



The Pennsylvania State University COVID-19 “Back to State” Health and Safety Plan

Report to the Pennsylvania Department of Education

August 17, 2020

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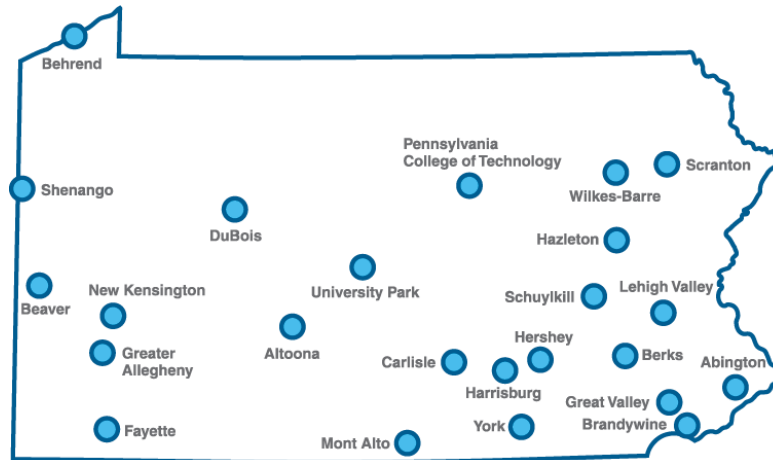
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Introduction

The Pennsylvania State University (“Penn State”) is submitting this COVID-19 “Back to State” Health and Safety Plan in response to the [Pennsylvania Department of Education’s “Preliminary Guidance for Resuming In-Person Instruction at Postsecondary Education Institutions and Adult Education Programs”](#) (Version 1, published June 3, 2020) during the pandemic.

The information herein is considered accurate as of Monday, August 17, 2020.

For Penn State’s comprehensive, up-to-date plans for returning to on-campus work, teaching, and learning, visit the [University’s official website dedicated to coronavirus information for the Penn State community](#) and the [“Back to State” website](#), which are information hubs regularly updated with information and resources for students, faculty, and staff.

The information in this document applies for plans at [Penn State’s 24 campuses across the Commonwealth](#) (see map above) subject to changes that may be needed in specific campuses communities to respond to the pandemic and its local or regional impact.

Background and Overview

As Pennsylvania's only land-grant institution, Penn State serves nearly 100,000 students across its 24 campuses and employs more than 17,000 faculty and staff. The University achieves positive impacts in the Commonwealth and beyond through activities that support its tripartite mission of teaching, research, and service.

In early March 2020, the **University formed 12 action teams** focused on Penn State's response to COVID-19 pandemic. These action teams comprised University leaders focused upon 12 priority areas.

In mid-March 2020, prior to the end of Penn State students' weeklong "spring break," the **University pivoted to remote delivery of courses** due to the emerging pandemic and its impacts. For students who lived on Penn State campuses, the University established a move-out procedure that maintained social distancing and reduced risk. Remote teaching and learning continued through the end of the semester, and events (including a **new University-wide Spring 2020 commencement ceremony**) were held virtually.

In April 2020, **three task groups were formed to focus on three critical areas affecting Penn State students, faculty, and staff**, all focused on returning these groups to

campuses safely commensurate with public health and scientific guidelines. These groups also considered how changing guidance from the government and public health authorities could affect Penn State's plans, especially given its campuses are spread throughout the Commonwealth.

Task forces were charged with developing evidence-based decision-making processes aligned with public health and science; a plan for faculty and staff to safely return to work, with an **additional focus on a return to research**; and plans for the return of students to Penn State campuses, details of which could vary based on local or regional guidelines. The groups were asked to provide the results of their work by June 15.

On June 15, Penn State President Eric J. Barron announced the University's plans to resume on-campus work, teaching, and learning in the Fall 2020 semester, which is slated to begin on Monday, August 24. Plan highlights include ending in-person instruction on November 20, with the remainder of the semester completed remotely; comprehensive public health strategies, including mask wearing and social distancing; capacity building for isolation and quarantine; and a robust contact tracing program. The plan pays special attention to the Commonwealth's county-by-county approach that could affect activities at different Penn State campuses.

