

UW SPH WINTER QUARTER 2022 – INSTRUCTOR FAQs FOR ON-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION

To assist you in finding the answers to your questions, we have divided the FAQ into questions related to the following sections:

- [University-wide policies](#)
- [SPH-specific guidance](#)
- [Balancing in-person instructions and COVID risks](#)
- [Future plans \(including contingency plans\)](#)

Questions related to University-wide policies

1. How was the decision made (and by whom) that AY21-22 instruction would be primarily in person?

- A. With the widespread availability of high-quality vaccines and testing in our region starting in the spring of 2021, UW central administration made the executive decision to: 1) in autumn 2021, return to campus for in-person instruction, and 2) in September 2021, lift the emergency protocols that allowed (near) universal work from home at the discretion of individual employees.

This decision was aligned with Governor Inslee’s mandate that K-12 schools in WA state return to in-class instruction for autumn 2021. This decision to shift towards in-person instruction was also in alignment with national trends for both K-12 schools and institutions of higher education. Guidance from both the [CDC](#) and the [US Department of Education](#) encouraged returning to in-person instruction to address the increased disparities in post-secondary education that were exacerbated by remote instruction during the pandemic.

2. Have either autumn 2021 or winter 2022 been designated [Extraordinary Circumstances](#) quarters in the same way as other quarters (e.g., spring, summer, autumn 2020; winter, spring, summer 2021)?

- A. Neither autumn quarter 2021 nor winter quarter 2022 have been designated an [Extraordinary Circumstances](#) quarter by the UW. That decision is made by the University (including UW Academic Senate) and not by SPH. We will alert you if a designation changes. However, even when it is not an “Extraordinary Circumstances” quarter, students will be able to change their grade in a course from a numeric grade to S/NS up until the last day of the quarter. Please refer students to the [registrar’s website](#) for more information on the updated S/NS deadline.



3. After teaching my class remotely during AY2020-21, I feel that the remote version of the class makes more sense pedagogically; can I switch to teaching the class remotely on a permanent basis?

- A. Per University policy and guidelines provided by our accrediting bodies, 100%-remote classes require a “DL” (distance learning”) designation. (This requirement was waived during AY20-21 due to the pandemic, but went back into effect in autumn 2021, when the UW returned to “primarily in-person instruction.”) The process for obtaining DL designation is run out of the UW Curriculum Office (UWCO) as described on their website: <https://registrar.washington.edu/curriculum/guides/distance-learning/>. Instructors interested in pursuing this option should reach out to the chair of the curriculum committee for their department and/or program.

4. What decisions were left to the discretion of schools?

- A. Deans of individual schools were given limited authority by the Provost to approve “special arrangements” for students in their programs who did not qualify for DRS accommodations but who were experiencing undue hardships. They were also given very limited authority to approve “special arrangements” for instructors who are experiencing undue hardships to move their classes to remote learning for a single quarter.

5. Why can’t department chairs approve instructor requests 100% remote instruction?

- A. Per University policy and guidelines provided by our accrediting bodies, 100% remote classes require a “DL” (distance learning”) designation. Instructors and departments may request a **permanent** DL designation (as opposed to a one-time DL designation) for a specific course using the standard process. The process for obtaining DL designation is run out of the UW Curriculum Office (UWCO) as described on [their website](#). Instructors interested in pursuing this option should reach out to the chair of the curriculum committee for their department and/or program.

The Provost has delegated limited authority to deans to approve one-time “special arrangements” for instructors to teach their course 100% remotely if they have some truly extenuating circumstance. While deans have been given limited authority to approve these requests, deans have been explicitly instructed by the Provost that they may **not** further delegate this authority (e.g., to chairs).

6. Suppose I don't qualify for an accommodation or special arrangement to teach my class remotely. Can I elect to teach my class remotely part of the time?

- A. As indicated above, per University policy, any course that is taught 100% online must have a “distance learning” designation. For “regular” classes, while instructors always have some flexibility in determining which course content should be delivered in-person, they should keep in mind that the “norm” for most courses in most programs and departments in SPH is for the number of hours of in-person instruction per week to roughly correlate with the number of credits for the course (i.e., a 3-credit course typically would have 3 hours of in-person instruction each week). A decision about whether to make a significant shift of this paradigm should be made by the faculty in a department or program through open discussion at one or more faculty meetings, as opposed to on an ad hoc/course by course basis.

