

Friday, November 19, 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.

PUBLICATION UPDATE

This Digest will not be published next week during the Thanksgiving break. The next edition will be published on Friday, December 3.

QUESTION FROM FACULTY

Q: *Should I get a flu shot?*

A: Matt Ferrari, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Dynamics, explains that getting your flu shot this fall is more important than ever. Several flu outbreaks have occurred throughout the U.S. in the past couple weeks. Ferrari also explains that with more flu cases, more people might mistake their symptoms for COVID and use already limited COVID testing resources. Read the full article [here](#).

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- All faculty, including those who are working remotely, must update their vaccine card if they have indicated that they are vaccinated. Vaccine cards can be uploaded to the [Salesforce Health Cloud](#). All faculty must do to determine whether their vaccine card has been uploaded is click on this link. Notification is instant.
- Penn State students in need of financial assistance due to the COVID-19 pandemic can now apply for a [fall 2021 emergency financial aid grant](#) from the University's Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) III allocation.
- Penn State's [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) will be updated [twice weekly](#), on Tuesdays and Thursdays, during the fall semester.

VACCINATION MANDATE RESOURCES

Many faculty members who indicated they are vaccinated have not yet uploaded their vaccination card. Even if you're fairly certain that you uploaded your vaccine card to Salesforce, please check to be sure by visiting [Salesforce Health Cloud](#). If you do not have a vaccine card uploaded into Salesforce, you will be considered out of compliance with the vaccine mandate.

Apply for a religious accommodation at <https://affirmativeaction.psu.edu/covid-19-information/>. More information is available [here](#).

Apply for a medical/disability-based accommodation at <https://hr.psu.edu/sites/hr/files/COVID19MedicalDisabilityAccommodationRequestForm.pdf>. More information is available [here](#).

Information on where to find a vaccine provider can be found [here](#).

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- In alignment with the recent announcement from the White House on federal vaccination requirements, [all Penn State employees at all locations are now subject to a federal COVID-19 vaccination requirement](#) – either the federal contractor mandate or the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) mandate – under an executive order from President Biden.
 - At this time, Penn State has determined that the federal contractor vaccination requirement applies to individuals working at, or affiliated with, nine campuses: Altoona, Behrend, Berks, Brandywine, DuBois, Fayette, Harrisburg, Schuylkill, and University Park, including Penn State Extension employees. This has also been extended to Penn State College of Medicine in Hershey and at University Park. There is no option to test out of the federal contractor mandate.
 - The OSHA Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) on Vaccination and Testing, which applies to employers with 100 or more employees, impacts employees at all other Penn State locations. Employees covered under the OSHA requirement must receive their final dose by January 4 or test weekly for COVID-19 in the University's testing protocol.
- The University has updated COVID-19 testing schedules and operating hours for both campus health services and the COVID-19 call center. For employees required to test this fall, the University has set defined dates for them to complete their COVID-19 test prior to the Thanksgiving and winter breaks: Wednesday, November 17-Tuesday, November 30; Saturday, December 1 to Tuesday, December 7; and Wednesday, December 8 to Tuesday, December 14.
- Drop-in testing at the White Building will remain available during the Thanksgiving and winter breaks, but will be closed or have modified hours on some days. The full schedule 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 ["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