Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Training Suite

Booklet Version

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Alternative formats of this booklet are available on request

Contents

Training Synopsis

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), Queen's University is considered a large public sector organization with the following training requirements:

January 1, 2010: Accessible Customer Service (trained by, and ongoing)
January 1, 2013: Accessible Instruction for Educators (provided by, and ongoing)*
January 1, 2014: Human Rights 101 (provided by, and ongoing)
January 1, 2014: Access Forward (training on the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation) (provided by, and ongoing)

Ontario Regulation 429/07, section 6; Ontario Regulation 191/11, section 7; and Ontario Regulation 191/11, section 16 outline who must take the training.

Who must take the training: All existing and new employees and volunteers, all persons who participate in developing organizational policies, all other persons who provide goods, services, or facilities on behalf of the organization, anyone who participates in the creation, development, or delivery of materials, activities, and assessments for learning to Queen's learners (inclusive of students, staff, and faculty).

The Training Suite is available on the Equity Office website at: www.queensu.ca/equity/training . This booklet is an alternative training format for individuals who require the Accessible Customer Service, Human Rights 101, and Access Forward training but **do not** have a Queen's netid.

*This training is for faculty and staff that are designated "educators".

AODA Overview

What is accessibility? It simply means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act passed into law in 2005. Its goal is to make Ontario accessible for persons with disabilities by 2025. The AODA has five standards.

Customer Service Standard

Accessible customer service is not about ramps or automatic door openers. It's about understanding that people with disabilities may have different needs. It can be as easy as asking "How can I help?" and making small changes to how you serve customers with disabilities.

Employment Standard

The standard for employment will help Ontario businesses and organizations make accessibility a regular part of finding, hiring and supporting employees with disabilities.

Information & Communications Standard

The standard for information and communications will help Ontario businesses and organizations make their information accessible for persons with disabilities.

Transportation Standard

The standard for transportation will make it easier for everyone to travel in Ontario.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

The standard for the design of public spaces only applies to new construction and major changes to existing features.

Accessibility is as much about anticipating and preventing barriers as it is about identifying and removing existing barriers. You could say that the AODA reflects an attitudinal shift about the right of persons with disabilities to full participation in our society. Barriers are not acceptable since now we know that much of what "disables" people is not a disability but rather an inaccessible environment.

What does "disability" mean?

The Ontario Human Rights Code defines disability as:

a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

b) a condition of mental impairment or a development disability,

c) a learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,

d) a mental disorder, or

e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

What are barriers?

A barrier is anything that keeps someone from fully participating in all aspects of society because of a disability. Barriers can be both visible and invisible.

Types of Barriers	Examples
Attitudinal barriers are those that discriminate against persons with disabilities	• thinking that persons with disabilities are inferior • assuming that a person who has a speech impairment can't understand you
Information or **communications** barriers happen when a person can't easily understand information	• print is too small to read • websites that can't be accessed by persons who are not able to use a mouse • signs that are not clear or easily understood.
Technology barriers occur when a technology can't be modified to support various assistive devices	• a website that doesn't support screen-reading software
Organizational barriers are an organization's policies, practices or procedures that discriminate against persons with disabilities	• a hiring process that prevents persons with disabilities applying – holding interviews in inaccessible locations
Architectural and **physical** barriers are features of buildings or spaces that cause problems for people with disabilities.	• hallways and doorways that are too narrow for a person using a wheelchair, electric scooter or walker • counters that are too high for a person of short stature • poor lighting for people with low vision • doorknobs that are difficult for persons with arthritis to grasp • parking spaces that are too narrow for a driver who uses a wheelchair

The Four Principles of the AODA

1. Dignity

Showing consideration for someone's **dignity** means providing goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises in a way that allows the individual to maintain self-respect and the respect of other persons

2. Independence

Honouring someone's **independence** means recognizing when a person is able to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others

3. Integration

We aim for **integration** so that goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises can be provided in a way that allows all individuals to benefit in the same place and in the same or similar way as others.

4. Equal Opportunity

We strive for **equality** by providing goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises to individuals in an equitable way so that they have access equal to that given to others

Terminology is Important

When referring to someone with a disability it is important that you put the person FIRST! For example:

- A person with a physical disability
- A person with hearing loss
- A person with vision loss

Unit 1: Accessible Customer Service Training

Objectives

➢ **By completing this Unit you will:**

- Learn how to communicate appropriately with persons with different kinds of disabilities

- Understand how service animals, support persons, and personal assistive devices help persons with disabilities

Communicating with Customers with Disabilities

Who are our customers?
Universities have all kinds of customers; students, staff and faculty, city residents, visiting alumni, students' parents and other relatives, and more.

