

Western University

**Multi-Year
Accessibility Plan**



Western

2017 - 2021

Prepared in accordance with the
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Western University Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2017-2020

Introduction

This 2017-2020 accessibility plan outlines the policies and actions that Western University will put in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. As a part of the mandate to improve accessibility, Western has developed a multi-year guide that is available online and in alternative formats as necessary. This 2017-2020 accessibility plan outlines the policies and actions that Western University will put in place to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities. Accessibility is an integral part of strategic planning, campus plans and operational processes. Accessibility is regularly considered in procurement, employment processes, customer service, feedback processes, training, policies and procedures.

The primary goal of this document is to develop a process to exceed the obligations of the Integrated AODA standards. It incorporates existing and new initiatives into one overarching accessibility strategy.

Statement of Commitment

Western University is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs to people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Western has committed itself to meeting its obligations under the Act in a timely manner, as well as achieving the following goals:

- The continual improvement of access to University premises, facilities and services for all persons with disabilities;
- Compliance with accessibility standards consistent with regulations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, as they come into force;
- The participation of persons with disabilities in the development and review of its accessibility goals & implementation plans; and
- The provision of quality services to persons with disabilities.

More information is available on the [Western Accessibility website](#).

"Western is committed to achieving barrier free accessibility for persons with disabilities studying, visiting and working at Western. As part of this commitment, there are a variety of services, groups and committees on campus devoted to promoting accessibility and to ensuring that individuals have equitable access to services and facilities. To help provide the best experience to all members of the campus community (students, staff, faculty and visitors), this website offers information on accessibility-related resources available at Western."

Goals 2017-2020



2017:

By 2017, Western will focus on the 'Design of Public Space Standards'. More specifically, Western will focus on the outdoor public use eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, parking, obtaining service and maintenance. Improvements are planned for safe and accessible sidewalk travel, ramps and building entrances.

2018-2019

The Diversity & Accessibility Coordinator and the Learning and Development team from Human Resources is working on updated and refreshed online training modules, 'What is new in Accessibility' brochures, and alternative format use manuals.

2020:

By 2020, Western looks to re-evaluate the procurement and production of educational training materials and library policy and procurement to improve quality and accessibility from 2016 policy. Western Libraries has convened an Accessibility Committee with campus partners serving as consultants as needed to achieve these objectives.

2021:

By 2021, Western will focus on upgrading accessible websites and web content. All internet websites and web content will conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA (with two exceptions relating to captions and audio descriptions for video). The Communications and Public Relations team continue to monitor Western's websites to ensure compliance. They have created a "Guidebook: AODA Making Western's

Accessible Web” to help campus partners understand these requirements. The Guidebook is available on their website:
<http://communications.uwo.ca/comms/pdf/Western-AODA-Accessibility-Slim.pdf>

*(2017-2021 goals originated from AODA Compliance Wizard)

Accessible Emergency Information

Fire Safety supports a safe campus environment by providing leadership, training, inspections and expertise in mitigation strategies for the university community. The achievement of high-quality service is based on collaboration with dignity and respect, valuing the importance of individual contributions. Western is committed to providing the customers and clients with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request. We will also provide employees with disabilities with individual emergency response information when necessary. Emergency procedures on campus take into account the AODA standards, and other safety and fire regulations in their evacuation procedures. These procedures are publicly available on the Western website.

Training

Western continues to meet its obligations under the AODA Customer Service Standard employing either an in-person training or the online training module for all new faculty, staff and volunteers. Follow up continues with existing service providers who have yet to complete training. Western will provide training to employees, volunteers and other staff members on Ontario’s accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Customer service training was provided in an in-person format to reach a broad array of staff, students, faculty and volunteers. Since 2010, it has moved to an online format. Continued, hands-on training continues as part of the feedback process, bringing awareness to specific issues which are unique to each department. The result is a growing awareness that we all play a role in ensuring an accessible learning and working environment. Western continues to refine its courses to reflect new Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations and is tracking process to ensure timely completion of this requirement by new faculty and staff.

Kiosks

Western Procurement has identified adjustable tables and counters to be used in areas of self-service kiosks as well as Academic Counselling and Student Service areas. These adjustable counters will be implemented in new buildings and Western Libraries across campus as well.



