



Business Principles: P2/N95 respirator issue to staff who feel vulnerable to COVID-19 infection

1. UQ embraces a workplace environment where everyone feels safe and secure.
2. At UQ a combination of control measures are in place to minimise risks posed by COVID-19. These include vaccination, physical distancing, adequate ventilation, occupant density restrictions, strongly encouraging a surgical mask to be worn at all times while indoors, respiratory hygiene, hand and personal hygiene, environmental cleaning, ill people to stay at home, provision of information and personal protective equipment.
3. Personal protective equipment, which includes surgical masks and particulate filter respirators (such as a P2/N95), can be used to manage residual risk after implementation of these higher order controls. Respiratory protection should not be used in isolation as it is one component of a wider risk management process guided by the hierarchy of control. UQ continues to follow the prevailing Queensland Health and Chief Health Officer advice regarding the provision of masks and respirators.
4. UQ will provide P2/N95 respirators to staff:
 - a. who are vulnerable (see 5 below);
 - b. engaged in work tasks that require regular close contact with staff and students (e.g., front counter staff/client service staff); and
 - c. where it is deemed that this control should reduce the risk of infection from COVID-19 when considered in conjunction with the other available controls (see 2 above).

In February 2022, it was discussed by the UQ Senior Management Team that if a staff member feels they are vulnerable to COVID-19 infection due to their work task/s despite the existing controls, UQ will issue them with P2/N95 respirators¹.

5. UQ has defined vulnerable employees (COVID-19) to include staff who have any of the following risk factors²:
 - are 70 years or older;
 - are 65 years or older with chronic medical condition/s;
 - are an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who is 50 years or older with chronic medical condition/s;
 - are significantly immunocompromised or taking immunosuppression therapy;
 - have a medical condition and their doctor has advised in writing that the medical condition places them at increased risk and they require consequential work adjustments; or
 - live and care for a person who meets the above criteria.

For more information refer to the UQ Safety Note *Risk Assessments – Reducing transmission of COVID-19*.

Steps to follow for effective use of P2/N95 respirators

Step 1: Staff member to self-assess against business principle 4 above

- If a staff member self-assesses as such, they are to contact their local HSW Manager or Work Health and Safety Coordinator (WHSC).

¹ This process is independent of any directions issued by Queensland Health or other authorities in relation to respirator fit testing and supply requirements for staff working in or students on placement in healthcare settings. Directives and placement provider requirements must be adhered to in the settings to which they apply.

² as outlined in the [Queensland Government Guide](#) to identifying and supporting vulnerable employees (COVID-19)



Step 2: Conduct a risk assessment in relation to the risk to the staff member of COVID-19 infection arising from work related tasks

- If a risk assessment has not already been conducted for the area, task or individual the local HSW Manager or WHS Coordinator will assist with a risk assessment.
- The risk assessment should consider the principles set out above and is to include:
 - The risk factors, as defined above, for vulnerable staff;
 - the task or activity requirements; and
 - other relevant issues (e.g. staff perceptions of their risk exposure).

Step 3: About the P2/N95 trial process

- If determined by the risk assessment that a P2/N95 respirator may be required, a trial will be conducted to allow the staff member to try the respirator in their normal working environment. This is to assess:
 - if the respirator can be tolerated for the duration of the work task/s, and
 - if wearing the respirator impacts adversely on the delivery of the work task/s.
- The trial will be conducted over five business days during which the staff member will wear the respirator **at all times** during work tasks.
- Based upon respirators available from the UQ eMarket, the following respirators (non-valved) are available for issuing:
 - Halyard Face Mask N95/P2 Regular (Pk of 35), catalogue number 028507
 - Halyard Face Mask N95/P2 Small (Pk of 35), catalogue number 028506
 - 3M Face Mask N95/P2 1870+ (Pk of 20), catalogue number 028508
 - Trident P2 Level 3 Respirator, UniFi catalogue number 028500.
- The Trident P2 respirator is recommended to be trialled by each staff member in the first instance.
- The local HSW Manager or WHSC will manage the process for providing the information to the staff member, supervising the trial, arrange for the purchasing of supplies and conducting the fit check, in the first instance.
- It should be noted that *AS/NZS 1715: Selection, use and maintenance of respiratory protective equipment* will be implemented from Step 7.

Step 4: Provide the staff member with information on P2/N95 respirator use

- The HSW staff member may utilise the [COVID-19 P2/N95 Guide](#) to discuss the following with the staff member:
 - Pros and cons of P2/N95 respirators versus surgical/cloth masks.
 - How a P2/N95 respirator works.
 - How to correctly don and remove a P2/N95 respirator.
- P2/N95 respiratory principles of use include:
 - Must be free of facial hair along the sealing surface of the respirator.
 - Fit testing to the respirator is mandatory following a successful trial indicating the respirator is tolerated during normal work tasks.



- Always wearing the respirator during the work task in order to realise the full protection potential of the respirator.

Step 5: Access to information on how to conduct a fit check for the purpose of the trial

- Use the [COVID-19 P2/N95 Guide](#) to show the staff member the following content:
 - Pictorial instruction on how to conduct a fit check
 - Links to videos that show how to perform a fit check.

Step 6: Provide the P2/N95 respirator

- The Organisational Unit is required to ensure the staff member has access to sufficient supplies of respirators.
- The staff member will initially be provided with five respirators to allow the staff member to replace it each day of the five-day trial period.
- The cost will be borne from the Organisation Unit operational budget.

Step 7: Staff member to commence trial

- If at the end of the trial, the staff member feels that they can wear the respirator at all times and wearing of the respirator does not adversely affect their delivery of their work tasks, they will be fit tested to the respirator, supplied with the type and model, fit tested on an ongoing basis and undertake a fit check each time the fit-tested respirator is worn.
- If during or at the end of the trial the staff member feels they would like to trial another size or brand of P2/N95 respirator, the HSW staff member can source such from the UQ eMarket and recommence the trial.
- If the staff member is not able to tolerate a P2/N95 respirator, they should revert to surgical mask use.

Step 8: Fit testing to the respirator

- the staff member determines, during or at the completion of the trial that they are sufficiently comfortable with using the respirator they must undergo a fit test.
- In the first instance, fit-testing (using either a quantitative or qualitative methodology) will be performed in-house by a UQ staff member who is trained as a fit-tester for the organisational unit.
- If demand for the fit testing exceeds the capacity of the organisational unit, fit testing will be provided by a contracted Fit Testing Provider.
- The cost of contracted fit testing will be borne from the Organisation Unit operational budget.
- The following Fit Testers are active within UniFi and can be engaged by the Organisational Unit:
 - Keys Onsite Safety Australia
 - SureFit Services.