

Friday, January 7, 2022

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: *What are Penn State's current masking expectations?*

A: [Indoor masking is still required by all individuals](#), regardless of vaccination status, in all classrooms, meeting rooms, common areas in residence halls, and indoor events. [Students, faculty, staff, and visitors are urged to wear well-fitting, multi-layered masks](#) in accordance with the latest University and federal guidance.

Masks are available through your unit's Pandemic Safety Officer.

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- Information for faculty and instructors about how to handle absences at <https://keep Teaching.psu.edu/ufags/handling-instructor-and-or-student-absences-due-to-covid-19/>.
- Instructors who are teaching an in-person class may offer less than 25% of the course remotely (synchronously or asynchronously). This flexibility is afforded to instructors to manage their own absences, whether due to illness or other unavoidable circumstances, during travel, or for pedagogical reasons. Instructors are asked to inform their academic unit head (department head, director of academic affairs, school director, division head) when remote instruction is offered.
- Centre Volunteers in Medicine and Penn State will host a [free COVID-19 vaccination clinic](#) from noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 9 inside the Bryce Jordan Center on the University Park campus.
- The Office of Physical Plan continues its [University-wide effort to manage ventilation throughout campus facilities](#) and closely monitor indoor air ventilation recommendations related to COVID-19.
- For the most recent week from Jan. 3 through Jan. 6, [2,403 total COVID-19 tests were administered at University Park](#), resulting in 318 positive cases, for a positivity rate of 13.2%.

VACCINATION MANDATE RESOURCES

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](#). Those who have received two shots are urged to get a booster if eligible.

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- Penn State has determined that, if the injunction against the federal contractor vaccine mandate is lifted by the courts, it will [apply to all Penn State locations](#). The University has concluded that it is not practicable to have different standards at different campuses because many Penn State employees work, collaborate, and interact on multiple campuses and at locations across the commonwealth.
- This [article](#) contains a list of COVID-19-related resources for employees.
- Penn State strongly encourages its students and employees to get their [booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine](#).
- Penn State students who have not shared with the University proof that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 [will continue to have to test weekly throughout the spring 2022 semester](#).
- [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