For an individual course, instructors are encouraged to take the following into consideration when making decisions about what specific content they deliver in-person and what content (if any) they deliver remotely (either synchronously or asynchronously):

- With the return to on-campus instruction in AY21-22, there is a general campus expectation that course content that was delivered in-person prior to the pandemic will again be delivered in-person.
- Any changes in the mode of instruction for specific course content should be based on a consideration of what mode best supports student learning.
- Students base their schedules (including curricular and co-curricular activities) on being on campus and may not have easily available options for “remote” learning when on campus or in transit.

Questions related to SPH-specific guidance

7. What is the SPH-specific guidance and how was it developed?

- A. UW SPH is committed to supporting any accommodations for students, staff or faculty that are approved by the office of Disability Resources for Students (DRS) or the Disability Services Office (DSO) to the best of our ability.

Through a series of conversations over summer 2021 and based on feedback provided by faculty and students (e.g., from google docs at webinars), SPH departmental and OD leadership teams agreed that the school would also provide “special arrangements” for some additional members of our community who had extenuating circumstances that



made it challenging for them to engage in remote instruction but did not meet the criteria for a DRS or DSO accommodation. Specifically, we agreed to:

1. Consider requests for “special arrangements” for students to take their classes remotely if:
 - They are living with an immunocompromised individual or
 - They cannot get a visa to return to campus for in-person instruction, as long as the program director and instructor agree that it is possible to accommodate this request.
2. Consider requests for “special arrangements” for instructors to teach 100% remotely (using the process outlined by the Provost’s office) for the quarter if:
 - They are living with an immunocompromised individual or
 - Have some other truly extenuating circumstance that compromises their ability to teach in-person, as long as their program director and chair agree that this mode of instruction is acceptable for a single quarter and is better than having another instructor teach the course.

The OD received additional feedback from SPH faculty in autumn 2021 (collected by the SPH Faculty Council) that requested greater clarity around which policies and guidance are campus-wide and which are SPH-specific. In addition, there was a request that SPH guidance more explicitly acknowledges the rights of the faculty to determine how specific course content is delivered. The current guidance for instructors and this FAQ document are now updated and addresses these concerns.

8. What information should instructors provide in their syllabus and on their Canvas site about the responsibilities and expectations of students/instructors and what to do if either an instructor or student is unwell?

- A. Instructors for SPH are encouraged to have language regarding policies that are consistent throughout the school. SPH has drafted a statement (see below) to include in each syllabus and course Canvas site that reflects our commitment to:
1. protect the health and safety of the community
 2. center our students by doing our best to provide quality education and learning
 3. promote equity in our practices and policies.

The [syllabus template](#) on the SPH Academic Resources page has also been updated to include this language.

Sample Syllabus Language:

COVID-RELATED EXPECTATIONS

Per UW policy, this class will be conducted in person. Therefore, unless you meet the criteria for an accommodation from Disability Resources for Students (DRS) or a special arrangement approved by the SPH Office of the Dean that allows you to take the course remotely, you should only register for this class if you can attend in-person.

Please contact UW Disability Resources for Students (DRS) directly if you feel you may be eligible for an accommodation based on your status as an immunocompromised individual or based on other diagnosed physical or mental health conditions that might prevent you from being able to take classes in-person.

If you are a student enrolled in a program in SPH, and you are either living with an individual who is immunocompromised, OR you are unable to obtain a visa to travel to the U.S., you may be eligible for a “special arrangement” that will allow you to take this course remotely. Requests for special arrangements to take the class remotely should have been submitted to and approved by the Students and Academic Services team in the Office of the Dean before the beginning of the quarter. If you have questions about this type of arrangement, please reach out to Student and Academic Services by email at sphsas@uw.edu.

All UW students are expected to complete their [vaccine attestation](#) before arriving on campus and to follow the campus-wide face-covering policy at all times. You are expected to follow state, local, and UW COVID-19 policies and recommendations. If you feel ill or exhibit possible COVID symptoms, you should not come to class. If you need to temporarily quarantine or isolate per CDC guidance and/or [campus policy](#), you are responsible for notifying your instructors as soon as possible by email. **If you receive a positive COVID-19 test result, you must report to campus Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) by emailing covidehc@uw.edu or calling 206-626-3344.**

Food is not allowed in the classroom. Drinks may be sipped with lifting or removal of your facemask for a brief moment, and immediate re-masking after drinking.

Please check your email daily BEFORE coming to class. If we need to conduct class remotely because the instructor or a guest speaker is complying with UW policies and unable to attend in person, we will send all registered students an email with a Zoom link for remote instruction. Thank you for your patience and support as we all transition together back to in-person learning!



9. I have some students in my class who are not matriculated in SPH programs. Are they eligible for "special arrangements"?

