

Northwest State Community College (NSCC) requires face coverings to enter campus while operating under COVID-19 protocol. To determine current protocol please visit <https://northweststate.edu/covid-19/>.

If a learner is unable to wear a face covering as a result of a disability, NSCC must provide reasonable accommodations to the face covering requirement so that the learner with the disability can participate in or benefit from courses, programs, and services on campus at NSCC and its off-campus sites. The requirement to modify the face covering requirement does not include individuals without disabilities, as they are not protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Examples of a person with a disability who might not be able to wear a face covering (including but not limited to):

- Individuals with asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or other respiratory disabilities may not be able to wear a face mask because of difficulty in or impaired breathing. People with respiratory disabilities should consult their own medical professional for advice about using face masks. The Centers for Disease Control also states that anyone who has trouble breathing should not wear a face mask.
- People with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), severe anxiety, or claustrophobia (an abnormal fear of being in enclosed or narrow places), may feel afraid or terrified when wearing a face mask. These individuals may not be able to stay calm or function when wearing a face mask.
- Some people with autism are sensitive to touch and texture. Covering the nose and mouth with fabric can cause sensory overload, feelings of panic, and extreme anxiety.
- A person who has cerebral palsy may have difficulty moving the small muscles in the hands, wrists, or fingers. Due to their limited mobility, they may not be able to tie the strings or put the elastic loops of a face mask over the ears. This means that the individual may not be able to put on or remove a face mask without assistance.
- A person who uses mouth control devices such as a sip and puff to operate a wheelchair or assistive technology, or uses their mouth or tongue to use assistive ventilators will be unable to wear a mask.

Examples of reasonable modifications to the face covering requirement

- Allow a learner to wear a scarf, loose face covering, or full face shield instead of a more tighter-fitting face mask;
- Offer appointments by telephone or video calls; offer remote instructional options in lieu of in person attendance, where possible;
- Individual modifications as necessary (e.g., class instructor, Faculty Advisor, Academic Advisor, or other employee is provided a face covering / mask or face shield that allows an individual with a hearing impairment to read lips);

How to pursue a reasonable modification to a face covering

- The learner should schedule a remote appointment with the Accessibility Services Coordinator (contact information is included below) at which time the learner may ask for more direction regarding documentation requirements in preparation for the appointment. *Please note: it is important to obtain current documentation of the applicable disability in advance of the appointment and send it via email to the Accessibility Services Coordinator before the scheduled appointment time.*
- During the initial appointment, reasonable accommodations due to a disability for the face covering requirement will be identified and discussed based on the learner's needs and documentation.
- The Accessibility Coordinator will review the documentation and will work together with the learner, faculty, and staff to proactively implement approved academic accommodations in the classroom and on campus, including all off-site locations. Please note: Instructors are able to view the approved accommodation in myNSCC for the learner for each class. The Campus Police Department will be made aware of the approved accommodation through a confidential notification from the Accessibility Services Coordinator on behalf of the learner.

Accessibility Services Coordinator

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