

Updated Physics Values Statement

MIT Physics Community Values

(originally written May 2018, updated April 2024)

This statement of values informs departmental policies and structures and applies to the MIT Physics community, which comprises staff, students, researchers, faculty, and all those who engage with the MIT Physics Department. The Department commits to ensuring that the entire community understands and strives to uphold the values in this document.

Our Physics Community Values stem from the basic principle that members of our community should treat each other with respect and decency at all times. In turn, we should not alienate, diminish, or insult each other, either in word or deed.

Based on this principle, we believe that ***well-being, respect, inclusion, collaboration,*** and ***mentorship*** are moral imperatives that are vital to scientific progress. These ideals are essential for excellence in teaching and research and guide our participation in the MIT Physics community.

***Well-being:* We support each other at all times and remember that we are not alone.**

Mental and physical health are priorities above all else. Proactively addressing wellness is essential to everyone in our community. We look out for others who may be in distress or struggling and offer them compassion and understanding. And just as we treat others well, we must also be compassionate with ourselves. Asking for support is brave and admirable no matter the circumstances. We strive to find a healthy balance between our professional and personal lives and proactively seek out any support that we need.

***Respect:* We value the multitude of ways to be a member of the physics community and the many paths throughout our fields and Department.**

We are all respected as members of our community, regardless of the problems we choose to study, the work we do, or our current level of mastery. No role is inferior; all tasks are worthy of respect. We value the diversity in the strengths, experiences, and areas of expertise within our community. Furthermore, much of physics research is interdisciplinary. We value the richness that the interdisciplinary community brings and recognize the worth of other research fields.

***Inclusion:* We strive to speak and act in ways that support and include all members of our community.**

We are informed and shaped by our identities and experiences. A diversity of identities and experiences is essential to bring broad perspectives to our Department and academic mission. It is our responsibility to ensure that these diverse voices are included and heard. As individuals and as a community we constantly work to avoid all forms of discrimination, implicit or explicit, unintended or deliberate. We respect and validate other people's identities and the language they use to describe themselves. We recognize that comments made with good intentions can still be hurtful, and we strive to be aware of how our comments impact others.

***Collaboration:* Physics is a social endeavor and we proudly collaborate with others to advance the field.**

When we collaborate, we take others' ideas seriously and recognize that they may understand concepts and approach problems differently. Exclusion or derision of others based on different points of view or organizational hierarchy is not acceptable. Collaboration requires sharing knowledge and skills, and is contingent on appropriately acknowledging everyone's intellectual contributions. Collaboration also requires effective and transparent communication, both top down and bottom up. Proper acknowledgement, communication, and transparency enhance trust and are crucial to all activities in the Department.

***Mentorship:* All members of the community are here because of the mentorship we have received and continue to receive, and the mentorship we offer to others.**

We all act as both mentors and mentees throughout our careers. Mentor-mentee relationships entail constructive feedback, active listening, responsiveness and a mutual respect and appreciation of each other's efforts and time. Humiliation and degradation are unacceptable forms of interaction. Mentors should act with compassion, empathy, and a strong belief in the potential of their mentees. Mentees should be communicative, ask questions, and take initiative.

As members of our community, we uphold the principles of well-being, value, inclusion, collaboration, and mentorship. We take an active responsibility in ensuring that everyone feels welcome and respected. We recognize that other people's life experiences are not our own but are valid in and of themselves. Given this, we realize that our actions may impact others in unintended ways even as we strive to treat each other with respect. We understand that we will make mistakes. When we do, we will work to correct them and educate ourselves. We take pride in being upstanding members of our community.

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