Penn State's COVID-19 Operations Control Center

Since then, the University has worked steadily on “Back to State” preparations. **On July 15, 2020, Penn State established its COVID-19 Operations Control Center (COCC)** to support and facilitate the University’s plans for a phased return to teaching and learning at its 24 campuses throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Led by Director Kelly A. Wolgast, DNP, RN, FACHE, FAAN, the COCC is playing a pivotal, overarching role in the University’s successful resumption of on-campus operations.

The COCC is focusing on and assessing the operational impacts of COVID-19 at all Penn State campuses based on data and established reporting metrics. It is collecting, analyzing, and communicating key information and operational data to University leadership, enabling agile and rapid decision-making based on facts and reasoned, defensible assumptions.

With a core team dedicated to data collection, assessment, and reporting, the COCC has direct engagement with representatives of operating units University-wide, including

at University Park (Penn State’s largest campus and its administrative hub) and at the Commonwealth Campuses.

While distinct from the current Penn State Emergency Operations Center management structure, the COCC ensures alignment and information sharing through regular communications.

The COCC’s “management by objectives” approach includes:

- establishing overarching objectives;
- developing strategies based on COVID-19 “Back to State” objectives;
- developing and issuing assignments, plans, procedures, and protocols;
- establishing specific, measurable objectives for various COVID-19 control management functions and directing efforts to attain them; and
- documenting results to measure performance and facilitate corrective actions.

Dr. Wolgast has decision-making authority to continue, pause, or halt University activities based on established criteria. Based on information learned in Fall 2020, the COCC also will focus on University operational plans for 2021.

Penn State's Pandemic Response, Strategies, and Plans for Fall 2020

The remainder of this report provides a high-level summary of Penn State's ongoing and evolving pandemic-response strategies in five areas in accordance with the Commonwealth's guidance for Pennsylvania universities resuming on-campus activities.

Details follow regarding Penn State's ongoing endeavors in these five areas. All information is considered accurate as of Monday, August 17, 2020.

1. Strategies for how Penn State will coordinate with local public health officials or the equivalent of.
2. Strategies for safely resuming in-person instruction.
3. Strategies for monitoring health conditions on its campuses and surrounding communities.
4. Strategies for mitigating and containing the spread of the virus on campus and for informing the Pennsylvania Department of Health in the event COVID-19 transmission occurs at Penn State.
5. Strategies for communicating accurate and timely information to students, faculty, staff, and the communities Penn State serves.

STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS 1

How Penn State will coordinate with local public health officials (or the equivalent of).

The University is working closely with public health and other officials in all Penn State campus communities. The University's Offices of Government and Community Relations, Student Affairs, and Strategic Communications are collaborating with local government leaders, businesses, landlords, and community leaders on many fronts, including communications and enforcement of health and safety guidelines.

Throughout the pandemic, Penn State has been working with local community leaders and stakeholders—in the State College area and campus communities across the Commonwealth—to partner on strategies to limit the impacts of COVID-19 through collaborative efforts informed by health and science. **The University and campus communities will continue to work together** to address the many challenges ahead, as Penn State has been committed to doing so since the start of the pandemic.

Through active conversation, collaboration and partnership across all campus locations with municipal leaders, local public health authorities, local businesses, landlords, and law enforcement, the University has been and remains focused on the health and safety of local communities. In close collaboration with these community partners, Penn State continues to consider topics—including public health, communications, compliance and enforcement—with the goal of creating a safe and healthy environment for all.



AT PENN STATE'S UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS:

- A **community-wide committee** has been preparing for Penn State students and visitors to return to the local area.
- To promote the safety of students, families, and community members during the off-campus move-in process, **Penn State and State College Borough leaders sent a letter to off-campus students and local landlords** highlighting tips for travel, move-in, and arrival.
- On August 4, the State College Borough Council passed a temporary ordinance, supported by Penn State that mandates mask wearing and social distancing in most instances and limits the size of gatherings in the borough, directly adjacent to the University Park campus. A **letter from President Barron** expresses support for the borough's plans.

AT PENN STATE'S OTHER CAMPUSES:

- At Penn State's **Commonwealth Campuses**, Chancellors and their staffs have been reaching out to their local government and community leaders regularly since March to share news and receive feedback. In addition, the University's social marketing campaign to promote responsible behavior was developed (and continues to evolve) so it can be shared with local partners in government and business, and local leaders have been involved in developing the ongoing campaign.

STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS 2

How Penn State will safely resume in-person instruction.

Penn State has been working on multiple fronts to mitigate and contain the spread of infection upon return to on-campus teaching and learning in Fall 2020, with **hundreds of University employees hard at work behind the scenes preparing campuses for the arrival of students, faculty, and staff.**

UNIVERSITY-WIDE EFFORTS FOR STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES:

- In accordance with Pennsylvania Department of Health requirements, each Penn State college, campus, institute or administrative unit will be required to **designate a pandemic safety officer for each work location**, such as a building or worksite, to respond to questions about the University's COVID-19 safety plan requirements. The pandemic safety officer will serve as a first level of contact to help implement COVID-19 safety plans and respond to questions and concerns raised by students, faculty and staff in their respective units. If individuals do not adhere to the **University's safety requirements**, disciplinary measures will be elevated to the employee's supervisor and human resources representative, or to the Office of Student Conduct for students.
- Penn State is providing **ample quantities of masks** and **other PPE supplies** to create safer environments for teaching, learning, and work University-wide. **About 500,000 cloth masks, as well as PPE procedure masks to support teaching and learning**, arrived and were slated for distribution to individual campuses, colleges and administrative units during the week of August 10. There are no costs to the wearers associated with these masks. Penn State has **purchased more than 2.6 million masks** since March 1.
- Anyone wanting PPE and related supplies before the aforementioned dates could place orders through Penn State General Stores. Additional information is available on the **EH&S Pandemic Supply List**.





- Penn State is taking several steps to mitigate the possibility of airborne transmission of COVID-19 in University facilities. The virus has been found in large respiratory droplets that travel short distances (6 feet) and precipitate out of the air quickly, in small aerosolized particles that can travel farther and reside in the air for longer periods, and on surfaces. The relative contribution of these three modes to transmission is uncertain, but evidence suggests that respiratory droplet transmission is the predominant mechanism. Regardless, Penn State is considering the risks of all three possibilities and taking steps to mitigate each.
- Requiring the wearing of masks in all classrooms and buildings and in other spaces per [Governor Wolf's guidance](#) limits the risks of all three modes of transmission (droplet, aerosol, and surface). Masks limit the emission of both large and small particles from an infectious wearer, which protects others from contact with virus particles, and can limit the frequency with which people touch their faces. Limiting building and classroom density also addresses the risks of both droplet and aerosol transmission and allows for proper social distancing of 6 feet. Increasing the distance between individuals reduces the chances of contact with respiratory droplets and the number of people that can contribute to the density of aerosolized particles.
- In addition to the [critical measures of universal masking and social distancing on Penn State campuses](#), which will help mitigate large droplet and aerosol transmission of the virus, the University is taking several steps to further mitigate the risk. Using a multi-layered approach, staff from the Office of Physical Plant (OPP) are checking and modifying, as necessary, the mechanical systems for every facility to verify that the systems are working properly and installing higher efficiency filters in central air handling equipment where possible for buildings that have ventilation systems. [OPP is also modifying how buildings operate](#) to provide more ventilation, air circulation, and building flushing wherever possible. All of these actions are in accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and [ASHRAE \(American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers\)](#).
- [OPP is taking a multi-pronged approach to cleaning and disinfecting spaces](#). All desks, podiums, doorknobs, elevators, restrooms, and other high-touch areas will be cleaned and disinfected daily with EPA-approved disinfectants. Exterior entrances will also be cleaned and disinfected daily. The multi-pronged approach also includes use of electrostatic sprayers (which positively charge the cleaning products to adhere to surfaces and help kill the virus) and working with a Penn State virologist to look at the long-term efficacy of disinfecting materials on surfaces. More information about cleaning protocols is available on the University's [Environmental Health and Safety website](#).
- During the last week of July, approximately 24,000 students from identified areas with a higher prevalence of coronavirus and anyone who will be on the front lines to welcome and work with students [were sent at-home saliva COVID-19 testing kits](#) to be taken before arrival on Penn State campuses.

