



FACULTY AND STAFF POLICY: University Mandatory Masking Policy Due to COVID-19

Objective

Rogers State University (“University”) strives to maintain a safe workplace environment at all times for its employees, students, and guests, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. All should feel confident that the University is taking every precaution to follow recommended guidelines by the health professionals of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that help in preventing the spread of diseases such as COVID-19. One such measure is the wearing of facial masks or other facial coverings that may help in the spread of COVID-19 to others.

(Please refer to these mask guidelines at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.)
The CDC states in part:

*“CDC continues to study the spread and effects of the novel coronavirus across the United States. We now know from [recent studies](#) that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus lack symptoms (“asymptomatic”) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (“pre-symptomatic”) can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. In light of this new evidence, CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission.”*

Therefore, effective July 30, 2020, the mandatory wearing of facial mask coverings (facial shields, if unable to wear a mask due to pulmonary conditions) for all employees of the University and guests will be in effect when unable to maintain social distancing from others of at least 6’ when unable to maintain social distancing from others of at least 6’ while at work.

Each Rogers State University campus has implemented and will enforce a policy mandating that faculty and staff wear masks. All faculty and staff must wear fabric or disposable surgical-style masks that cover their nose and mouth (1) when they are inside University facilities and (2) when they are outdoors on campus, and social distancing of at least six feet is not possible.

Faculty and staff may remove masks when inside University facilities only (1) when alone in an enclosed room or (2) while participating in activities in which a face mask cannot practically be worn, such as eating and drinking or an approved activity or (3) if they are in their own enclosed private area with no one else present.

*COVID-19 campus guidelines/procedures have been reviewed and approved by RSU’s COVID-19 Task Force and are effective until further notice.

Guidelines/Procedures

1. The University will provide one facial mask to all employees at no cost that will be dispersed through the Mail Room. Employees may also provide their own masks that comply with this policy. Masks for employees in Pryor and Bartlesville may be obtained from the campus directors.
2. Guests must wear masks on campus and are asked to bring their own. The University will make surgical-style masks available to guests who do not provide their own approved masks.
3. The CDC notes that masks should cover the mouth and nose, be secured under the chin and fit snugly on all sides. It is important to wash your hands before putting on a mask and after removing it.
4. Cloth masks should be washed daily.
5. Facial masks or facial shields are not optional. They are mandatory for every employee when unable to maintain 6' distances, such as in conference/meeting rooms, hallways or copy rooms where others may be present.
6. The wearing of facial masks or facial shields are not considered personal protective equipment (PPE) by OSHA standards, because they do not ensure the safety of the wearer. However, they are meant to protect others from the spreading of someone infected with COVID-19 to others.

Supervisors should communicate this policy to all faculty and staff. Any questions or concerns about this policy should be addressed first to your supervisor and/or human resources.

Reasonable accommodation or exception due to health reasons

The University recognizes that there may be personal health concerns due to the wearing of a facial mask or facial shield. Therefore, an accommodation or exception may be appropriate under the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). Each situation will be considered on an individual basis. Any accommodation or exception will require documentation from the employee's primary care physician and will be reviewed by human resources for consideration.

Failure to comply with policy

The intent of this policy is for the safety and well-being of all those who work at, attend or visit our University. It is not meant to be a burden or a single solution, but rather be a part of an overall plan of safety to protect individuals from becoming infected with COVID-19 and to provide reassurance to all that the University values everyone's health and well-being.

Employees should be aware that failure to comply with this policy, will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary actions being taken, up to and including termination.

Please refer to the University's disciplinary action, grievances and appeals procedures for further information.

Policy date: July 2020