

Face Mask Accommodation

UPDATED: February 15, 2021

On February 13th, 2021, the university [released a statement regarding the use of face masks on campus](#). In part, this statement outlined:

"With the emergence of the B.1.1.7, also called the U.K. variant of the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), we remind our campus community of the importance of health and safety controls. These new variants of concern include mutations that seem to make the virus more contagious, allowing it to spread more easily. They may also affect the severity of the disease. At this time, the use of all controls is important, but especially the use of non-medical face masks.

Memorial requires everyone on campus to wear a non-medical face mask while in public spaces and common areas on campus, offices or while conducting fieldwork.

A non-medical face mask should be worn at all times except if you are alone in an office or when eating and drinking. A two-ply face mask is the minimum standard while three-ply is recommended and will be worn by staff performing critical operations on campus...

Note that face shields do not replace a mask, masks with exhalation valves should not be worn and neck gaiters, scarves and bandanas are not acceptable. Further information can be found [here](#). Anyone who cannot wear a mask due to medical reasons should not come to campus.

Choosing a face mask

Due to the most recent updates, only 2-ply (preferably 3-ply) non-medical face masks are acceptable facial coverings for those who must access campus. *Face shields, bandanas and gaiters are no longer acceptable.*

It is important to note, that while facial masks are essential to prevent the spread of COVID-19, they are not considered a substitute for social distancing and proper hand washing. Students, faculty and staff are all encouraged to use facial coverings in conjunction with physical distancing practices (where possible) and proper hand hygiene.

Before Seeking an Accommodation

In addition to supporting all public health measures announced by the province, Memorial University also remains strongly committed to principles of equity and inclusion. While the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission has declared that this mandatory face covering order is appropriate and does not violate the Human Rights Act, Memorial University understands that there may be reasons why a student cannot wear a facial covering as defined above. Read more about Human Rights and COVID-19 at the [HRC-NL website](#).

To assist students who feel they require a face mask accommodation, Memorial is providing an opportunity to receive such an accommodation through the [Accessibility for Students with Disabilities Policy](#). Accessibility Services (the Blundon Centre) will be assisting students on the St. John's Campus to receive a face mask accommodation, where, and if, appropriate.

Supporting Documentation

Each request for a face mask accommodation must be accompanied by sufficient medical documentation to support the student's request. This documentation must be signed by a licensed healthcare provider, include sufficient detail regarding the request. Students without access to a healthcare provider can [book an appointment at the Student Wellness and Counseling Centre](#).

Requesting an Accommodation

After reviewing all pertinent information from the province and the university about applicable public health measures, and if a student has sufficient documentation to support an accommodation due medical or other reasons, they are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services (the Blundon Centre) to pursue an accommodation. Please email blundon@mun.ca or call 864-2156 to speak with a staff member. Given the large number of students being supported by Accessibility Services (the Blundon Centre), students can expect a virtual meeting with an Advisor within 5-7 business days.

Students who are granted accommodations

Students who are ultimately granted a face mask accommodation will be provided documentation outlining this accommodation. These students will be permitted to access campus without wearing a face mask, as articulated in the accommodation letter. Face mask accommodations may have an expiration date. Once the accommodation period expires, students may be required to meet with Accessibility Services to renew the accommodation.

Limitations

Students granted a face mask accommodation are asked to limit the time (where possible) that they spend on campus and are encouraged to limit interactions – to the extent possible – with others and to practice physical distancing and hand washing to help maintain the health of all campus community members.

Communicating your Accommodation

Members of the university community and general public are encouraged to act with compassion, empathy and understanding when they observe individuals not wearing facial coverings where typically required, however, students granted a face mask accommodation can reasonably expect to receive questions regarding their lack of facial coverings. If a student is approached

and ask about their lack of facial covering, they are encouraged to remain calm and simply state that they have been granted an accommodation by the university.

In addition to receiving questions about a lack of facial covering, students may also be asked by a staff person to provide evidence of the approved accommodation. As such, we encourage students to keep their accommodation letter with them at all times.

Revised: February 15, 2021