STUDENT-FOCUSED EFFORTS:

- Penn State's Return to Campus task group [issued guidance](#) in late July related to expectations for student behavior and safety compliance when visiting University offices. The University also developed and communicated [requirements and expectations for students](#) to meet prior to returning to Penn State campuses across the Commonwealth for the Fall 2020 semester.

- All students selected for the required at-home saliva COVID-19 testing (referenced above) **received notification via email by or on August 5**, with instructions for ordering a test kit from Penn State’s third-party provider Vault Health, an individualized registration link, and directions about the testing process. On August 13, **students and employees who were selected for pre-arrival COVID-19 testing were reminded** that they should initiate and complete their at-home saliva test immediately if they have not already done so.
- Among other steps, students must read and sign the new required **“Penn State Coronavirus Compact,”** complete mandatory pre-arrival COVID-19 testing, if notified, and self-quarantine for at least seven days immediately prior to arrival. All students are required to carefully read and acknowledge the compact before the Fall 2020 semester begins.
- Penn State Vice President for Student Affairs Damon Sims **shared a letter** with members of the University’s fraternity and sorority community, calling on these students to help minimize the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, **Penn State’s Interfraternity Council (IFC)** issued a social moratorium, effective immediately, prohibiting all IFC social activities indefinitely. The move aims to support the health and safety of the State College community. The moratorium includes social activities of all types.
- Penn State announced extended and staggered student **move-in dates for all campuses** as well as information on the arrival process, what to pack, and other resources.
- **Classroom policies related to masking and social distancing** are in effect for Fall 2020 at all Penn State campuses.
- Students are expected to attend all classes that are designated as in-person, with **details about these expectations provided online**. Student’s instructors are asked to follow **Faculty Senate policy 42-27—Class Attendance**, with some flexibility. For a long absence, instructors may need to consider more flexibility.

FACULTY-FOCUSED EFFORTS:

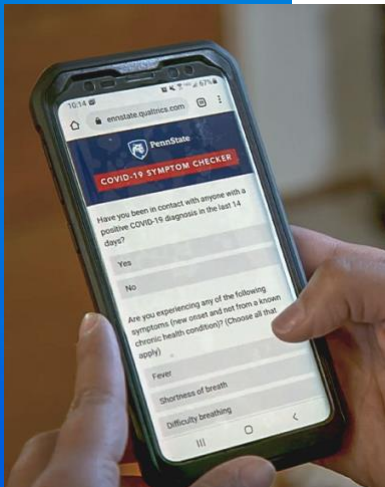
- Penn State’s **“Keep Teaching” website** includes **guidance on Returning to Instruction** and **details about Flexible Instructional Modes** for the Fall 2020 semester, as well as **frequently expanded and updated FAQs**. A wide range of resources have been added to **keep-teaching.psu.edu** for each of the four modes: **in-person instruction, mixed mode instruction, remote synchronous instruction, and remote asynchronous instruction**.
- An evolving **Classroom Guidance for Instructors** document is posted on the website for Penn State’s **Office of Student Conduct**. The **document** describes the steps that faculty can take to provide a positive learning environment and manage COVID-19-related concerns in the classroom.
- Across Penn State’s campuses, instructors are not required to provide courses in delivery modes other than the one designated for a specific course, though not all courses can be offered in a different mode than that originally scheduled. Instructors are asked to consider **how students may make up missed work if students are out** for short or lengthy periods of time, especially if students who have remote learning options have no other course sections to choose from.



- **Guidance specifically for instructors regarding PPE** in classrooms and laboratory spaces is available. In addition to masks, Penn State instructors will be issued alcohol-based hand sanitizer that can also be used to clean and disinfect classroom microphones and other surfaces between uses. Instructors will be issued an initial box of 50 procedure masks. It is recommended that the instructor bring two to three additional procedure masks to give to students should they forget their masks. Instructors also may ask the student(s) to leave the classroom and retrieve their cloth mask before returning to class. Instructors will be able to obtain additional procedure masks through their Departments or Colleges.

STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS 3

How Penn State will monitor health conditions on its campuses and surrounding communities.



