

Friday, January 14, 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 2021-2022 Resources"](#) webpage.

QUESTION FROM FACULTY

Q: *Does the federal contractor mandate injunction affect testing?*

A: While the Supreme Court blocked the OSHA vaccine mandate yesterday, it is the federal contractor vaccine mandate that will apply to all Penn State locations if the injunction is lifted by the courts. Under the federal contractor vaccine mandate, all employees at all Penn State campuses are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or have an approved medical/disability or religious-related accommodation. Because this mandate is currently under an injunction it will not be implemented by Penn State on January 4. This injunction, however, could be lifted in the near future. In the meantime, the University will continue with the current testing protocols already in place. Read the full FAQ [here](#).

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- University Health Services is administering [free first and second doses and booster COVID-19 vaccinations for all students](#) in the Student Health Center at University Park starting January 12.
- At University Park, [drop-in and by-appointment asymptomatic COVID-19 testing is available seven days a week at White Building for students](#) living on or near campus. At all Commonwealth Campuses, student tests will be distributed by the student health center or designated office, or ordered through the mail via the Vault Health mail-in test kit.
- [More than 1,000 people received COVID-19 vaccine doses](#) at the latest vaccination clinic hosted by Centre Volunteers in Medicine and Penn State on January 9.
- According to researchers in Penn State College of Medicine, the [public's willingness to comply with CDC recommendations correlates with COVID-19 case projections](#) in zip codes where those surveyed about their intended behaviors live.

- According to economists in the College of Agricultural Sciences, Pennsylvania's labor economy showed resilience during the first two decades of the 21st century, but [certain industry sectors and regions of the state continued along a trend line of job loss](#) in the run-up to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

- The Office of Physical Plant continues its [University-wide effort to manage ventilation throughout campus facilities](#) and closely monitor indoor air ventilation recommendations related to COVID-19.
- [Students, faculty, staff, and visitors are urged to wear well-fitting, multi-layered masks](#) in accordance with the latest University and federal guidance.
- Information for faculty and instructors about how to handle absences at <https://keep Teaching.psu.edu/uFAQs/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.
- 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