Everyone can benefit from good customer service. Your first question should ALWAYS be, **"How can I help you?"**

What kinds of disabilities are there?
Disabilities can be both visible and non-visible: while some disabilities are immediately recognizable, others are not.

Learning Disabilities
Persons with a learning disability generally have average or above average intelligence, but take in and process information and express knowledge in different ways.

Learning disabilities can result in difficulties in reading, problem solving, time management, way-finding, and processing information.

When communicating with someone with a learning disability:
- Speak naturally, clearly and directly to the person
- Be patient and willing to explain something again
- Assist in filling in forms and so on with courtesy

Mental Health Disabilities
Mental health disabilities include a range of disorders however there are three main types of mental health disability: anxiety, mood, and behavioural. Persons with mental health disabilities may seem edgy or irritated; act aggressively; be perceived as pushy or abrupt; be unable to make a decision; or may start laughing or get angry for no apparent reason.

When communicating with someone you know has a mental health disability:

- Ask what would make them the most comfortable and respect their need to the maximum extent possible
- Try to reduce stress, be patient and calm
- Familiarize yourself with any protocols in place at your university for dealing with crisis situations involving mental health disabilities
- Make an effort to learn about resources available at your university and in the community for assisting people with mental health disabilities

Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities
Intellectual and developmental disabilities affect a person's ability to think and reason. It may be caused by genetic factors, exposure to environmental toxins, brain trauma or psychiatric disorders.

A person with intellectual or developmental disability may have difficulty with: understanding spoken and written information; processing conceptual information; perceiving sensory information; and, storing and retrieving memories.

When communicating with someone with an intellectual or development disability:

- Use clear, simple language

- Be prepared to explain and provide examples
- Be patient and make sure you are being understood

Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Hearing loss can cause problems in distinguishing certain frequencies, sounds or words. A person who is deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing may be unable to understand speech in noisy environments or pronounce words clearly enough to be understood.

Deaf spelled with a capital D is used to refer to people who are deaf or hard of hearing and who identify with the culture, society and language of Deaf people, which is based on Sign Language. Their preferred mode of communication is Sign.

When communicating with someone with who is deaf or hard of hearing:

- Persons who are deaf may use a sign language interpreter to communicate; always direct your attention to the person who is deaf, not the Interpreter
- If necessary, write notes back and forth to share information
- Face the person and keep your hands and other objects away from your face and mouth
- Speak clearly and don't shout!

Vision Loss

Vision disabilities range from slightly reduced visual acuity to total blindness. Vision loss can result in: difficulty reading or seeing faces; difficulty maneuvering in unfamiliar places; inability to differentiate colours or distances; a narrow field of vision; the need for bright light or contrast; and, night blindness.

When communicating with someone with a vision loss:

- Don't assume the person cannot see you – few people with vision loss are totally blind
- Verbally identify yourself
- Verbally describe the setting, form, and location to the customer as necessary
- Offer your arm to guide the person as necessary
- If you are not sure, ask the person what would be most helpful

Deaf-blind

Deaf-blindness is a combination of vision and hearing loss. Deaf-blindness can interfere with communication, learning, orientation, and mobility. Persons with deaf-blindness may use various sign language systems, Braille, telephone devices, communication boards and often use the services of a support person.

When communicating with a person who is deaf-blind:

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do. Some people who are deaf-blind may have some hearing and/or vision
- If you are not sure, ask the person what will be helpful
- Always speak directly to the person, never the support person

Speech or Language Disabilities

A person with a speech disability may have issues concerning pronunciation, pitch and

loudness, hoarseness or breathiness, stuttering or slurring, and speech.

A person with a language disability has trouble understanding others (receptive language) or sharing thoughts, ideas and feelings (expressive language).

When communicating with someone with a speech or language disability:

- Give the person your full attention
- Don't interrupt or finish their sentences
- Ask them to repeat as necessary or write their message
- Verify your understanding

Physical Disabilities
Physical disabilities include a range of functional limitations from minor difficulties in movement and coordination through to muscle weakness and paralysis. Physical disabilities may affect a person's strength and endurance and their ability to perform manual tasks, move independently, and control motor movements.

