

Instructor & Academic Support Staff FAQs – COVID-19 Protocols Fall 2022

1. When compared with prior semesters, how will campus operations change at UW-Milwaukee campuses for Fall 2022?

UWM plans to start the Fall 2022 semester with operations and campus activities that closely resemble those at the end of the Spring 2022 semester. Approximately 70 percent of Fall 2022 sections will have some in-person component, classroom capacities have returned to normal levels, and campus social activities and operations will move toward pre-pandemic normalcy. While campus will look and operate more like it did before the pandemic, UWM has developed safety protocols and monitoring activities that will foster campus safety and flexibility.

As detailed in [UWM's Interim Covid-Related Health and Safety Policy](#), regardless of vaccination status, UWM recommends that all individuals visiting UWM facilities wear face coverings while indoors. This masking recommendation applies to all vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. In addition, UWM encourages all individuals to get vaccinated and stay up to date on booster doses. Students who test positive must report their condition to the [COVID-19 Case Submission Form](#). Faculty and staff who test positive, who are close contacts, or who have symptoms must notify both their supervisor and the [UWM Self-Reporting form](#).

UWM bases its guidance on recommendations from the Milwaukee Health Department, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, and the CDC. All guidance is subject to change given local health conditions.

2. Are masks required on campus and in classrooms?

No. Masks are recommended but not required while on campus, with noted exceptions: masks are required in the Student Health and Wellness Center, the Children's Learning Center, and specific health care professional training programs. As of September 30, 2022, masks are not required on Milwaukee County Transit System buses, although this subject to change if infection rates rise.

3. Are COVID-19 vaccines required for UWM students and staff?

No. Currently, COVID-19 vaccinations are not required of students or staff who are on campus or participating in campus activities. Thus, one cannot require students to vaccinate for specific courses, on-campus activities, a field trip or some other activity off campus. If a field trip site requires vaccination to enter, then an instructor should work with the site potentially to relax this restriction during the field trip or identify an alternate activity so that we do not deprive some students of educational opportunities based on vaccination status. Certain field placements, for example, in nursing and education, may be exceptions to this rule if the placement site requires vaccinations.

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4. Will there be mandatory COVID-19 testing on UWM campuses this fall?

No. UWM no longer requires COVID-19 testing. Students can be tested or pick up at-home test kits at the UWM Student Health and Wellness Center. Also, at-home kits are available for pick-up at each of the branch campuses.

5. Will there be physical distancing in classrooms or in other areas on campus?

UWM eliminated physical distancing requirements last academic year and does not plan to reinstate that practice. Some individuals may feel more comfortable maintaining some physical distance and are encouraged to do so, if feasible and desired. In most cases, classrooms and event facilities will operate at normal, pre-pandemic capacity levels. Apart from vaccination, masking is the best protection against catching and transmitting COVID-19.

6. Can I ask my students whether they have been vaccinated?

A student's vaccination history is private medical information and should not be requested since vaccination is not required for UWM classes or activities.

7. Will UWM monitor positive COVID-19 cases in Fall 2022?

Yes, UWM will monitor students and staff who self-report positive for COVID-19. UWM does not plan to conduct internal contact tracing.

8. What should I do if I or a student are identified as a close contact?

UWM recommends using the [CDC's Quarantine and Isolation Calculator](#) for the most recent guidance when one is a close contact or has tested positive.

Students who test positive should report their condition to the [COVID-19 Case Submission Form](#). Faculty and staff who test positive, who are close contacts, or who have symptoms must notify both their supervisor and the [UWM Self-Reporting form](#).

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9. What should I do if a student contacts me to report that they tested positive or were diagnosed with COVID-19?

Regardless of vaccination status, an individual who tests positive should isolate following the [CDC's Quarantine and Isolation Calculator](#).

You should instruct the COVID-positive student to:

1. Stay home and isolate.
2. Self-report their illness to the [COVID-19 Case Submission Form](#).
3. Follow guidance from the CDC or directions from the Student Health and Wellness Center or their health care provider. Report a worsening of symptoms to their care provider. (It's possible that the health care provider will only check the test and inform the student to follow general guidelines without being seen by the provider.)
4. Keep up with their course work and studies, as their health and symptoms allow.
5. Isolate based on the [CDC's Quarantine and Isolation Calculator](#).
6. Do not ask for an excuse note from a medical provider.

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-19. The issue is whether they meet the expectations and course outcomes. If the student cannot meet course expectations, 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.

If you wish, you can [file a report](#) on behalf of the COVID-positive.

10. Are students and staff required to self-report their positive COVID-19 test result or diagnosis?

Yes, students and staff are required to self-report their positive test result and/or a positive COVID-19 diagnosis.

Students or staff should report their results/diagnosis to the [COVID-19 Case Submission Form](#).

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

A student's health status is personal medical information and should not be shared with the class. If the student wishes to share this information, the student can do so as they see fit.

12. What should I tell a student who asks me where they can get tested for COVID-19 or get a vaccination?

UWM's Student Health and Wellness Center will conduct COVID-19 testing by appointment or provide students at-home testing kits.

