In the first full week of Fall quarter, several students taking ENVS courses self-reported COVID-19 positive “breakthrough” cases to their professors.

Starting Monday, October 4, 2021, the university will shift to notifying instructors and students within 24 hours when a student in their class tests positive. The department awaits further university guidance on how this notification will occur and what actions, if any, faculty, and students will need to take.

As a supplement to this university notification, the Environmental Studies Department is encouraging the following voluntary approach for Environmental Studies (ENVS) Face-to-Face classes:

Per university guidance:

- Anyone feeling ill should not come to campus and should get tested as soon as they can, regardless of vaccine status. The CDC has a list of symptoms of COVID-19 here; many symptoms overlap with common colds and flus.
- Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 should not come to campus. Students should contact the Student Health Center at +1 360-650-3400 and follow their guidance. Faculty and staff should contact Human Resources and follow their guidance.
- Anyone who is a close contact of someone who tests positive -- defined by the CDC as closer than 6 ft for more than 15 minutes, regardless of masking -- should get follow the close contact procedure shown below.

ENVS classroom approach:

- Students in ENVS courses are encouraged to sit in the same general area of a classroom each time.
- Students who test positive in ENVS courses are encouraged to tell their instructors in which general area of the classroom they sat during the 4 days prior to symptom onset or positive test result.
- All members of the ENVS community are strongly encouraged to show care and compassion towards each other. With widespread community transmission off campus, exposure at work and at home is often involuntary. Anyone who voluntarily discloses a positive test result should be treated with gratitude for acting in a proactive, responsible, and caring way.
- When it is possible to do so without identifying the person who tested positive, instructors are encouraged to inform the class where that person was sitting. In small classroom, such differentiation may be impossible.
- Students and instructors in that general area of the classroom should voluntarily consider themselves close contacts.
## Close Contact Procedure
Per [Western Student Health Center](https://www.western.edu/student-health) on Oct 1, 2021

### For VACCINATED individuals

- Get tested 3-5 days after exposure
  - If you’re vaccinated and are **not experiencing symptoms**, you do not have to quarantine prior to testing or while waiting for testing results
  - If you’re vaccinated and **experiencing symptoms**, quarantine until you receive your test results
- If your **test comes back negative**, continue self-monitoring for symptoms for 14 days, and get a second COVID test 2-3 days after your first test.
  - If you are experiencing symptoms but have received two negative tests, isolate until you have gone 24 hours without symptoms
- If your **test comes back positive**, you will need to isolate for 10 days or until you have gone 24 hours without symptoms, whichever is longer

### For UNVACCINATED individual

- Get tested 3-5 days after exposure
  - Regardless of whether you are experiencing symptoms or not, you must quarantine for 14 days
- If your **test comes back negative**, continue your 14 day quarantine, continue self-monitoring for symptoms for 14 days, and get a second COVID test 2-3 days after your first test
- If your **test comes back positive**, you will need to isolate for 10 days or until you have gone 24 hours without symptoms, whichever is longer

## Where to Get Tested
Per [Student Health Center](https://www.western.edu/student-health) and [HR](https://hr.western.edu) guidance on Oct 1, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Call the Student Health Center for instructions at +1 360-650-3400.</th>
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| Faculty & Staff | Get a testing appointment at [NW Labs Portal via the TestDirectly appointment system](https://www.testdirectly.com/patient/search/provider_search).  
Alternately, get an appointment at the county COVID testing center at the airport. Appointments can be made at [https://www.testdirectly.com/patient/search/provider_search](https://www.testdirectly.com/patient/search/provider_search) |
Further clarifications:

- Instructors are encouraged to tailor this voluntary approach to their particular class configuration and teaching pedagogy. For example, in classes where students work in groups, instructors may choose to identify a group rather than a section of a room. In small classes, instructors may encourage all students to consider themselves a close contact.

- Per university guidance, students with approved vaccine waivers or illness, may request alternative assignments. Instructors are encouraged to accommodate these students to a reasonable degree.

- The form of that accommodation is the sole discretion of the instructor; alternative assignments do not need to match or fully replicate classroom attendance.

- Per MOU between faculty union and the university, instructors retain full rights to, at any time, shift a class to an online modality for a limited time or the remainder of the quarter. Instructors may do so for many reasons, including their own personal safety, the overall health of the class, or the need to maintain consistency for all students. Instructors are not required to record or stream Face-to-Face class session.

- Instructors who test positive are encouraged to tell their class; per university policy, instructors cannot come to campus while positive. The instructor and department Chair will arrange alternative learning options.

- Instructors are mandated by university policy to not disclose the test status of a specific student; this is confidential health information and cannot be shared without explicit permission from the student in writing.

This approach is valid for Fall 2021. At this time, new confirmed COVID-19 case rates in Bellingham are higher than at any time to date, although they are beginning to fall. Local hospital ICUs are at 100% capacity. Children under 12 are unable to receive vaccination. This situation is expected to change. As such, Environmental Studies Department faculty, staff, college AS Senators, and student committee members will re-evaluated the policy as the university and community situation changes.

The department expects that classroom transmission of COVID will be rare. ENVS Face-to-Face courses have near 100% Covid Compliance, with over a 96% student vaccination rate. Masking is universal in ENVS courses and the ventilation in Artnzen Hall and other campus buildings has been adjusted to vastly increase outdoor air flow. These measures are in line with CDC best practice for mitigating COVID transmission. The voluntary approach described here is seen as an additional, voluntary layer or protection as our university community begins widespread campus instruction and monitors effectiveness.

This approach applies to Environmental Studies courses taught under the ENVS rubric and by Environmental Studies faculty. It does not cover cross-listed ENVS courses taught by faculty in other departments or units, such courses cross-listed under the ENRG, ESCI, SALI, or UEPP rubrics.
This approach is to supplement and support university guidance. It remains voluntary. University policy about masking, testing, and covid vaccine/waiver compliance is mandatory and will continue to be maintained in all ENVS courses.

University policy takes precedent; if future university policy details a more stringent testing or quarantining approach, this voluntary department approach will no longer be valid.

Questions, concerns or suggestions about this approach can be directed to Environmental Studies Chair Dr. Rebekah Paci-Green, rebekah.paci-green@wwu.edu, 360-650-2707 or via Teams message.