Principles of Health and Safety in the Classroom

The health and safety of everyone in our campus community continues to be our top priority as more people return to campus. New health measures are being put in place for everyone on campus. To be successful, we will need all our students and employees to share the responsibility of keeping our campus community healthy and safe.

To minimize risk to students, staff and faculty, the university will rely on universal face covering requirements, physical distancing in classrooms, mandatory testing, contact tracing and symptom monitoring.

Transmission Information

Coronaviruses are common viruses found in humans that can cause respiratory diseases (e.g., the common cold) and gastrointestinal disease (e.g., the stomach flu). Coronavirus disease, COVID-19 is caused by the novel severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and is related to severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) (Wiersinga 2020). Like other respiratory viruses, COVID-19 is transmitted over multiple routes, with exposure to droplets being the most likely sources of spread (Morawska and Cao 2020). Droplet transmission occurs when the virus is connected to a larger particle such as mucus or saliva. These infected droplets fall quickly and near the infected person. Aerosol transmission occurs when the virus is connected to smaller particles of mucus or saliva, which can loiter in the air and be carried farther away from the infected person (Jayaweera 2020).

Individuals spread droplets and aerosols whenever they talk, breathe, cough or sneeze. While uncommon, several instances of transmission beyond what could be attributed to droplet transmission alone have been documented. These events are associated with enclosed, indoor settings with poor or improper ventilation, prolonged exposure to infectious persons, and activities that increase the rate of droplet and aerosol generation. A third potential route of transmission for the virus occurs through contact with contaminated surfaces (e.g., touching a surface that has infected droplets on it). There is not yet scientific consensus on the amount of virus on a surface required to cause an individual to become infected or the amount of time a virus can live on various surfaces (Wiersinga 2020).

Transmission requires exposure to the virus from an infected person. Persons infected with COVID-19 can be symptomatic (e.g., fever, cough, short of breath) or asymptomatic. Exposure to the droplets or aerosols from an infected person generally occurs when individuals are at close distances (less than 6 feet) for at least 15 minutes (CDC).

Transmission can occur during more brief exposures from symptomatic infected persons (e.g., coughing, sneezing). In other words, brief exposure to asymptomatic individuals does not result
in higher rates of transmission, while brief exposure to symptomatic individuals does result in higher rates of transmission (Wiersinga 2020). Once the virus is transmitted and the body becomes infected, it can take several days for the infected person to feel ill, but they can still be transmitting the virus to others. This period prior to the onset of illness represents a time when wearing face coverings and hand hygiene are particularly important and particularly useful tools to prevent transmission.

The science around COVID-19 is dynamic, so the guidance presented here is current based on December 2020 information. Visit UW-Madison’s COVID-19 Response website for updates related to exposure risk mitigation for faculty, staff and students.

Hierarchy of Controls

Given the potential routes of transmission for COVID-19, controlling exposure to this occupational hazard is the fundamental method of protecting workers. Traditionally, a hierarchy of controls has been used as a means of determining how to implement feasible and effective control solutions. The idea behind this hierarchy is that the control methods at the top of the graphic are potentially more effective and protective than those at the bottom. Following this hierarchy normally leads to the implementation of inherently safer systems, where the risk of illness or injury has been substantially reduced. Since elimination and substitution are not always possible, we must reduce risk with other control methods.
Physical Distancing

To help allow for physical distancing across campus, the university is offering a mix of in-person and remote courses. Classroom capacity and seating have been designed to meet CDC guidelines for physical distancing. This includes the space between students as well as between students and instructors. Student seating locations will be identified with signage to indicate locations that are available for use. In some cases, furniture will be removed from the classroom to achieve the recommended 6-foot shoulder-to-shoulder distancing.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends a six-foot (two-m) separation for most interactions. This six-foot distance recommendation began to evolve after the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003 provided indications that respiratory droplet secretions could reach persons 6 feet or more from their source. Six feet is thought to be the average distance that respiratory droplets from a sneeze or cough travel before they settle and are no longer likely to be inhaled by other people. Travel distance is influenced by many factors such as velocity and mechanism by which respiratory droplets are propelled from the source, the density of respiratory secretions, and environmental factors such as temperature and humidity (CDC 2007).

Droplet transmission appears to be the more common route of transmission for COVID-19 (WHO); however, transmission via aerosols can also occur (Ma, 2020). Aerosolized transmission is the most difficult to mitigate through individual behaviors or PPE. Therefore, instructors are encouraged to consider ways of further reducing the proximity and duration in which students are together in indoor spaces when possible. The most effective means of reducing aerosolized transmission is to reduce or eliminate the presence of infectious people in the classroom by self-monitoring, frequent mass testing, and staying home when necessary, according to campus and public health guidance.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Keeping instructional spaces clean and disinfected requires a collective effort from both custodial services, and the students and instructors that use those spaces. Working together will keep these spaces clean and safe for everyone that uses them.

Campus cleaning and disinfection procedures are operating in a proactive approach with a layered defense. The procedures help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 via surfaces and stay ahead of reports of positive cases, regardless of the space or area where the affected person may have been.

