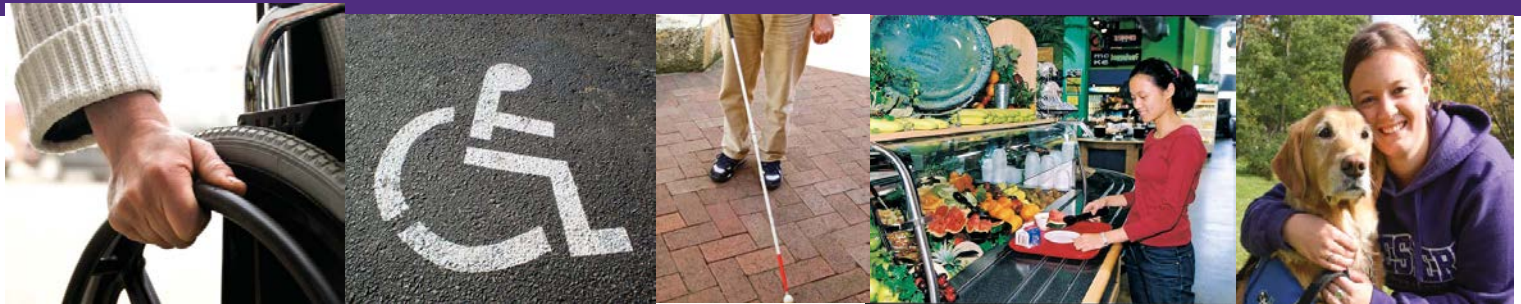


# “What’s New Under the AODA?” Western University’s 2014 Update



Recent legislative changes affect the way we teach and provide service at Western. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) has new requirements that came into effect as of January 1, 2014, which aim to make information, employment and transportation accessible. As an employee at Western, it is your accountability to know about the changes in this document.

Western University is committed to increasing accessibility for persons with disabilities who study, visit, or work at Western.

## Summary of New Requirements

### 1. Procuring or Acquiring Goods or Services

Under the Information and Communication Standard, organizations are required to incorporate accessibility when purchasing or acquiring ALL goods or services (except where it's not practicable to do so).

At any time you are making a purchase, ask yourself if the good or service is:

- a) **Accessible** (e.g. Can a person with a disability use the good or service?)
- b) **Equitable** (e.g. Can a person with a disability use the product or service as quickly and easily as a person without a disability?)
- c) **Adaptable** (e.g. Can a person configure the item to meet their specific needs?)

If the answer is 'no' to any of the above questions, consider a more accessible option.

Example: In a laboratory environment, where possible, purchasing plastic materials vs. glass increases accessibility for individuals with vision loss.

### 2. Accessible Websites and Web Content

Also under the Information and Communication Standard, all new websites and web content are to be designed in an accessible format that conforms with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0.

A “new website” is a site with a new domain name or a site that is undergoing a significant refresh. In this context, some examples of a significant refresh could include:

- a new look and feel to format or layout of the website
- a change in how users navigate around it
- a major update and change to the content of the website.

Note: By January 1, 2021, all *existing* websites and web content must be accessible.

Any time you are planning new websites or web content, ensure you design accessibly. To help you with this requirement, Western's department of Communications and Public Affairs has provided templates and accessibility best practices on their website, which can be found at:

[http://communications.uwo.ca/comms/web\\_design/accessibility/index.html](http://communications.uwo.ca/comms/web_design/accessibility/index.html)

If you have questions related to web accessibility, send your inquiry to [barrierfree@uwo.ca](mailto:barrierfree@uwo.ca).

### **3. Accessible Educational and Training Resources**

Under the Information and Communication Standard, we are required to provide educational or training resources in an accessible format that takes into account the needs of persons with disabilities. This also applies to course and program information, and student records.

Purchase educational materials that include an accessible or conversion-ready electronic format (e.g. textbooks). If such a format is not available, make timely arrangements to provide a comparable resource in an accessible format that meets the needs of an individual student. Ensure that a student with a disability doesn't incur an additional expense for accessible materials. Be prepared to provide course information, syllabi and grades in an accessible format upon request.

