

Friday, September 3, 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.

QUESTIONS FROM FACULTY:

Q: What should I do if I am notified that a student in my class is in quarantine or isolation?

A: This [document](#) describes how you will be notified if a student in your class is in quarantine or isolation and the role faculty can play in contact tracing efforts.

Q: What should I do if a student tells me they have COVID-19?

A: If the student was identified through university testing, there is no other action you need to take. If the student received a positive test result from a third-party vendor not affiliated with the University (for example, urgent care clinic or primary care physician) you should encourage the student to report their result to the University by sharing this link: <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/covidsupport/reporting>.

You may also submit information about students who have tested positive (or who have identified themselves as close contacts of students who have tested positive) via the [Covid-19 Close Contact or Positive Case Referral Form](#). Further information on contact tracing is available at <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/covidsupport/reporting>. Please do not report a class roster. Contact tracers will follow up with classmates identified as close contacts.

For guidance on working with students who test positive for coronavirus or who find themselves in special circumstances, please see this [FAQ](#).

Q: What consequences will students face if they fail to comply with required COVID-19 testing?

A: Students who are not vaccinated and those who have not shared with the University that they are fully vaccinated will be required to test weekly for COVID-19 throughout the fall semester, or until they share that they have been fully vaccinated. Students who fail to test by the weekly deadline will receive an email with a warning that the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and be placed under a registration hold, which prohibits future course registration, if they fail to test within the required time window a second time. Students who fail to test within the required window a second

time during the fall semester will immediately be placed under a registration hold and will be referred to Student Conduct. Read the full FAQ [here](#).

Q: *Can I get the flu shot and COVID-19 vaccine at the same time?*

A: Physicians say it's fine to get both shots at the same time. Leslie Parent, vice dean for research and graduate studies and an infectious disease specialist at the Penn State College of Medicine, says that as we participate in more in-person activities, influenza and other respiratory viruses could circulate at much higher levels. Read the full FAQ [here](#).

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- Penn State Campus Recreation may be [forced to impose a moratorium on access to its facilities](#) unless compliance with the University's indoor masking requirement significantly increases.
- In the latest COVID-19 vaccination report for the University Park campus, the vast majority of students living on campus – more than 86% - [has provided proof of vaccination to the University](#). In addition, 83% of full-time employees at University Park have indicated that they are fully vaccinated.
- [Required weekly COVID-19 testing will begin this week for full-time Penn State faculty and staff](#) who have not shared with the University that they are fully vaccinated. Penn State continues to strongly encourage students and employees to be vaccinated for COVID-19 with the first available option as soon as possible.
- At University Park, nearly [94% of course sections for fall](#) are expected to be delivered as in-person classes.
- From Jun 7 to August 23, Penn State [conducted an incentive program](#) for students, faculty, and staff, encouraging them to receive a COVID-19 vaccine and share their vaccination status. Each week, those who shared proof of their vaccination status were eligible for prize drawings. More than 40,000 people participated in the program, and winners included 48 students and 48 faculty/staff at University Park and 24 students and 24 faculty/staff at the Commonwealth Campuses.
- Penn State is [continuing to offer voluntary COVID-19 testing](#) for any student or employee, including vaccinated individuals, who are asymptomatic of COVID-19 but want to be tested because of possible virus exposure or other reasons.
- Updated "[Guidance on Instructor/Researcher/Faculty Member Violations of COVID-19 Requirements](#)" is available.

- [University Health Services is administering free COVID-19 vaccinations](#) for all students at University Park.
- A research team including researchers from Penn State found that staying home and limiting local travel, supporting access to primary care, and limiting contacts in contagion hubs – including hospitals, schools, and workplaces – are [strategies that might help reduce COVID-19-related deaths](#).
- The University Park Undergraduate Association is leading an effort, in collaboration with Student Affairs and the College of Health and Human Development, to [encourage the Penn State community to be vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible](#).
- Penn State's [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) will be updated [twice weekly](#), on Tuesdays and Thursdays, during the fall semester.

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- The University is reminding students, faculty, staff, and visitors of changes to COVID-19 policies and resources. Read the full article [here](#).
- Several [FAQs](#) address faculty questions about why faculty cannot choose their own mode of instruction in the fall and the role that faculty play in developing the University's plans for the fall.
- President Eric Barron responded to a COG letter calling for a student-only vaccine mandate. Read the full text [here](#).
- If you are planning to utilize Zoom to stream or create recordings of your in-class lectures, [new guidance is available](#) that includes best practices for using lecture recordings as a resource for students, and considerations regarding in-person attendance.
- 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