For all graduate students:

- **When should I return from spring break?**
  
  If you are serving as a Teaching Assistant Spring Quarter, please refer to the FAQ on this topic for TAs. For everyone else, the quarter is scheduled to begin with remotely delivered classes on April 6, and the current plan is for on-campus classes to resume starting April 27.

- **I heard that employees are being encouraged to work remotely. What does this mean for me? Can I continue to come to campus to work on my thesis?**
  
  If you are able to work from home, current guidance recommends that you do so. If you work in a research laboratory, consult with your advisor on specific practices for your lab. A current list of building and program closures and suspensions is available on Western’s coronavirus information page.

- **What happens if I am defending my thesis spring quarter?**
  
  Thesis defenses will continue Spring Quarter. Specific arrangements may vary, but can include videoconferencing, and small group meetings (e.g. just you and your committee). If you plan to defend Spring Quarter, consult with your committee chair to develop a plan.

- **As a graduate student, can I use the student health center? What about my spouse / children?**
  
  If you registered for 6 or more credits during Spring Quarter and attend classes on the Bellingham campus your tuition bill automatically includes a $117 Health Service fee. If you are registered for fewer than 6 credits however, your tuition bill does not automatically include the Health Service fee and you need to specifically opt-in. Services through the Health Center are available only to current students.

- **I don’t currently have health insurance. What are my options? What about this summer?**
  
  If you are a teaching assistant, please refer to the FAQ for TAs. For all other graduate students, please see the Student Health Center insurance plan website. Several coverage options are available for both the academic year and summer. In addition to the policy offered by Western’s private insurance partner, you may also qualify for one or more options under Washington Apple (“Obamacare”) coverage.

For students who have spring quarter TA appointments:

- **When should I return from spring break?**
  
  Please contact your supervisor for program-specific guidance. Online instruction Spring quarter is scheduled to begin April 6, but it is likely that you will have some work to do prior to then in order to prepare. Note that, under ordinary circumstances, your teaching duties would begin on March 31, and you will be in pay status from March 16.

- **Can I continue to count on receiving my stipend and tuition waiver spring quarter? Under what circumstances might this change?**
  
  Yes, you will receive both your stipend and tuition waiver. Western is committed to offering a full set of courses Spring Quarter as scheduled. Beginning April 6 all courses will be delivered online, transitioning back to in-person instruction when possible, currently expected to occur April 27. Your duties may change depending on the status of the course/lab assigned to you, but your stipend and waiver will not change.
• I or a member of my household are in a high-risk category and I’m concerned about interactions in the lab/course I’m scheduled to teach. What can I do?
Western is committed to ensuring you have a safe work environment. Please contact your supervisor as soon as possible to discuss options with them.

• Whom should I contact for more information about my assignment next quarter?
Your TA supervisor is your primary contact. In most cases, this is a staff member or instructor in your department. If you are not sure who your supervisor is, contact the chair of the department that offers the class you are scheduled to teach.

• What if the lab/course I am scheduled to teach is cancelled?
In the event that your course is cancelled, your program will assign you to other duties.

• When can I expect to know what my duties next quarter will look like?
Departments are developing plans now and will share that information with you as soon as possible. Your patience and understanding are greatly appreciated as we work through the numerous logistical and instructional challenges posed by this developing situation.

• I may need to invest extra time to prepare myself/my lab/my course for online delivery. Will I be compensated for this?
The start of instruction for Spring Quarter has been delayed by one week in order to provide TAs and other instructors time to prepare and implement necessary changes. Note that, under ordinary circumstances, your teaching duties would begin on March 31, and you will be in pay status from March 16.

• If I become ill or am required to self-isolate for a period of time, and cannot teach my class/lab, will I continue to be paid?
Yes. As you normally would, please contact your supervisor as soon as possible so they can work with you to find a substitute while you’re away.

• Does Western provide health insurance to TAs? Can my spouse/children receive coverage?
Yes, during the academic year TAs are eligible to receive health insurance with the premium covered by Western. However, you must sign up. If you do not sign up you will not be covered. You should have received an email with instructions about this on March 6. The deadline for registering for health insurance for Spring Quarter is May 1. If you are a TA (full-time or half-time) Western will cover the full cost of your Spring Quarter insurance premium, but only if you sign up. For more information, please go the Graduate School health insurance information page. You may also sign up for health insurance coverage during the summer. For details, please refer to the Graduate School health insurance information page. Your spouse and children can be added to your plan, but you need to have your coverage in place first. Once you do, contact the insurance provider to add dependents and pay the additional premium.