

Academic Laboratories Guidance to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 Updated August 25, 2020

Purpose

This guidance specifies procedures and considerations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in UVM teaching/academic laboratories and to protect faculty, staff, and students from transmission of the virus in these settings. This complies with Vermont's Governor's executive orders, Vermont Department of Health recommendations, and VOSHA mandates. This guidance will be amended as necessary to reflect the latest health and safety state and federal recommendations.

Applicability

This guidance applies to UVM teaching/academic laboratories and to UVM faculty, staff, teaching assistants (TAs), and students. This includes wet chemistry, clinical, biological and similar hands-on instruction. This is intended to supplement the UVM academic classrooms guidance.

Definitions

- Face Covering – <https://www.uvm.edu/returntocampus/face-coverings>
- Face Shield – <https://www.uvm.edu/returntocampus/face-coverings>
- Procedure Mask – <https://www.uvm.edu/returntocampus/face-coverings>

Compliance

Faculty and teaching assistants will enforce this guidance in their laboratories. Students are required to abide by the tenets of the [Green and Gold Promise](#). Any UVM student, faculty, or staff member may report non-compliance to the UVM COVID Information and Service Center at UVM.Strong@uvm.edu or (802)656-1010, or via a [Student Conduct Incident Report](#).

Guidance for COVID-19 Protections in UVM Academic/Teaching Labs

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 includes a layered approach:

- Monitoring individuals
- Occupancy (de-densification)
- Partnering/Group work.
- Physical distancing
- Aisle directionality



- Areas of congregation (e.g. shared fume hood use, additions to waste bottles, shared equipment like balances, etc.)
- Face coverings (procedure masks vs. cloth face coverings vs. respirators (N95s))

Monitoring Individuals

- *Daily Health Screenings.* All UVM students, staff, faculty, and affiliates must not come to a UVM facility, and report via a daily health screening, if they experience symptoms of COVID-19; if they have come in close contact with a person who has, or is suspected to have, COVID-19; or if they have traveled outside of Vermont to an area requiring quarantine upon return to Vermont.
- *Testing.* All students are tested on a regular basis for presence of the SARS CoV-2 virus, the test results are monitored by the UVM Center for Health and Wellbeing. UVM Employees, other than those who exclusively work remotely, may opt to be tested on-campus.
- *Pledge.* All students must abide by the tenets of the UVM Green and Gold promise.
- All employees and affiliates must abide by the requirements of the UVM Fall 2020 operations plan, their individual department operations plan, and VOSHA regulations.

Occupancy

Minimizing the number of people in the lab at a given time is one of the most effective ways to minimize the risk of exposure. There are a variety of options for minimizing occupancy.

- When possible, lab activities should be completed on-line using live or video demonstration. All remote lab activities that use chemical reactions, energy sources, microbiological samples, or other hazardous or potentially hazardous materials, must be reviewed with UVM Risk Management & Safety (RMS) personnel prior to conducting the activity remotely, or shipping materials for the activity. Contact RMS at safety@uvm.edu.
- Rotate students' schedules week-by-week for in-person activities. Split the class in half so that the occupancy in the lab is half of the usual occupancy.
- Faculty, staff, and/or TAs can complete some prep work prior to students entering the lab, therefore allowing the lab to be completed in a shorter timeframe. This would allow for students to begin the lab at different times throughout the allotted lab session.



Partnering and Group Work

Students should work individually to avoid contact with others and sharing of equipment when possible. If partnering or group work is required for a lab, the same partners/groups should be maintained for every lab session.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is required everywhere on campus, including classrooms and academic labs. Faculty and students must maintain 6-feet of separation.

For brief interactions of mentoring and instruction (<15 minute), faculty/TAs can interact at less than 6-feet separation: both people must avoid direct face-to-face interaction, faculty/TA must wear face shield over procedure mask if multiple interactions are expected. Proximate interaction must be minimized. Hand washing/sanitizing is required between interactions.

Aisle Directionality

To reduce face-to-face interaction and where aisle spacing does not allow for 6 feet of separation, faculty/TAs will direct student flow through the lab. [Signs and posters](#) with directional arrows can be ordered and/or downloaded and printed on your department printer.

Areas of Congregation

Additional preparation prior to the lab beginning can help prevent students congregating in specific areas of the lab. Examples of these areas include waste accumulation stations (chemical bottles, biological waste boxes), balance stations for weighing reagents, fume hoods (unless there are enough hoods for every student to use their own), shared equipment use, etc. Faculty/TA's can alter the start time of labs so students arrive at these areas at different times.

Face Coverings

All personnel and students will wear cloth face coverings, in accordance with [UVM Face Coverings Guidance](#), and will follow PPE guidelines specific to laboratories in Appendix A.

Eating/Drinking in Academic/Teaching Labs

Food and drinks are not allowed in UVM laboratories (teaching and research). If an employee or a student is found to be eating or drinking, they will be required to leave the lab immediately.



Accommodations

Employees who are not able to follow these procedures due to a medical condition, should contact the UVM ADA Coordinator in Human Resource Services at accessibility@uvm.edu or 802-656-0945 to request an accommodation.