- The University is continuously monitoring state and national disease data and following guidance from state and local health officials. Based on that guidance, and in consultation with faculty experts in epidemiology, medicine and public health, the University is prepared to adjust its approach to Fall 2020 as necessary, including the possibility that Penn State would need to shift the semester to a fully remote learning environment at one or more of its campuses.
- The **University and Governor Wolf** have stressed the importance of following guidelines to protect community health and minimize the spread of the virus, and cautioned that lax behaviors could undo progress toward reopening campuses or allowing them to continue in-person operations.
- On June 30, **Penn State shared plans for its contact tracing program**, which includes the aforementioned pre-arrival testing for our students who are living in areas in which there are higher incidences of COVID-19. **Additional details were released in early August** providing instructions to students, as well as follow-up information published online on **what the University's contact tracing plan entails**.
- The **"Latest Updates" section of Penn State's comprehensive "Back to State" FAQ** is being updated regularly with new or significantly revised questions and answers for students, faculty, staff, and the community regarding how the University will monitor health conditions on its campuses and surrounding communities. Among the FAQs is information about **how the University may adjust its plans and approaches if viral spread grows**.

How Penn State will mitigate and contain the spread of the virus on campus and inform the Pennsylvania Department of Health in the event COVID-19 transmission occurs at the University.



- In accordance with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and public health guidelines, wearing face masks and adhering to social distancing practices, including maintaining 6 feet of physical distance between another person, are critical components in helping to maintain the health and safety of individuals in all Penn State campus communities. **Students, employees and visitors are required** to practice physical distancing and wear face masks/coverings at all times in campus buildings; outdoors when they cannot be physically distant from others; and whenever state or local laws require. Comprehensive details were provided in an [article in Penn State News](#), the University's official source of news and information.
- The University continues to work with the Wolf administration on its "Back to State" plans and has confirmed with the Pennsylvania Department of Education that the **July 15 order** limiting indoor gatherings to fewer than 25 people does not apply to classrooms. (**Penn State anticipates that about half of its classes across all campuses will have an in-person component this fall** structured in a way that allows for social distancing in classes.) Other indoor gatherings, however, cannot exceed 25 individuals and must adhere to masking and social distancing requirements. **Penn State has updated meeting and events guidance, effective July 16.**
- The **University is developing plans to support the health and safety of faculty and staff members during the transition back to in-person work functions.** Work adjustments are an option for immunocompromised and other vulnerable employees.
- Preparations are well underway to help make Penn State classrooms and labs safer this fall, including implementation of new policies requiring face coverings and social distancing. Details about the efforts in this area by the University's Public Health and Science Task Group are spotlighted in an [informational video featuring Dennis Scanlon](#), Distinguished Professor of Health Policy and Administration and director of the Center for Health Care and Policy Research, and Matt Ferrari, associate professor of biology in Penn State's Center for Infectious Disease Dynamics.
- Evolving recommendations on the use of PPE are available on the [Keep Teaching website](#) (requires University WebAccess authentication) for Penn State instructors teaching in-person classes this fall. **Updated universal masking and PPE guidance for instructional spaces** was published on August 11. At least 50 faculty and staff members from many Penn State campuses and disciplines contributed to the [initial phase of researching and testing various masks and other PPE](#) in classroom, laboratory, and other campus settings. Multiple sub-groups are evaluating additional pedagogical learning environments before the fall semester, including performance settings (music/vocal/theater), close contact settings (nursing/physical therapy/allied health), and many more.



