



## Guidance to staff and students – distinguishing between COVID-19 symptoms and allergies

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At this stage of the COVID-19 epidemic in Australia, and specifically in NSW, it is essential that all staff and all students do not attend the university if they are sick.

Early recognition of illness, immediate self-isolation, and COVID-testing when appropriate are essential strategies that will limit the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory viral infections.

This advice applies irrespective of specific symptoms, and is consistent with [advice from NSW Health](#).

### COVID-19 symptoms, and other respiratory viral infections

Symptoms of COVID-19 and flu are quite similar – fever, cough, sore / scratchy throat, shortness of breath, and loss of taste / smell.

### Allergy symptoms

Many people suffer from allergies including seasonal hay fever, reactions to pets and changes in the weather etc.

Typically, symptoms associated with allergies are: itchy eyes, runny nose, sneezing, wheezing, and coughing.

Most people with allergies suffer the same symptoms on a chronic or recurrent basis and can usually recognise the symptoms.

### Advice to staff and students

If you have any symptoms that are consistent with possible COVID-19 / other respiratory viral infection (as above) you must not attend university, you should self-isolate promptly and you should be tested for COVID-19.

If you have symptoms consistent with a recurrent allergic condition, you should take your allergy medications, and control symptoms as much as possible before coming to work or class.

If you have any doubt about the cause of your symptoms you should err on the side of caution and not attend until symptoms have subsided.

### Do I require a medical certificate for a chronic or recurrent respiratory condition or symptoms (including allergies)?

If your symptoms predate the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020) are at a similar level of severity you will be required to provide a medical certificate from your GP in order to attend class.

If your symptoms have changed or are more severe than usual you should get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible. You should also see your GP and get a medical certificate.

Students should follow this process:

1. Students should obtain a medical certificate from their GP/treating medical practitioner
2. The student follows the [steps to register](#) with the Student Wellbeing- Accessibility Service
3. Upon finalising registration, the Accessibility Service will liaise with the Unit convenor/relevant staff indicating that the student's circumstances have been reviewed and they are permitted to attend class. When relevant, the Accessibility Service may be in further contact with University staff to recommend alternative adjustments to promote the continued participation of the student in their chosen course/program.