

Friday, August 14, 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: What if a student misses receiving their pre-arrival COVID saliva kit because they were already en route to campus?

A: Students who are designated to receive the kit should enter the address at which they will be located to take receipt of the kit and should not travel until the test is completed. Kits ordered by 3 p.m. generally will arrive within the following 36 hours. Test kits are not shipped by the supplier on a Sunday, so that could impact arrival time. If a student misses the arrival of their kit, then they should arrange to have it sent to them by a family member. Students will need to quarantine wherever they are until they have completed the test and receive their test results and should not be on campus during that time.

Detailed information about Penn State's pre-arrival testing program is available [here](#).

Q: When will I receive masks, hand sanitizer, and PPE?

A: Penn State officials [are working to procure masks and personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) and finalize plans for distribution to students, faculty, and staff. For faculty, Penn State Environmental Health and Safety, in coordination with Procurement and General Stores, are working with distribution contacts at campuses, academic colleges, and units to supply them with masks and PPE. Each unit will handle its own mask/PPE distribution, which includes cloth face masks, clear masks, procedure masks, face shields, and bottles of hand sanitizer. Employees will hear from their unit leadership about specific distribution plans.

Q: Is there any Zoom help available to me? Are any new Canvas features available?

A: Instructors can access zoom.psu.edu for Zoom resources, training, and technical support information: The [Zoom Resources](#) tab include links to Knowledge Base articles on how to get started with Zoom, register for live training courses, and self-paced training. The [Zoom Support](#) tab links to the information about one-on-one consultations with Tech Tutors and Tech TAs. Technical support questions can also be submitted by sending an email to zoom@psu.edu.

Instructors can access canvas.psu.edu for Canvas resources, training, and technical support information: Canvas [Features and Integrations](#) and [Release Notes](#) pages provide information, including new features as they are available. Technical support questions can also be submitted by sending an email to canvas@psu.edu.

Assistance with remote instruction can be found at either the [remote synchronous instructional mode site](#) or the [remote asynchronous instructional mode site](#). For immediate support for Zoom and Canvas, a live [IT Service Desk Chat](#) is available 24/7. In general, all technical support questions for Zoom and Canvas can be directed to the [IT Service Desk](#) by sending an email to itservicedesk@psu.edu or calling 814-865-HELP.

You can read other FAQs related to Fall 2020 instruction on the [Keep Teaching website's FAQ page](#).

NEW VIDEO MESSAGES

Are you curious about what in-person instruction will look like this fall? [Watch this short video](#) to see a realistic preview of how the guidance on the use of masks and personal protective equipment (PPE) in the classroom and on campus will be implemented. The video site also includes some helpful tips for teaching in a physically-distanced classroom and additional information on university policy and teaching strategies.

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- An [Instructor Guide to Fall 2020](#) has been created to compile and organize COVID-related information for faculty. The guide was created by Denise Bortree, associate dean for academic affairs and associate professor of advertising/public relations in the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications; Frank Marko, professor of mathematics at Penn State Hazleton; and Yvette Richardson, associate dean for undergraduate education and professor of meteorology in the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences.
- A “[Countdown to Classes](#)” toolkit, created by a group of Penn State teaching and learning experts, includes a [flexible instruction guide](#), a two-hour webinar, and 25 virtual drop-in office hours. A full schedule is available [here](#).
- A new FAQ, published on Penn State’s “virusinfo” website, describes the [difference between isolation and quarantine](#) and the different time requirements associated with each.
- A team is currently looking at the organization of the [Keep Teaching website](#) and we could use your help with a user study! The purpose of the study is to understand how instructors (whether full-time faculty, graduate student instructors, or adjunct instructors) look for information on the Keep Teaching

website. The data that you generate will inform improvements to the site. All are welcome to participate and we are especially looking for input from new faculty. If you have already taken the study, please do not take it a second time. Complete the survey based on the first letter of your last name:

[Last Name begins with A-L](#)

[Last Name begins with M-Z](#)

- Penn State has launched an integrated effort to remind faculty, staff, and students at all campuses and in adjacent communities of the importance of doing their part to limit the spread of COVID-19. “[Mask Up or Pack Up](#)” is a research-based campaign that is also launched in State College to create a seamless message for students and other members of the community.
- In response to concerns about language in the Penn State COVID-19 Compact, [language in the compact has been revised](#). Students returning to any Penn State campus must acknowledge the Compact as a condition of a return to learning on campus.
- Students and employees who were [selected for pre-arrival COVID-19 testing](#) should initiate and complete their at-home saliva test immediately if they have not already done so.
- The Penn State College of Nursing, in collaboration with Penn State Extension, is delivering an online course to educate participants on the basics of contact tracing. This non-credit, three-hour course is open to the public and prepares participants to support contact tracing in their local communities and organizations. There is a fee of \$25 for participants who are not affiliated with the University. [Register here](#).
- The [Big Ten Conference announced the postponement](#) of the 2020-21 fall sports season, including all regular-season contests and Big Ten Championships and Tournaments, due to ongoing health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Student Affairs has announced the [Public Health Ambassador Program](#), a newly created peer health initiative designed to provide students at University Park with guidance on health behaviors and social norms related to COVID-19.
- [Faculty can still submit questions](#) related to Penn State’s plans for a return to classrooms in the fall. Questions may be submitted [here](#).

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- A [second round of recommendations](#) on the use of universal masking and other personal protective equipment (PPE) from the Academic Matters Coronavirus Task Force is now available. An updated document pertaining to the use of face masks and PPE in the classroom is posted [here](#).
- As a part of Penn State's comprehensive safety guidelines, and in accordance with Pennsylvania Department of Health requirements, each college, campus, or administrative unit will be required to [designate a pandemic safety officer](#) for each work location to respond to questions about the University's COVID-19 safety plan requirements.
- Penn State is strongly encouraging all members of the university community to [use the COVID-19 symptom checker](#) in the Penn State Go app to self-screen for potential COVID-19 symptoms.
- The [University Faculty Senate has set up a webpage](#) to make it easier for faculty members to find syllabus language for topics related to COVID-19. The suggested language, which includes examples and information on mask-wearing, class attendance and webcam use, can be found at <https://senate.psu.edu/syllabus-language-for-required-and-covid-19-related-topics/>.
- During the fall 2020 semester, Penn State undergraduate and graduate students who wish to complete [required experiential learning opportunities](#), such as internships and practicums, in person, will need to secure prior approval from University leadership.
- Revised [guidance pertaining to meetings and events](#), as well as an [Acknowledgment of Risk document](#) that can be used by units hosting visitors for meetings or events, is now available.
- Copious development and training opportunities are available to faculty in preparation for the Fall 2020 semester. [Upcoming webinars for instructors](#) at all Penn State campuses include:
 - Monday, August 17: [It All Adds Up: Using EquatIO to Read and Write Math in a Digital Classroom](#)
 - Wednesday, August 19: [Canvas, Kaltura and Zoom: Enabling Continuity of Instruction](#)

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