#### **Producers of Educational or Training Material**

In cases where institutions develop their own educational or training materials that are circulated to students, accessible or conversion-ready versions are to be available upon request. At Western, accessible educational or training materials are to be produced upon request in a timely manner.

#### **Libraries of Educational and Training Institutions**

By law, libraries that are part of educational institutions are to provide, procure or acquire resources in an accessible or conversion-ready format of print to a person with a disability upon request.

Libraries at Western are to provide requested resources, in a timely manner, in an accessible format to students with disabilities in a way that meets their needs. Students shouldn't be required to pay any additional fees for accessible versions of resources.

### **4. a) Accommodation in Recruitment, Assessment and Selection Process**

Under the Employment Standard, for any employment opportunities, organizations are required to notify applicants of the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities.

If you are recruiting for a position at Western, you are to ask the following two questions (verbally or in writing) of all applicants you plan to interview:

1. "Are there any arrangements that can be made to make the interview accessible to you or do you require any accommodations?"
2. "Do you require any information in an alternative format?"

If an accommodation is requested due to a disability, you are to consult with the applicant to provide a suitable accommodation that takes into account his/her accessibility needs.

If you are ready to make an offer of employment, all successful applicants are to be notified, at the time of offer, of the organization's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities. To meet this requirement, at Western, offers of employment (made verbally or in writing) are to include the following statement:

*"Western is committed to accommodating the needs of our employees with disabilities. Further information can be found in Western's Duty to Accommodate Guidelines located on Western's Accessibility website."*

## **b) Individual Accommodation Plans**

Also under the Employment Standard, organizations are to have a written process in place for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. At Western, our Rehabilitation Services department's website provides employees with information on our accommodation process.

For more information, visit: [http://www.uwo.ca/hr/safety/ergo\\_rehab/documentation.html](http://www.uwo.ca/hr/safety/ergo_rehab/documentation.html)

If, as an employee, you require an accommodation as a result of a temporary or permanent disability, to fulfill the accountabilities of your role, please notify your supervisor of your needs. Rehabilitation Services is also available for a confidential consultation.

For those in supervisory roles, if an employee notifies you that they require an accommodation due to a disability, you are to work with the employee to develop and document an appropriate accommodation plan. It is your role to ensure the accommodations are effectively implemented. Rehabilitation Services is available to consult with you as needed.

## **c) Performance Management & Career Advancement**

The Employment Standard also outlines that the needs of employees with disabilities are to be taken into account by organizational processes related to performance management and career development/advancement opportunities.

If you supervise an employee with a disability, who has an accommodation plan, you are required to:

- Review the accommodation plan to understand the accommodation needs of the employee and determine if the plan requires any revisions to support the individual's performance
- Provide all performance management related documents in an accessible format
- Learn what adjustments may be needed when the employee receives new responsibilities in a new or current role. If needed, work with Rehabilitation Services and/or Fire Safety to revise the accommodation plan.

# **Reminders and Tips**

## **a) Accessible Formats**

Under the AODA, organizations are to provide information or materials (printed or electronic) to persons with disabilities in an alternate format upon request in a manner that meets their needs.

Here are some examples of how you might do this:

- Provide material in alternate electronic formats such as a well-formatted MS Word document or an accessible PDF (e.g. lecture notes, presentations and email attachments)
- Add captioning or audio description
- Describe pictures or visual aid content
- Provide accessible audio formats of material
- Read aloud written information to the person
- Provide materials in Braille format
- Provide materials in "Large Print" (Arial font, Minimum of 18 font size, Single spaced, Minimal use of italics, bold, underlining, parentheses and hyphenation, Non-glossy paper and wide margins)

Resource Note: Ryerson University has created detailed, step-by-step instructions on how make documents, files and media accessible. To view these instructions on their accessibility website visit: <http://www.ryerson.ca/accessibility/tools/index.html>

### **b) Teaching Students with Disabilities**

Western's Teaching Support Centre created a toolkit for teaching students with disabilities. To view this resource, visit: [http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/resources/teaching\\_students\\_disabilities.html](http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/resources/teaching_students_disabilities.html)

### **c) Problem-Solving**

At Western, we are all expected to know what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our services.