Cleaning and disinfecting are just two factors in a greater campus-wide approach to mitigating risk to employees, students and campus visitors. Taken together with other safeguards such as decreased density, required face coverings, and frequent hand washing, these protocols are aligned with local and CDC guidelines for limiting exposure to the COVID-19 virus.
Supplies

Each instructional space, including labs, will be stocked with a supply of cleaning supplies so that students and instructors can clean their individual areas upon arrival and before departure.

Facilities Planning & Management (FP&M) is providing each classroom with Oxivir Tb, an EPA registered disinfectant, and directions for use. Gloves are not required for use with Oxivir Tb and are generally NOT recommended as a measure to protect against COVID-19. Do not wear lab gloves outside of the laboratory or other required uses. Hand hygiene is important to reduce transmission. More than 500 hand-sanitizer stations have been installed in campus buildings, including outside classrooms. Students and instructors are encouraged to use these supplies to frequently sanitize their hands.

FP&M Responsibilities

FP&M will conduct routine cleaning and also focus custodial cleaning efforts on increased cleaning frequency of high-touch common areas in buildings, including restrooms. (See this daily cleaning and disinfection guide). Out of an abundance of caution, in the event of a reported case or outbreak, space closure and/or additional cleaning may be recommended as determined by campus health professionals.

Instructor and Student Responsibilities

Instructors and students are responsible for cleaning their immediate area (desk, seat, lectern, etc.) when they arrive in a classroom, using the provided cleaning and disinfection supplies. (See guidance for cleaning classrooms.)

Face Coverings and Shields

Face coverings filter out some of the particles that are released when the wearer talks, coughs or sneezes. They help protect others by reducing exposure to the aerosols and droplets of the wearer. Their primary role is that of community protective equipment rather than personal protective equipment, but face coverings can also have some protective filtering properties. Free cloth and disposable face coverings are available to all employees. Face shields are also available to instructors, including TAs, to provide an additional barrier to large respiratory droplets where physical distancing cannot be maintained. Units can order face coverings, face shields, hand sanitizer, etc. from the COVID-10 Response website through staff identified by divisional business offices. Items in the catalog are funded centrally at the time of this publication.

Students returning to campus have been provided a kit that contains cloth face coverings, hand sanitizer and educational material that outlines expected public health protocols. A Badger Pledge has been developed for students to sign to commit to wearing face coverings and other shared health and safety responsibilities.

Face coverings must be worn correctly (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose). If any student is unable to wear a face-covering, an accommodation may be provided due to disability, medical
condition, or other legitimate reason. Students with disabilities or medical conditions who are unable to wear a face covering will be directed to contact the [McBurney Disability Resource Center](https://mcburney.wisc.edu) or their Access Consultant if they are already affiliated. If a student is approved for an accommodation from the McBurney Disability Resource Center, their instructors should receive a notification via email. Students are also instructed to contact their instructor and notify them of their accommodation(s).

Instructors wanting an additional level of protection can consider using the [Badger Seal face covering fitter](https://mcburney.wisc.edu/ppe) developed by the College of Engineering. A face covering fitter is an adjustable “frame” that improves the fit and performance of a standard face covering. Badger Seal face covering fitters can be ordered through the [EOC PPE form](https://mcburney.wisc.edu/ppe) using the “other” section.

**Training**

All employees returning to work on campus are required to complete a mandatory online [COVID-19 training](https://mcburney.wisc.edu/ppe). This training will include basic information about COVID-19, physical distancing and hygiene, cleaning and disinfection, the use of personal protective equipment, and other best practices for reducing exposure risks.

**Testing**

Testing is key to identifying infection and keeping it from spreading. UW–Madison is updating its COVID-19 health and safety program for [spring 2021](https://mcburney.wisc.edu/ppe), launching in January.

The new measures, which cover the scope and frequency of free [on-campus testing](https://mcburney.wisc.edu/ppe) and access to campus, represent a significant change from the fall semester. By expanding testing and linking campus access to this testing, we will put additional strong curbs on the spread of COVID-19.

The two main components of this new program are expanded testing with rapid results and a new app, [Safer Badgers](https://mcburney.wisc.edu/ppe), which students, faculty and staff will use to participate in testing and to access campus facilities and services.

Find more [information on testing](https://mcburney.wisc.edu/ppe) including on-campus testing locations, getting test results and what to do if you test positive for COVID-19.
General In-person Classroom Guidance

The following are general considerations and guidance for some of the most common activities that occur before, during and prior to an in-person course. (*This list is not intended to be exhaustive.)

- Before each face-to-face class period, use provided disinfectant to clean shared equipment or high-touch areas. These locations may include the podium, dry erase markers, and computer mouse and keyboard.

- Explore teaching methods that support physical distance such as viewing video demonstration or video projection of a demonstration.

- Consider active learning approaches that can be used in the physically distanced environment.

- Consider teaching methods that reduce the duration of students remaining together in indoor spaces. Examples could include:
  - Holding some class periods outside
  - Moving some class periods to a remote format
  - Blended courses in which content is delivered online, and in-person classes are reserved for discussions or other activities

- Develop instructional protocols to accommodate students who miss classes due to quarantine or isolation.

