

Questions submitted and answered through the Q&A Aug. 24, 2021

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Vaccines and Testing

Will faculty and staff really be terminated if they are not vaccinated and don't have proper medical or religious exemption? If faculty are terminated effective October 19, who will teach their class(es)?

The University will share additional details once an updated proclamation is received from the Governor's Office and we determine how UW's [vaccination requirements](#) will be updated, including changes to the process for requesting a medical or religious exemption. We are also determining how the state mandate making vaccination a condition of employment affects UW faculty, staff and other academic personnel, including tenured faculty and employees covered by labor contracts.

Will the UW Vaccine policy for students, faculty, and staff be updated/strengthened? I worry about the philosophical exemption and the lack of proof of vaccination status.

We are waiting for the details of the Governor's order on vaccine policy to determine changes to the UW policy. The Governor's order allows only for medical or religious exemptions. Revised UW policy should be released in the next week or two.

COVID rates and hospitalizations are at an all-time high in Pierce County. Is the UW considering returning to online work/instruction for Autumn Quarter? If not, why?

Is there a chance that we may be required to switch from the "in person" to "remote" instruction?

There is a chance this could occur but it is not seen as likely. At this time projections are that we can return safely to campus without COVID outbreaks if we follow the policies. For a perspective from the Dean of the School of Public Health, please see <https://www.washington.edu/coronavirus/2021/08/23/dean-of-public-health-hilary-godwin-on-the-benefits-and-safety-of-in-person-learning-and-working/>

[Following up on] re case counts in Pierce County. Sometimes UWS does not fully consider UWB and UWT in their calculations. Are we confident that Seattle has Pierce County in mind now?

At our regular meetings of the Back to School and Back to Work task forces, we report this information, so there is awareness that Pierce County lags King County in vaccination rate. We are watching the vaccination rates for employees and students at UW Tacoma based on attestations, and the percentage is well over 90%.

Link to UW COVID dashboard?

You can find the Dashboard here: <https://www.washington.edu/coronavirus/testing-results/>

Masking and Distancing

Is there a standard for face coverings?

Yes. They can be found here: <https://www.ehs.washington.edu/covid-19-prevention-and-response/face-covering-requirements>

Will face coverings be provided by campus for students who come to class without a mask and forgot to bring one? Or should we just send those students away?

As Mentha mentioned, disposable face coverings are available to all units and faculty can bring some to each class to help students who may forget.

Can students drink water and take their mask off for that reason during class?

Face coverings can be removed briefly to drink water during a class. There's an FAQ at this site which identifies when masks can be removed: <https://www.ehs.washington.edu/covid-19-prevention-and-response/face-covering-requirements>

What is the protocol for requiring non-students on campus to wear masks--I'm thinking of the community members who frequent library spaces? How will this be enforced--or will it?

A polite request and reference to the UW policy is appropriate for anyone who is present on campus.

Does the classroom masking policy apply in other spaces like staff offices and TLC?

Masking is currently required in all indoor spaces on campus regardless of vaccination status. There are some great FAQs about masking that UW has provided that drill down on more

specifics: <https://www.ehs.washington.edu/covid-19-prevention-and-response/face-covering-requirements>

In my campus office--a space I do not share and one with a door I can close--do I need to wear a mask for the entire day?

As long as you are alone in your office and keep your door closed, you can take your mask off. You need a mask on if you are in a shared/common space or if you are around others.

In terms of asking students to mask or leave, where would one have the conversation? Out loud in front of the whole class?

You might start class with a general reminder that masks are required for everyone in all indoor spaces at UW. If someone is not masked after that, a quiet, private reminder would be the next step.

For faculty, are the units responsible for getting clear, see-through masks?

Yes, units are responsible for ordering clear masks if they need them.

Are students allowed to wear shields (which do not filter air at all) as a face covering? Or can I request they wear a mask?

Per EH&S policy, face shields alone do not qualify as a face covering. If a cloth or disposable mask is worn with it, that's fine. You may ask them to add a cloth or disposable mask to meet masking requirements.

Will there be social distancing in the classroom?

There is no requirement for social distancing in the classroom. The science suggests that vaccination, universal masking, and high-quality air filtration systems (all in place at UW Tacoma) provide substantial protection from virus transmission.

Because there may be health, disability, other-related reason not to wear a mask. How do we handle asking students to wear a mask without them having to share private information with us (in case they don't want to do that)? Is this going to be information that will come to us from the DRS directly? How can we best handle this?

