



## Personal Protective Equipment Policy

**Policy #**

5-103

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<b>Category:</b>	5-Student Safety and Security
<b>Curriculum Phase:</b>	All Phases
<b>Author/Authoring Body:</b>	Curricular Affairs
<b>Responsible Unit:</b>	Curricular Affairs
<b>Policy Contact:</b>	Curricular Affairs Dean Office
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### Summary

All medical students must complete mask fit testing before beginning clinical rotations, with clinical sites providing standard personal protective equipment and specialized accommodations available for religious or medical needs. Students requiring accommodation must notify the Office of Curricular Affairs at least 6 weeks prior to scheduled fit testing, and those who miss scheduled testing must complete it on their own time and at their own expense.

### Related LCME Standards

#### 5.7 Security, Student Safety, and Disaster Preparedness

A medical school ensures that adequate security systems are in place at all locations and publishes policies and procedures to ensure student safety and to address emergency and disaster preparedness.

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### Applicability & Scope

This policy applies to all medical students participating in clinical rotations, including Rural Health Professional Program (RHPP) students.

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### Definitions

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – Specialized clothing or equipment worn to protect the respiratory tract, mucous membranes, skin, and clothing from infectious agents or other hazards. Examples of PPE include gloves, respirators, goggles, facemasks, surgical masks, faceshields, footwear, and gowns (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 2022).

**Surgical Mask** – A loose-fitting, disposable type of facemask that creates a physical barrier between the mouth and nose of the wearer and potential contaminants in the immediate environment. Surgical masks are fluid-resistant and provide protection from splashes, sprays, and splatter. Surgical masks do not seal tightly to the wearer’s face, do not provide the wearer with a reliable level of protection from inhaling smaller airborne particles, and are not considered respiratory protection (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 2022).

**N95 Respirator** – A generally used term for a half mask air-purifying respirator with NIOSH-approved N95 particulate filters or filter material, which captures at least 95% of airborne particles and is not resistant to oil.(i.e., includes a N95 filtering facepiece respirator or equivalent protection). Ideally should be discarded after each patient encounter and after aerosol-generating procedures; should also be discarded if damaged or no longer forms an effective seal to the face (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 2022).

**Powered air-purifying respirator (PAPR)** – An air-purifying respirator that uses a blower to force air through filters or cartridges and into the breathing zone of the wearer. This creates a positive pressure inside the facepiece or hood, providing more protection than a non-powered or negative-pressure half mask APR (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 2022).

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## Policy Statement

### I. Personal Protective Equipment Requirements and Accommodations

- A. Students must complete mask fit testing before beginning clinical rotations and annually thereafter (see Section II. Mask Fit Testing Timing and Process).
- B. Students requiring specialized personal protective equipment for religious reasons or known medical/physical conditions that prevent standard N95 use must notify the Office of Curricular Affairs in writing (via email) at least 6 weeks prior to the scheduled mask fit testing.
- C. All clinical sites will provide standard personal protective equipment to medical students.

### II. Mask Fit Testing Timing and Process

- A. The Office of Curricular Affairs will organize mask fit testing during the Transition to Clerkships Course (prior to the start of clinical rotations) and again during Intersessions 2.
  - 1) Separate sessions are scheduled for first-year RHPP students prior to summer rotations.
  - 2) Curricular Affairs will also schedule one back-up fit testing event.
- B. Two types of masks are available for fit testing (subject to availability):
  - 1) Standard
    - a) N95 masks (provided by Banner)
  - 2) Non-Standard
    - a) PAPR hoods (provided by Banner, limited supply)
- C. Students who miss scheduled fit testing or arrive unprepared (e.g., incomplete paperwork, with facial hair without approved accommodation) must complete testing on their own time and at their own expense.
- D. Fit testing is conducted by trained student volunteers who receive CUP volunteer hours (see Procedures).
- E. Medical clearance paperwork must be reviewed and approved by Campus Health.

### III. Clinical Site Coordination and Student Responsibilities

- A. Curricular Affairs will notify clinical sites of students' specialized PPE needs.
- B. If a clinical site cannot provide required specialized PPE:
  - 1) Students may be rotated to alternative sites when feasible.

- 2) The clerkship may arrange alternative learning activities that meet the learning objectives of the rotation.
  - 3) Students may be required to purchase their own non-standard PPE if unavailability of accommodation would prevent achievement of major clerkship learning objectives.
- C. Students are responsible for timely notification, attendance at scheduled testing, and costs associated with missed appointments or specialized equipment when required.

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## Procedures

### I. Student Volunteer Fit Testing

- A. Fit testing is conducted by trained student volunteers in the MD program who receive CUP volunteer hours for their time.
  - 1) The specific number of hours will vary based on length of fit testing events and falls outside this policy.
  - 2) Students interested in training to be a mask fit tester may sign up for participation in the Respiratory Fit Team CUP Program.

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## Related Information

### References

- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. (2015). *Hospital Respiratory Protection Program Toolkit: Resources for Respirator Program Administrators* (Publication No. 2015-117, revised 2022). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://doi.org/10.26616/NIOSH PUB2015117revised042022>

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## Revision History

**2026/01/14:** The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions to update definitions, clarify policy language (including mask availability and student responsibility), and add annual requirement for mask fit testing.

**2020/10/21:** The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved the policy.