

Masking Alternatives for Instruction — Non-Clinical Spaces

Universal face masks/coverings help prevent the wearer from expelling small virus-containing droplets of saliva or mucus into the air and infecting others. Wearing a mask reduces the likelihood that an infected individual could spread the virus to people around them. This is especially important to reduce the spread from infected people who are asymptomatic. Masks can also provide some protection to the wearer. Therefore, Washington University requires masking indoors for all individuals, regardless of vaccination status.

Due to concerns regarding the use of universal face masks/coverings and the ability to effectively lecture and instruct in certain non-clinical situations, alternatives were evaluated to determine if they can be used during lectures to improve visual and verbal communication (see table below). Factors such as breathability, user comfort, fit, and design are considered. Based on these evaluations, limited options are recommended due to concerns with potential deficiencies associated with source control, breathability, comfort and design. Evaluations are ongoing and recommendations for alternative options during instruction may change over time. Alternative face mask styles that are not listed will require evaluation and approval from EH&S prior to use. Contact EH&S @ 314-362-6816 if there are questions concerning alternative face masks.

An alternative mask should only be used when the lecturer's visual or verbal communication is adversely impacted and/or affects students who rely on seeing the instructor's mouth when speaking. The School or Department will determine and approve when alternative masks are necessary when lecturing or providing instruction.

This guidance was developed jointly with faculty representatives from the McKelvey School of Engineering and the Infectious Disease Division of the School of Medicine, and with user feedback from faculty in Arts & Sciences, Brown School, Law School and others.

The following table provides a summary of the anticipated pros and cons for each alternative device that has been evaluated to date. Please note that approval status of recommended styles may change over time based on ongoing research.

*Alternative Mask Style	Pros	Cons
 <p data-bbox="261 329 483 359">Mask with window</p>  <p data-bbox="191 701 495 751">e.g. XPRS™ / The Communicator™ / Clear-View Window Mask</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allows visual communication - Blocks aerosols, fluids and sprays for the user - Should block droplets in user-exhaled air - Similar to traditional face mask/covering fit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential fogging or droplet accumulation - Rarely some individuals with certain medical conditions may not be able to wear
 <p data-bbox="272 793 472 823">Clear-Type Mask</p>  <p data-bbox="305 999 443 1020">e.g. ClearMask™</p>	<p data-bbox="581 793 1203 823">Not recommended based on the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not designed for re-use - User comfort: hot - Poor breathability after 10 minutes - Mask moved around on face and difficult to adjust 	
 <p data-bbox="245 1115 505 1144">Enclosed Face Shields</p>  <p data-bbox="285 1373 459 1394">e.g. Humanity Shield™</p>	<p data-bbox="581 1115 1143 1144">Not approved based on the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial testing indicated potential build-up of CO2 levels inside the shield 	
 <p data-bbox="305 1451 440 1480">Face Shield</p> 	<p data-bbox="581 1451 1143 1480">Not approved based on the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited source control - Potential glare; potential fogging or droplet accumulation - Must be used in conjunction with a face mask/covering 	

*Alternative masks summarized in this table represent a general style or type, and not a particular brand. Styles similar to those depicted would be expected to have comparable pros and cons.