

Oxford Brookes University
Face Coverings Policy Updated 24th February 2021

1. Introduction

1.1 The Covid-19 virus is primarily a respiratory disease. The World Health Organization (WHO) states that SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) is transmitted by: direct contact, indirect contact of contaminated surfaces and through inhalation of droplets from sneezing and coughing. It is known that viral aerosols are also generated during breathing, talking, singing and coughing. These particles can: travel great distances, remain suspended in air, and can be inhaled into the lungs.

1.2 Oxford Brookes University continues to follow the latest Government and scientific advice. The best available scientific evidence is that, when used correctly, wearing a face covering may reduce the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus) droplets, helping to protect others. Research has highlighted how it is possible for the virus to be increasingly carried in what are called aerosols - drifting and accumulating in the air. Taking account of this increased transmissibility of the new COVID-19 mutation/s, the University has reviewed and updated the Face Coverings Policy.

1.3 **Breaking the chain of infection is key to minimising the spread of this virus.** Wearing a **face covering** or mask is just **one** method to help stop the spread of Covid-19. Face coverings are **not** a replacement for **social distancing**, regular **hand washing** and **respiratory hygiene**. These actions are also essential for stopping the spread of COVID-19.

1.4 In addition to adopting these principles the University has also undertaken risk assessments of the work environment and role. COVID-19 Secure measures are in place to ensure employees, students and visitors to the University are kept safe from transmission of the virus.

Policy

2.1 Students, staff and visitors to campus will be **required to wear face coverings** while indoors on campus except where there is a valid reason for exemption. 2.1.2. refers.

2.1.2 Students, staff and visitors will all need to bring their own face coverings. See **Table 1** for Summary of mask requirements. Individuals do not need to wear a face covering if they have a legitimate reason not to. This includes:

- if someone has a physical or mental illness or impairment, or a disability, that means they cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering
- if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering would cause someone severe distress

2.1.3 If students, staff or visitors forget to bring a face covering they can purchase a face mask from all of our campuses (with contactless payment).

2.2 Exemptions

2.2.1 Exemptions to the Brookes policy on face coverings will follow the [government guidelines on exemptions](#). These guidelines explain that there are some circumstances, for health, age or equality reasons, where people are not expected to wear face coverings. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances, noting that the reasons for this may not be visible to others. See FAQs.

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2.3 Students

This policy will not apply to student flats or private student residences. Once outside your flat or household, if entering a communal space such as a shared corridor, laundry or reception area you will be required to wear a face covering. Face coverings will be optional in outdoor areas on campus. Students are strongly advised to follow Public Health Guidance.

2.4 Teaching Staff

All staff who are working on campus to be issued with **2** of the Covid V-100 masks which have 9 layers and a special coating that kills the virus. In pooled teaching rooms staff **MUST** wear either Covid-V masks or if wearing their own mask it must be a **3** layer face covering or a transparent face mask when they are teaching. Unless by exception they have been given specific Occupational Health advice on what they should be wearing.

We will provide a visor/face shield for staff members who are unable to wear a mask for medical reasons and these should be worn instead. Members of staff must also wear a sunflower lanyard.

See **Appendix 1** for **FAQs**.

2.5 Types of mask

2.5.1 Medical Masks

Are certified according to international or national standards to ensure they offer predictable performance when used (typically by health care workers) according to the risk.

2.5.2 Non-Medical Masks (Face Coverings)

These are made from a variety of woven and non-woven fabrics. Non-medical masks may be made of different combinations of fabrics, layered in sequences and available in diverse shapes. A non-medical masks standard has been developed to define minimum performance in relation to filtration and breathability. WHO recommends a minimum of 3 layers.

2.5.3 Mask management is **essential**. The key questions are:

- How do I wear a face mask correctly?
- How long do I have to wear each mask for before changing to a new one?
- How do I dispose of my mask?

See **Appendix 2** for Mask Management

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Table 1 Covid Secure: Summary of Face Masks Requirements

Situations / settings	Population	Type of mask to wear on site at Brookes	Comments
1. All sites - indoors	All Staff, Students Visitors	Minimum non-medical Mask (3 Layers recommended as advised by WHO) Visors or Face Shields + lanyards for those medical exemptions	See Appendix 2 for Mask Management
Teaching in pooled rooms	Staff / Students	Covid V-100 mask are strongly recommended by the University or Non-medical mask 3 layers or Transparent ClearMask See section below	2 masks are provided for staff Reusable - up to 50 washes Care: Wash up to 60 degrees FAQ on Covid V-100 Mask Tests conducted by PHE to trap particles down to 23nm, inactivate virus and considered more effective than standard medical -grade masks Single use only Type II face masks (EN14683) are medical face masks made up of a protective 3 ply construction that prevents large particles from reaching the patient or working surfaces. The ClearMask face mask provides splash protection for the wearer in the same way that a type IIR surgical face mask does.

