The following frequently asked questions (FAQs) are intended to assist you with complying with the current Auburn University Policy regarding face coverings as you return to in-person work that is allowed. Since the situation is extremely fluid, the below FAQs are subject to change, modification, or rescission at any point and without notice.

**What is a face covering, and how is it different from a mask?**
A face covering is any kind of generic covering that covers portions of your face. A face covering could be, for example, a mask, a scarf, a bandana, or a handkerchief. A mask is one specific type of face covering.

**What is the purpose of a face covering?**
According to the CDC, a face covering is a way to protect others from asymptomatic or other spread of the virus. For instance, face coverings are generally used to protect others from an individual that might be spreading the virus when that individual does not know they have the virus. Face coverings should be the last line of defense against spread of the virus. As such, they are not a substitute for other ways to prevent the spread of the virus, which is why it remains important to maintain social distancing, minimize the duration of contact with other individuals, and practice other health/hygiene recommendations, such as hand washing or use of hand sanitizer, even when wearing a mask.

**Am I required to wear a face covering when performing in-person work?**
Any individual able to medically tolerate a face covering must wear a covering over his or her nose and mouth—such as a homemade mask, scarf, bandana, or handkerchief—when on campus.

**Do I have to wear my face covering when sitting in my cubicle space?**
Generally, yes.

**Can I bring my own face covering to work?**
Yes, that is the current requirement.

**Do I need to wear a face covering when I am working outside for the university?**
The Face Mask Policy requires that any individual able to medically tolerate a face covering must wear a covering over his or her nose and mouth—such as a homemade mask, scarf, bandana, or handkerchief—when on campus.

**If I wear a mask, do I have to maintain social distancing?**
Yes. Face coverings will help to slow the spread of the virus, but they should be the last line of defense. Other preventive measures, including social distancing and minimizing the duration of contact time with others, need to be maintained even while wearing a face covering.

**Is the university required to provide me with a face covering? Are departments responsible for providing these?**
Generally, no.
I am performing a task that requires respiratory protection above and beyond a face covering, and I have been previously medically cleared, fit tested and trained on such protection. Should I wear that respiratory protection or am I required to wear a face covering instead?

If the task requires protection above and beyond the use of a face covering, and you have previously been medically cleared, fit tested, and trained on such respiratory protection, you should wear the respiratory protection as indicated for the task. In all other instances of performing allowed, in-person work, you should follow all other guidance on wearing a face covering.

As a supervisor, can I assign my staff to wear N95s as face coverings for COVID-19?

The use of N95s should generally be reserved for healthcare workers, first responders and critical infrastructure workers, unless an N95 is otherwise indicated for the task. The required use of any respirator, including N95s, requires medical screening, fit testing and training. If an individual has been assigned an N95 and has completed all the requirements to use the N95, then they may wear an N95 to meet the face covering requirement. However, again, all N95s and surgical masks should generally be reserved for situations where an N95 is required or for healthcare workers, first responders and critical infrastructure workers.

Can I wear a face shield instead of a face covering?

No. A face shield is not a suitable substitute for a face covering. They can be worn as additional protection in conjunction with a face covering but do not meet the requirement for wearing a face covering alone. They are recommended to be worn with a face covering in situations where social distancing cannot be achieved for a specific task and workers may be within 3 feet of each other.