

**Friday, September 10, 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 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: What consequences will faculty or instructors face if they fail to comply with required COVID-19 testing or other COVID-19 guidelines?***

**A:** This [document](#) describes the expectations of instructors, researchers, and faculty members to adhere to Penn State's requirements and expectations for reducing the risk of COVID-19, the process for reviewing allegations of failure to abide by expectations, sanctions that may be imposed, and the appeals process. When an academic unit head is notified that an instructor/researcher/faculty member is not adhering to health and safety requirements, they will verify the allegation and, if found to be credible, will have a constructive conversation with the instructor/researcher/faculty member. If the non-compliance continues, the academic unit head will again meet with the instructor/researcher/faculty member and make every effort to assist them with meeting Penn State's health and safety requirements. Sanctions may be imposed. For subsequent instances of non-compliance, the individual will be removed from the course and, subject to a review process described in the document, placed on unpaid leave. Any decision to place an instructor/researcher/faculty member on unpaid leave will be reviewed within seven days by a committee.

**Q: What COVID-19 testing options are required for employees, and what optional testing options are available?**

**A:** Required testing has begun for full-time employees who have not shared vaccine information and who are working on a campus this fall. Emails are being sent weekly with testing information. University Park employees are offered testing by appointment or walk-up and those details are included in the testing email messages. Mail-in testing for on-campus University Park employees to meet this requirement is not an option. The testing will primarily take place at the White Building on UP campus. The Pegula Ice Arena site is at limited capacity [for appointments only](#) and will close on September 22, 2021. Please plan at least one hour to complete this testing weekly.

Full-time employees at the Commonwealth Campuses who have not shared vaccine information with the University are also receiving weekly testing emails with test information. These employees are provided a link to order a Vault Health test kit to their home. Instructions for ordering a kit are included in the email. It is possible to order up to four test kits at a time for at-home weekly testing. It is important for employees who are using this test method to follow the instructions contained in the test kit and complete the test process in a timely manner each week. Test kits are mailed to Vault via UPS, not USPS. Specific information on a website to identify a local UPS is provided in the Vault Health materials.

Any employee (not just an employee who is required to test) who is concerned about COVID-19 may seek testing through their personal health care provider or other local COVID-19 testing options. At any Penn State location, employees may order a [Vault Health mail-in test kit](#). Voluntary testing is available to employees even if they have been vaccinated for COVID-19. Due to the required testing process at University Park, UP employees not required to test are strongly encouraged to use this test-at-home option.

**Q: What should I do if a student in my class tells me that they have tested positive for COVID-19? *\*new resource available***

**A:** This [document](#) describes how a faculty member is notified that a student in their class is in quarantine or isolation and how faculty can help with contact tracing efforts. A new resource is now available to faculty: if a student directly informs a faculty member that they have tested positive for COVID-19, the faculty member may send this [notice](#) to the students in the class. Faculty should not share that there was a positive case in the class.

**LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY**

- The College of Health and Human Development Dean's Lecture Series will host a special event, ["Missed Opportunities with COVID-19 Vaccination – Maybe it's not too Late"](#) on Wednesday, September 15 at 4 p.m. via Zoom.

- Researchers from the College of Information Sciences and Technology studied [crisis communications during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) to understand how local policy announcements can be more culturally dependent.
- Penn State's [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) will be updated [twice weekly](#), on Tuesdays and Thursdays, during the fall semester.

## KEY REMINDERS FOR 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 has begun 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 June 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.
- [University Health Services is administering free COVID-19 vaccinations](#) for all students at University Park.
- 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