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Teaching	Communicating with colleagues (staff and students) with a hearing impairment or who have English as a second language		<p>Single use only mask FDA Approved Transparent Mask FAQ</p> <p>The ClearMask face mask provides splash protection for the wearer in the same way that a type IIR surgical face mask does.</p> <p>The transparent face coverings are mainly for use by teaching colleagues, and may also be helpful to other staff whose work requires them to have face-to-face conversations with students or colleagues. To request a transparent face covering, please email studentcentral@brookes.ac.uk with details of your campus delivery address. The masks will then be sent in the internal post, using Covid-safe procedures.</p> <p>When emailing to request the coverings, please ensure that the words "Request for clear face covering" are included in the subject line, so that the team can pick out these requests and respond to them as promptly as possible.</p> <p>See Appendix 2 for Mask Management</p>
Working in a shared office or laboratory space but 2 metres apart from others	Staff / Students	Covid V-100 mask or Non-medical mask 3 layers or - see below Transparent mask See section below	<p>In any indoor environment shared with other people, it is advisable to wear a facemask unless it is practically not feasible.</p> <p>See Appendix 2 for Mask Management</p>
Working in dedicated laboratory space	Staff / Students	Covid V-100 mask or Non-medical mask 3 layers or Transparent mask See section below	<p>In any indoor environment shared with other people, it is advisable to wear a facemask unless it is practically not feasible.</p> <p>See Appendix 2 for Mask Management</p>
Health/social care professional skills	Staff / Students	Level 1 PPE	<p>Level 1 PPE - see Guidance COVID-19: Guidance for the remobilisation of services within health and care settings</p>

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training activities less than 1 metre			Infection prevention and control recommendations Cannot access link See Appendix 2 for Mask Management
First Aiders and Life Savers Professional Services Staff in ECS			Refer to: Covid-19 PPE Template for ECS Staff ACRO Donning and Doffing a Face Mask How to fit FFP3 Masks Videos With/out Valves Without Valve https://youtu.be/MCM9uMMok1M Refer to: First Aider Guidance Document FFP3 See Appendix 2 for Mask Management

Source:

Infection Prevention and Control

[WHO June 2020 Advice on the Use of Masks in the Context of Covid-19: Interim Guidance](#)

[COVID-19: Guidance for the remobilisation of services within health and care settings Infection prevention and control recommendations](#)

[Face Coverings: When to Wear One and How to Make Your Own](#)

Covid Secure

[Gov. UK HE Operational Guidance February 2021](#)

[PHE Actions For Colleges and Providers During the Coronavirus Outbreak](#)

[HSE Making Your Workplace Covid Secure During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-safe-outside-your-home/staying-safe-outside-your-home>

[MIND Mask Anxiety, Face Coverings and Mental Health](#)

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Appendix 1
FAQs

What is the difference between a face covering and a face mask?

Our policy at Brookes is that you need to wear a face covering. Students, staff and visitors to campus will be **required to wear face coverings** while indoors on campus (except where there is a [valid medical reason](#)).

Some professional services staff and in some first aid scenarios staff will be instructed to wear a medical mask.

Medical Masks

Are certified according to international or national standards to ensure they offer predictable performance when used (typically by health care workers) according to the risk.

Non-Medical Masks (Face Coverings)

These are made from a variety of woven and non-woven fabrics. Non-medical masks may be made of different combinations of fabrics, layer in sequences and available in diverse shapes. A non-medical masks standard has been developed to define minimum performance in relation to filtration and breathability. WHO recommends a minimum of 3 layers.

Students, staff and visitors will all need to bring their own face coverings.

Teaching and front-facing staff (e.g. library, student support and reception staff) will need to follow the guidance in **Table 1** for Summary of mask requirements.

How do I wear a face covering correctly?

- Wash or sanitise your hands before putting it on
- Ensure the mask goes up to the bridge of your nose and all the way down under your chin
- Tighten the loops or ties so it's snug around your face
- Avoid touching your face, or the parts of the mask that cover your nose and mouth
- Wash or sanitise your hands before taking it off
- Use the ear loops to take the mask off
- Wash or sanitise your hands afterwards

Do I need to wear a face covering if I am working in a private workspace on my own?

No, if you are working alone you will not be expected to wear a face covering - but when you leave the private work area, for example on an errand or to get some lunch - you must put it back on.

