

COVID-19 GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF FACE COVERINGS ON CAMPUS

1. Purpose

This guidance document provides information on the provision and use of personal face coverings at the University of Strathclyde.

Scientific evidence along with clinical and public health advice is clear that face coverings are an important part of reducing the spread of coronavirus. In Scotland you must by [law](#) wear face coverings in most indoor public places, indoor communal and circulation spaces, in workplaces and on public transport, unless there is a relevant exemption. A university falls under the definition of a workplace in the regulations on face coverings.

Communal areas are defined as areas where people mingle or gather, and includes entrances, corridors, stairs, lifts, staff rooms, training rooms, meeting rooms, workstations, seminar rooms, lecture theatres and changing rooms.

2. University Position

The virus is still present in the environment and although many restrictions have been lifted, we all have a collective responsibility to exercise care and caution to continue to suppress the virus. Protection measures are still required.

When worn correctly, face coverings can provide protection from droplet and aerosol transmission to those around the wearer, and they can also provide some protection to the wearer. They also serve a purpose in source control by reducing contamination to the environment surrounding the wearer (e.g. contact surfaces). This is especially important if the wearer is asymptomatic (they have the virus and do not display any symptoms) or pre-symptomatic (they have the virus but have not yet developed symptoms).

As well as wearing face coverings in indoor communal spaces, face-coverings will be worn by students during face-to-face learning and teaching settings and by students and staff in shared offices.

This is in addition to the other safeguarding measures in place including:

- [physical distancing](#);
- good ventilation;
- access to hand washing facilities/hand sanitisers;
- positioning people so that they are not face to face during their work/study activity where possible.

Face coverings remain an important public health mitigation, even as the vaccine is rolled out, as we are yet to understand how effective the vaccines are at preventing transmission of current and new variants. A face covering must therefore be worn by those who have been vaccinated, unless they are exempt.

Staff will not be asked to 'enforce' the wearing of face coverings given that some people will be exempt.

3. Definitions

3.1 Face Covering

Face coverings **are not** PPE (personal protective equipment) as they do not protect the wearer from work-related hazardous substances. A face covering can be a covering of any type that covers the mouth and nose. This includes transparent face coverings which assist communication for those who rely on lip-reading and facial expressions. It is recommended that face coverings are made of cloth or other textiles and should be two, and preferably three, layers thick in line with [WHO recommendations](#). They should fit snugly around the mouth, nose and chin while allowing you to breathe easily.

Religious face coverings that cover the mouth and the nose count as face coverings for these purposes.

3.2 Face Masks

A face mask is not the same as a face covering. A face mask is a loose-fitting disposable mask that creates a physical barrier between the wearer's nose and mouth and contaminants. Also known as medical or surgical masks they are classified as Type I, Type II or Type III. They are often worn with other PPE.

4. When and Where Face Coverings Must be Used

Staff and students attending campus must come prepared with a face covering to wear when on campus as outlined below.

Face coverings must be worn inside all buildings, in communal spaces, circulation spaces and activity spaces:

4.1 Circulation Spaces

Face coverings must be worn in circulation spaces across campus such as:

- Entrances;
- Exits;
- Stairwells;
- Corridors;
- Lifts; and
- Other communal spaces within buildings including social areas.

4.2 Activity Spaces

Activity spaces include areas such as:

4.2.1 Learning and Teaching Spaces

Face coverings must be worn in learning and teaching spaces across campus.

Lecturing staff will not be required to wear a face covering in learning and teaching spaces where they are able to maintain a distance from students and other staff. Staff will be required to wear a face covering if and when they are circulating within a teaching space.

4.2.2 Offices

Face coverings must be worn in shared/multi occupancy offices across campus.

4.2.3 Meeting Spaces

Face coverings must be worn in meeting spaces.

4.2.4 Canteens/Rest Areas/Catering Outlets

Face coverings must be worn in canteens/rest areas/catering outlets across campus unless you are:

- Seated and eating or drinking.

4.2.5 Strathclyde Sport

Face coverings must be worn throughout Strathclyde Sport and only removed while:

- Exercising;
- Using the swimming pool; or
- Using the shower.

4.2.6 Library

Face coverings must be worn in the library at all times.

4.2.7 Laboratories

Face coverings must be worn in laboratories across campus.

In laboratories depending on risk assessment and potential contamination issues with hazardous substances, a face covering may be a surgical type disposable mask. These masks should be disposed of as general waste when exiting the laboratory. They should not be recycled. If contaminated, they should be disposed of via appropriate disposal routes as identified in the risk assessment.

5. Student Accommodation

Students are not required to wear a face covering in their flat. However, face coverings must be worn in circulation spaces and activity spaces on campus. Therefore, face coverings should be worn in areas such as:

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- Student Village Reception;
- Building entrance/exits;
- Building stairwells;
- Corridors;
- Laundries; and
- Common Rooms.

6. Exemptions

The [Scottish Government](#) recognises that it may not be possible for some people to wear a face covering. The University understands that there are situations where some people are 'unable' or it would be inappropriate for them, to wear a face covering. Some people may feel more comfortable showing something that says they are exempt from wearing a face covering. This could be in the form of an exemption card, lanyard or badge. You can now request a Healthier Scotland face covering exemption card online using the [request form](#).

The University of Strathclyde has also joined the [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower scheme to](#) support its staff and students. Strathclyde branded sunflower lanyards, badges or cards are available for any staff, student or visitor who requires one.

Face coverings will also not need to be worn in open-plan offices or workplaces where Perspex screening has been installed around desks or workstations. In this situation face coverings will have to be worn when staff or students are circulating between workstations.

7. References

Scottish Government:

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): face coverings guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): universities, colleges and community learning and development providers - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer businesses and workplaces](#)