

Face Covering (Mask) Policy and Guidelines

To maintain campus safety, all NOC students, employees, and visitors must continue to wear a facial covering (mask) upon entering any campus building and when near or encountering others anywhere inside campus facilities. **Face masks are optional outside; however, social distancing should be followed.** Individuals representing NOC at off campus events must adhere to local facility requirements. COVID-19 can be spread when people are asymptomatic, which means they do not know they are sick yet. Facial coverings do not replace the need to maintain social distancing, frequent handwashing, and rigorous cleaning and disinfecting routines; however, facial coverings have been proven to significantly reduce the spread of COVID-19 to others. When **everyone** wears masks, we keep our NOC community safer.

General Guidelines for Face Masks:

NOC provided one facial covering (mask) per employee and student. Additionally, one reusable face shield was provided to all employees for use during a lecture or work environment when 6' social distance is also maintained. The shield was added as an alternative to the mask during class times as needed as many students and guests rely on lipreading to further understand. To maintain safety, instructors should wear the mask prior to class and only lower the mask and use the shield when socially distanced, raising the mask at the end of class when students might step closer to ask questions. Employees who are unable to wear a mask for health reasons should submit documentation to HR for ADA purposes and when approved may wear the shield instead of rather than in addition to the mask.

Failure to comply with the college's expectation to wear face coverings is considered a policy violation and will be addressed under the Campus Safety section of Institutional *Policies* (reference 2020-2021 Course Catalog and Student Handbook), and Employee Conduct (reference NOC Employee Handbook 2020-2021, Section 3.12 – Standards of Performance and Conduct).

You may purchase additional masks through the NOC Bookstore or provide your own clean, well-maintained mask from home. [Information regarding face coverings, including how to make them, is provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)

- You may wear your own clean, well-maintained, and professional face covering from home instead of the NOC-provided covering if you choose.
 - You may use a homemade or purchased cloth or disposable face covering.
 - A multi ply tightly woven cotton cloth or multi ply disposable face covering is recommended.
 - Masks containing valves are not allowed, with the exception of N-95 (although these are discouraged for use by the general public to save for medical personnel) <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment-infection-control/n95-respirators-surgical-masks-and-face-masks>, and for those with medical documentation.
- Permissible face coverings include cloth masks, including those with clear plastic inserts, and disposable nonsurgical masks. They do not include bandanas, handkerchiefs, fleece coverings, neck gaiters without filters or any other piece of cloth tied with an opening at the bottom as masks.
- You **must** wear a face covering at all times in hallways, classrooms, public spaces, restrooms, and other common areas across campus. Exceptions – employees who are in their offices alone or students who are in their residence hall room alone.
- Plexiglass barriers are not a replacement for face masks and masks should be worn at all times when assisting others.

- Face coverings are optional outdoors; however, social distancing should be followed.
- Your face covering should meet the following criteria:
 - fits snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
 - completely covers the nose and mouth
 - allows for breathing without restriction
 - can be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape
- The face covering is primarily a protection for others near you to prevent you from unknowingly spreading the COVID-19 virus to others. Studies have shown that if everyone is wearing a mask and following other safety measures the spread of viruses is reduced.
- You should carry at least two face coverings with you daily to ensure that you have a replacement if one becomes unusable while you are on campus.
- Masks and cloth face coverings should not depict or promote the use of drugs, alcohol, extremism, offensive language or symbols, and must be worn properly over the mouth and nose.

How to remind others of mask requirement:

- Be respectful in tone.
- Refer to policies and signs posted with guidelines. Do not make comments about them as an individual; refer only to the action needed.
- Thank them for doing their part in keeping the NOC community safe.

Syllabus Policy:

As with all classroom expectations, instructors are responsible for maintaining a safe environment that is most conducive to learning and to convey those expectations clearly to students (written in the syllabus, reviewed verbally in the first-class period, and through the Blackboard posting of syllabi prior to day one).

All syllabi should include NOC's policy about facial coverings:

Students must wear a mask at all times in this class, including before and after class has started. Instructors will assign seating on day one of class. This seating chart will help students maintain 6' distancing from classmates and will facilitate tracing should a student become ill during the course of the semester. Students who fail to wear their masks to class will be asked to leave the classroom and return after retrieving one. Because the expectation to wear a mask will be communicated to all students both prior to the semester beginning and on day one, students may be penalized for missed class time or missed points for quizzes or other classroom activity if they must leave to retrieve a mask. Students who refuse to wear a mask will be asked to leave the class and be referred to the Office of Student Affairs. Students who are not able to wear a mask for health reasons must file a request through the ADA contact listed in section 8 of the syllabus and must provide their own face shield to be worn at all times noted in mask requirement. See NOC's Pandemic Response Plan at the following link for institutional mask policies: <http://www.noc.edu/emergency/>

Note: The White House Coronavirus Task Force's Recommendations for College Students advocates social distancing and also advocates the use of masks when social distancing is not possible. NOC has taken the extra safety precaution of requiring students to wear masks even when social distancing is followed in the classroom and inside all NOC facilities to further reduce risk for instructors and students.

Questions?

- Visit <http://www.noc.edu/emergency/> for FAQs for some of the most common questions regarding face masks.

This policy and guidelines will be in place until further notice in writing and is subject to change based on current COVID-19 conditions.