

Tuesday, July 21, 2020

News for Faculty: Penn State's Preparations for Fall 2020

This twice-weekly email is designed to provide faculty with Penn State's pandemic-related news and updates as the University prepares for the Fall 2020 semester. Watch for these emails on Tuesdays and Fridays, with additional "special editions" delivered periodically. Previous faculty news digests are [archived here](#).

QUESTIONS FROM FACULTY

Q: Will the University provide information to faculty if a student in their class has a confirmed case of COVID-19?

A: Penn State will conduct contact tracing for faculty, staff, and students who test positive or are presumed positive for COVID-19. When a student tests positive for COVID-19, an email notification will be sent to faculty teaching in-person classes that mentions dates when the student cannot attend class due to a medical reason. When the student gives permission to share that they have tested positive for COVID-19 or are in quarantine as a close contact of someone who has tested positive, the University will do so. In addition, the University will notify faculty teaching remote courses to assist with appropriate academic accommodations as needed, and a notification will be sent to confirm when a student can return to class.

When physical distancing is maintained in class, the faculty member and fellow students are not considered to be close contacts of a positive/presumed positive case and will not need to quarantine due to being in class together. An exception to this may be in a lab or other experiential environment where students are working together. In these cases, faculty should have students working in teams/pods that maintain physical distance from the other groups.

Q: What do I do if a student who will be unable to participate for a period of time requests make-up work?

A: You may provide traditional make-up assignments (e.g., provide slides, offer office hour appointments, extend due dates, etc.) appropriate for the course and its designated delivery mode. [Policy 42-27](#) on Class Attendance states, "Instructors also should provide, within reason, the opportunity to make up work for students who miss classes for other legitimate but unavoidable reasons. ... it should be recognized that not all work can be 'made-up' and that absences can affect student performance in a class."

Consider asking if the student is unable to participate in the whole course or in certain elements (e.g., cannot attend in-person sessions but can complete assignments on time). Try to identify simple ways to provide access to the elements that the student will miss, so there will be no need for make-up work. Instructors are not asked to create

alternate ways to deliver course material; rather, they are asked to provide flexibility, within reason, on how students might achieve learning outcomes to students who unexpectedly cannot participate in part or all of a course for a period of time.

To read the full FAQ on this topic, please visit <https://keptteaching.psu.edu/fall-2020/frequently-asked-questions/>.

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- On July 17, President Eric Barron outlined to the Board of Trustees the [University's ongoing efforts to provide students with options and flexibility](#) for learning in Fall 2020 given the pandemic's impacts. With nearly all classes finalized for the fall semester, [about half the courses will be either fully in-person or a combination of in-person and remote learning](#).
- On July 16, the Board of Trustees Committee on Academic Affairs and Student Life held a [panel discussion about the disproportionate effects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on underrepresented populations](#) at the University, with input from Penn State leadership and students, faculty, and staff of color.

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- The new [Fall 2020 Faculty Lunch & Learn webinar series](#) is designed to provide critical information for Penn State faculty as they prepare their courses in one of the Fall 2020 instructional modes. [Upcoming webinars this week include:](#)
 - Wednesday, July 22, Noon-1 p.m. EDT: [Strategies for Mixed-Mode Instruction for All Campus Faculty](#)
 - Thursday, July 23, Noon-1 p.m. EDT: [Active Learning in Socially Distanced Classrooms for All Campus Faculty](#)
 - Thursday, July 23, 3-4 p.m. EDT: [Strategies for Remote Synchronous Instruction for Instructors at Commonwealth Campuses](#)
 - Friday, July 24, Noon-1 p.m. EDT: [Active Learning in Socially Distanced Classrooms for Instructors at Commonwealth Campuses](#)
- The "Keep Teaching" website has [updated Return to Resident Instruction guidance](#), a [new webinar series for faculty](#), and many new and updated [Fall 2020 FAQs](#).
- Penn State [faculty are encouraged to continue submitting questions](#) via [this online form](#) so leadership can respond to them in upcoming communications.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To obtain comprehensive, updated information at any time, please review:

- The University's comprehensive resources on its ["Back to State" page](#) and [updated FAQs](#) regarding plans to resume on-campus work and learning this fall
- Penn State's ["Keep Teaching"](#) and ["Keep Learning"](#) websites, including many [Fall 2020 instruction-related FAQs](#) and [new webinars](#)
- The online archive of [video messages](#) from Penn State leaders and experts, previous [news digests](#), and pandemic-related University [news stories](#)
- The [Office of Human Resources COVID-19 information site](#) and ["Return to Work on Campus"](#) resource site
- The ["University Measures" webpage](#), which summarizes steps Penn State is taking in response to COVID-19
- 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