- In support of these efforts and subsequent recommendations, the University has purchased 1.5 million procedure masks (adding to the 500,000 cloth masks previously purchased) for instructor use in general purpose classrooms, more than 14,000 face shields, and 8,000 clear masks to meet specific teaching and learning needs for University Park and all campuses. For each instructor teaching in-person classes, 50 procedure masks will be provided before the fall semester begins, and masks will be replenished as needed. More details about this topic and the cleaning and disinfecting of campuses spaces were [published in Penn State News](#); sent out in Penn State Today, the University's daily email news send to all faculty, staff and students; and featured in a [video from Bill Sitzabee, Penn State's chief facilities officer](#).
- An evolving [Classroom Guidance for Instructors document](#) (as of July 22) is posted on the website for the [Office of Student Conduct](#). The content describes the steps that faculty can take to provide a positive learning environment and manage COVID-related concerns in the classroom. The guidance includes a sample statement for faculty to include in their course syllabi and a series of steps that faculty can take if a student fails to adhere to health and safety requirements. Students who fail to comply will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and will not be allowed to return until the matter is addressed through Penn State's conduct process. More information is provided in a [video featuring Danny Shaha, Penn State's assistant vice president for Student Affairs](#).
- In July, Penn State released comprehensive [plans for COVID-19 testing and contact tracing](#) at all campuses. Penn State's testing program will consist of in-house and third-party contracted testing for symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals. In addition, Penn State's contact tracing program will leverage and scale-up existing contact tracing protocols in place at the University.
- The College of Nursing, in collaboration with Penn State Extension, is delivering an [online course to educate participants on the basics of contact tracing](#).
- At the University Park campus, [Penn State has planned isolation space for students, if needed, at the Eastview Terrace residence hall complex](#). The complex's seven buildings normally house more than 800 students. Built in 2004, Eastview Terrace provides each resident a single room with a private bath.
- [A Penn State faculty and staff COVID-19 symptom checker went live on August 6](#) as part of a new employee-centered experience in the [Penn State Go app](#). In addition to the symptom checker, the new faculty and staff resource features other COVID-19 resources. A [student COVID-19 symptom tracker](#) is also available in the app.
- An [interdisciplinary team of nearly 400 Penn State experts is helping healthcare workers](#) at Penn State Health and local hospitals fight COVID-19 through the Manufacturing And Sterilization for COVID-19 (MASC) initiative — highlighting the power of partnership at Penn State to help promote the health and welfare of lives across the Commonwealth.

How Penn State will communicate accurate and timely information to students, faculty, staff, and the communities it serves.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE EFFORTS FOR STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES:

- The University maintains comprehensive, updated information on its website and communicates it in myriad ways, including through [Penn State News stories](#); [informational videos](#); official University social media accounts; and email messaging to faculty, staff, students, and other constituents. The University also continues to hold [virtual Town Halls](#) on topics related to Penn State's pandemic response and plans for Fall 2020. The Town Halls, which are [archived for on-demand viewing](#), have been held on the following dates since March 2020:
 - **March 24** for students and families, with 17,209 total live views;
 - **March 24** for faculty and staff (22,573 total live views);
 - **May 19** for all (10,570 total live views);
 - **June 23** for faculty and staff (11,987 total live views);
 - **June 23** for students and families (9,257 total live views);
 - **July 30** for all (14,804 total live views).
- The University's comprehensive resources on its ["Back to State" page](#) and regularly [updated FAQs](#) cover plans to resume on-campus work and learning this fall. To ensure Penn State's [virus information website](#) remains a key source of information, the [frequently-asked-questions section](#) was reorganized and streamlined with focused categories for students and families, faculty and staff, and the broader community. The University's ["Back to State" page](#) also will continue to be updated with the latest information and resources related to Penn State's return, again with dedicated sections for students and employees.
- In early August, Penn State 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.



- Since the earliest days of the pandemic, Penn State's [virus-focused website](#) has been a key source of information for the University community. Launched on February 14, 2020, the platform has gained more than 1.2 million total page views through mid-August. The site routinely undergoes changes to content and structure driven by communications needs and observed trends. The robust [Frequently Asked Questions section](#) is home to daily updates and periodic restructuring, and it has received nearly 300,000 total pageviews, including an average of 1,500 total page views per day in the last month – showing the interest from the community. The site's [“Back to State” page](#), again with dedicated sections for students and employees, details Penn State's plans for a return to on-campus teaching and learning. It has garnered 100,000 page views since the University's plans were announced on June 15. The site directs visitors to key resources that have been organized University-wide, including the University's [“Keep Learning”](#) and [“Keep Teaching”](#) websites.
- The [Office of Human Resources COVID-19 information](#) site and [“Return to Work on Campus”](#) resource site provide critical information for University employees, including guidance for supervisors with teams that must do on-campus work.
- The [“University Measures” webpage](#) summarizes steps Penn State is taking in response to COVID-19.
- The University's [health information page focused on personal safety practices](#) is geared toward individuals returning to all Penn State campuses.
- A robust, updated [list of contacts and resources](#) for the University community is available.
- Penn State has a series of [video messages](#) from Penn State leaders and experts about the University's pandemic response and plans for safely returning to on-campus operations. The University's Center for Infectious Disease Dynamics also has published an ongoing [video series](#) with answers to COVID-19 questions. A [YouTube page](#) makes videos available to the public, and Strategic Communications promotes each new video to all faculty, staff and students via Penn State Today and Penn State News.
- The Social Science Research Institute has a [website featuring pandemic-related insights from University experts](#) and other resources.