Adjustable Customer Service kiosk 1

Information and Communications Standards

As Western moves toward meeting its obligations under the Information and Communications standards, new processes will continue to be established to help ensure accessibility of both print and online content. Western Communications has upgraded to a new web system that will continue to be monitored and feedback will be shared regarding any areas of concern requiring updates.

January 1, 2014 - WCAG 2.0 Level A

January 1, 2015 - ensure existing feedback processes are accessible to people with disabilities upon request.

By January 1, 2016, Western will take the following steps to make sure all publicly available information is made accessible upon request.

By January 1, 2021, Western will take the following steps to make all websites and content conform with WCAG 2.0, Level AA.

Employment Standards

Employment Standards are addressed in the AODA legislation with the Employment Regulations of the Integrated Standards.

The public and Western employees are notified that, when requested, Western will accommodate people with disabilities during the recruitment and assessment processes and when people are hired through initial contact by Human Resources staff and the New Employee Orientation program.

Changes to practice include an overhaul of the Transitional Accommodation Program (TAP) for breadth. The program is called The Accommodation Program (AP) and encompass not only transitional but longer-term accommodations. Emergency evacuation and fire plans are included in the newer format.

Design of Public Spaces

Western is committed to upgrade, update and retrofit older buildings and physical spaces to make the campus more universally accessible to all who work, study, or visit where financially feasible. Each year, numerous projects are undertaken for improvement or development.

The Diversity & Accessibility Coordinator as well as the Acting Director of Services for Students with disabilities are consulted for new and renovation building plans to represent input from individuals with disabilities and address any concerns raised.



When maintenance is scheduled for outdoor paths of travel or public parking areas, consideration will be given to accessible areas as a priority. Whenever possible, maintenance will be scheduled outside of work hours. Service interruptions will be completed for restricted access with alternative routes posted.

Transportation

When Western University provides transportation services, it also provides accessible vehicles or equivalent service upon request. Western will work closely with partnering companies that provide transportation to adhere to AODA regulations.

Attitudinal Changes

Attitudinal barriers are the most difficult of the barriers to identify and address. Western is fortunate to have a large number of interested and concerned individuals in its community who regularly take on the task of educating others about the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in our community, both formally in the work that they do and informally. The office of Equity & Human Rights Services provides Lunch & Learn as well as workshop opportunities to raise awareness of accessibility concerns, universal design best practices and proactive solutions to create an inclusive campus.

Policies and Practices

With an organization the size of Western, there are a great number of policies and practices, both formal and informal. Pursuant to obligations set out in the AODA, it is anticipated that many policies and practices will be reviewed by the appropriate departments, and barriers will be identified and brought forward, either by those departments or by individuals impacted. Staff Relations, Rehabilitation Services, Services for Students with Disabilities and Equity & Human Rights Services are available to receive concerns, provide advice and consult with ad hoc committees. These stakeholders also continue to review policies and practices as part of their work on campus.

For More Information

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact Lesley Oliver, Diversity & Accessibility Coordinator at: 661-2111 ext. 81458 or accessibility@uwo.ca.

Accessible formats of this document are available upon request from Human Resources.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Western University is committed to creating a campus community that is inclusive of all individuals and ensures equal opportunity among its members to achieve success in their academic and employment endeavours. Western recognizes that successful learning and employment outcomes are the result of a shared responsibility and commitment on the part of students, faculty, staff and volunteers, and expects that all members of the community will advance and contribute to the ongoing development of an environment that is accessible and inclusive, while actively working to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities.

Stakeholders:

Jane O'Brien, V.P. Human Resources

Communications: Terry Rice, Gulnara Shafikova, Matt Hoy

Talent, Learning and Engagement: Andrew Fuller, Nancy Stewart

Talent Acquisition: Melissa White

Library Services: Monica Fazecos

Student Records (alternative format): Lee Ann McKivor

Procurement: Elizabeth Kirsche, Paula Granger

Emergency Evacuation: Dan Redmond, Director, Campus Community Police Service

Alternative Formats: Deb Stuart, Sue Burns, Deb Dawson, Nanda Dimitrov

Academic Reform: John Doerksen

Equity: Larissa Barlett, Terri Tomchick

Rehabilitation Services: Rebecca Crichton

Internal compilation by M. Wickett

Internal compilation by Lesley Oliver, Equity & Human Rights Services

Consultants: Council of Ontario Universities (COU), Brett Mason, Christine Stutt, Wendy Dickenson