

## Face Mask Accommodation

As was announced on August 24th, 2020, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador issued a special measures order mandating the use of facial coverings in common areas and public spaces across the province. In an effort to comply with, and support this special measures order, Memorial University also mandated the use of non-medical face/mouth coverings in a number of common and public spaces on its campuses. All students are encouraged to read more about Memorial's approach to complying with this provincial special measures order.

### Choosing a face covering

When choosing, purchasing or making appropriate face coverings, students are asked to consider any of the following, in an effort to comply with [provincial and institutional directives](#):

- Non-medical face masks
- Face shields (more effective when worn in conjunction with, not instead of, a non-medical face mask)
- Gaiters & bandanas

It is important to note, that while facial coverings are essential to prevent the spread of COVID-19, they are not a 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 appropriate. Prior to seeking an accommodation, students are strongly encouraged to refer to the government's website for [a list of exceptions to wearing facial coverings](#) (masks or face shields) as outlined by the provincial government's special measures order.

### 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, as well as include a statement about the student's inability to wear any facial covering as outlined above. 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](mailto: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 asked 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 granted accommodation. As such, we encourage students to keep their accommodation letter with them at all times.

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