

## UW SPH AUTUMN 2021 QUARTER RETURN TO WORK IN-PERSON – STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Dear SPH Staff,

Sixteen months ago, the University of Washington and School of Public Health transitioned to a fully remote working environment to help protect ourselves and others from COVID-19. It's been a challenging time, and there will undoubtedly be more challenges to come. We're so grateful to all of you for your continued flexibility and understanding as we navigate unprecedented circumstances.

With COVID-19 vaccinations widely available and Washington State re-opening guidance in place, the University of Washington is transitioning back to a [“primarily in-person” workplace](#) effective September 13, 2021. We have learned a lot about our ability to work remotely over the last 16 months and have incorporated these insights into our policies as we publicly re-open our facilities.

We recognize that the situation concerning COVID-19 incidence and policies remains fluid. Both the SPH and UW leadership teams continue to monitor the status closely and are committed to ensuring that our policies remain aligned with the most up-to-date public health guidance. For now, that means continuing to plan for return-to-work in person beginning September 13, with good vaccine coverage and masking.

Consistent with the [UW-wide telework policy](#), **eligible staff who wish to continue to work remotely part-time beginning September 13, 2021, have the opportunity to do so with an [approved telework agreement](#) in place.**

From September 13 – December 31, 2021, many full-time professional staff and classified (union and non-union) staff in SPH will be eligible to work one of the following schedules:

- “4+1” (i.e., four days in person and one day of telecommuting).
- “3+2” (i.e., three days in person and two days of telecommuting determined in collaboration with their supervisor).
- “2+3” (i.e., two days in person and three days of telecommuting, with the days telecommuting to be set in collaboration with their supervisor).

These telework schedules for SPH ensure that we:

- Provide essential services to our students who will predominantly be back in classes on campus in person.
- Leverage the significant strengths we have when we can work collaboratively together in teams in person.
- Support the health and well-being of our staff, who appreciate the flexibility of teleworking during the pandemic.



- Provide more precise, equitable guidance for deciding who gets to telework and how many individuals telework across the school.

Please keep in mind which telework agreements are appropriate should be developed through a conversation between staff and their supervisors. **If you want to telework and have not yet begun discussing with your supervisor, please start that conversation now. It will be ideal to have a telework agreement by August 20 to continue telework beginning September 13.** A diagram illustrating considerations for telework can be found [here](#) to help staff, and their supervisors explore which telework options (if any) work for them. Please note that the diagram is only intended to be a helpful tool, and supervisors need to approve any plan.

Other telework arrangements can be made by exception but must be approved by the individual's department chair or department administrator (in addition to the individual's supervisor). Per [UW policy](#), staff in SPH who seek to work 100% remotely after September 10, 2021, must have their request approved by the dean (in addition to the chair or department administrator). **The SPH request form for 100% telework can be found [here](#)**, and should be submitted to SPH HR along with the telework agreement once approved at the department level. Additionally, we will support individuals who may seek medical or disability accommodations that may require full-time telework -- for instance, because they are immunocompromised. [Requests for medical and disability accommodations](#) should be made through the [UW Disability Services Office](#). Requests for accommodations should be submitted well in advance of September 10, 2021 (ideally by August 20, 2021) to provide adequate time for review and approval.

**Linked, you will find additional resources, including a [staff/supervisor operational expectations](#) for telework and [FAQs](#) for any further questions you may have.** We will re-assess how this approach has worked towards the end of the autumn quarter as we make plans for winter and spring quarters.

We are all committed to working together to create a safe work environment. Before you return to work in person:

- **Verify your vaccine status via WorkDay.** The University of Washington [requires](#) all employees and students to be vaccinated against COVID-19, unless claiming an exemption. Therefore, please complete your [vaccine attestations](#) by August 16, 2021, so we have an accurate sense of what percentage of our community is fully vaccinated and can plan accordingly.
- **Complete the updated UW online [COVID-19 Safety Training module](#)** and familiarize yourself with your units' return to work onsite plan before returning to work onsite.
- **Familiarize yourself with the most up-to-date [campus masking policy](#) and abide by it.** (Note that UW and local/state masking policies are subject to change based on local conditions.)

In addition, please remember that:

- You **must** stay home if you have symptoms of COVID at any point and **must** comply with UW and CDC guidance regarding quarantine and isolation.
- **SPH values prevention and protecting the most vulnerable members of our community.** Therefore, we strongly encourage *all individuals* (regardless of vaccine status) to wear masks at this point when they are indoors at UW and to respect that not everyone will feel comfortable being near other people.

Thank you so much again for your patience; we look forward to seeing many of you in the coming weeks back on campus! In the meantime, please continue to take care of yourselves. We're all learning how to transition back into in-person environments. Know that we are here to support you. Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to reach out to any of us or to your HR Manager.

All the best,  
Hilary Godwin  
Uli Haller  
Meghan Herman