

INFORMATION SHEET

Face Coverings

This is written in accordance with Welsh Government guidance for alert level zero and the Infection Control Framework for Higher Education.

It applies only to low and moderate risk levels as defined by the local IMT. Should the risk level increase to high or very high, then the University will require face coverings to be worn in all indoor areas.

The most effective way to protect yourself and others from infection is to work in ventilated spaces, follow social distancing rules, avoid touching surfaces and your face, getting tested and isolating when displaying symptoms and to wash your hands regularly. Face coverings are not a substitute for these measures but are a *reasonable measure* to reduce transmission of coronavirus.

What is a face covering?

A face covering is a piece of cloth or material that covers your nose and mouth, while allowing you to breathe comfortably. Face coverings are worn to reduce the spread of coronavirus.

The World Health Organisation recommend wearing **3-layer face** coverings. You could also use a scarf, bandana, religious garment or hand-made cloth covering but these must securely fit round the side of the face and may not give the same protection to others that the **three-layer face coverings** recommended by the World Health Organisation provide. Advice on making a face covering can be found on the H&S intranet page, Information Sheet: Making a Face Covering (HSA-10147-21A).

Face coverings are not a type of personal protective equipment. The Welsh Government recommends that medical grade masks should be reserved for health and care workers. At the university, this may include medical, health and social care courses and activity where the risk assessment requires.

Disposable face coverings should be provided in laboratories and workshops where chemicals or biological agents are handled. They should be disposed of in the lab after use.

Please see Welsh Government guidance on face coverings for members of the public: [Face coverings: guidance for public | GOV.WALES](#)

What is the University position on wearing a face covering?

As a reasonable measure, face coverings **must be worn** in the following scenarios unless you are exempt;

- In all University areas accessible to the public including: foyers, reception areas, corridors, lifts, stairways, conveniences, shops and libraries.
- When 2m social distancing cannot be maintained (unless it has been identified in a risk assessment that this would be unsafe).
- When moving around a space such as an open plan office, learning and teaching environment or catering venue.
- Where identified on a risk assessment as an appropriate control measure.
- When requested, where there are clinically extremely vulnerable students or staff or those who are at increased risk from COVID-19, including those who were previously shielding.

The University **strongly recommends** that you continue to wear a face covering in the following scenarios;

- When seated and socially distanced in a multi occupancy office.
- When seated and socially distanced in an examination.
- When seated and socially distanced in a learning and teaching environment, such as lecture theatres, classrooms and computer suite.
- When socially distanced in a research laboratory or workshop, where activity risk assessments permit.
- When working as part of a defined contact group in a learning and teaching environment. Students are not required to be socially distanced within defined contact groups.
- When working as part of a defined contact group in teaching laboratories, clinical settings and workshops, where activity risk assessments permit. Students are not required to be socially distanced within defined contact groups.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE)

PPE and RPE may be required as per the activity risk assessment and take precedence over wearing a face covering. Compatibility of wearing a face covering with PPE/ RPE must be considered as part of the activity risk assessment.

Does everybody have to wear a face covering?

Some individuals may not be able to wear a face covering for medical reasons or a disability. In these instances, individuals may be anxious about being challenged for not wearing a face covering and are encouraged to wear a sunflower lanyard, carry an exemption card or [download a digital exemption](#) on to a mobile phone. Wearing/ carrying the [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower](#) discreetly indicates to people around you including staff, colleagues and health professionals that you have a hidden disability and you are unable to wear a face covering, that you may need additional support, help or more time.

The use of face coverings will increase communication difficulty for many people, especially those that are Deaf/deaf or hearing impaired or those who rely on lip reading or facial expression to communicate. You may be asked by any student or colleague to remove your face covering, or you may ask a student or colleague to remove their face covering to assist

with communication. If this is the case, remove your face covering temporarily, ensuring that you maintain 2 metre distance and are in a well ventilated area.

Staff are requested to inform their line manager and students are requested to inform the Disability Office and MyUni Support if they are Deaf/ deaf, hearing impaired or rely on lip reading or facial expression to communicate and require appropriate support. Individual communication needs will be identified and appropriate measures implemented to support communication.

It is important to check individual communication needs with the people you are talking to and be mindful of different strategies for communicating in general.



Putting on and removing a face covering

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser (if access to handwashing is restricted) before putting a face covering on, and after removing it.
- Place the face covering over the nose and mouth.
- Secure the face covering.
- When wearing a face covering, take care to tuck away any loose ends.
- When removing the face covering do so without touching the front of it and do not touch the eyes or mouth after removal.
- Place the face covering in a sealable bag where it can be kept until washed and cleaned. Avoid placing them down on tables and work benches.

Advice when wearing a face covering

- Avoid touching the face or face covering itself, as it's possible to contaminate them with germs from the hands.
- Change the face covering if it becomes damp or if you have touched it.
- Continue to wash hands regularly.
- Change and wash the face covering daily.
- If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it, following disposal instructions, if on campus.
- Practise social distancing wherever possible.

Face covering maintenance

Face coverings should only be used by one person and must not be shared. It is important to change the face covering if it becomes wet or are visibly soiled.

Face coverings should be washed frequently and handled carefully, so as not to contaminate other items. If the layers of fabrics look noticeably worn out, discard the face covering. It is extremely important that you do not wear your washable face covering for longer than one day due to the risk of contamination. **Please ensure you wear a fresh face covering every day.** Face coverings should be washed and dried in accordance with the washing instructions provided.

IMPORTANT: This advice applies only to people who are not showing symptoms of COVID-19. If you experience any of the symptoms of COVID-19, you must self-isolate for ten days and get a test. Unless your test shows a negative result, you must not go out during this time, even with a face covering. See the [Isolation Arrangements](#) for more information.

Further Information

- [Welsh Government guidance: Face coverings - frequently asked questions](#)
- [World Health Organisation – Advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID19](#)
- [Hidden disabilities store](#)
- [Digital exemption for wearing a face covering download](#)