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Students with symptoms should contact the Student Health and Wellness Center or their own health care provider. Symptomatic individuals should self-isolate until they are able to visit a health care provider.

UWM is partnering with the Milwaukee Health Department to vaccinate students and staff in the fall semester. Refer to the UWM [vaccination clinic webpage](#) for date and time of the vaccination clinic. In addition, students and staff at any UWM campus can receive vaccinations from local pharmacies and health care providers.

13. If a student suspects that 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 10 days?

UWM recommends students and staff consult the [CDC's Quarantine and Isolation Calculator](#) for return to class/work guidance. In order to reduce the burden of unnecessary calls and visits to medical units, instructors should not ask for a medical excuse for COVID-related illnesses.

14. 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, as provided in the [CDC's Quarantine and Isolation Calculator](#).

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

All students and staff are responsible for following UWM's [Interim COVID-Related Health and Safety Policy](#). UWM recommends everyone attending an indoor classroom wear a face covering. You personally are not responsible for cleaning the classroom. You are not responsible for checking or verifying a student's or staff member's vaccination status and should not inquire about vaccination status. Individuals may choose to voluntarily share their vaccination status but are not required to do so.

To support a safe community environment, all instructors are encouraged to share UWM safety protocols with students and to recommend vaccination against the COVID-19 virus.

16. Can I prohibit a student from attending my in-person class if they are not wearing a mask?

No. Regardless of vaccination status, all students and staff are permitted to attend classes and work on campus regardless of mask wearing.

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

UWM is planning to conduct classes and campus activities in a manner that resembles pre-pandemic practices. For face-to-face classes, instructors should inform students at the beginning of the semester and in the course syllabus of attendance requirements, if any. Instructors should consult their department or academic unit's policies for attendance and attendance requirements. UWM is not requiring that all in-person courses have online options available for students. Instructors may wish to include or consult the COVID-19 Syllabus Statement ([PDF](#), [Word](#)).

With that said, the potential exists for COVID-19 to disrupt semester plans. Instructors should consider back-up plans just in case. Additionally, students benefit from instructor flexibility in case of disruptions to their ability to attend classes in person. In last year's student survey, students expressed their appreciation and gratitude to instructors for their flexibility and understanding. UWM benefits by being a radically welcoming campus.

18. Am I required to record my lectures for students who cannot or do not attend my face-to-face class?

No, you are not required to use lecture capture for your in-person lectures. However, UWM recommends that instructors make lecture capture available to students in Canvas when practical. The UITS Knowledge Base has a [list of classrooms currently equipped for lecture capture](#), with more general assignment rooms being added. UITS also has [training available](#).

Students' responses to the AY 20-21 survey indicated that a great majority of the responding students anticipated that they would use lectures captured on video. Lecture capture is viewed by many students as a means to go back and review parts of the lecture that they did not immediately understand or missed for some reason while in class. Lecture capture was not generally seen as an alternative to attending class. In addition, lecture capture benefits students with accommodations who can use its captioning functionality.

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

If you test positive or are a close contact, please consult the [CDC's Quarantine and Isolation Calculator](#). Additionally, one should:

- a. Self-report your diagnosis to your supervisor as soon as possible.
- b. At the start of the semester, 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.
- c. Add the backup instructor in Canvas as an instructor.
- d. If your health situation allows it, continue to teach the class using synchronous or asynchronous technology tools.
- e. If your health situation does not allow you to teach remotely, communicate with the back-up instructor (cc'ing the department chair) about the need for them to step in to continue instruction.

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- f. Resume your normal instructional duties, after your isolation/quarantine period.

20. 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 Fall 2022. Please refer to [these guidelines](#) and process for submitting requests.

21. Who should I contact if I'm feeling anxious about transitioning to in-person campus activities?

There is little doubt that the global pandemic has created new personal and professional challenges and concerns. The opportunity to return to campus life is exciting but might come with emotional unease. This is to be expected and will require adjustments from the past year's routines and comfort zones. As you adjust to new routines and a familiar but changed environment, please give yourself time to make the adjustment. The pandemic continues to challenge our routines and comfort levels. In time, we all will find connection to our students, colleagues, and new routines. The best thing we can do to navigate these changes is to take care of ourselves and manage any stresses that might arise. If you feel the need to speak to a professional, UWM's [Employee Assistance Program](#) is a free and confidential benefit for employees and their household members.

22. Can I ask students for a doctor's note if they claim to have tested positive?

There are several reasons instructors should not ask for a doctor's note to excuse COVID-19 absences:

- Many students use take-home tests to determine whether they are COVID-19 positive. As a result, there is no doctor's note.
- Requiring students to get a doctor's note increases the burden of unnecessary calls and visits to medical units.
- Requiring students to retest at a medical facility may incur medical and transportation costs the student cannot afford, thus increasing their financial hardship.
- Requiring students to retest at a medical facility discourages students from pro-actively self-monitoring and self-testing, especially if the student does not have the means to visit a medical facility.
- Students who are required to provide a medical note and do not have the means to do so may decide to ignore safety protocols and attend class in-person while infected.

Please visit UWM's [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page for more information and answers to other questions.

Updated: October 14, 2022