

Defining Diversity & Inclusion

What is Diversity?

“Any collective mixture characterized by differences, similarities and related tensions.”

-- R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr., founder of The American Institute for Managing Diversity

Diversity encompasses a wide range of individual backgrounds, characteristics, and experiences. Diversity is differences based on age, ethnicity, gender, religion, ability, national origin, and sexual orientation, as well as learning styles, work styles, communication styles, work-life issues, speed of learning and comprehension, personality, socioeconomic status, length of service and expertise, and job function.

What is Inclusion?

“Creating a culture that encourages collaboration, learning from differences, flexibility, fairness and equal opportunity where structures, policies and practices enhance organizational effectiveness.”

-- R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr., founder of The American Institute for Managing Diversity

Putting it All Together: Diversity & Inclusion at MIT

Diversity is the composition of people associated with MIT. Inclusion, on the other hand, describes MIT's effectiveness at using the talents of people with different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. How does MIT leverage opportunity, interaction, communication, information, and decision-making to tap into the benefits of diversity?

Achieving inclusion at MIT means creating the structures, policies, and practices that recognize the existence of multiple perspectives, and signals the importance of learning from differences. Inclusion at MIT is not limited to the employee experience, but also refers to interactions among all MIT community members as well as partners, vendors, and subcontractors.

Inclusive organizations encourage collaboration, support problem solving and promote creativity, flexibility, and responsiveness to change. Pursuing high standards for workplace fairness and organizational effectiveness requires both diversity and inclusion.

We are committed to ensuring our policies and practices support our goal of inclusion. Over the next few months, we will provide additional information about inclusion as well as suggestions for MIT community members. We also invite you to send inquiries to Alyce Johnson, Manager of Staff Diversity & Inclusion, alycej@mit.edu