

Friday, August 6, 2021

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

This weekly email is designed to provide faculty and instructors with Penn State's pandemic-related news and updates. Watch for these emails on 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 2021 Resources](#)" webpage.

QUESTION FROM FACULTY:

Q: How can faculty with health needs request adjustments to their in-person teaching responsibilities?

A: The University understands that some individuals may have health-related needs that require adjustments for the fall and has put a process in place for faculty to request an adjustment to their in-person teaching responsibilities. Due to the changing nature of the pandemic recently across the country and in Pennsylvania, the University is reopening the process for faculty work adjustment requests until Thursday, August 12. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Remote work adjustments will be considered for individuals who are immunocompromised or live with someone who is immunocompromised, individuals with children who are unvaccinated and are at high risk for complications from COVID-19, and individuals who, for medical reasons, cannot be vaccinated. Faculty members who wish to request a work adjustment should visit the [Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs website](#) and look under the "Instructional Guidance" section for information on the adjustment process and the [Work Adjustment Request Form](#).

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- Effective immediately, Penn State will require all students, faculty, staff, and visitors – including those who are vaccinated and unvaccinated – to [wear masks indoors at all campuses](#). Click [here](#) for a list of FAQs related to the University's fall plans.
- With COVID-19 cases rising and the Delta variant becoming the dominant strain, Penn State is adjusting its health and safety plans for the fall 2021 semester. President Barron joined other University leaders for a town hall on August 3 to share the fall plans. Read the full story [here](#).
- Instructors are reminded to utilize the [Canvas setup guidelines](#) as they prepare classes for fall. These guidelines ensure that, in the event of instructor or student illness, information is conveyed consistently across courses.

- Penn State is awarding [COVID-19 relief grants totaling \\$10 million](#) to help students enrolled during the summer 2021 semester cover any component of their cost of attendance or other emergency expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Penn State researchers are exploring [behaviors for slowing and stopping the spread of COVID-19](#) and related beliefs, emotions, and experiences via survey data of Pennsylvania adults in the Centre County COVID-19 Data 4 Action Project.
- 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.

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- Students who started at Penn State in fall 2020 and spring 2021 did so under extraordinary circumstances due to the pandemic and may have spent the entirety of their first two semesters studying remotely. The University started the First to Second Year Task Force in spring 2021 to identify the implications the pandemic had on students. The [task force has established a system of financial support](#) for colleges, campuses, and units that wish to offer programs and services to second-year students to help that cohort develop the awareness, understanding and connections of a full on-campus experience. Any college, campus, or unit can [apply for up to \\$7,500 in funding](#).
- Effective August 16, [Penn State will lift its suspension of University-affiliated international travel](#), which has been in place since March 2020. The revised guidelines apply to travel requests made on or after August 16 for travel beginning September 16 or later. Registration in the Travel Safety Network at least 30 days in advance will be required.
- The deadline for students to respond to an anonymous survey about their current COVID-19 vaccination status or plans to get vaccinated before the start of the fall semester has been [extended to August 6](#).
- The [Class of 2020 Commencement Celebration Weekend](#) will take place April 29 to May 1, 2022.
- Penn State is continuing to [encourage students and employees to share their coronavirus vaccination status](#) to help inform the University's decision-making and its COVID-19 management plan. Employees can provide their vaccination status using [SalesForce Health Cloud](#), a secure online platform.
- [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 ["University Status" page](#) and [updated FAQs](#) regarding on-campus work and learning
- Penn State's ["Keep Teaching"](#) and ["Keep Learning"](#) websites, including many [instruction-related FAQs](#)
- Penn State's [COVID-19 dashboard](#)
- Previous issues of this [Digest](#)
- The [Office of Human Resources COVID-19 information site](#) and ["Return to Work on Campus"](#) resource site
- 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