

The University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson
COVID-19 Pandemic N95 Mask Policy

Policy #:	n/a	Policy Name:	COVID-19 Pandemic N95 Mask Policy
Category:	Student Safety & Security	Policy Status:	Final - TEPC Approved
COM-T Phase:	Pre-Clerkship Clerkship Transition to Residency	Effective Date:	10/21/2020
Responsible Unit:	Curricular Affairs	Revision Dates:	n/a
Relevant LCME Standard(s):	5.7 Security, Student Safety, and Disaster Preparedness 9.3 Clinical Supervision of Medical Students 11.3 Oversight of Extramural Electives	Page 1 of 3	

Purpose and Summary

All Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies are to be provided by the clinical site. If the site or learners rotating to that site require specialized PPE, they must notify Curricular Affairs (CA).

Scope

This policy is intended for all medical students in their clinical rotations.

Definitions

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses. Personal protective equipment may include items such as gloves, safety glasses and shoes, earplugs or muffs, hard hats, respirators, or coveralls, vests and full body suits (Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 2020).

Surgical Mask: Fluid resistant and provides the wearer protection against large droplets, splashes, or sprays of bodily or other hazardous fluids. Protects the patient from the wearer’s respiratory emissions. Does not provide the wearer with a reliable level of protection from inhaling smaller airborne particles and is not considered respiratory protection. Discard after each use (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

N95 Respirator: Reduces wearer’s exposure to particles including small particle aerosols and large droplets (only non-oil aerosols). Filters out at least 95% of airborne particles including large and small particles. 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 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

The University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson

COVID-19 Pandemic N95 Mask Policy

Elastomeric Half Facepiece Respirator: Reusable device made of synthetic or rubber material. May be equipped with filters that block 95%, 99%, or 100% of very small particulates. Also, may be equipped to protect against vapors/gases. Reusable and must be cleaned/disinfected and stored between each patient interaction (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

Policy

Affiliation agreements with all clinical sites used by the College of Medicine Tucson require that PPE is provided by the clinical site. Students requiring specialized PPE, for religious reasons or known medical conditions, need to advise the Curricular Affairs office in writing in advance of 1) mask fit testing in the curriculum or 2) two weeks prior to the start of clinical rotations.

Curricular Affairs will organize a mask fit prior to the start of clinical rotations. Students missing this mask fit testing, or coming to the mask fit testing unprepared (e.g. beard and/or mustache, except for religious reasons; without medically required alternative mask approved by CDC, NIOSH and OSHA that the student supplies at their own cost, incomplete paperwork, will need to complete fit testing at their own cost and on their own time. A complete mask fit test is required before students can start their first clinical rotation.

Background:

N95 fit testing is in-house in COM starting Fall 2020. N95 fit testing will be done by student volunteers in the MD program, who receive CUP credit hours for their time. (The specific credits will vary based on volunteer hours and falls outside this policy; Students should consult CUP). Medical clearance paperwork will be reviewed and approved by Campus Health.

Fit testing will provide 3 types of masks:

1. N95 masks provided by Banner Hospital
2. Half-face elastomeric masks that meet CDC rules for N95 equivalence (limited supply)
3. PAPR hoods (through Banner, only available if supplies available)

COM-T supports religious freedom. Students who maintain a beard for religious reasons are supported in this demonstration of religious freedom. As the religious beard means such students will not be able to complete an N95 mask fit test, they will need to complete the PAPR mask fit test. These students should notify the Curricular Affairs office 1) in advance of the mask fit test happening as part of the MD program curriculum, and 2) the start of clinical rotations, whichever comes first. Students are advised that PAPR masks are end-of-life and CAPR masks are often difficult to obtain. This is even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COM-T also recognizes there are students who are already aware of unique physical or medical situations where a standard issue N95 mask may not fit or be appropriate for a learner to wear. These students should notify the Curricular Affairs office 1) in advance of the mask fit test happening as part of the MD program curriculum, or 2) two weeks prior to the start of clinical rotations.

All students should recognize that PPE is provided by the clinical site, and all mask fitting is completed in conjunction with UA and clinical site partners. Curricular Affairs will organize the date and time of mask fitting

The University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson COVID-19 Pandemic N95 Mask Policy

within the MD program, and one back-up mask fitting date. Students missing these two fit test dates will be required to complete mask fit testing on their own time, and at their own expense.

Students requiring specialized PPE, for physical, medical, or religious reasons, should note that while the clinical sites will be notified of your unique need, the clinical site may not be able to provide all individualized PPE accommodations. Students may be required to purchase these individualized PPE items on their own. Curricular Affairs will notify the clinical sites of the learners' needs (previously made in writing to CA), if the site is not able to provide PPE, CA may consider: 1) rotating the learner to a new rotation, as is possible and reasonable in the time frame given; 2) working with the clerkship director to reasonably provide alternative learning activities that meet the learning objectives of the clerkship rotation. Where having no individualized PPE would put the student at risk of missing major clerkship learning objectives across all or the majority of clerkship rotations, the learner will be counselled to purchase their own PPE.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015, May). *Hospital Respiratory Protection Program Toolkit*.

Retrieved from National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health:

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2015-117/pdfs/2015-117.pdf>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration. (2020, September). *Personal Protective Equipment*. Retrieved from <https://www.osha.gov/personal-protective-equipment>