



Respectful Engagement: Wearing Masks and Following the Campus Rules

Purpose

Effective September 16, 2020, UBC implemented rules whereby students, faculty, staff and visitors are required to wear masks in public indoor [UBC-controlled spaces](#).

As part of UBC's commitment to the health and safety of our community, and the responsibility we all share in preventing the potential for COVID-19 transmission, students, faculty, staff and visitors are required to follow UBC's [COVID-19 Campus Rules](#) when on our campuses. These rules include the requirement to wear masks in public indoor UBC-controlled spaces.

The requirement to wear masks indoors recognizes that transmission is reduced when face masks are worn in conjunction with other safety practices. This document can act as a guide when having respectful conversations about following Campus Rules appropriately. For more information, including exceptions to the mask policy, please refer to the [COVID-19 Campus Rules](#) and [Mask of Face Coverings FAQs](#).

Key considerations

- As a part of the University community, we must all play our part in maintaining a [respectful environment](#). If engaging in a conversation about COVID-19 requirements on campus, all faculty, staff and students are expected to address visitors, patrons and peers in a positive and supportive manner.
- The current rules around masks, accessing campus and obeying signage were developed to provide faculty, staff and students with the safest working, teaching and learning environment possible.
- Many factors can affect an individual's understanding of current policies, and messages may be misinterpreted. When people on campus are unsure, we must be consistent and remind them that the UBC COVID-19 webpage <https://covid19.ubc.ca/> has the most reliable and up-to-date information.



There may be situations where you can provide guidance on campus rules. Here are some tips for approaching individuals:

- **Show compassion.** New habits (like wearing a mask to work) can take time to adopt. Approach individuals how you would like to be approached; non-confrontationally and with kindness and compassion.
- **Always start with awareness** (i.e. by pointing out the preventive measure). Acknowledge that measures may be misinterpreted, forgotten about or not read. Students especially are focusing on their studies and may not be reading the updates in full.
- **Be patient and understanding.** Remind people that the safety protocols will help the community thrive and stay safe.
- **Be calm and respectful.** If someone challenges a policy, do not react with emotion. Stay calm. Deescalate the situation or remove yourself from a potential confrontation.
- **Focus on guiding and informing.** Read and understand your worksite rules. Listen to the individual and provide any known guidance to help understand the rules.
- **Reinforce consistent messaging.** Send people to the right webpages using easy-to-remember URLs like <https://covid19.ubc.ca/> for campus COVID-19 updates
- **Deescalate by suggesting they send feedback.** If someone challenges the rules or refers to an inconsistency or loophole, do your best to assist them and ask them to contact ready.ubc@ubc.ca if they still have questions.

Strategy for approaching someone on campus

Don't assume that someone is intentionally breaking the rules. Even with the best intentions, people are bound to forget or misinterpret policies, and there could be others who just don't know.

Together we can respectfully inform and remind people of the rules that are in place to protect ourselves and the community.

- 1) **Know the rules.** Review and stay up to date with the UBC [COVID-19 Campus Rules](#)
- 2) **Politely advise.** Give people the benefit of the doubt, there are a lot of new rules, they may have forgotten or need a gentle reminder
- 3) **Stay calm and approach with compassion.** A respectful tone can make all the difference.
- 4) **Avoid responding with emotion.** Aim to inform and clarify in a calm and positive manner

Last Resort

If you encounter faculty or staff that repeatedly show they are unwilling to follow the rules in the workplace, ensure you contact your supervisor, Human Resources representative or send an email to ready.ubc@ubc.ca. All other encounters involving visitors or patrons exhibiting violent or aggressive behaviour should not be engaged by faculty or staff. Please remove yourself from the situation and call the non-emergency line of the RCMP - 604-224-1322.

Please remember, our primary role is to provide respectful education on the rules and avoid confrontation.