When communicating with someone with a physical disability:

- Wheelchairs and other mobility devices are part of a person's personal space, don't touch, move, or lean on them
- Keep ramps and corridors free of clutter
- If a counter is too high, step around it to provide service
- Provide seating for those who cannot stand in line

Other Disabilities
Temporary disabilities can result from a range of conditions, or accidents including heart disease or joint replacement. Chronic

health conditions, such as asthma, arthritis, diabetes, environmental sensitivities are disabilities that may affect a person's ability to move around, sit or stand or to do other things. Many people do not think of these conditions as disabilities requiring accessibility considerations, but in some cases, they do.

Serving Customers with Disabilities

What is a service animal?

A service animal may be a cat, monkey or other animal, not just a dog. Service animals are trained to assist persons with disabilities.

Service animals accompanying persons with disabilities are welcome on Queen's University premises, unless law excludes the animal, such as in an environment where food is being prepared. If law forbids a service animal, staff should ensure that the person accesses our services with alternate assistance.

What do service animals do?

For example:
- A **guide dog** serves as a travel aid for a person with vision loss
- A **hearing or signal** animal alerts a person with hearing loss when a sound occurs, such as knock on the door or alarm
- **Mobility assistance** animals may carry, fetch, open doors, ring doorbells, activate elevator buttons, and more
- A **seizure response** animal warns a person of an impending seizure or provides aid during a seizure

> **What should you do when communicating with someone who uses a service animal?**

- Do not pet or talk to a service animal: this distracts the animal from its tasks
- Do not feed or offer treats to the animal

What is a support person?
Support persons assisting a person with a disability may be a paid professional, a volunteer, a family member, or friend.

Support persons may provide one or more types of assistance. For example:

- Guiding a person with a vision loss
- Interpretation (e.g., ASL/English interpreter, LSQ/French interpreter)
- Note-taking, scribe or reading services
- Personal care assistance

Under the customer service standard, universities must permit persons with disabilities to be accompanied and assisted by their support persons while accessing its good or services.

When communicating with someone who has a support person:

- Although it can feel a little awkward, speak to and look directly at the person with a disability even though the message may be coming from the support person
- Address the person appropriately: "What courses are you taking this year?" as opposed to "Can you ask him what courses he is taking this year?"
- Plan for the presence of support persons, e.g., ensure seating arrangements accommodate support persons in locations that will help facilitate communication

What is an assistive device?
An assistive device is any device that is used, designed, made or adapted to assist people in performing a particular task. Assistive devices enable persons with disabilities to do everyday tasks such as moving, communicating, reading or lifting. For example:

- Wheelchairs
- Canes
- Walkers
- Assistive listening devices (FM systems)
- Laptops with screen-reading software
- Hearing aids
- Voice output system
- Lifts in stairwells

The customer service standard requires that anyone who acts on behalf of the university must become familiar with these devices and can either provide assistance or know whom to contact about operating them upon request.

Unit 2: Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Training

Objectives

➢ **By completing this Unit you will:**

- Know what the University is doing to meet Regulation requirements
- Learn about how to make information more accessible

Source: https://assistivetechnologytidbits.wikispaces.com/About+UDL
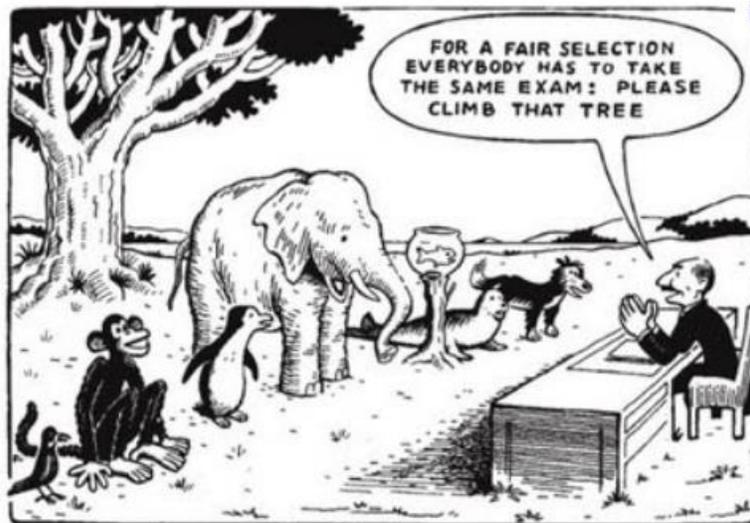
The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) are standards under the AODA that include general requirements and standard for information and communications, employment, transportation, and design of public spaces.

General Requirements of the IASR
The general requirements of the IASR require the University to:
- Develop an accessibility policy
- Create a multi-year accessibility plan and provide annual status updates
- Incorporate accessibility in purchasing activities and when designing or purchasing self-service kiosks
- Provide training (this booklet is one of our tools)

Accessibility Policy
The University's accessibility policy and supporting procedures outline our commitment to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility.

