

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.

To comply with the law, face coverings will continue to be mandatory within all University premises (unless exempt, see Section 6) including the library, sports centre, teaching spaces, offices, laboratories and in circulation spaces such as lifts, corridors, open areas in buildings (such as the Learning & Teaching building) and toilets. This is in addition to the other safeguarding measures in place including:

- [physical distancing](#) (although not defined in the guidance, 1m would be a reasonable distance)
- 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.

The latest guidance does allow for face coverings to be removed in certain limited circumstances at work if a person is separated from others by a distance of at least 1m or by a screen or partition. This may be considered as part of the review of a risk assessment.

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

If people choose to wear a face covering in the workplace even when not required by law, they will be supported to do so.

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 IIR. 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 1m 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.

When circulating around an open plan office a face covering should be worn. Face coverings can be removed where 1m distancing, partitions or screens are in place, as considered as part of the ongoing review of risk assessments.

4.2.3 Meeting Spaces

Face coverings must be worn in meeting spaces.

When circulating around a meeting space a face covering should be worn. Face coverings can be removed where 1m distancing, partitions or screens are in place, as considered as part of the ongoing review of risk assessments.

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 Research Environments (including Teaching Laboratories)

Mitigation measures in research environments, including laboratories, will include good ventilation, the appropriate use of face coverings following risk assessment, as well as encouraging and providing facilities for good hand hygiene and regular surface cleaning. In circumstances where biological or flammable material is being used the risk assessment might indicate that wearing a face covering is not advisable or safe. PPE will be worn where appropriate.

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:

- 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.

The University of Strathclyde is participating in the [Distance Aware Scheme](#) to support staff and students. It is a national initiative to enable individuals and organisations to politely prompt ongoing distancing and respect of individual social space. Badges and lanyards will be provided to anyone who prefers others to take extra care around them.

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](#)