

Friday, January 21, 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.

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- Centre Volunteers in Medicine and Penn State will hold a [free COVID-19 vaccination clinic](#) from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, January 26 at the Bryce Jordan Center on the University Park campus. [Appointments](#) are now available to Penn State students, faculty, and staff who need first, second, or booster doses and then the clinic will welcome local community members to fill the remaining appointment slots.
- Students who have not shared with the University that they are fully vaccinated must test weekly throughout the spring semester. Enrolled students who are noncompliant with the weekly required testing will [lose Canvas access until they become compliant](#).
- As part of its ongoing efforts across many channels to expand Americans' access to free COVID testing, the Biden-Harris Administration is requiring insurance companies and group health plans to cover the cost of over-the-counter (OTC), at-home COVID-19 tests, so people with private health coverage can get them for free starting January 15th. The Aetna medical plans, with CVS Caremark prescription coverage, will cover the cost of OTC COVID tests with direct reimbursement through the pharmacy and no upfront out of pocket cost for employees, provided employees make the OTC COVID test purchase at the **pharmacy counter** of a CVS Caremark participating pharmacy. All faculty and instructors should have received an email from Penn State Human Resources on Thursday, January 20 with complete information. More information is available [here](#).

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

- 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.
- [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