If a student says they cannot wear a mask, please send them immediately to Disability Resources for Students. DRS will make a determination of whether an exemption applies, and will notify faculty of any need for accommodation privately.

Most all Tacoma classrooms that we have are small and will be unable to meet the 6 ft distancing requirement with large class sizes. When 30 to 45 students who are registered for

a class show up to enter a classroom that can only safely hold 15 students per the distancing guideline, what do you recommend faculty do with the remaining students?

As Susan just shared the distancing requirement has not been put back in place so distancing will not be required on campus or in classrooms.

Newest data from MIT study showing that 6 ft social distancing is probably not enough

CDC guidance indicates that distances less than 6 feet have very low transmission risk with proper face mask wearing.

Teaching and Classroom Management

It is my understanding that faculty needed to offer multiple modalities for students to participate in class. That is why the UWT classrooms were upgraded to make sure this could happen. I am confused by this.

No, faculty are asked to teach in a single mode. Our classrooms are not equipped for simultaneous in person and online instruction (called Hyflex). UW Tacoma's policy is that Hyflex instruction is not permitted. See <https://teaching.washington.edu/challenges-of-delivering-live-lectures-to-in-person-and-online-students-simultaneously/>

To the previous question, there are 2 different course-designation policies out there; it's not clear which one ranks supreme:

https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/sections/FacultyAssembly/UW_Tacoma_DL_Designation_and_Review_Policy.pdf

The correct policy is located at https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/uwt/sites/default/files/2021-05/uw_tacoma_dl_designation_and_review_policies.pdf. Searches may be turning up old sites due to the recent switch to Drupal 8 software for our websites. *[The outdated policy document has now been removed from the site.]*

Can you confirm that students have the choice between attending class face to face or by zoom?

Faculty are to offer their courses through one modality: in person, hybrid, or online, according to the definitions created by UW Tacoma Faculty. Student are not able to select whether they attend in person or by Zoom.

https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/uwt/sites/default/files/2021-05/uw_tacoma_dl_designation_and_review_policies.pdf

If a student tests positive and goes into quarantine, how are they supposed to be able to continue in the class, especially in a class in which "lecture capture" is not possible or reasonable?

This situation is the same as prior to COVID when a student had a serious illness that required missing class. Faculty are to provide alternative resources that allow students to achieve the learning objectives of the course. Depending on the course, the faculty member and student may want to discuss whether taking an incomplete for the class would be appropriate.

Could you confirm that to teach hybrid/online in the Fall, faculty need to be iTech fellows?

Yes, this is a requirement of the UW Tacoma Faculty and compliance is reviewed by our federal accreditor, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. See

https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/uwt/sites/default/files/2021-05/uw_tacoma_dl_designation_and_review_policies.pdf

Some of our student work in high-risk areas: K-5 classrooms; hospitals; high volume jobs; and then come to campus. Concerns are about possible exposure to those in UWT courses. How would we address this situation?

UW Medicine has demonstrated success in working and teaching in high risk/high volume environments where social distancing is not possible. Vaccination, masking, and good air systems minimize the risk significantly.

Follow-up question about online teaching certification: Ms. Purdy mentioned that UWT requires the instructor to have been certified as an iTech Fellow to be allowed to teach online or hybrid at regular terms. Given that some of the faculty at Tacoma has been certified as a Technology Teaching Fellow (<https://teaching.washington.edu/programs/technology-teaching-fellows/>) in the past years, I think some clarification should be made about this point and it should also be mentioned in the related UWT written correspondence.

iTech Fellows certification requires successful completion of the Quality Matters assessment. TTF faculty are probably well-prepared to complete this assessment, and can submit their courses to the Office of Digital Learning for QM review.

Is there going to be an opportunity for faculty to shift modality slightly for Autumn - for example, if an iTech fellow feels that shifting to hybrid based on the current situation makes the most sense for student safety?

It is possible but can have impacts on students' schedules and plans (and affect things like VA benefits that some students need to pay tuition). Any changes should happen as quickly as possible so that students can adjust and change their registration if needed.

Overall clarification: If faculty are asked to be ready to pivot (presumable to online teaching), only iTech Fellows can do that?

No, if we must disrupt in-person instruction and go online (as we did in Spring 2020), it would be through an emergency declaration of extraordinary circumstances that would allow everyone to teach remotely.

Teleworking and Child care

Following up on the response of staying home if you have any symptoms, is telework acceptable, or will staff be expected to use sick leave?

