

# Changes to face coverings, vaccination requirements and other COVID-19 updates (Message to UW students and personnel)

July 7, 2021

*This message was sent to faculty and other academic personnel, staff, trainees and students across the University of Washington.*

Dear UW community members,

Washington state's continued vaccination progress resulted in the end of many coronavirus-related restrictions on June 30. Today, we are bringing the UW's policies into alignment with these new regulations and writing to you to highlight key parts of those changes. We also have additional information about the UW's requirement that all students, faculty and other academic personnel, staff and trainees get [vaccinated against COVID-19](#) by the start of autumn quarter, if not declaring an exemption.

## Changes to face covering and distancing policies

All University units must follow the updated [UW COVID-19 Face Covering Policy](#). Following federal, state and local health guidance, as of July 7, **face coverings are optional for fully vaccinated individuals** at UW campuses and facilities, with specific exceptions that include health-care and child-care facilities, and UW shuttles. You must continue to wear face coverings in these settings, regardless of your vaccination status.

**Consistent with state regulations, individuals who are not fully vaccinated must continue to wear a face covering indoors at all UW campuses and facilities**, in accordance with the UW Face Covering Policy. Individuals who are not fully vaccinated should also consider wearing face coverings outdoors when distancing is not possible.

Of course, you're welcome to continue wearing face coverings wherever and whenever you wish for any reason. And just as in the broader community, our University includes individuals who are unable to be vaccinated or whose medical conditions put them at higher risk for infection. For our part, we both plan to continue masking in certain situations such as indoors when meeting with groups whose vaccination status is unknown, and particularly when cold and flu season returns.

## Physical distancing, capacity and other updates

Based on state guidance, today the UW is also lifting both indoor and outdoor distancing and COVID-19 capacity requirements, though distancing is still recommended for unvaccinated individuals.

Also consistent with state requirements, Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) is updating the University's COVID-19 Prevention Plan template, events guidance, cleaning and disinfection procedures, training and other guidance documents. EH&S will post updates to its COVID-19 health and safety resources over the next several weeks.

## How to verify your vaccination status

Starting today, we ask students and employees to either [verify that they have been fully vaccinated](#), or declare a medical, religious or philosophical exemption:

- Students: By the start of autumn quarter, please provide your information with the [student COVID-19 vaccine attestation form](#).
- All employees besides UW Medicine clinical personnel: Please provide your information through the [Workday COVID-19 vaccine attestation form](#).
- UW Medicine clinical personnel: UW Medicine will send you specific information about updated COVID-19 policies and vaccine attestation this month.

[Washington Department of Labor & Industries regulations](#) require employers to verify that an individual is fully vaccinated before allowing them to go without face coverings at work where it is permitted. Providing false information is grounds for disciplinary or corrective action.

## Vaccination attestation information is private and confidential.

- Managers may not use, share or disclose this information for any purpose other than upholding compliance with state regulations.
- Employees may not ask colleagues about their vaccination status.
- Instructors may not ask their students about their vaccination status, nor will they have access to students' records or be expected to verify students' vaccination status. Instructors may broadly inform students that

individuals who are not fully vaccinated need to wear face coverings in the classroom.

A limited number of employees and students are exempt from the vaccination requirement. See the new [vaccination requirement page](#) for more information, including details on privacy protections and links to the attestation forms.

### **Symptom attestation continuing only for clinical personnel, child-care**

Effective July 7, UW employees will no longer be required to complete the daily COVID-19 symptom attestation in Workday prior to working on-site unless they work in a clinical or child-care setting. UW Medicine clinical personnel should continue to follow UW Medicine policies and procedures. Other clinical personnel or those in child-care settings should continue to use the Workday daily symptom attestation.

All individuals are still required to monitor symptoms daily, stay home if they are sick or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, and report to [EH&S](#) or UW Medicine employee health if they test positive for COVID-19 or have had close contact with someone who tested positive, *regardless of their vaccination status*.

### **Telework**

Employees not currently required to be on campus may continue teleworking through September 10. Employees who prefer to work from campus sooner than September 10 are encouraged to do so, as long as it is safe and operationally feasible.

As we prepare to return to in-person working and learning this autumn, it may be operationally necessary to call additional employees back to onsite work prior to September 10. In cases where an employee has been teleworking but is now needed in person to support operations, units must provide employees with 30 days' notice for reporting back to work in person. Exceptions can be made for emergencies and in accordance with relevant collective bargaining agreements.

Staff telework arrangements after September 10 should follow autumn [return to onsite work guidance](#).

The UW will continue posting updates about the University's [COVID-19 recovery status](#) in the coming days and weeks as we finalize these and other policy changes, and as the state issues finalized guidance and regulations.

As our state continues to recover from the pandemic, there will understandably be uncertainty and anxiety, together with the joy of coming together once again and the hope we share for a new and better normal. We look forward to working with you as we reinvigorate our commitment to our University mission, and to creating a healthier, more just, and more equitable world for all.

Sincerely,

Ana Mari Cauce  
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Professor of Psychology

Mark A. Richards  
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Professor of Earth and Space Sciences