- Develop a contingency plan in the event that you require quarantine or isolation.

- Quarantine is required when an individual has had close contact (within 6ft for 15 minutes) with an infected person. If class interactions are structured where this definition is not met, if one person tests positive, the other class members will not need to quarantine. This is also true for instructor and TA interaction. Ensure instructors maintain distance to prevent multiple instructors having to quarantine if one tests positive.

- To avoid congestion indoors, students and instructors should stay to the right as they enter and exit classrooms, keep moving, and avoid close proximity.

- If instructional materials are to be distributed for class use, place them at each student’s seat prior to them entering the classroom to avoid distribution at full occupancy.

- Minimize the number of items that need to be handled by multiple persons. If more than one individual needs to manipulate an object in order to communicate the instruction successfully, have all individuals use a hand sanitizer before handling, or disinfect items between individuals.
• Maintain physical spacing greater than 6-feet for all face-to-face interactions, especially where forceful exhalations will occur, such as during exercise, dancing, singing or playing of musical instruments.
• Keep in-person breakout sessions small enough to maintain distancing.
• Consider ending instructional activities a few minutes prior to the end of the scheduled classroom period to allow time for students to put away personal items and exit the classroom in a physically distanced manner.
• All individuals on campus are expected to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms each day before reporting to work or class. Self-monitoring includes assessing coughs, sneezes, breathing difficulty, etc., and should follow the most recent Wisconsin Department of Health Services guidance.
• Review the updated campus syllabus template which includes a template for student expectations around proper health safety behaviors. This includes guidance on symptom monitoring, what to do if a student is not wearing a face covering, and what to do if a student needs to isolate or quarantine.

Instructors requesting additional guidance on unusual circumstances can contact the Office of Environment, Health and Safety for a consultation. For additional information on Facilities topics, see the FP&M Facilities Start-up Guide.
Instructor Safety Guidance - An Example Scenario and Considerations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior to the Start of the Semester</th>
<th>Prior to the Start of an In-person Class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• If you haven’t already, complete the online COVID-19 training for on-site workers</td>
<td>• Enter the classroom with the safety items described above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stay up to date on the new Spring 2021 testing and building access requirements to ensure a smooth transition into Spring semester for on campus activities.</td>
<td>• Ensure that your face covering / face shield is comfortable and on securely. Reduce gaps between your face and the covering to increase filtration performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students sign a Badger Pledge indicating that they understand their shared responsibility for keeping our campus community healthy and safe, and controlling the spread of COVID-19. The pledge includes a commitment to wear a face covering and adhere to physical distancing and other public safety protocols.</td>
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<td>• Students unable to wear a face-covering due to disability, medical condition, or other legitimate reason have been directed to contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center or their Access Consultant, if they are already affiliated, prior to the start of classes. Students requesting an accommodation unrelated to disability or medical condition, should contact the Dean of Students Office</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Request any necessary supplies like face coverings, face shields, hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, anti-fog wipes, etc. from your School/College/Division or Departmental ordering contact.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Practice speaking in your face covering and face shield. Anti-fog wipes are helpful if you experience fogging on your glasses or face shield.</td>
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<td>• “Have a Seat” signs will be placed on classroom seating to indicate where students should sit. “Place Chair Here” signs will also show where furniture in the room should be placed and left.</td>
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</table>
- Distribute any required instructional materials or handouts to seating locations before students arrive.

- Wipe down your work area with supplied classroom cleaning wipes.

- If in a classroom with an audio-visual system, use the microphone or one that you have been provided by your unit, if appropriate. Students may have difficulty hearing you because of the face coverings and physical distancing, although in some rooms the reduced student density may also mean a microphone is unnecessary.

- Remind students to use provided cleaning supplies to clean their desk surface and seats, and any equipment or materials they may touch.

- Remind students of expectations around proper health and safety behaviors including symptom monitoring, wearing face coverings and cleaning of desks/seats. Suggestions are provided in the university’s recommended syllabus template including what to do if a student refuses to wear a face covering or follow other health and safety protocols.

**During Class**

- Continue to maintain physical distancing of six feet between yourself and students. The classroom furniture will be set up to maintain this distance, so keep the furniture where it is.

- If students are expected to work on an instructional activity as a team in the classroom, limit group size based on the available configuration to maintain the necessary six-foot distance.

- Avoid instructional activities that necessitate sharing of common materials, such as passing around a sheet of paper, a microphone, or other items, or disinfect in between uses.

**End of Class**

- Consider ending instructional activities a few minutes prior to the end of the scheduled classroom period to allow time for students to put away personal items and exit the classroom in a physically distanced manner.
• Ask students to deposit used cleaning wipes in trash receptacles on the way out of the classroom.

• Take steps to coordinate exiting, such as asking the last row of students to leave first, then the next row, etc.

• Take any personal materials with you prior to leaving the classroom

• Wiping down the immediate instructional area (podium, keyboard, mouse) upon exit is optional, as the next occupant will clean the space prior to beginning their class.