If an employee is feeling well enough to work and can perform their work remotely, that would be up to the discretion of their supervisor. Employees who have symptoms of illness and cannot work remotely can use sick time or other accrued paid time off to cover the absence.

If an employee is working 100% remote and they test positive for COVID, does that need to be reported to UWT?

Yes, we want to be aware of all positive cases. I made a reference to 76 cases - all occurred during the time that we were operating remotely.

https://www.ehs.washington.edu/system/files/resources/when-to-report-COVID-19-illness-close-contact.pdf?_ga=2.24107194.1818063214.1629835923-403356377.1629835923

If our position allows us to easily work from home, why are we being forced to take a risk and return to campus, when we could continue to safely work from home?

Per UWHR, telework or hybrid work agreements are based on operational needs and the duties of the position and are up to each individual unit. Every case is different, so this is a discussion to have with your supervisor.

Parents of unvaccinated children (0-11) will need greater flexibility since public schools and daycare centers will need to close in the event of a Covid outbreak. How will UW make accommodations for this eventuality? In the last year, UWT severed ties with Greentrike (Muse daycare) which previously gave priority admission to UWT families.

UW Human Resources maintains information about [child care options and resources during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). Eligible staff can take a [family care emergency absence](#) when regularly scheduled care plans are interrupted due to a school, camp, facility closure and/or the unexpected absence of a care provider. Family care emergencies apply to both child and elder care situations.

Care for children of all ages

Backup care through Bright Horizons and KinderCare: KinderCare and Bright Horizons have limited COVID-19 backup spaces at their local centers. Bright Horizons also has a service that will send a care provider to your home. [Explore options for backup and sick-child care.](#)

UW CareLink: UW CareLink child care specialists are available to UW employees and their family members. They listen to your family's needs and provide a list of child care providers, camps and/or tutors that align with your preferences and that have space available. Please call for assistance: 866-598-3978.

Child Care Aware Referrals: The [Child Care Aware COVID Referral Center](#) connects families in King and Pierce Counties to vacant child care slots in the community. The referral center offers multi-lingual service and is available weekdays from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Call 1-800-446-1114 and press “1” to request child care.

Komae cooperative child care app: [Komae](#) provides a flexible management option for UW parents both at home and on-site. The app enables parents to identify and vet families with similar parenting styles and COVID-19 hygiene practices to build their pod for shared childcare and education.

Facilities and Air Quality

What is the plan to manage foot traffic in buildings? I'm thinking of a rainy day in November and crowds of students leaving classes and jamming up the area stretching from GWP to WCG?

At this time, we are not going to manage foot traffic unless EH&S, CDC, or public health mandates distancing again.

What about the Carlton, that is NOT a green building? What measures will be taken to address air quality?

EH&S has completed an air quality audit in Carlton. All areas of indoor air quality parameters were normal.

Has the HVAC system in all classrooms been updated so that it follows CDC guidelines?

Buildings HVAC filter systems are upgraded.

Can we get a list of classrooms that were updated?

This list will be shared shortly. We are waiting for the final list from IT.

If we are expected to bring our office garbage and recycling to the hallway receptacles, how do we get fresh liners? Will custodial services stock the offices with them?

Please request for liners at Facilities service desk at 253-692-5700.

Have the water systems on campus been tested since most have not been used in over a year (i.e., water fountains, water bottle filling stations, water for hand and dish washing)?

The campus water systems are flushed every day by the facility team. EH&S tested and cleared the Carlton building, I will have the building tested before school starts.

Miscellaneous

Can administrators and academic advisors get a copy of the checklist that new students received so we can help reinforce messaging?

Yes, you can find the checklist here: <https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/uwt/student-affairs/vc>

We have an evening event scheduled at William Philip Hall on October 7. Food was going to be provided. The capacity is 400. Should we make changes?

Please continue to work with Conference Services and they can assist you with the specific requirements for food service, etc.

Parking permits are not available for employees to purchase at this time, will the processing of parking permits be integrated into when we are expected to return to campus? We can't park if we don't have permits.

Yes, we have a new parking permit system that is entirely electronic (based on license plate #) so no physical pass is needed. The system is planned to go live on 9/13 so staff and faculty can purchase passes and use them that same day.

Just to confirm, if our department is requiring us to return to campus on September 10 - we won't need to pay for parking that day because the parking passes are not available to purchase yet?

September 10 is a Friday; most units are not asking employees to return to work in person until September 13, a Monday. Please note that City of Tacoma street parking around campus including alleys is now limited to 3 hours.