

Instructor FAQ Spring 2021

1. What's meant by "close contact" with COVID-19?

The CDC defines "[close contact](#)" as occurring when a person is "within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from two days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, two days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated."

UWM's safety policies are intended to prevent close contact of instructors and students in the classroom and campus setting—students are required to sit in seats spaced at least six-feet apart, and everyone is required to wear a mask/face covering. Both instructors and students are responsible for maintaining a safe classroom environment by wearing a mask and attending to proximity and duration of exposure. Like faculty and staff, students also had to complete an attestation of having completed the COVID safety program.

2. What is "isolation" and "quarantine," and to whom does each apply?

"Isolation" refers to sick individuals who separate themselves from contact with healthy individuals. For COVID-19, persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have been symptomatically diagnosed with COVID-19 must isolate.

"Quarantine" refers to the separation of individuals who were exposed to an infectious disease to see if they become sick. For COVID-19, individuals identified as close contacts, caregivers of infected persons, or those who share quarters with infected persons must quarantine.

3. What should I do if a student contacts me to report that they tested positive/were diagnosed or were identified as a close contact?

If you kept your distance from this student and weren't within six feet for more than 15 minutes total over a 24-hour period, then you are not a close contact according to CDC and local health officials. Students are being instructed to self-report their positive test result and/or a positive diagnosis to the Dean of Students Office, so you should encourage any student who reports a positive test/diagnosis to you to report to the Dean of Students Office via this form ([link](#)).

The Dean of Students Office will notify, in a de-identified manner, the other students in your in-person class, so please **do not** share the student-provided information with the class. Beyond the potential confusion duplicate notifications could cause, you may violate FERPA by sharing this information beyond those UWM staff who legitimately need to know this information (such as your department chair or the Dean of Students Office).

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Anyone identified by the self-reporting student as being a close contact may be contacted by the Dean of Students Office.

You should instruct the student to:

1. Stay home and isolate.
2. Self-report their illness with the Dean of Students Office ([link: http://uwm.edu/covid19selfreport](http://uwm.edu/covid19selfreport)).
3. Follow Norris Health Center's or their health care provider's directions. Report a worsening of symptoms to their care provider.
4. Keep up with their course work and studies, as their health and symptoms allow.
5. Isolate for a least 10 days and contact Norris HC or their health care provider at the end of those 10 days.
6. If the conditions for Return to Class have been met (see below), the student is free to return to class, without retesting or documentation, on the 11th day after onset of COVID-19 symptoms.

Please make every effort to accommodate the student's participation and learning as their health allows. There are no hard rules about how much class a student can miss, same as before COVID. The issue is whether they meet the expectations and course outcomes. If they cannot, just as you did for illnesses or other issues pre-COVID, please work with your student advisors or program directors and follow your department or college policies and procedures.

4. What should I tell a student who asks me where they can get tested?

Students with symptoms should be told to contact Norris Health Center or their own healthcare provider. Symptomatic individuals should self-isolate until they are able to visit Norris or their healthcare provider.

Asymptomatic students who live in residence halls are required to test weekly. Off-campus students and staff who are on campus at least one day per week are required to test once every other week. Testing for students and staff will be available on all UWM campuses. In addition, there are also [free testing sites](#) in each county.

5. If a student suspects they have COVID-19, is awaiting test results, and then finds out the test comes back negative, can the student return to in-person activities upon knowledge of the results if it is before 14 days?

If the test is negative for COVID-19, their symptoms are improved, they no longer have a fever, and a healthcare provider has instructed them they can resume normal activities, then the student can return to class. If the student was identified as a close contact, they must quarantine for 14 days even if they tested negative and are asymptomatic.

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6. A student who tested COVID-positive contacts me and wants to rejoin our face-to-face class. What do I tell them?

Students who tested positive or were quarantined can return to in-person classes and the campus after their required isolation or quarantine period. Students should follow the directions they were provided for Return to Classes/Campus. (See below for these directions.)

7. Who should I work with if I feel the need to move my face-to-face class completely online?

If you need to move your class from in-person to fully online instruction, for whatever reason, please contact your department chair and/or dean to discuss your situation. The Provost's Office has provided a set of guidelines governing requests for changes in modality for Spring 2021. Please refer to these guidelines and process for submitting requests.

8. What are my responsibilities in the classroom for classroom safety?

Maintaining social distancing and wearing face coverings/masks are two key factors in maintaining a safe classroom environment. All students and staff are responsible for following UWM's [safety standards](#) and [COVID-19 health and safety rules](#). You personally are not responsible for cleaning the classroom, although supplies will be in each classroom for use as you or other individuals feel the need.

9. What do I tell my class if there is a positive case?

As detailed above, the Dean of Students Office will inform both the instructor and students in an in-person class when a student in that class has self-reported a positive test or diagnosis for COVID-19. The information provided to the rest of the class will not include identifying information about the COVID-positive person. Since the Dean of Students will provide this information, instructors should not inform students in the class of any student-provided information they may have received. Please note: the notification the Dean of Students Office will provide does not treat the instructor or class members as close contacts, as defined above. If an individual is identified as a close contact, that person will be contacted by the Dean of Students or local public health department regarding next steps.

