



# Face Coverings

**This policy applies to all people who enter University buildings**

1. Cardiff Metropolitan University's approach to managing the Covid-19 pandemic has been focused first and foremost on the health and wellbeing of all members of our community. This has helped us as we develop processes for staff and students to return to campus in a way which is consistent with the social distancing legislation which exists in Wales, and which prioritises safety. Our planning continues to assume that we should be socially distancing to at least 2 metres.
2. All returns to campus are being supported by health and safety risk assessments, so that we can understand how best to make spaces safe for staff and students as well as any other visitors to our sites. We introduced the use of non-medical face coverings in summer 2020 to support the return of staff and students to campus as an additional mitigation in areas where social distancing was not possible, and committed to keeping this policy under review. In January 2021 we revised the policy to make it mandatory to wear three-layer face coverings in all shared spaces, including teaching spaces; while this exceeded Welsh Government guidance, it reflected risks around increased transmission of new variants circulating in the UK. **Face coverings should also be worn outdoors where it is not possible to maintain social distancing or where it is required by risk assessment.**
3. **The policy was reviewed in June 2021 to reflect new research on the importance of face coverings and ventilation to reduce the risk of transmission, as well as good practice in the HE sector. While the policy remains that the use of face coverings is mandatory in shared spaces, there are now some exceptions where it is acceptable to remove face coverings.**
4. **It is worth noting that we want staff and students to feel safe and our approach has been to err on the side of caution. People have the freedom of choice to wear face coverings in addition to the spaces where we have made it mandatory – for example, in shared offices – but not the freedom of choice about whether to wear them where they are mandatory. These include:**
  - a) **People working alone in offices do not need to wear face coverings in the office. People working in shared offices are expected to wear face coverings, unless they can maintain 2m social distancing at all times. Ventilation and cleaning practices must be maintained and a face covering should be worn if moving around the office where 2m cannot**

be maintained. Staff can choose to wear a face covering in a shared office.

- b) **Staff working in frontline services do not need to wear face coverings if they are working behind a transparent screen. However they should wear a face covering if working behind the screen with others and unable to maintain a 2m distance. They can choose to wear a face covering in addition to using the screen. Where a screen is not in place, staff must wear a face covering.**
  - c) **Meetings being held in offices or meeting rooms where social distancing of 2m or more can be reliably maintained.**
  - d) **Areas where the use of face coverings would be impractical (for example whilst eating or drinking)**
5. This policy also applies to all people coming into our space; **those who have a legitimate exemption will need a risk assessment to consider how we can enable safe access to spaces.** Clear signage will be displayed where face coverings must be worn. It is important to note that there has been no evidence that there has been any transmission of the virus in campus buildings, even during the initial period when the new variant was prevalent in the community.
6. Non-medical face coverings – simple fabric masks which you can purchase or make yourself – are not regular types of PPE. Most PPE is worn because it protects the user from a specific risk, but face coverings are intended to protect other people. There is growing evidence to show that these types of face coverings can reduce the transmission of the virus from infected people. As many people may not even be aware they are infected, we are including the use of face coverings in our risk assessment process because they can help increase the safety of our community in areas where it would be difficult to protect people otherwise. Staff can choose to wear additional protection – such as face shields – in addition to face coverings.
7. Students in residences will not need to wear face coverings in their household or flat.
8. We hope that staff and students will understand the importance of our own behaviour in keeping all members of our community safe. Until there is a change in the requirement to socially distance, we will need to work together for our safety, and face coverings will play a part in this. It is vital that people continue to socially distance even when wearing face coverings.
9. We are aware that there will be some people who, for various reasons, are unable to wear face coverings. Some exceptions include:
- you have a mental or physical health condition or disability where a face covering would be inappropriate because it would cause difficulty, pain or severe distress or anxiety or because you cannot apply a covering and wear it in the proper manner safely and consistently
  - if for any reasons you have brought children on site, it is not recommended that children under 3 years of age wear face coverings.

- you have a reasonable need to eat or drink
  - you need to take medication
  - you need to communicate with someone else who relies on lip reading (make sure you do so using the two metre social distancing rules)
  - a relevant person, such as a police officer, asks you to remove your face covering
10. Any staff, students or other visitors to our campuses who have a legitimate exemption will need to have a risk assessment so that we can make reasonable adjustments to allow them to attend safely. Staff should do this through their managers, and students should contact their Schools.
  11. Staff who teach or are in regular contact with students need to feel safe, and we will be communicating with students about the importance of wearing face coverings and social distancing while they are on campus. We are not asking staff to become enforcers for this policy, however if staff feel uncomfortable with the behaviour of others, they will be supported to ask people to leave if they do not comply with this policy.
  12. The University will provide staff and students with two washable non-medical face coverings and provide guidance on how to use these; visitors to our buildings who do not already have a face covering may collect one from reception. If you lose these or need more, you can purchase further masks from the University, purchase them from elsewhere, or make your own.
  13. This policy will be kept under review as guidance on Covid-19 changes and evidence emerges about the new variant of Covid 19.
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#### **Updated 8 January 2021\***

\*The previous version of the policy from 25 August 2020 required people visiting University buildings to wear non-medical face coverings in spaces where it was not possible for people to maintain a distance of 2 metres, such as corridors, communal spaces, smaller teaching spaces etc. In spaces where it was possible to reduce the number of people in a space or mitigate the risk by moving furniture (such as in teaching spaces), face coverings were not required.

#### **Updated 12 February 2021\*\***

\*\*The previous version of the policy allowed those who could not wear face coverings to do so without any risk assessment. This change has been made after undertaking an equality impact assessment.

#### **Updated 2 June 2021\*\*\***

A list of areas where face coverings are not required was added.