Face coverings for general instructional use

The COVID-19 transmission risk mitigation framework must include a number of layered protocols, each of which supports the overall goal of protecting employee safety, health, and well-being when returning to campus. Face coverings are just one component of this strategy. To minimize risk to students, staff and faculty, the university will rely on universal face covering and physical distancing requirements, in addition to robust testing, contact tracing and symptom monitoring.

At this time, the primary route of transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is direct contact with an infected person’s respiratory droplets during, speaking, breathing, coughing and sneezing. Face coverings and physical distance are critical because prolonged close proximity interaction with an infected person increases the risk of exposure. Based on current guidance, all employees and students will be required to wear either a reusable cloth face mask or a single-use disposable mask while present in any area within campus buildings unless working alone in a laboratory or office space with the door closed. A mask is also required outside in campus spaces.

Many classes will be offered virtually/online, but for classes designated face-to-face, instructors are encouraged to refine their strategies to reduce contact during in-person experiences. As instructional processes vary by course, instructor expertise and judgement must be used to evaluate course delivery methods that require close physical proximity between individuals. Regardless of the type of face covering used, in courses where close proximity instruction or demonstrations were previously conducted, all alternative methods that do not require close contact should be exhausted before proceeding with a traditional method of instruction that
requires close interaction. Alternate methods such as viewing video demonstrations or video projection of a process or demonstration must always be considered.

Means of instruction that are not compatible with face masks should be extensively evaluated to determine if alternate modes of instruction are available. Considerations include virtual instruction, conducting activities outdoors, incorporating video projection, or isolating the hazard using a physical barrier. Unfortunately, some traditional means of instruction might not be viable at this time due to risk factors. Consultation to review alternate plans on a case-by-case basis is available through Environmental and Occupational Health (EOH) eoh@uhs.wisc.edu.

Reusable and disposable masks are available to all employees to meet the universal face covering requirement. If instructors would like an additional physical barrier, faceshields can be worn in addition to a mask. A faceshield alone is not adequate for minimizing either inhalation or exhalation of respiratory aerosols in an instructional setting. In select circumstances where having a visible face is essential, such as speech therapy, communication with individuals who require lip reading, interaction with select children, etc., one option is the Badger Shield+, a faceshield with an attached cloth that surrounds the face. The Badger Shield+ an effective option for source control of, and personal protection from, larger respiratory droplets that are too large and heavy to travel well with air movement. It has not been proven to provide protection from inhalation of, or prevent the dispersal of, smaller aerosolized particulates which can remain suspended in the air over extended periods of time. A well-fitting cloth or disposable face mask will provide some protection from inhalation of both the smaller and larger particles, although this protection varies by fit and material. For this reason, the Badger Shield+ is only recommended for specialty uses.

At a minimum, the options presented in the following table will be available to instructors at no cost. If you are unable to wear a face mask, please notify your supervisor or your Divisional Disability Representative.

See table on the following page.
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<th><strong>Standard Option:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Face mask only</strong></th>
<th><strong>Appropriate while in University vehicles, riding on campus buses, outside in campus spaces, and while present in any area within campus buildings unless working alone in a laboratory or office space with the door closed.</strong></th>
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| **Secondary Option:** | **Faceshield with disposable or cloth mask** | **Appropriate for settings where the instructor must interact within 6 feet from students on a limited basis.**  
Suggested use: instructors who may start at a podium, but then walk around to check progress with lessons or techniques i.e. - chemistry, fabric design, pottery, engineering builds, programming, etc.  
* a microphone is not provided with the faceshield, microphones are provided separately. |
| **Specialty Use Only:** | **Badger Shield** | **For specialty use only in situations where a visible face is the most important factor.**  
**Not a substitute for a well-fitting face mask for routine uses.**  
Potential Use: Language instruction, work with children where expression is necessary, select mental health treatment, speech therapy and situations where lip reading is necessary. |