10. Can I prohibit a student from attending my in-person class if they have not tested according to UW System's testing requirements for Spring 2021?

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UW System [Interim Policy 600-01](#) requires students and staff to test regularly during the Spring 2021 semester. Students living on campus must test weekly. Off-campus students and staff who are on campus at least one day per week must test every other week. UWM is centrally managing student and staff compliance. It is not the instructor's responsibility to enforce compliance or to prevent students suspected of non-compliance from attending in-person classes or activities.

11. I've already had COVID-19, do I need to test every other week?

If you tested positive for COVID-19, recovered and are without symptoms, then you do not have to test again for 90 days after your positive test result.

12. I've been vaccinated. Do I still have to test every other week?

Yes. If you have been vaccinated, you are still expected to test every other week. There is no research yet on whether people who have been vaccinated can carry the virus without symptoms and transmit it to others.

13. If a student becomes uncomfortable with attending class in person, how should this be handled?

For face-to-face classes, this is their choice. Every faculty member teaching face-to-face or hybrid is to have created an online back-up plan for this event and/or be flexible in allowing students to meet the course objectives (see CETL for suggestions). This may include recording lectures or having a synchronous class that a student can "attend live" from home.

14. What if a student refuses to wear a face covering or social distance in the classroom?

If a student is not wearing a mask in a classroom setting, instructors should:

1. Inform the student of UWM's health and safety rules, including the wearing of masks. If the student complies, carry on.
2. If the student does not comply, ask the student to leave class and go get a mask at a mask-handout location.
 - a. If the student refuses to leave class to get a mask, take a break and talk to the student. The student should be informed that failure to leave class and comply with UWM's safety standards could result in nonacademic discipline.
 - a. UWM Police (or branch campus administrators) should be called only as a last resort. UWM Police (or the branch campus administrator) will talk to the student and provide the student with a mask in the hallway.
 - b. Report these student violations using the Dean of Students Office [Report It](#) form.

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15. What happens to my class if I test positive or if I become a close contact?

If you test positive for COVID-19 or have been a close contact with a COVID-positive person, you should:

1. Self-report your diagnosis to your supervisor as soon as possible.
2. Follow the guidelines given in the attached Return to Work/Return to Classes & Campus: Requirements After Isolation or Quarantine.
2. To maintain continuity of the class in such a contingency, make sure that a back-up instructor has been designated for your class. If you need assistance in finding a back-up instructor, discuss this with your department chair.
3. Add the backup instructor in Canvas as an instructor.
4. If you are teaching an online class and your health situation allows it, continue to teach the class.
5. Communicate with the back-up instructor with a copy to the department chair about the need for them to step in to continue instruction.
6. After your isolation/quarantine period, assume your normal instructional duties.

Please visit UWM's [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page for more details.

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**Return to Work/Return to Classes & Campus:
Requirements after Isolation or Quarantine**

All students and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19, who have been in close contact with a COVID-positive person, or who have been required to self-quarantine should not return to work, classes, or campus until the following conditions are met. Conditions for return differ whether one is in isolation as a result of a positive test or quarantine based on close contact. These conditions for return to work/class/campus follow CDC guidelines.

Isolation: Return to Work/Class/Campus

1. COVID-19 positive individuals should isolate for 10 days after symptom onset.
2. Ten (10) days after symptom onset, isolation can end for individuals
 - a. whose symptoms are gone or improving, and
 - b. who do not have a fever (and have not used fever-reducing medications).
3. For asymptomatic individuals, isolation can end 10 days after their first positive test for COVID-19.
4. No documentation is required, nor should it be requested for return to work/class/campus.
5. Once the above conditions have been met, students cannot and should not be denied a return to class/work/campus.

UWM recommends contacting Norris Health Center or your personal medical provider to verify your health status for return to work or classes. Norris Health Center will not retest students leaving isolation.

Those who have recovered from COVID-19 should self-monitor for return of symptoms. If symptoms return, do not come to campus and contact Norris Health Center or your health care provider. (Reference: [CDC isolation guidance](#))

Quarantine: Return to Work/Class/Campus

1. Individuals who quarantine due to close contact should quarantine for 14 days following their last contact with a COVID-positive person. There can be no close contact with a COVID-positive individual during quarantine, or else the quarantine clock resets to 14 days.
2. Individuals who quarantine due to close contact and who live with a COVID-positive individual should quarantine for 14 days from when the COVID-positive person began home isolation.
3. After 14 days with no symptoms and from the last contact with a COVID-positive person, quarantined individuals are allowed to return to normal activities.
4. No documentation is required, nor should be requested for return to work/class/campus.
5. Once the above conditions have been met, students cannot and should not be denied a return to class/work/campus.

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UWM recommends contacting Norris Health Center or your personal medical provider to verify your health status for return to work or classes. Norris Health Center will not retest students leaving quarantine.

Those who leave quarantine should self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. If symptoms occur, do not come to campus and contact Norris Health Center or your health care provider.
(Reference: [CDC quarantine guidance](#))