

Joint Provostial and Human Resources Guideline on Non-Medical Masks

August 10, 2020 (Updated November 17, 2020)

This version is based on the regulatory requirements as of November 17, 2020. The Guideline will be amended to comply with future regulatory changes. For definitive guidance, please see the regulations; the guideline is intended to provide additional details to assist in applying the regulatory requirements in the University context.

The University of Toronto is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for its faculty, librarians, staff, students, volunteers, visitors, and other community members. As part of this commitment, the Governing Council approved [the University of Toronto Policy on Non-Medical Masks or Face Coverings](#), requiring non-medical masks or face coverings to be worn indoors on University campuses and other University-owned or leased spaces.

This joint Guideline is being issued under the [Policy](#) to offer further guidance and information to the University community regarding the masks requirement. The *Policy* and this Guideline support the University's compliance with legal requirements.

This Guideline remains in effect as long as the *Policy* is in effect and is subject to change and to extension at the discretion of the University administration as public health guidance, legal requirements and understanding about COVID-19 evolve.

Masks Requirement

Wearing non-medical masks or face coverings is required in all indoor University spaces (including University-owned and leased spaces), whether restricted-access or open to the public. In leased spaces, occupants may also be subject to the policies and guidelines of the building owner or manager.

Exceptions

Non-medical masks or face coverings are not required, subject to health and safety requirements, public health advice, and legal requirements that pertain to specific factual circumstances, in the following circumstances:

- When an individual is required to wear personal protective equipment in lieu of a non-medical mask or face covering, as determined by the U of T Environmental Health & Safety office
- When wearing a non-medical mask or face covering would create a risk to the individual related to their work, as determined by the University's workplace safety guidelines, or would create a health and safety risk to an individual who is not a worker as determined by worksite or activity-specific safety procedures. Assessments may be conducted on a case-by-case basis by Environmental Health and Safety.

- In University residence spaces that are not common areas, such as dorm rooms, or in common areas in a residence where physical distancing can consistently be maintained
- While participating in athletic or fitness activities, playing a musical instrument in a rehearsal or performance, or performing in or rehearsing for an artistic performance (e.g., film, television, or theatrical production or concert), in accordance with public health guidelines
- While receiving a service that necessitates temporary removal of the mask
- When eating or drinking
- In learning and teaching environments, if and when it is determined that the delivery of a specific learning activity requires the temporary removal of non-medical masks or face coverings on the basis that wearing them would fundamentally undermine the effectiveness of the learning activity, and where the learning activity can be carried out safely
 - If instructors recommend that masks be temporarily removed for specific components of class, they must ensure that the learning activities are carried out safely and in accordance with public health guidance and the direction of U of T's Environmental Health & Safety office, and be approved through applicable Divisional procedures
- For University employees:
 - In research environments, if the approved departmental/divisional research re-entry plans allow individuals to maintain a consistent two-meter physical distance and where there is no requirement for Personal Protective equipment
 - In administrative, office and industrial environments (e.g. server rooms, control rooms, mechanical rooms), when the physical layout allows individuals to maintain a consistent two-meter physical distance. Examples include in private offices or when it has been determined through an approved re-entry plan using the university's COVID-19 General Assessment Tool (GAT) that masks are not required
 - Inside areas such as designated meeting rooms, lunchrooms, study spaces, rooms providing WiFi access and lounges when the physical layout allows individuals to maintain a consistent two-meter physical distance and where contact tracing information can be collected
- While attending a school within the meaning of the *Education Act* or a childcare program, provided the school or childcare program is operating in compliance with applicable guidance issued by public health and government authorities.

Accommodation

Individuals may be exempt from this Guideline in the following situations:

- If they require accommodation (e.g., for reasons of disability, religion, or other) under Ontario's *Human Rights Code* and/or the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*
- Children under the age of two
- If they have a medical condition including a physical condition, mental health condition, or other health concern that makes it difficult to wear a mask or face covering, including a medical condition that makes it difficult to breathe, or to put on and remove a mask or face covering without assistance, or someone who is unconscious or incapacitated
- Where the ability to see the mouth is required for communication, if they are persons with hearing loss and/or deafness or if they are the person communicating with a person with hearing loss and/or deafness, provided measures are in place to protect health and safety

Members of the community should not ask colleagues, students, or others at the University for supporting documentation or other proof regarding exemptions or accommodations under the *Policy* or this *Guideline*. In specific circumstances where individual health and safety is at risk, an individual who is unable to wear a non-medical mask or face covering due to one of the reasons above, or some other similar reason, may be asked by a manager or academic administrator to provide supporting documentation to the University through the appropriate office on a confidential basis. For example, employees, including faculty members, may be asked to provide documentation to Health & Well-being Services & Programs in some circumstances, or students in some situations may be asked to register with Accessibility Services. In all cases, such inquiries should be for the purpose of maintaining health and safety for the community, or for assisting with tailoring accommodation to their specific needs in a manner that maintains health and safety.

Education and Enforcement

The University will focus on educating members of the community about the *Policy* and this *Guideline*, including the benefits of non-medical masks or face coverings with regard to community transmission of COVID-19, as well as the importance of accommodation and personal privacy regarding medical or other conditions.

Enforcement measures will focus primarily on an educational approach and will depend on the individual's relationship with the University, the nature of an incident, the place in which it occurred, and the impact on others in that place. Additional training will be provided to Campus Police on all three campuses on expectations with regard to enforcement and engaging with community members not wearing a mask while at the University of Toronto.

Regulatory History:

The Ontario regulations will take precedence over either the *Policy* or the *Guideline* when there is conflict between them.

Below is a list of the applicable Ontario regulations governing mask requirements in the Toronto and Peel Public Health Units from time to time:

- O. Reg. 263/20, as amended (applicable to Toronto and Peel from October 10, 2020 - to present)
- O. Reg. 364/20, as amended by O. Reg. 546/20, effective Oct. 3, 2020 (applicable to Toronto and Peel from Oct 3 to Oct 9, 2020)

Resources

[PDF Version of Joint Provostial and Human Resources Guideline on Non-Medical Masks](#)

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