

## FACE COVERINGS – EXEMPTIONS TO UNIVERSITY POLICY

### Introduction

Evidence suggests that wearing face coverings can reduce transmission of coronavirus from an infected person to others. Face coverings are largely intended to protect others.

All members of the University of Bolton are required to wear a face covering when in a building at the University - with the aim of providing increased reassurance to all members, including those most vulnerable to serious illness.

Information on the University policy regarding face coverings can be found at Appendix One. The policy applies to all staff, students, visitors, contractors, and members of the public across all University and buildings, except those individuals who are medically exempt from wearing face coverings.

### Face Covering Exemptions

**Health and safety is everyone's responsibility. Those members of the University community not wearing a face covering must take ownership of ensuring that they and those around them are Covid-19 Secure.** This means ensuring social distancing of at least 2 meters and following a regular handwashing regime – as important ways to mitigating the transmission of the virus.

This requirement to wear face coverings in University buildings will not apply to those who have a legitimate medical reason. These include not being able to put on, wear, or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability (e.g. severe breathing difficulties and other respiratory conditions, conditions affecting dexterity and non-visible disabilities and/or neurodiverse conditions such as Autism). However, social distancing of at least 2 meters and other measures to mitigate the risk of transmission must be followed.

The use of clear face coverings may be used in environments where staff / students who have severe hearing loss and have to lip-read. Where requested the University will issue one clear face covering to those staff and students who require it in teaching environments. These are available from Student Services.

Please note the University does not have any exception from the policy to wear a face covering on religious / cultural grounds. However, women wearing a Niqab (a full face veil fully covering both the nose and mouth) are not expected to wear an additional face covering if they do not wish to do so.

If you are a student and not able to wear a face covering, for whatever reason, you will be eligible to access the online offer.

Employees who have been advised by their GP / Consultant not to wear a face covering due to a medical condition should contact their Head of Service / School and/or HR in order that the University records can be updated.

All members of the University community can expect to be treated with dignity and respect. However, some staff and students may be worried about being confronted for not wearing a face covering and/or being asked to prove their exemption.

The presentation of an exception card / badge from the Government web site or other source does not provide for an exemption to the policy of wearing a face covering in a University building.

Members of the University community who can evidence a medical exemption for wearing a face covering should do one of the following:

*Students* - visit Student Services to register your disability, long standing illness or medical condition which exempts you from wearing a face covering. You will be asked some information regarding your disability or medical condition, you may be required to supply medical evidence to the University to support your request and your student record may be updated to reflect the disclosure of any disability or long standing illness you may not have previously disclosed before. Once Student Services are satisfied with the medical exemption you will be issued a pass, you will be required to carry the pass at all times when on campus. This pass will permit you to enter the university buildings without a face covering however it will not automatically provide you with access to classroom or teaching environments such as laboratories or studios.

Students will only be allowed into classrooms without a face covering if they have a medical exemption from wearing a face covering (because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability) and have contacted their Programme Leader/Head of School and Student Services in advance. Student Services will notify the relevant Head of School and Programme Leader when a medical exemption pass has been issued. The Head of School and Programme Leader will consider what reasonable adjustments can be made in classrooms and teaching environments that do not put other members of the University community at risk. The Programme Leader will communicate with the student what Covid-19 secure adjustments can be made and in instances where adjustments cannot be made they will notify the student of any alternative arrangements which may include engaging with online learning only.

*Staff* – email [HR@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:HR@bolton.ac.uk). A member of the HR team will review your request and where applicable, further medical advice may be sought to support your request. Once HR are satisfied with the medical exemption, you will be issued a pass, you will be required to carry the pass at all times when on campus.

**Note:**

Visors (also referred to as face shields) are not a suitable alternative to face coverings. The primary purpose of wearing a close-fitting face covering is to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus from an infected person to others. Visors are considered less effective for the purpose of reducing transmission risk to others.

It is each member of the University community responsibility to ensure that used face coverings are disposed of appropriately, in a safe and environmentally friendly manner.

**Appendix One**

# IMPORTANT



**Whilst you are inside  
University of Bolton buildings  
you must**

**wear either a surgical mask or a cloth face  
covering (inc scarves / bandanas)**

**There are only four exceptions:**

- 1. Seated to eat and drink**
- 2. Whilst working on your own in an office**
- 3. When working from behind a screen – the  
face covering can be replaced with a visor**
- 4. If you are unable to do so due to diagnosed  
medical condition**



**Wear a face covering**

**Please be considerate of others.  
Hidden disabilities or medical conditions  
may mean not everyone can**