Do I need to wear a face covering if I am working in a shared office or lab space but two metres apart from others?

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Staff should assume they normally need to wear the face covering in all office space, as it is covered under the policy of 'all indoor space'. In any indoor environment shared with other people, it is advisable to wear a facemask unless it is practically not feasible.

I have a health condition and don't want to wear a face mask. What do I need to do?

In most cases face masks are safe for anyone to wear, regardless of health conditions, and all staff working on hospital sites are now expected under national guidance to wear face masks in our hospital buildings unless they are in a COVID-secure area (see above). You can wear a visor or face shield instead of a mask. You will also need to wear a lanyard. The University will not require staff or students to provide any personal information in order to collect this lanyard. If someone is wearing a sunflower/exemption lanyard, we will respect this and we will not challenge the wearer.

In corridors, lifts, on staircases and in any other communal areas staff and students are expected to wear masks. For those not used to wearing masks, they can initially feel restrictive, hot and uncomfortable, but for most, these feelings will improve in the short-term.

What happens if I refuse to wear a face covering / mask?

We are asking all members of staff to wear masks to help limit the spread of COVID-19, and keep people safe. [This is in line with Government guidance](#). As a member of staff if you have concerns, please speak to your line manager.

Unless you are covered under the [government exemptions](#) you must wear a face covering.

Students will not be permitted to enter teaching rooms and other areas of campus unless they have a face covering.

What do I do if I am exempt under the government criteria?

We would encourage you to order an exemption lanyard from the [Online Shop](#). If you are wearing this lanyard we will not challenge why you are not wearing a face covering.

What do I do if I need to eat or drink?

This is covered under the government exemptions for eating and drinking - you can remove your face covering to eat or drink when you are sitting in our designated eating areas / cafés, but you must put it back on when you are no longer seated in this area.

What about when doing indoor exercise/sport on campus?

This is covered under the government exemptions - you can "remove your face covering if you are undertaking exercise or an activity and it would negatively impact your ability to do so".

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Appendix 2
Mask Management

Q: How do I wear a face mask correctly?

- Wash or sanitise your hands before putting it on
- Ensure the mask goes up to the bridge of your nose and all the way down under your chin
- Tighten the loops or ties so it's snug around your face
- Avoid touching your face, or the parts of the mask that cover your nose and mouth
- Wash or sanitise your hands before taking it off
- Use the ear loops to take the mask off and wash or sanitise your hands afterwards.

Q: How long do I have to wear each mask for before changing to a new one?

- There is no set time, nor recommended number of masks you should use each day. It all depends on what you are doing.
- If your mask gets **dirty, wet or damaged**, or if you **touch the inside** of it, then you should change to a new one
- When you **take it off to eat or drink**, you should **dispose of the old mask**, wash or sanitise your hands, and **replace** it with a **new one** once you have finished eating.

Q: How do I dispose of my mask?

Medical Masks - single use. Dispose following local protocols

Non-Medical Masks

Change and wash daily at up to 60 degrees

Summary Guidance and practical considerations for non-medical mask production and management

Fabric Selection
Choose materials that capture particles and droplets, but remain easy to breathe through
Avoid stretchy material for making masks as they provide lower filtration efficiency during use and are sensitive to washing at high temperatures
Fabrics that can support high temperatures (60 degrees or more) are preferable
Construction
A minimum of THREE layers is required, depending on the fabric used: an inner layer touching the mouth and an outlier that is exposed the the environment

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Choose water -absorbing (hydrophilic) materials or fabrics for the internal layers, to readily absorb droplets, combined with an external synthetic material that does not easily absorb liquid (hydrophobic)
MASK MANAGEMENT
Masks should only be used by ONE person
All mask s should be changed if soiled or wet; a soiled or wet mask should not be work for an extended period of time
Non-medical masks should be washed frequently and handled carefully, so as not to contaminate other items
Clothing fabrics used to make masks should be checked for the highest permitted washing temperatures, which is indicated on the clothing label
Non-woven polypropylene spun-bond may be washed at high temperature, up to 140 degrees C
The combination of non-woven polypropylene spun-bond and cotton can tolerate high temperatures; masks made of these combinations may be steamed or boiled
Where hot water is not available, wash mask with soap/detergent at room temperature water, followed by either a) boiling mask for one minute OR b) soak mask in 0.1% chlorine for one minute then thoroughly rinse mask with room temperature water, to avoid any toxic residue

Source: World Health Organisation (June 2020) Advice on the use of masks in the context of Covid-19: Interim Guidance