume of MIT students who are interested in living on campus. If you have questions, please connect with the team from MIT Housing & Residential Services. Staff is available through a variety of channels, including drop-in virtual office hours.

There are two potential drawbacks to on-campus housing for postdoctoral scholars:

- Housing availability is typically quite limited given the high volume of MIT students who live on campus.
- On-campus leases are only guaranteed for one year (with all leases ending in August), after which you need to use the self-selection process again.

For these reasons, most postdoctoral scholars choose off-campus housing.
If you have questions, please connect with MIT Housing and Residential Services. Staff are available through a variety of channels, including drop-in virtual office hours.

2. Sublicensing MIT-housing

Visitors, postdocs, affiliates, and cross-registered students may also sublicense a housing unit from a current resident during the summer or Independent Activities Period (IAP) breaks.

3. 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.

The best informal source to identify housing is to leverage any networks you have in the Cambridge area. The key administrative contact in your MIT department may be able to put you in touch with other postdocs and graduate students who know the area.
After getting your MIT identification number (ask your key administrative contact before you arrive), you can join the MIT Postdocs Slack channel, which has a housing sub-channel, and make a profile on the Off-Campus Housing website. The Off-Campus Housing website has 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

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 try 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. 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.

4. Resources to find an apartment in Boston

This archived Jumpshell blog post has a good introduction to finding a place in Boston. It includes details about the T Boston train system, explanations of craigslist, and advice on visit.

You can also find an updated breakdown of rental costs for various Boston neighborhoods at Zumper. Finally, Zillow provides insights on places such as what the cost of a rental should be for a unit (RentZestimate©)

5. 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.

Many people work with a real estate agent, but you must pay a “broker fee” for their services when the lease is

signed. The fee varies by company and situation (and may even be covered by some landlords); in general, it is similar to the cost of rent for one month.

a) List of long-term housing websites

i) 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)

ii) Zillow
https://www.zillow.com
Real-estate website listing rentals as well as properties for sale. Many listings with photos.

iii) Official MIT Off-Campus Housing
https://www.mitoffcampus.com/
Signup instructions are provided in the following section - note an MIT web certificate is needed. (Note: you can also access the same information without MIT web certificate using the Harvard Off-Campus housing list: https://www.harvardhousingoffcampus.com)

Other sites:

- ➢ https://www.padmapper.com/apartments/boston-ma
- ➢ www.bostonapartments.com
- ➢ www.boston.com/realestate
- ➢ www.rent.com
- ➢ www.apartments.com
- ➢ https://bostonpads.com/
- ➢ https://www.apartmentfinder.com/

b) 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

iv) AirBnB:
https://www.airbnb.com/
Room or apartment rental for days, weeks, or months

v) 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.

c) Social media listings

Sometimes students/postdocs exchange housing information on social media platforms. Below is an incomplete list of Facebook groups, some of which are only open to MIT/Harvard affiliates and others 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 MIT Housing" Group
- "Harvard GSD Housing" Group
- "Harvard Grad Market" Group
- "Boston Student Housing & Sublets" Group
- "Harvard Housing" Group
- "Boston Housing, Rooms, Apartments, Sublets" Group
- "Boston Housing & Apartments" Group

d) 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
- ✓ 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) Note: If you do not have one yet, the Harvard off-campus housing website lists the same information

- 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.

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