Guidelines for Re-opening Teaching at MIT

This memo provides details on available learning spaces at MIT for in-person teaching, illustrates campus sectors, and provides a short list of principles for their use. The aim is to communicate available options for hands-on-campus learning for Fall 2020 onward. The appendix contains an illustrative example of apportioning the campus into sectors of learning spaces, and examples of realigning teaching spaces into common sectors.

Inventory of MIT Learning Spaces

The attached spreadsheet (MasterLearningSpaceInventory_20200507_ForDistribution.xlsx) contains a sortable table of all available learning spaces for teaching for the Fall of 2020. Each of the spaces was categorized in terms of room type and COVID adjusted capacity. The COVID capacity was estimated using different social distancing calculations based on the room layout and fixtures. The table below summarizes the available learning space inventory. Note that we do not expect the XS spaces to be used for teaching. The XL spaces may be able to be used, but the upper limit of students in one location should not exceed 50. That limit is not absolute, but based on prior guidance during ramp down.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room Type</th>
<th>XS</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>XL</th>
<th>Total Rooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom_Fixed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar_Fixed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching_Lab</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Rooms</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The class size categories are:

XS = 2 or fewer students  
S = 3 to 10 students  
M = 11 to 20 students  
L = 21 to 50 students  
XL = more than 50 students

The room types are:

- Classroom = traditional flat room with moveable tables and chairs  
- Classroom_Fixed = tiered auditoriums or classrooms with fixed furniture  
- Other = non-traditional learning spaces (e.g., Samberg 6th floor)  
- Seminar_Fixed = small seminar rooms with large unmoveable table  
- Special = studios, shops, music practice areas, etc.  
- Teaching_Lab = spaces designed for specific educational uses (e.g., chemistry, etc.)
Campus Sectors

The campus has been divided into sectors that roughly match academic departments. These sectors are intended to allow departments to schedule and plan courses for their own students in order to minimize student and instructor movement across campus and to avoid crowding in entrances. Also, keeping people in a sector allows for better monitoring and contact tracing.

Table 2. Illustrative example of the campus sector map. Primary access points are shown.

Principles for Learning Space Use Planning

It is clearly each department’s role to determine what, how, when, and where to teach. Here are some principles that DSU’s might want to consider when developing their teaching plans for the fall.

1. The overall objective is to deliver educational excellence for students.
2. The health of faculty and staff is just as important as student health and should be included in both campus travel and space cleaning considerations.
3. Try to minimize required student and instructor movement across campus.
4. Consider minimizing the amount of on campus teaching by employing both on-line and in-person approaches for each class.
5. Try to minimize number of visits per day and reduce the number of visits per week to teaching sectors.
6. Consider scheduling classes to be in close proximity to each other within the same sector so that students do not need to move between sectors.
7. Try to stagger entry/exit times for students to minimize congestion and bottlenecks.
Appendix

Learning Space Map & Inventory for Two Teaching Sectors

Example of various learning spaces within two teaching sectors.

Figure 1. Level 1 learning spaces within teaching sectors in buildings 2 & 4

Figure 2. Level 2 learning spaces within teaching sectors in buildings 2 & 4
Figure 3. Level 3 learning spaces within teaching sectors in buildings 2 & 4

Figure 4. Snapshot of the Master Learning Space Inventory spreadsheet for buildings 2 and 4.
Examples for Teaching

This example shows for students with Chemical Biology focus. In fall 2019, three classes were taught in rooms in two separate buildings (top chart) that can be consolidated into rooms within a single sector (bottom chart). This may also require schedule modification for those subject numbers, but this is anticipated as likely because only hands-on-campus segments of a given subject number need access the campus and other elements of that subject number may be managed by remote education.

Figure 5. Three teaching locations as in Fall 2019. Note that they cross multiple sectors.

Figure 6. Recommended new learning spaces within teaching sector 2 adhering to COVID capacity limits.
Another example shows students with a Physical Chemistry focus. In fall 2019, three classes were taught in two different buildings (top chart) that can be consolidated into rooms within a single sector (bottom chart). This example would also include some scheduling modification for the learner to conduct those hands-on-campus elements during the same day of the week.

Figure 7. Three teaching locations as in Fall 2019. Note that they cross multiple buildings and sectors.

Figure 8. Recommended new learning spaces within teaching sector 4 adhering to COVID capacity limits.