

Friday, April 23, 2021

News for Faculty and Instructors: Penn State and COVID-19

This twice-weekly email is designed to provide faculty and instructors with Penn State's pandemic-related news and updates during the Spring 2021 semester. Watch for these emails on Tuesdays and Fridays, with additional "special editions" delivered periodically. Previous faculty news digests are [archived here](#). For current faculty guidance, resources, FAQ documents, and more visit the "[Back to State Info for Faculty](#)" webpage.

A NOTE ABOUT THIS DIGEST

Beginning the week of May 3, this Digest will be published once a week on Friday.

QUESTION FROM FACULTY

Q: *Can I test out of isolation?*

A: Individuals who have been placed in isolation cannot test out of isolation. Individuals who are in isolation are COVID-19 positive. They cannot leave isolation for a minimum of 10 days and may have to isolate longer if they are symptomatic. The full FAQ is available [here](#).

FEATURED VIDEO

- As part of the "COVID-19 Vaccines: Asked and Answered" video series, Troy Sutton, assistant professor of veterinary and biomedical sciences, explains that because variants continue to emerge, [we anticipate that SARS-CoV-2 will continue to circulate in humans for several years](#), causing regular outbreaks.

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- Penn State's [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) shows ongoing results for all COVID-19 tests administered on campus since December 19, 2020, for faculty, staff, and students.
- Earlier this semester, an Academic Integrity Canvas module was created. Whether you downloaded the module and used it in your class, looked at the module back in February but didn't incorporate it into your Spring class, or are just hearing about the Academic Integrity Canvas module for the first time, we would like to hear from you! Please complete this short [survey](#) to help us improve the Academic Integrity Canvas module for use in future semesters.

- In [this video](#), Deb Kelly, professor of biomedical engineering, and a team of biomedical engineers used a novel toolkit of approaches to uncover the first full structure of a SARS-CoV-2 protein.
- The summer 2021 Tech TA Request Form is now available. Instructors can request Tech TA support for the summer 2021 semester by submitting the form located [here](#).
- A new study by Simon Haeder, assistant professor of public policy, found that a majority of those surveyed [supported mandates that required students and teachers to be vaccinated against COVID-19](#).
- The 2021 survey¹ from TLT regarding challenges students face during the pandemic found that 17% of students found differing layouts in Canvas challenging. To reduce this challenge during the upcoming semester, please remember to use the [research-based guidelines](#) for setting up Canvas to be effective for your students! (¹ Serpi, A., Robert, J. (2021). *The remote teaching experience: 1 year later, How are instructors holding up?* Retrieved April 13, 2021, from <https://doi.org/10.26207/fdjk-jr25>)
- President Barron shared a [message with the University community](#) following the verdict in the Minneapolis trial.
- Penn State community members across every campus location are invited to participate in a [survey about the upcoming search](#) for the University's 19th president. As part of the [Next Gen Penn State](#) listening process, the survey will seek feedback from students, faculty, staff and alumni as well as other community stakeholders on characteristics, priorities and goals for the institution's next leader. The survey closes on Sunday, April 25.

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- [Penn State is partnering with Walmart to offer a COVID-19 vaccination clinic](#) that is open to Penn State students, employees and dependents age 16 and older beginning Thursday, April 22 through Saturday, April 24 inside Pegula Ice Arena on the University Park campus.
- Researchers in the College of Information Sciences and Technology conducted a study in which they [augmented online symptom checkers](#) by offering explanations of how the system generated its probable diagnoses and suggestions — while also studying users' perceptions of those recommendations.
- [Penn State is strongly encouraging all students, faculty, and staff to sign up to get a vaccine as soon as they are eligible to receive one.](#) Phase 2, which extends vaccine eligibility to all Pennsylvanians age 16 or older, began on April 13.

- [Spring 2021 Holiday/Special Events Testing Schedule](#)
 - Friday, May 7: no random testing (all campuses); one walk-up testing site open (Pegula Ice Arena).
 - Saturday, May 8: no random testing (all campuses); no walk-up testing.
- Walk-up testing is available to employees who are in the Return to Work database at University Park. Employees in that database also continue to have the option to do the opt-in mail kit testing. Walk-up COVID-19 testing hours at the University Park campus will continue as follows:
 - Walk-up testing at the Hintz Family Alumni Center will be available Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
 - Testing availability will change on the dates listed above. More information is available [here](#).
- [Faculty can still submit questions](#) related to Penn State’s COVID response. Questions may be submitted [here](#).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To obtain comprehensive, updated information at any time, please review:

- The University’s comprehensive resources on its [“Back to State” page](#) and [updated FAQs](#) regarding on-campus work and learning
- Penn State’s [“Keep Teaching”](#) and [“Keep Learning”](#) websites, including many [Spring 2021 instruction-related FAQs](#)
- Penn State’s [COVID-19 dashboard](#)
- Previous issues of this [Digest](#)
- The online archive of [video messages](#) from Penn State leaders and experts
- The [Office of Human Resources COVID-19 information site](#) and [“Return to Work on Campus”](#) resource site
- The [“University Measures” webpage](#), which summarizes steps Penn State is taking in response to COVID-19
- The University’s [health information page focused on personal safety practices](#) for individuals at all campuses
- A robust, updated [list of contacts and resources](#) for the University community
- The Social Science Research Institute [website featuring pandemic-related insights from University experts](#) and other resources