- A. While we are not handling requests for special accommodations for students who are not enrolled in degree programs in SPH at a school-wide level, you are welcome (and encouraged) to provide other students in your class with the same considerations that you would provide to students in SPH programs. Please note, however, that these students would be contacting you directly to request special arrangements for remote learning.

10. I use active-learning methodologies, and hence in-class participation is an essential component of the class. Can I still include a participation component for grading?

- A. Yes. However, you will need to make available some alternative way that students who have approved accommodations or special arrangements for remote learning or are required to quarantine or isolate during the quarter can earn these points. This alternative (and who can take advantage of this alternative) needs to be clearly spelled out in your syllabus.

Questions related to balancing in-person instruction and COVID risks

11. What was the rationale, in terms of COVID risk, for returning to instruction in-person in autumn 2021, even though COVID (including newer variants) is still circulating both globally and locally?

- A. With the widespread availability of high-quality vaccines and testing in our region starting in the spring of 2021, UW campus decided to return to campus for in-person instruction in autumn 2021 and lift the emergency protocols that allowed (near) universal work from home at the discretion of individual employees in September 2021. Returning to campus was aligned with Governor Inslee's mandate that K-12 schools in WA state return to in-class instruction for Fall 2021, and the shift towards in-person instruction was also in alignment with national trends for both K-12 schools and institutions of higher education. Guidance from both the [CDC](#) and the [US Department of Education](#) encouraged returning to in-person instruction to address the increased disparities in post-secondary education caused by remote instruction during the pandemic.

UW has implemented best practices outlined by the CDC and the U.S. Department of Education to ensure that this return to in-person instruction and work is conducted as safely as possible. This includes vaccine and masking mandates, extensive free testing, aggressive contact tracing, and enhanced ventilation in critical areas. Our campus-wide COVID guidance and protocols are informed by and consistent with federal and state guidelines, as well as guidance from Public Health-Seattle and King County, which has



typically promoted even more protective protocols than the CDC and WA DOH during the pandemic.

While we continue to see COVID circulating worldwide and in our local community, the number of COVID cases in the UW community has been lower in 2021 than in 2020, despite a much higher population of students and employees on campus this fall. This is because: 1) vaccinated individuals are less likely to both contract and transmit COVID, 2) wearing a face covering is an effective strategy for reducing transmission of COVID, 3) aggressive contact-tracing is effective, and 4) we are strongly adhering to guidance that individuals with symptoms should not come to campus. All of these factors have kept the incidence of COVID lower for UW than for the surrounding community.

Most individuals who are fully vaccinated are significantly less likely to contract COVID if they are exposed to it and are *much* less likely to require hospitalization or to die of COVID. [Please see the PHSKC “vaccination outcomes” dashboard for the most up-to-date relative-risk data on this for our region.](#) The University and SPH have in place mechanisms to provide accommodations (UW DSO) and special arrangements (SPH Office of the Dean) for those individuals who have exceptional circumstances that put themselves and their families at higher risk.

Thus, the data to date suggests the measures we have in place on campus have allowed us to return to in-person instruction and flexible in-person work without significant risk to most individuals and that this shift has not contributed to an undue burden for the local healthcare system. Nonetheless, we continue to closely monitor a wide range of metrics including the number of cases in the UW and surrounding community, the capacity of the local healthcare system and their ability to provide critical services, and the ability of our current vaccines to protect against hospitalizations and death from COVID as new variants emerge. We will also continue to align our protocols with the most up-to-date federal, state, and local public health guidance.

12. What happens if I need to switch to remote instruction in the middle of the quarter because I am sick or exposed to COVID (or my kids are sick or required to quarantine or isolate)?

- A. We understand that there are any number of legitimate reasons where an instructor may need to temporarily switch to remote instruction in the middle of the quarter. Please make sure that you develop a plan for how you will handle this situation in advance and clearly communicate this plan to your students in your syllabus (see example above). In addition, please be sure to notify your chair if you need to switch to remote instruction or are unable to teach your course due to illness.

13. What should I do if I am notified that one of my students has tested positive for COVID?

- A. There are two different reasons why you may be contacted by UW EH&S if one of your students has tested positive for COVID: 1) to let you know that you should accommodate their need for temporary remote instruction (in which case the name of the student will be included), or 2) to let you know that you are a close contact (in which case the identity of the student is confidential). Please read the communication you receive carefully to understand the reason for being notified as this will allow you to respond appropriately. Use this [flowchart from UW EH&S](#) to determine how you should respond if you had close contact with an individual who has tested positive. In addition, please let your department chair know that you have a student who has tested positive, as they will not be informed directly. You should not forward confidential information (including the name of the student who has tested positive) to your department chair.

