MEETINGS AND EVENTS
(UPDATED JANUARY 12, 2021)

This updated version of the guidance is effective January 12, 2021. Please note that this guidance is current as of the date listed herein and is subject to change.

Governor’s Guidance
The time-limited mitigation orders that went into effect on December 12, 2020 expired on January 4, 2021 at 8 am. With the expiration of the time-limited orders, mitigation efforts will revert to mitigation orders in place on December 11. Orders issued by Governor Tom Wolf and Secretary of Health Rachel Levine on November 23 amend previous COVID-19 orders to allow for adjusted capacity to gathering limits. (Note: The order does not apply to classrooms, per the Pennsylvania Department of Education.)

Scope
The guidance below applies to any Penn State-sponsored event, either on or off campus. At this time, events organized or sponsored by organizations external to Penn State are not permitted on campuses. In general, meetings and events should be held remotely if feasible.

Student Organizations
Student organizations wishing to hold an event or meeting should consult with the Office of Student Activities (University Park) or the chancellor’s office (Commonwealth Campuses) regarding student meeting/event policies and the procedures for requesting to hold a meeting or event.

Indoor meetings and events
Meetings and events of 10 or fewer participants are permitted with no prior permission required, with masks required and taking into account the maximum occupancy of the space that allows for at least six feet of distance between participants. Requests to hold indoor meetings or events of more than 10 participants, following the Governor’s order, Section 9, “Requirements for Events and Gatherings” related to room occupancy, must be submitted for approval to unit executives (see “Approval Process” below).

Outdoor meetings and events
Outdoor meetings of 10 or fewer participants are permitted with no prior permission required, with masks required and taking into account the maximum occupancy of the space that allows for at least six feet of distance between participants. Requests for outdoor meetings of more than 10 participants, following the Governor’s order, Section 9, “Requirements for Events and Gatherings,” related to Maximum Occupancy, must be submitted for approval to unit executives (see “Approval Process” below).
Approval Process
Meeting/event organizers requesting permission for an indoor or outdoor meeting or event of more than 10 participants, must:

- Explain how the proposed event is in alignment with the mission of the university.
- Provide justification as to why the meeting or event cannot take place virtually or in a hybrid format (some participants in person and others virtually);
- Provide the total number of individuals attending the meeting or event, which must include the employees working the event;
- Include a plan that outlines how the organizers will meet the state of Pennsylvania’s regulations. Masks and other required PPE must be worn both indoors and outdoors and plans for abiding by physical distancing guidelines must be included;
- If the event is on campus, work with the Office of Physical Plant to determine the room capacity that allows for physical distancing;
- Keep a list of all attendees, the locations from which non-employees are traveling, and their telephone numbers for contact purposes;
- Check with the unit’s HRSP (human resources strategic partner) to determine whether employees at the meeting should be entered into the Return to Work database;
- Provide evidence that the meeting organizers have worked with relevant campus leadership to ensure that the gathering is in compliance with local ordinances pertaining to COVID-19;
- Attendees who are not employees or students are required to sign an Acknowledgment of Risk when feasible, in advance of their arrival if possible. This document is available here. If the unit wishes to make changes to this document other than to add the unit name, it should contact the Office of General Counsel.

Attention to COVID rates in other areas
Meetings that include participants from states with high levels of COVID-19 should only be permitted if there are special circumstances and with unit executive approval. All Penn State employees must follow existing travel guidance. All meeting and event attendees from outside of Pennsylvania must follow Pennsylvania’s “COVID-19 Information for Travelers” guidance.

Unit executives should elevate meeting/event requests to the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs if there is uncertainty about whether the meeting/event should be approved.