

MIT Subject Access by Non-Enrolled Participants

Introduction:

In February 2021, Chair of the Faculty Rick Danheiser and Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz asked Dean for Digital Learning Krishna Rajagopal, Associate Chair of the Faculty Prof. Duane Boning, Registrar Brian Canavan and Deputy General Counsel Dahlia Fetouh to explore and discuss whether any guidelines are needed with regard to the involvement of non-MIT individuals in MIT subjects and classes.

The group reviewed common cases of non-MIT participation, recent specific cases, cultural norms, and legal and regulatory considerations. Findings were drafted, reported, and adjusted based on input from the Faculty Policy Committee, the Faculty Officers Group, and Dean's Council. The guidelines were approved by the Chair of the Faculty and Vice Chancellor in July, 2021.

This document articulates principles and guidelines that have largely existed within the MIT community for many years but not in written form.

Definitions:

- An “MIT subject” is an official MIT unit-bearing subject offering administered through the MIT Registrar. External MITx, MITxPro, edX, OCW, Professional Education, and related content or offerings are not “MIT subjects” for the purposes of this discussion.
- “MIT-enrolled student” is any participant registered through the MIT Registrar in an MIT subject. This includes MIT students and cross-registered students from other institutions with which MIT has a cross-registration agreement. MIT-enrolled students include those with Listener registration.
- “Non-enrolled participant” is a person granted access to any part (any content or activity) of an MIT subject who is not enrolled in the subject and is not an MIT member of its instructional staff. Non-enrolled participants include persons with roles as below (and potentially other roles):
 - “Non-enrolled student” who has a role similar to that of an MIT-enrolled student, or has access to or participates in a subset of the content and activities of an MIT subject.
 - “Non-enrolled speaker” who has a role similar to that of a guest speaker; guest lecturer; or invited panelist, expert or judge.
 - “Non-enrolled guest” who may take part in class in a role other than as a “student” or “speaker.” For example, MIT-enrolled students may interact with local grade school students, members of prisons, etc., as part of the educational experience of the MIT subject.

Principles and Guidelines:

- Open scholarly discourse is encouraged and valued at MIT. The inclusion of outside scholars in teaching and learning is a long-standing practice, consistent with and contributing to MIT's mission.

- The decision to include non-MIT participants is at the discretion of a subject's instructional staff under the oversight of the subject's department or program, as is typical at present for all aspects of a subject's administration.
- Engagement of non-enrolled participants can bring substantial benefits to the MIT-enrolled students, the non-enrolled participants, or both. In general, the expectation is that the presence or engagement of non-enrolled participants should be designed so as not to interfere with, degrade, or dilute the MIT-enrolled student experience.
 - For example, passive access by non-enrolled participants to subject content can be relatively non-intrusive and non-interfering. This might include viewing of live or recorded lectures, access to online content, etc.
 - Active participation by non-enrolled participants in subject activities (e.g., viewing or participating in synchronous or asynchronous discussions, viewing of MIT-enrolled student contributions, engaging or partnering with MIT-enrolled students in some component of the MIT subject) requires more care and should serve in some way to enhance or augment the educational experience of the MIT-enrolled students. Active participation by invited non-enrolled speakers naturally meets this criterion; examples of active participation by non-enrolled students or guests that meet this criterion have been designed by MIT instructors over the years.
- When non-enrolled participants are engaged in or granted access to the MIT subject, it should be disclosed and made transparent to MIT-enrolled students.
 - This is particularly pertinent for non-passive participation where non-enrolled participants may have access to the names, images, and classwork of MIT-enrolled students. MIT-enrolled students should be advised in advance that non-enrolled participants could be in attendance and, if relevant, will have the same access that they do to class recordings and materials.
- Cross-registration agreements require MIT vetting and approval of the Provost and Chancellor.
- Joint teaching agreements are those where students are registered in their own home institution subjects, but one or more components of the teaching of those subject(s) is coordinated and jointly executed by corresponding instructional staff across those institutions. At MIT, joint teaching arrangements should be vetted in advance by, and should be overseen as usual by, the MIT department or program offering the MIT subject.
 - Good practice is that joint teaching agreements should include parity of resources and benefits among the participating institutions and should improve the educational experience of all participants, including MIT-enrolled students.
- Several elements of MIT infrastructure, educational support, and reporting only apply to MIT-enrolled students, and non-enrolled students will generally not be included in or provided access to these resources. These include MIT class lists, pre-requisite reports, grade sheets and grade reporting, and subject evaluations, as well as access to labs, shops, makerspaces, or other areas that present environmental health and safety issues.
- Access to MIT subject content or activities through MIT learning management systems (e.g., Canvas) by non-enrolled students is permitted consistent with the guidelines here.

Non-MIT participants require an MIT guest account sponsored by an MIT faculty or staff member and subject to the MITnet rules of use. Instructors should be aware that the formats of email addresses for guest accounts are no different than for MIT community accounts. Therefore, instructors are urged to assign the status of “Non-Registered Participant” to non-enrolled students and other guests in Canvas (or provide similar indications of status in other learning management systems or sites used for subject content or activities, when possible).

- There is a difference between early undergraduate education, and later undergraduate and graduate years when topics tend toward research and/or specialization. Cross-boundary collaboration is more likely to arise in such advanced and graduate subjects, perhaps with increased or different engagement of non-enrolled participants. Such engagements should also follow the norms and expectations articulated here.
- Active participation by a non-enrolled participant who is a K-12 student is not permitted without first obtaining signed, written consent from the participant’s parent or guardian. For assistance, please contact minors@mit.edu.
- Unless the non-enrolled student is physically present on the MIT campus, certain advanced screening to ensure compliance with U.S. export control and sanctions laws may be required. If there will be any active participation by remote, non-enrolled students, then please contact exportcontrolhelp@mit.edu for assistance. The export control team can help screen each participant’s name, company/institute affiliation, and country of ordinary residence against relevant U.S. sanctions lists and determine if any exclusions are required. Purely passive participation by non-enrolled students delivered solely through Zoom or a public webpage accessible by the general population does not require additional screening. However, if passive participation will take place through a different remote medium, then please contact exportcontrolhelp@mit.edu to determine if screening is required.
- Although this may not have been common practice in the past, good practice is that a statement should be provided to active non-enrolled participants that:
 - Makes clear that the participant gains no status as an MIT student or MIT affiliate, by way of their non-enrolled participation in the MIT subject.
 - States that we expect the participant to follow the policies of their home institution, to the extent applicable, the guidance of their instructor(s), and MIT’s policies on conduct, non-discrimination, and non-harassment (which can be found in MIT’s Policies and Procedures, [Section 9](#)) when they are participating in an MIT subject;
 - States that there is no obligation by MIT to grant access, and when access is granted there is no obligation by MIT to continue to provide access to or participation in an MIT subject. That is, if it turns out that an individual non-enrolled participant, or participation by non-enrolled participants in general, is disruptive or interfering of the conduct of the subject, or if the instructor otherwise decides for any reason to discontinue the participation, the instructor and/or department should be able to discontinue that participation at any time. NOTE: this would not apply to joint teaching agreements, which *should* identify obligations of all parties.

For ease of administration, rather than distribute such a statement individually to each non-enrolled participant, it is recommended that a disclosure and limitation statement or acknowledgment as above could be included on the relevant subject's web site.