Students who are not able to follow these procedures due to a medical condition should contact Student Accessibility Services at access@uvm.edu or 802-656-7753 to request an accommodation.

UVM anticipates no accommodation that allows a UVM employee, student, or community member to be present at UVM facilities or activities in the presence of other people without a face covering, unless they meet one of the exemptions from VDH/CDC

Supplies

Faculty and/or teaching assistants may request replacement face coverings, and/or other COVID-10 supplies through their department's safety officer/logistics coordinator.

Related Documents:

COVID19_Academic_Classroom_Guidance

UVM Safety in the Laboratories: <https://www.uvm.edu/riskmanagement/safety-laboratories>

UVM Face Covering Guidance: <https://www.uvm.edu/returntocampus/face-coverings>

Questions pertaining to this guidance document should be directed to Francis Churchill, UVM's COVID-19 Safety Officer at francis.churchill@uvm.edu.

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Appendix A: UVM COVID-19 Academic Lab Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Guidelines

The safety of all members of our UVM community is a top priority as we navigate the rapidly evolving public health situation around COVID-19. While every effort should be made to maintain 6ft physical distancing between individuals during in person instruction, there will be particular educational experiences that are not amenable to this practice. UVM has PPE guidelines that align the use of PPE with the risk of transmission. These guidelines are in alignment with recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC offers several free handwashing resources that include health promotion materials, information on [proper handwashing technique](#).

WHO	WHEN	PROTECTIVE MEASURES
<p>Students <u>who do not have close contact</u> with others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals who are more than 6ft apart and/or spend less than a few minutes with others. 	<p>While in an indoor or outdoor space with others and physical distancing is possible. Examples: labs without partnering/sharing of equipment and lab demonstrations</p>	<p>Perform hand hygiene before entering lab. Maintain 6-foot distance Wear Personal Cloth Face Covering (if not available use procedure mask)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May use own cloth face covering Reusable face coverings should be washed daily by user Perform hand hygiene before and after touching mask. <p>Perform hand hygiene when leaving lab.</p>
<p>Students <u>who do not have close contact</u> with others but will be sharing equipment.</p>	<p>While in a shared space and equipment is shared. Examples: labs/studios where students share materials and equipment</p>	<p>Perform hand hygiene before entering lab Maintain 6-foot distance Personal Cloth Face Covering (if not available use procedure mask)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May use own cloth face covering Reusable face coverings should be washed daily by user <p>Perform hand hygiene before and after touching mask Disinfect equipment with 70 percent ethanol or isopropanol (electronics) after use. Perform hand hygiene when leaving lab.</p>
<p>Students <u>who will be in frequent or continuous close contact</u> with others. Close is when people are within 6ft for more than 15 minutes (combined time), repeated contact, required to be within breathing zone (face-to-face) or touching</p>	<p>While in a shared space and physical distancing is not possible. Examples: labs/studios where students will be frequently passing by others, skills labs or those that require close contact or personal touch, and side-by-side instruction/mentoring.</p>	<p>Perform hand hygiene before each interaction. Reduce potential for contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize time of close contact. Avoid direct face-to-face interaction. For pairs/groups, the same students should be assigned to work together for the entire semester. <p>Face Coverings</p>



(such as physical exam or manipulations)		<p>Medical Procedure Mask* and Face Shield</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use one mask/day (unless damaged or physically soiled) • Perform hand hygiene after touching mask. • Avoid donning/doffing the mask repeatedly • Face Shield must be cleaned and disinfected and can be reused <p>Wash hands before and after each interaction (as appropriate) and after removing PPE using proper handwashing technique.</p> <p>Wear disposable gloves if the activity requires physical contact with others or use of hazardous materials.</p> <p>Disinfect equipment with 70 percent ethanol or isopropanol (computer, mouse, keyboard) after each use.</p> <p>Perform hand hygiene when leaving lab.</p>
Students <u>who will be in close contact</u> (within 6ft for more than a few minutes) with others.	While in shared space where physical distancing is not possible and involves the requirement to have facial visibility. Example: Speech Language Pathology students in skills lab or interacting with clients during clinical practicum.	Same as above plus Face Coverings should include: Transparent Face Coverings for activities requiring facial visibility.
Students <u>who will be in close contact</u> (within 6ft for more than a few minutes) with others	While at a site that requires enhanced PPE. Example: Nursing students who are participating in at home patient visits.	<p>In addition to a medical procedure mask* the site may require any or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disposable Gown Disposable Gloves Face Shield or Fluid Shield; universal eye protection

*Medical procedure masks can be reused for up to 8 hours if stored in an individual paper bag.

- The facemask should be removed and discarded if soiled, damaged, or hard to breathe through.
- Not all facemasks can be re-used.
 - Facemasks that fasten to the provider via ties may not be able to be undone without tearing and should be considered only for extended use, rather than re-use.
 - Facemasks with elastic ear hooks may be more suitable for re-use.

Individuals requiring face shields should be assigned one for the entire semester and properly cleaned in between use.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html>

[UVM Face Covering Guidance: https://www.uvm.edu/returntocampus/face-coverings](https://www.uvm.edu/returntocampus/face-coverings)

