

UW SPH WINTER QUARTER 2022 - STUDENT FAQs ABOUT CLASSES IN SPH (12/2/21)

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 policies & guidance](#)
- [Balancing in-person instruction and COVID risks](#)
- [Future plans \(including contingency plans\)](#)

Questions related to University-wide policies

1. How was the decision made that classes would be primarily in-person for AY21-22?

- 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) return to campus for in-person instruction in autumn 2021 and 2) lift the emergency protocols that allowed (near) universal work from home at the discretion of individual employees in September 2021.

This decision supported 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 caused by remote instruction during the pandemic.

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

- A. Deans of individual schools have the authority to approve "special arrangements" for students in their programs who did not qualify for DRS accommodations but who were experiencing undue hardships. Schools also have the authority to approve "special arrangements" for instructors who are experiencing undue hardships to move their classes to remote learning for a single quarter. This power to approve or deny special arrangements within the School for students and instructors was given by the provost.

3. Have either autumn 2021 or winter 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 has 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 this changes.

4. I am an Academic Student Employee (ASE) and meet the criteria for taking classes remotely; can I also request to conduct my ASE remotely?

A. As a UW Employee, you can reach out to the Disability Services Office (DSO) to submit a request for [Public Health Emergency Accommodation](#). The process of evaluating your request will be done in concert with your ASE supervisor; that process will be managed by the DSO office.

5. I am a student and would like to request to attend my classes remotely. Can I do that?

- A. You may be eligible for an accommodation administered by the Disability Resources for Students (DRS) or a Special Arrangement from SPH to take classes remotely if you are a student who is:
- i. Immunocompromised, or
 - ii. Experiencing other diagnosed physical or mental health conditions that preclude you from participating in class in-person during winter quarter.
 - iii. Living with someone who is immunocompromised, OR
 - iv. Unable to travel to the US because you are unable to obtain a visa.

If any of i-iv applied to you, please reference the SPH Winter Quarter Student Guidance for instructions.

Questions related to SPH-specific policies & guidance

6. If I don't qualify for an accommodation or special arrangement, can I elect to take my SPH classes remotely or participate remotely on an ad hoc basis?

A. If you don't have a formal accommodation approved by DRS or a special arrangement approved by the SPH Office of the Dean, you are expected to attend your SPH classes in-person and may not take them remotely. If you are sick, you should not come to class. Please notify your instructors following any guidance they provide about absences related to illness on their course syllabi.

There may be instances in which you are required to participate in classes remotely. To learn more, please refer to the summary of [public health guidance developed by UW Environmental Health and Safety \(EH&S\)](#).

- 7. 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. Please see the [UW EH&S guidance](#) regarding reasons why you may be required to switch to remote instruction. . If this happens, inform your instructors directly about your situation.
- 8. Will the mask mandate continue on campus?**
- A. Per UW policy, masks are required in all indoor locations at all times. More details on the campus mask policy can be found [here](#).
- 9. Are students allowed to eat and drink in classes?**
- A. Per University COVID guidance, eating is not currently allowed in classrooms: <https://www.ehs.washington.edu/system/files/resources/eating-space-guidance.pdf>. Students may, however, temporarily lift their mask to take a brief sip from a beverage.
- 10. Are the ventilation systems in the buildings we occupy at UW safe?**
- A. Yes, an overview of how ventilation systems work and changes made in response to COVID can be found [here](#).
- 11. I am worried that there may be other students in my class who are not vaccinated – is there any way that I can find out another student’s vaccine status?**
- A. For privacy reasons, individual student vaccination statuses are not made available to instructors or other students. However, please do remember there is a vaccination mandate 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.
- 12. I have children who are not vaccinated and am worried that I will infect them; can I request to attend class remotely?**
- A. No, having children who are not yet vaccinated does not qualify you to take classes remotely. If you have a child who is immunocompromised or have other circumstances that you’d wish for SPH to consider, please submit a request for special arrangements to the SPH Office of the Dean.
- 13. I have to take public transportation to campus and don't feel that it is safe; can I request to attend class remotely?**
- A. No, relying on public transit does not qualify you for taking classes remotely.
- 14. If I am taking a class in SPH, but I am not matriculated in a degree program in SPH, am I eligible to apply for SPH "special arrangements"?**

A. No, SPH special arrangements only apply to students who are matriculated in degree programs in SPH for classes that they are enrolled in that are offered through SPH.

Questions related to future plans (including contingency plans)

15. 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. That being said, the UW is unlikely to shift back to 100% remote instruction unless:
- i. Available vaccines 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
 - ii. In-person work and classes at the UW is 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).