- Ask the person how you may best help him or her.
- If you see that a service or facility isn't working, contact the unit responsible.
- Seek help from one of the following Western Resources
  - Advice regarding students: Services for Students with Disabilities: [ssd@uwo.ca](mailto:ssd@uwo.ca), 519-661-2147, ext. 82147
  - Advice regarding staff and faculty: Rehabilitation Services: 519-661-2111 ext. 85578
  - Building and facility inquiries: Facilities Management: [fm-help@uwo.ca](mailto:fm-help@uwo.ca), 519-661-3304 or ext. 83304

If the issue is unresolved, tell the person about Western's accessibility feedback process. Comments or questions can be directed to:

[accessibility@uwo.ca](mailto:accessibility@uwo.ca), 519-661-2111 ext. 85562

### **d) Notice of Service Disruptions**

Disruptions in service are to be communicated for services/facilities usually used by persons with disabilities. Notify students of local disruptions (e.g. a cancelled class or department closure) directly via email, signage, and department websites. By law, notices must indicate:

1. the reason for the disruption (e.g. department meeting)
2. the expected duration
3. a description of alternate facilities or services, if available

*Note:* Broad disruptions at Western in physical facilities (e.g. elevators, buildings), ITS web and data services, and Campus Recreation are posted at:

<http://www.accessibility.uwo.ca/resources/disruptions/index.html>

By request, the website can post disruptions for a department if you cannot directly contact those who will be affected. Use this in addition to your local communication.

## Resources

**Advice Regarding Students:** Services for Students with Disabilities in the Student Development Centre: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/> or email [ssd@uwo.ca](mailto:ssd@uwo.ca)  
ext. 82147

**Advice Regarding Staff and Faculty:** Rehabilitation Services: [www.uwo.ca/hr/safety/ergo\\_rehab/](http://www.uwo.ca/hr/safety/ergo_rehab/)  
ext. 85578

**Advice Regarding Teaching Practices:** Teaching Support Centre: <http://www.uwo.ca/tsc>  
ext. 84622

**Alternative Format Inquiries:** email [barrierfree@uwo.ca](mailto:barrierfree@uwo.ca)

**Building Inquiries** (e.g. lights, ramps, elevators): Facilities Management: email [fm-help@uwo.ca](mailto:fm-help@uwo.ca),  
519-661-3304 or ext. 83304

**Advice on the Use of Service Animals in Labs or Other Sensitive Environments:** Occupational Health and Safety, ext. 84741

**Classroom Technology; Accessible Desks:** Classroom Management Group (CMG):  
<http://www.ipb.uwo.ca/cmog/>

**Accessibility Feedback:** [www.accessibility.uwo.ca](http://www.accessibility.uwo.ca) or email [accessibility@uwo.ca](mailto:accessibility@uwo.ca)  
ext. 85562

### More about the AODA and “The Code”

The goal of the AODA is an accessible Ontario by 2025 through the development and implementation of accessibility standards. For public sector organizations like universities, schools, hospitals, and government offices, the first four standards are now law.

1. Customer Service Standard
2. Information and Communications Standard
3. Employment Standard
4. Transportation Standard
5. Built Environment Standard (in development)

Each person who interacts with students, alumni, visitors, retirees, other organizations, or other members of the public on behalf of Western is required to know and follow these standards.

The AODA works together with the Ontario Human Rights Code (“the Code”). The Code offers protection of rights, equal opportunity, and freedom from discrimination based on protected grounds. Under the Code, we have a duty to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability as fully and as promptly as possible in order to access services or, in the case of an employee, fulfill his/her role. In the event that, there is a conflict between the AODA and the Code, the Code has primacy.

**Thank you for learning about and contributing to increased Accessibility at Western.**