**Friday, April 10, 2020**

**News Digest: Penn State and the COVID-19 Crisis**

You will receive an email on Friday afternoons summarizing key updates involving Penn State and the COVID-19 crisis. Please review each weekly news digest on receipt and forward it to colleagues to keep them informed of recent developments.

* [Undergraduate](https://news.psu.edu/story/613137/2020/03/25/academics/optional-alternative-grading-scale-implemented-spring-2020) and [graduate](https://news.psu.edu/story/614029/2020/04/02/academics/graduate-school-implements-optional-alternative-grading-spring) students university-wide can request “alternative grading” this semester on a course-by-course basis. [Penn State Law](https://news.psu.edu/story/614016/2020/04/02/academics/penn-state-law-university-park-announces-spring-2020-grading) in University Park and [Dickinson Law](https://news.psu.edu/story/613969/2020/04/02/academics/dickinson-law-adopts-creditno-credit-grading-spring-2020-semester) in Carlisle also announced alternative grading options.

* Faculty and student use of Zoom is now “camera optional,” and we’re taking security measures to prevent individuals who shouldn’t be there from
logging into classes’ Zoom sessions. Guidance and FAQs for Penn State [faculty](https://remoteteaching.psu.edu/faq/) and [students](https://remotelearning.psu.edu/faq/) about remote teaching and learning are being
updated regularly.

* For tenure-line faculty in their probationary period in Spring 2020, Penn State has issued [guidance regarding a one-year extension due to COVID-19](https://www.vpfa.psu.edu/files/2020/04/COVID-probationary-period-extension-4.3.20-FINAL.pdf).

* Prospective students still can apply to the University Park campus through Monday, May 1, and to Commonwealth Campuses through Friday, July 31. Applications are being processed on a rolling basis as usual.

* We are encouraging new students to accept their admission offers by Monday, May 1, and to begin their transition activities. However, students needing additional time may go to their MyPennState portals to get an extension to Monday, June 1.

* New [Penn State Emergency Paid Sick Leave and FMLA Public Health Emergency Leave Guidelines](https://nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fpsu.app.box.com%2Fs%2F6i0inw2xdp8viazb75tz68hz4gwgnp1c&data=02%7C01%7Cjmd158%40psu.edu%7Cff584e6ffdfd4bb6754a08d7da2a27dd%7C7cf48d453ddb4389a9c1c115526eb52e%7C0%7C0%7C637217746893929810&sdata=9BAXQ4JgM1y7gMnGbkuNYh%2Fyf1qu1g0FfNnHi4Ngkgo%3D&reserved=0)took effect Wednesday, April 1.

* The time frame to complete the 2019-2020 performance management cycle (end-of-year reviews) has been pushed back to Friday, May 1, through Friday, July 31.

* [Efforts are underway to provide prorated refunds](https://news.psu.edu/story/613777/2020/03/31/campus-life/penn-state-begin-issuing-room-and-board-refunds-students) of room and board payments to students who have on-campus Housing and Food Service (HFS) contracts.

* Free virtual screenings for COVID-19 are now available Penn State Health OnDemand, a telehealth service. A [Centre County COVID-19 drive-through test collection site](https://hr.psu.edu/content/covid-19-drive-thru-testing) also is available for Mount Nittany Health and Penn State Health patients.

* [The Graduate School will host a virtual town hall](https://news.psu.edu/story/613994/2020/04/02/administration/graduate-school-host-virtual-town-hall-april-9) on Thursday, April 9.

* The [Penn State Alumni Trustee Election](https://news.psu.edu/story/613880/2020/04/01/administration/penn-state-alumni-trustee-election-begin-april-10) will begin on Friday, April 10.

**To obtain comprehensive, updated information at any time, visit:**

* The University’s official [COVID-19 information site](https://sites.psu.edu/virusinfo) and [FAQ page](https://sites.psu.edu/virusinfo/faqs/). The most recent updates to the FAQs are provided [here](https://sites.psu.edu/virusinfo/faqs/#latest).
* [The Office of Human Resources COVID-19 site](https://hr.psu.edu/covid-19-coronavirus)
* Our robust [list of contacts and resources](https://sites.psu.edu/virusinfo/contacts-and-resources-for-penn-staters/) for the University community
* The websites dedicated to remote [teaching](http://remoteteaching.psu.edu/) and [learning](http://remotelearning.psu.edu/)