

Frequently Asked Questions About Face Coverings

What is a “face covering?”

In accordance with the [University’s COVID-19 Standards and Guidelines: Face Coverings, Personal Protective Equipment, and Personal Hygiene](#), a face covering is any type of cloth or disposable material that covers the mouth and nose and can be safely secured in place (e.g., looped around ears or around the head) while in use. For the purposes of this guidance, face coverings include masks.

Who is required to wear a face covering and when must it be worn?

All University members must wear a face covering as outlined in the COVID-19 Standards and Guidelines: Face Coverings, Personal Protective Equipment, and Personal Hygiene.

What should I do if I do not want to wear a face covering?

In the absence of a qualifying medical condition that prohibits you from complying with the University’s policy, you are required to wear a face covering.

What are the penalties for failing to follow the University’s standards and guidelines on face coverings?

Employees who fail to follow [University Standards and Guidelines](#) will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. Students who fail to follow University Standard and Guidelines will be subject to a range of sanctions from **probation to dismissal**. The University reserves the right to deny an individual entry onto and/or remove an individual from University property should they refuse to follow University Standards and Guidelines.

What should I do if I feel I cannot wear a face covering?

If you have a medical condition that you believe limits your ability to wear a face covering as required by University policy, you must contact the office of [Disability Resources](#) (DR). Disability Resources will work with you to determine whether and to what extent such limitations can be accommodated.

Can the University deny my request not to wear (or to limit the wearing of) a face covering?

Yes. The University will examine requests not to wear (or to limit the wearing of) face coverings on an individual basis. To ensure the safety of the University community and the public, such requests will only be granted where legally required.

When do I need to make a request not to wear (or to limit the wearing of) a face covering?

You will not be permitted to enter University property without wearing a face covering unless and until you are specifically approved to do so by DR in writing. As such, you should contact DR to begin the accommodation request process as soon as possible. Because of the risk to the safety of the University community and the public, the University will not provisionally grant requests not to wear (or to limit the wearing of) face coverings while the accommodation request process is ongoing.

What should I do if I see someone on University property who is not wearing a face covering?

If you see a University member who is not wearing a face covering and/or who is improperly wearing a face covering (e.g., with their mouth or nose exposed), you should contact the [Pitt COVID Concern Connection](#), or file a complaint with [Student Conduct](#)

Is a face shield an acceptable form of face covering?

During in-person lecturing in the front of the classroom, the instructor may use a face shield that fully covers the face in lieu of a cloth face covering if they have a medical or academic reason to do so. The instructor should also maintain a physical distance of six feet from the closest student. A face shield, while allowed under this circumstance, is not the best option for infection control as its open sides offer less protection to both the wearer and others.

In general, a face shield should not be substituted for a cloth face covering. If the instructor needs/wants to walk around the classroom to observe students' work, give feedback or engage in one-to-one discussion, both the instructor and the student should wear cloth face coverings and attempt to maintain as much physical distance as feasible.