14. If students are not vaccinated, will they still be allowed to attend class?

- A. Starting in winter quarter 2022, students who are not vaccinated and who have APPROVED medical or religious exemptions are allowed to attend classes as long as they take weekly COVID tests and submit the negative test result to UW EH&S through the official portal. Unvaccinated students who do NOT have an approved exemption or vaccinated students who have not provided documentation that they are fully vaccinated will not be allowed to register for winter 2022 and hence should not be attending classes.

15. I am worried that there may be students in my class who are not vaccinated – is there any way that I can find out my students' vaccination status?

- A. For privacy reasons, we are not able to release individual student vaccination statuses to their instructors. However, there are vaccine mandates in place for students and employees at UW. Per the [UW COVID-19 dashboard](#), >95% of students on the UW Seattle campus have uploaded their vaccine documentation and >98% of those students are fully vaccinated.

16. Will there continue to be a mask mandate on campus?

- A. Both the SPH and UW leadership teams continue to closely monitor the situation and are committed to ensuring that our policies remain aligned with the most up-to-date public health guidance. Please make sure that you are familiar with the current [campus masking policy](#).

17. What work was done to ensure that the ventilation systems in the buildings we occupy at UW are safe?

- A. An overview of how ventilation systems work and changes made in response to COVID can be found [here](#).

18. I am worried about students eating and drinking in the classroom and that these behaviors increase the risk of COVID transmission.

- A. Please review the guidance that UW EH&S has released regarding safety practices while [eating and drinking on campus](#). Signage in your building will also indicate which spaces are suitable for eating and drinking. Please check with your departmental manager if you have questions.

19. I live with an immunocompromised individual; am I eligible for a workplace accommodation to teach remotely?

- A. Faculty living with an individual who is immunocompromised are not eligible for a workplace accommodation through DSO since it does not relate to their own medical condition. However, the School of Public Health will consider requests for a special arrangement for these individuals to teach remotely. Please submit a special arrangement request to your department chair and HR Manager explaining your circumstances and articulating those factors. Your chair will forward your request to the Office of the Dean and it will be given full consideration. Per University policy, all requests to teach 100% remotely require final approval by both Dean Godwin and the Vice Provost Phil Reid.

20. I have unvaccinated children and am worried that I will infect them; can I request to teach remotely?

- A. Current CDC and state guidance state that children should attend K-12 school in-person, reflecting our understanding that children are generally at low risk for severe disease caused by COVID. Masking in school settings is an effective mechanism for protecting unvaccinated children. Vaccines are now available for children ages 5-17. Having children who cannot be vaccinated currently does not qualify an individual to telework 100%. However, suppose you have a child who is immunocompromised, or you have other circumstances that complicate your situation. In that case, you are welcome to submit a special arrangement request to your department chair and Human Resource manager that articulates those factors, and we will give it full consideration.

21. I must take public transportation to work and don't feel safe; can I request to teach remotely?

- A. Relying on public transit does not qualify an individual for 100% telework. However, suppose you have an immunocompromised child, or you have other circumstances that complicate your situation. In that case, you are welcome to submit a special arrangement request to your department chair and HR manager that articulates those factors, and we will give it full consideration.

Individuals who take public transportation to campus or commute in group settings should particularly review the recommendations released by Public Health--Seattle & King County (PHSKC) about [choosing the right mask for different situations](#).

Questions related to future plans (including contingency plans)

22. Is it possible that the entire campus will shift back to 100%-remote instruction?

- A. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is to expect the unexpected and be prepared to pivot. **We ask that you keep abreast of campus-wide announcements and be prepared to pivot to online instruction if necessary.** (The campus [COVID webpage](#) is a great resource.)

Examples of reasons that the University might need shift back to 100%-remote instruction include:

- If available vaccines and boosters cease to provide strong protection against hospitalizations and death from COVID (i.e., the individual risk to members of our community of learning in-person is too high) and/or
- If in-person work and classes at the UW are contributing to high rates of community transmission and/or overwhelming the capacity of our health care system. (i.e., the societal impacts of in-person instruction are unmanageable).

We are closely monitoring the situation with Omicron (and will likewise do so when future variants of concern emerge). The UW has increased the amount of surveillance testing we are doing and strongly encourage all members of the community to get a booster shot if they are eligible to do so. The University leadership team is in constant communication with Public Health Seattle and King County (PHSKC), WA Department of Health (DOH) and the Governor's office and we will continue to coordinate with them closely. Any decision for the entire campus to move to remote instruction and/or work from home would come from the UW President and Provost and would be broadly disseminated to the University community.