STUDENT-FOCUSED EFFORTS:

- Comprehensive “Back to State” information and resources specifically for students is available at <https://virusinfo.psu.edu/back-to-state#students>. These include resources for undergraduate, graduate, and international students related to return to campus, academics, health and counseling resources, and more.
- [FAQs for students and their families](#) are regularly updated as needed.



- Regarding health-related requirements, students are asked to:
 - [Review pre-arrival requirements for students on all Penn State campuses](#)
 - [Review plans and requirements for testing, contact tracing, and monitoring](#)
 - [Learn about personal safety requirements for everyone on Penn State campuses](#)
 - [Follow masking and social distancing classroom policies in effect for fall](#)

All of this information and more is sent directly to students via Penn State Today, the daily news and information email from the University's [Office of Strategic Communications](#) that goes to all faculty, staff, and students.

- Penn State's "[Keep Learning](#)" website provides copious academic resources for students as the University prepares for instruction this fall.
- In August, Penn State's Office of Student Affairs announced the [Public Health Ambassador Program](#), a new peer-health initiative designed to provide students at the University Park campus with guidance on health behaviors and social norms related to COVID-19.
- Penn State's Office of Residence Life created several videos to help educate students about living-on campus and being at Penn State. These videos soon will be available on the Residence Life website and shown on digital signage in residential areas. Topics covered in the videos include social distancing, common-area policies, roommate agreements, and responsible action protocols.

FACULTY-FOCUSED EFFORTS

(MANY OF THEM ALSO APPLICABLE TO NON-INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF):

- Comprehensive "Back to State" information and resources specifically for faculty is available at <https://virusinfo.psu.edu/back-to-state#employees>. This includes information about Penn State's plans for a phased return to campus and resources for returning to campus workspaces.
- [FAQs for faculty and staff](#) are regularly updated as needed.
- An [Instructor Guide to Fall 2020](#) has been created to compile and organize COVID-related information for faculty.
- In April, the University began [sending news digests via email](#) to keep faculty updated about key developments. They continue to be distributed twice a week.

- Regarding health-related requirements, faculty and staff are asked to:
 - [Review plans and requirements for testing, contact tracing, and monitoring](#)
 - [Learn about personal safety requirements for everyone on Penn State campuses](#)
 - [Follow masking and social distancing classroom policies in effect for fall](#)
 - [Review updated classroom guidance for instructors](#)

All of this information and more is sent directly to employees via Penn State Today, the daily news and information email from the University's [Office of Strategic Communications](#) that goes to all faculty, staff, and students.

- Penn State's "[Keep Teaching](#)" website provides copious resources for faculty as the University prepares for on-campus instruction this fall.
- A [resource available to all Penn State faculty](#) (requires University WebAccess authentication) provides a suggested timeline for communication to students regarding Fall 2020 instruction, as well as templates to streamline this process and ensure consistency with important information. Key dates for communications include:
 - **August 3:** Send initial communication to students (templates provided)
 - **August 10:** Publish Canvas course and post an announcement (instructions provided with templates)
 - **Before August 24:** Publish syllabus with new University syllabus guidance

For More Information

The content of this document reflects at a high level Penn State's COVID-19 "Back to State" Health and Safety Plan as of Monday, August 17, 2020, in response to the [Pennsylvania Department of Education's "Preliminary Guidance for Resuming In-Person Instruction at Postsecondary Education Institutions and Adult Education Programs"](#) (Version 1, published June 3, 2020).

For updates and more information about Penn State's preparations for returning to work, teaching, and learning on its 24 campuses across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, visit the [University's official website dedicated to coronavirus information for the Penn State community](#) and the "[Back to State](#)" website, which is regularly updated with information and resources for students, faculty, and staff.

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