

Cloth Face Masks and Applying for an Accommodation

Northern Michigan University currently requires all persons to wear a cloth face mask in all indoor public spaces on campus. Face masks are required in classrooms, lecture halls, laboratories, the library, hallways, the public spaces in residence halls, etc. They are not required in a person's personal living space, such as residence hall apartments, suites, and rooms. They are also not required in outside spaces when not near another individual, or when alone in a private office or university vehicle.

Students must wear a cloth face mask in all indoor public spaces. Any student who cannot tolerate a cloth face mask may apply for a medical accommodation to attend classes via remote learning. Medical documentation will be required and the process will mirror the established Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation process.

Some courses will not be able to accommodate complete remote learning because the course objectives require hands-on or face-to-face exercises. Disability Services is both compiling a list of these classes and has added language to the "Accommodation Letter to Students" to acknowledge this.

Students granted an accommodation for classes will still have to work with Human Resources separately for a workplace accommodation.

Students are not expected to question or confront fellow students who are not wearing cloth face masks or are wearing them incorrectly.

The General Public is expected to wear a cloth face mask on campus in all indoor public spaces. Alternatives to cloth face masks are generally not allowed. A free disposable face mask may be obtained at many locations across campus and from the NMU Police dispatch office.

While certain mask exemptions and accommodations are allowed under Michigan law, it is safer for the NMU Community when persons unable to tolerate a cloth face mask refrain from in-person visits to NMU's public indoor spaces at this time.

Adaptations to the cloth mask are allowed for communicating with persons who are hearing impaired.

Mask Accommodation ADA Statement: Certain students may qualify for remote learning options due to a variety of health conditions. These students have gone through a qualifying process with the Office of Disability Services. Faculty have been notified of which students receive these accommodations in their class and will handle all related issues and concerns. If you have concerns regarding this topic, please contact the faculty member outside of class.

A Note about Face Shields and Vented Face Masks: NMU does not accept vented face masks or face shields as substitutes for cloth face masks.

Applying for an Accommodation:

- Students will file a formal request for accommodation (to be approved to participate in remote learning) through the [Disability Services office using the portal/app](#). The request will not be granted unless medical documentation is submitted and accepted.

- Formal request for alternate face coverings* will also be reviewed by the Disability Services office and medical documentation will be required.
- Mobility accommodation, such as going to the front of long queues caused by COVID processes, will be processed through Disability Services. The Disability Services Coordinator will modify existing business-sized cards to evidence that the exemption has been granted.
- NMU uses the [ADA portal/app](#) to automate communication. Specifically, two common rosters used by faculty are updated with an icon or indicator to show a mask or remote learning accommodation. In addition, Disability Services sends either an email or a copy of the acceptance letter for the accommodation to each faculty (for classes registered before the accommodation is granted). Disability Services will also send an email to faculty when students apply for a remote learning accommodation.
- Disability Services Coordinators will receive and process requests for a remote learning accommodation:
 - Using the [portal/app](#), the student submits documentation of a disability impacting their ability to attend face-to-face classes to the Office of Disability Services. This documentation may be from a physician (psychiatrist, family practitioner, neurologist, or pediatrician) or psychologist.
 - The student needs to meet with the Coordinator of Disability Services in person, via phone or Zoom. This meeting will serve as a collaborative exchange to find a reasonable accommodation for their needs.
 - Last, the student will submit a formal Accommodation Request Form indicating the accommodation options they have chosen.
 - The student will need to resubmit an Accommodation Request each semester they require this accommodation. The student will receive an updated Letter of Accommodation for each semester they request along with an identification card and an updated roster status.

***Formal Request for Alternate Face Coverings (aka Mask Exemption):** Most persons who cannot medically tolerate a face mask request a remote learning or remote work accommodation.

Students pursuing a “mask exemption” for face-to-face learning must submit detailed medical documentation from a physician or psychologist to Disability Services. The documentation must explicitly address how a face mask would impact a student’s health or inhibit the student's learning and state that a face mask exemption is necessary. The documentation must also address the need for a face shield or mask in transit between classes and in common areas. The Coordinator of Disability Services will send a follow-up email outlining any additional documentation criteria and how to proceed until sufficient documentation is obtained. If there is lag time between the request and obtaining additional documentation, the student will wear a cloth face mask or attend class remotely. If approved for a mask exemption, during class the student will either socially distance at a faculty-approved location in the classroom, or sit in a faculty-approved partitioned Plexiglas area. The Coordinator of Disability Services will provide a continually updated list to facilities of which rooms need a Plexiglas partition. Some options for mask modification include an alternative type of face-covering, a full face-shield, or intermittent breaks from class.

Possible disabilities that could warrant a mask modification accommodation include but are not limited to: 1. Autism 2. OCD 3. Generalized Anxiety Disorder 4. Major Depressive Disorder 5. PTSD 6.

Claustrophobia 7. Schizophrenia 8. Hearing Impairment 9. Speech Impairment 10. Mobility of hands/arms 11. Asthma/Chronic lung disease or 12. Other rare psychological illness.

FOR FACULTY: Students arriving to class with no face covering:

Northern will continue to follow CDC guidance. As of mid-September, 2020, no students qualified for a medical exemption from wearing a cloth face mask in a public space. In the event a medical mask exemption is granted, each relevant faculty member will be contacted by Disability Services, and informed of the accommodation details.

If someone arrives in class with no face covering (and you did not receive notification from Disability Services about a mask exemption accommodation):

- Announce that masks are required on campus by Official University Requirement and a State of Michigan Executive Order.
- Direct them to the free masks in the building or have a free disposable mask available in your classroom.
- If the student does not put on a mask, ask them to leave.
- If they do not leave, you are empowered to dismiss class and contact the Dean of Students office. Include the student's name and a brief summary of what occurred so that the DOS can reach out to the student to discuss the violation of the Student Code.
- Alternately, contact the NMU Police Department at 227-2151 to remove the student from class. NMU PD will escort the student from the class and contact the Dean of Students Office for conduct discussion.

What will happen: If an officer arrives in time to talk to the student, it is the officer's choice whether to walk the student to the DOS office or file an official report. If an official report is filed, a copy is sent to the student and the student has 48 hours to respond. The DOS will track noncompliance. The first response will explain the Official University Request (including the expectations of student behavior during the pandemic) and will try to persuade the student to wear a mask in class. Repeated noncompliance or egregious behavior will result in more severe consequences, including the possibility of temporary suspension.