COVID-19 Style Guide

Updated August 12, 2020

# Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Use the full name on first reference. *CDC* may be used on second reference.

# coronaviruses

The family of viruses that includes SARS-CoV-2, which causes the disease COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019).

*The new coronavirus* (using the article *the*) may be used in reference to the virus that causes COVID-19.

# COVID-19

Short for *coronavirus disease 2019*, the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Symptoms vary and can include fever, cough, difficulty breathing and/or loss of taste or smell, but individuals with COVID-19 may experience mild or even no symptoms.

Do not use *COVID-19* to refer to the virus that causes it. Never shorten to *COVID* unless it is used in a quotation.

# current

When writing about health and safety guidelines or best practices associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, be sure to communicate that what’s being discussed reflects the most current information. COVID-19 continues to be a developing situation, and guidelines may change.

For up-to-date information about official university guidelines, visit [UB’s Health and Safety Guidelines webpage](https://www.buffalo.edu/coronavirus/health-and-safety/health-safety-guidelines.html). Additional information may also be found on the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19) website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) and the [New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus website](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home).

# face covering

Current health and safety guidelines require all students, faculty, staff and visitors to wear a face covering over the nose and mouth at all times while on campus. Varieties include surgical masks, multilayer cloth masks or N95 masks, which are tight-fitting, cup-shaped masks that filter the air.

*Face covering* is more accessible than *face mask* and is preferred as a general term. However, *face mask* or *mask* may be used in graphic design applications, such as signs or posters, where space may be limited. Default to *face covering* in longer articles, documents or web copy.

# face shield

A protective transparent visor secured around or over the head and covering the entire face. A face shield is a specialized type of personal protective equipment and is not expected to be worn on campus except in specific circumstances by health care professionals or as required by individual units. A face shield, though a type of face covering, is generally not a substitute for a more fitted face covering like a surgical mask, but an individual may use a face shield in lieu of a fitted face covering when there is a valid medical reason why that person cannot wear a face covering. Therefore, it is important to practice physical distancing when using a face shield alone.

# isolation

The practice of separating sick people, such as those with confirmed cases of coronavirus infection, from others to contain the spread of contagious diseases.

*Isolation* is different from *quarantine*; do not use them interchangeably. Though the process of separation may be similar, *isolation* pertains specifically to individuals confirmed (or presumed with a high degree of certainty) to be infected, while *quarantine* pertains specifically to individuals who may have been exposed but have not been confirmed to be infected.

# personal protective equipment

Equipment, such as face coverings or gowns, worn to reduce exposure to dangers such as contagions.

Always use *personal protective equipment*. Do not use *PPE* unless in a direct quotation, making sure to spell it out later.

# physical distancing

The current health and safety guidance to individuals to maintain a minimum 6 feet of distance between themselves and others outside their home.

Preferred over *social distancing*.

# quarantine

The precautionary practice of separating a person who might have been exposed to a contagion such as the new coronavirus from others prior to the possible development of infection. Not everyone who quarantines will necessarily develop infection. Current guidelines recommend that members of the UB community who have not returned to campus since it first closed in mid-March of 2020 quarantine for seven days before returning to campus, while those traveling from [states](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory#restricted-states) with high rates of community spread are required to quarantine for 14 days. Quarantining individuals should stay home, monitor their health and follow additional guidelines from health experts.

*Quarantine* is different from *isolation*; do not use them interchangeably. Though the process of separation may be similar, *quarantine* pertains specifically to individuals who may have been exposed but have not been confirmed to be infected, while *isolation* pertains specifically to individuals confirmed (or presumed with a high degree of certainty) to be infected.