



DATE: August 31, 2021

TO: USC Upstate Community

From: Dr. David L. Schecter, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

RE: Guidance on Face Coverings in Classrooms (Update as of August 31, 2021)

As we enter Fall 2021, all faculty, staff and students are required to wear face coverings indoors at USC Upstate except while alone in private offices, private residence hall rooms, or while eating inside campus dining facilities. This requirement includes all classrooms. This requirement will be in place for an unknown period of time, and we hope that the requirement will be lifted later in the semester as more people are fully vaccinated and the danger of COVID-19 wanes. This face covering requirement is in accordance with the email Chancellor Bennie Harris sent to the campus community on August 18, 2021.

Face coverings protect you and others, especially if the wearer does not have symptoms and is unknowingly infected. Face coverings should cover your nose and mouth.

Students with conditions that prohibit them from wearing a face covering must register with Disability Services; appropriate accommodations will be approved by that office [Disability Services | USC Upstate](#).

Since face coverings are required in their class, instructors of record are expected to either wear a face covering, teach behind a barrier (e.g., Plexiglas guard), or be physically distanced from the students (at least 6 feet). In many cases, these options will address the needs of any instructor of record who has a condition that prohibits them from wearing a face covering. If not, the instructor should work with their supervisor/academic unit for accommodations. Note that the academic unit may request documentation for accommodations beyond those described herein; such documentation would be submitted to Human Resources.

If a student attempts to enter a classroom without a face covering, the following steps may be followed depending on the situation. In alignment with the university's core values of wellness, equity and civility, the instructor should engage with the student in a respectful manner, and try and arrive at a solution by discussing options one-on-one:

- Instructors should ask the student if he/she has a face covering on their person (in a pocket or backpack), and if so, ask them to put it on. If not, instructors may ask the student if he/she has a

mask in their possession (in a car, in their apartment, etc.), and if so, ask him/her to retrieve it and return to class.

- If the student has no face covering or cannot retrieve one in a timely manner, the instructor may offer the student a disposable mask should one be immediately available.
- If the student cannot retrieve a face covering, the instructor may ask the student to leave and return to the next class wearing a face covering, or ask the student to sit apart from the rest of the class in an area where physical distancing is possible (if there is space in the classroom).
- If the student refuses to wear a face covering, the instructor may tell the student to leave the classroom and that a referral to the Dean of Students Office will be made [Dean of Students | USC Upstate](#).
- If the student causes disruption (e.g., yelling, using profanity, interrupting an instructor's ability to teach or conduct the class) USC Upstate police may be called to address the situation (864-503-7777).

*Note that guidance is subject to change as the University adapts to the conditions imposed by the pandemic, State and the USC System Board of Trustees.