

When to Wear a Face Covering on Campus

A face covering is something that safely covers the mouth and nose and fits securely around the face¹. They are effective at protecting others from the aerosols you release when talking². Wearing a face covering will help to protect those around you. Face coverings offer additional protection alongside other ways of managing risk, including 2m physical distancing and increasing hand and surface washing, which still must be adhered to when wearing a face covering.

Face coverings are currently mandatory on public transport, in libraries and in retail premises. In line with this we therefore require you to wear a face covering on campus in situations where you are encountering other people. The University has provided face coverings to all colleagues and students as part of a safety pack. You are welcome to use these or use your own. You must still self-isolate at home if you have symptoms.

Face coverings must be worn when moving around buildings and shared office spaces unless you are stationary at a desk or workstation. Laboratory, workshop and studio users should wear face coverings unless working on their own. Face coverings must be worn by students and lecturers (a face shield is acceptable for the lecturer) in teaching spaces. The table below clarifies the situations where you do, and do not need to wear a face covering on campus.

Please be mindful that wearing a face covering may inhibit communication with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound. Please also be mindful that some people may not wear a face covering where it is usually expected on campus due to a legitimate exemption.

You should wear a face covering...	You do not need to wear a face covering (but are welcome to)...
When walking around corridors within buildings.	If you meet one of the exemptions as described below.
When walking through or working in other areas where people move around frequently and 2m distancing may occasionally be breached. Examples include the libraries, open plan office spaces, labs, workshops, studio spaces and social rooms. Signage must indicate these areas.	Inside your office, including shared offices where Covid-secure* measures are being implemented.
Within lecture theatres, seminar rooms and other teaching spaces.	Once you have reached your desk within an open plan office where Covid-secure*

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#what-a-face-covering-is>

² <https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/widespread-facemask-use-could-shrink-the-r-number-and-prevent-a-second-covid-19-wave-study>

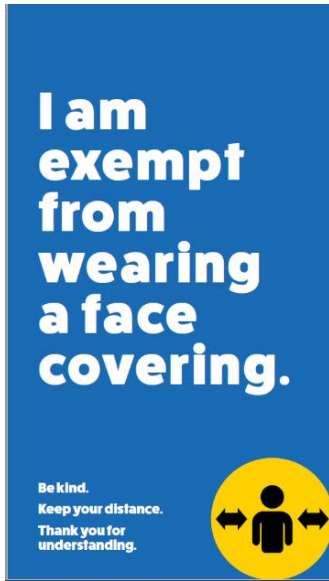
	measures are being implemented. If you are having a conversation with someone at your desk/workstation all individuals should wear a face covering (but still maintain physical distancing).
Within on-campus shops.	In labs, workshops, studios and other spaces when you are on your own or when removal of a face covering is required to do a task and covid-secure* measures are being implemented.
In areas that are operating at less than 2m (1m+) physical distancing and where wearing a face covering has been identified as an additional mitigating measure. Signage must indicate these areas.	Within Eat@Newcastle outlets and other social areas once you are seated for eating and drinking.
When carrying out maintenance work or similar including in locations where Covid-secure* measures are being implemented including plant rooms, roof spaces unless working on your own (and the space is not accessible to other people).	During sports related activities or when using sports facilities such as the gym.
	Outside.
*covid-secure means the measures that the University has put in place to support physical distancing, cleaning, hygiene etc as described in Working Safely on Campus and at Home During Covid-19 .	

Exemptions to wearing a face covering

You do not need to wear a face covering if you have a legitimate reason not to as described below , which reflects [current Government Guidance](#). This includes:

- Not being able to put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability.
- If putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress.
- If you are travelling with or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading to communicate.
- To avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others.
- To eat or drink.
- To take medication.
- Young children under the age of 11.
- If a police officer or other official requests you to remove your face covering.

Colleagues and students who meet an exemption may wish to use an exemption badge or card which can either be presented if asked about face coverings or displayed on your person. You can choose to use one of the following examples that can either be downloaded onto your mobile phone or printed and kept on your person



[Exemption from face covering badge for mobile phone](#)

[Exemption from face covering badge to print](#)

[Exemption from face covering card to print](#)

Other alternatives such as [the hidden disabilities sunflower lanyard or cards](#) are equally acceptable. Although some colleagues and students may find cards or badges helpful, nobody is obligated to carry or display an exemption badge. Similarly, colleagues and students should not be expected to produce these as evidence of an exemption.

There are also scenarios when individuals are permitted to remove a face covering when requested:

- If asked to do so by shop staff for the purpose of age identification.
- If asked to do so by University colleagues such as members of the Security team in support of their undertakings.
- If speaking with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions or clear sound. Some may ask you, either verbally or in writing, to remove a face covering to help with communication. Individuals should move away to a safe social distance of at least 2m before removing their face covering to then commence in conversation etc.

Those carrying out manual work while wearing a face covering should be afforded more comfort breaks and time to complete tasks, especially if it is hot.

Using and Disposing of Face Coverings

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it.
- Avoid touching your face or the face covering (the front or the part that has been in contact with your nose and mouth).
- Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it.
- Continue to wash your hands regularly.
- Change and wash your face covering regularly – store in a plastic bag until you have an opportunity to wash it.
- If the material is washable, wash in line with the manufacturer's instructions. It can go in with other laundry, using your normal detergent. If it is not washable, dispose of it carefully – it can go in a general waste bin.
- Practise physical distancing wherever possible

Face Shields

Following research undertaken into the effectiveness of wearing face coverings and face shields at limiting aerosol release it is clear that face coverings provide greater protection. Face shields are not considered as an alternative to face coverings. Face shields should only be used where 2m physical distancing and/or other mitigations such as sneeze screens are in place, a risk assessment detailing all mitigations must be completed. These situations will be closely managed by line managers. Face shields can be used in:

- Lecturing facilities, where they can be used by lecturers alongside 2m physical distancing to allow for greater visibility by the audience, and where other face coverings may inhibit communication with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound.

- Where colleagues are working in buildings outside of normal office hours, 2000 to 0700, when occupancy is very low and 2m physical distancing is easily achieved. Face coverings should be worn during working hours.

Face shields should not be used where it is reasonable to use a face covering.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Face coverings are not identified as PPE and cannot be used as an alternative. Please read [Working Safely on Campus and at Home During Covid-19](#) for further information on the difference between face coverings and PPE.