

Friday, October 15, 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: *Are faculty 'work adjustments' available for spring semester 2022?*

A: Guidance has been updated and released to inform faculty and instructors of on-campus work expectations and the [work adjustments process](#) for spring 2022. A document describing the work adjustment process and criteria is available [here](#). Faculty with an approved work adjustment for fall 2021 may apply for an extension of their work adjustment to spring 2022 [here](#). The form for faculty who do not currently have a work adjustment, but who want to request one for spring 2022, is available [here](#). The deadline to apply for a spring semester work adjustment is October 29.

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- In compliance with President Biden's executive order requiring COVID-19 vaccination for all federal employees, contractors, and others, Penn State has determined that [all University Park faculty and staff must submit proof that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by December 8](#).
- A research project conducted jointly by the Penn State College of Medicine and Penn State University Libraries will [assess COVID-19 beliefs, including vaccine hesitancy](#), throughout the Penn State community.
- A Penn State-led research team will measure the [rapid changes in greenhouse gas emissions](#) that resulted from lower traffic levels and efforts to curb transmission of the virus.
- According to Penn State College of Medicine researchers, more than half of the 236 million people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 worldwide since December 2019 will [experience post-COVID symptoms](#) up to 6 months after recovering.
- Penn State will [award \\$50 million in emergency relief](#) to help students enrolled during the fall 2021 semester to cover any component of their cost of attendance or other emergency expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Penn State's [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) will be updated [twice weekly](#), on Tuesdays and Thursdays, during the fall semester.

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- More than five weeks into the fall semester, the [COVID-19 vaccination rates among students, faculty, and staff at University Park are continuing to rise](#) as the positivity rate of University COVID-19 testing declines. As of October 7, the overall vaccination rate among all students at University Park is more than 87%, and the seven-day positivity rate of all testing conducted by Penn State at University Park is 0.4%. Penn State is urging students who have not yet been vaccinated against COVID-19 to begin the process now so that they can be fully vaccinated before leaving campus for the Thanksgiving break.
- A “contingency planning” [document](#) has been developed that assists academic unit heads (department heads, director of academic affairs, school directors, division heads) in planning for the possibility of a faculty member’s extended absence from a class, or multiple student absences in a single class, that may strain instructional capacity. Faculty members may also find this document useful to review.
- [COVID-19 testing at White Building](#) is available from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sundays through Fridays for students living on or near the University Park campus, and faculty and staff who are working on campus.
- 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