Multi-year Accessibility Plan
The University created a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan in consultation with persons with disabilities. The plan outlines key actions the University will take to meet AODA requirements. The plan is a living document and will be updated annually to highlight our progress.

Purchasing and Procurement
It is a requirement that our purchasing of goods, services, and facilities include accessibility design, criteria and features. The University has checklists to help staff address these requirements when making purchases.

Information and Communications Standard

For persons with disabilities, information needs to be provided in an accessible format (formats that help persons receive and understand information) or with an appropriate communication support (tools to help communication) upon request.

Accessible formats and communication supports must be provided in a timely manner and at a cost that is not more than the regular costs charged to other people.

Examples of alternate formats and communication supports:
- Reading written information to a person directly
- Large print
- Text transcripts of audio or visual information
- Handwritten notes instead of spoken word
- Information written in plain language
- An electronic document formatted to be accessible for use with a screen reader

How to Provide Accessible Formats

1. Ensure Electronic Version is accessible
Use Microsoft Headings - Allows individuals with screen readers to navigate through the document and ensures consistency.

2. Follow Clear Writing Principles
- Use short sentences
- Avoid unnecessary words
- Action in your verbs
- Write as you talk
- Tie in with reader's experience
- Write to express, not to impress

3. Follow Clear Print Guideline
It is important to keep clear print guidelines in mind when designing any product (letters, emails, flyers, signage, documents, forms, business cards, agendas, minutes and website)

- Black and white is best
- Keep text large, between 11 and 18
- Use Bold – with filled boxes
- Use a sans serif font (Arial is our corporate standard)
- Do not use all caps
- Do not use *italics*
- Appropriate use of white space

4. Colour Contrast

- Use high contrast colours for text and background
- Printed materials are most legible in Black and White
- Do not use colour as your only means of communication
- Reduce distractions by not using watermarks or complicated background designs.

Feedback

Anytime that the University is asking the public for their feedback or comments, whether in writing, in person or by telephone, we have to ensure that alternate formats or communication supports are offered. It is important to let persons with disabilities know that accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request.

Websites

The University is working to achieve Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) Level A and Level AA on all our websites. These guidelines cover things like writing content in plain language, providing alternate text for images, ensuring someone can navigate a website, and that documents on a website can be read by a screen reader.

Emergency Procedures

Emergency procedures, plans, or public safety information that is available to the public must be provided in an accessible format, on request. This information can be helpful for persons with disabilities when planning a visit to a location and being prepared to vacate in the event of an emergency.

Examples of emergency information include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency plans and procedures
- Maps, warning signs, and evacuation routes
- Information you give the public about alarms or other emergency alerts

Real-time emergency information (such as announcements and alarms) is not included in this requirement.

Employment Standard

The University is dedicated to removing and preventing barriers to persons with disabilities when posting jobs, during the recruitment and selection process, and in the life cycle of a job.

Informing Employees of Supports
The Employment Standard requires employers to inform all employees, both new and existing, of their accessible employment practices.

This includes, but is not limited to, policies on providing job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

This will make all employees aware of how the organization will support them if they have a disability – or if they acquire a disability later in their career.

Accommodations
The University has a procedure in place that ensures accessibility accommodations in all stages of employment. Workplace accommodations do not change performance expectations; they help our employees perform the functions of their jobs.

Transportation Standard

The Transportation Standard sets out the requirements that will prevent and remove barriers to public transportation to make it easier for people to travel within Ontario. Although this Standard does not apply to Queen's, we remain obligated under the Ontario Human Rights Code to provide accessible transportation upon request.

Design of Public Spaces Standard
Accessible public spaces make it easier for people with disabilities to move through and use the environment. The requirements of the standard are divided into seven sections:

1. Recreational trails and beach access routes
2. Outdoor public use eating areas, like those found at rest stops or picnic grounds
3. Outdoor play spaces
4. Exterior paths of travel (sidewalks or walkways) and their associated elements, such as ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signals
5. Accessible off-street and on-street parking spaces
6. Obtaining services (service counters, fixed queuing guides and waiting areas)
7. Maintenance planning

Unit 3: Human Rights Training

Objectives

➤ **By completing this Unit you will:**

- Become familiar with the principles and concepts of the Ontario Human Rights Code

- Become familiar with disability and human rights in the workplace

- Become familiar with accommodation responsibilities for both the employer and the employee

Ontario Human Rights Code

The Ontario Human Rights Code (the Code) provides for equal rights and opportunities, and freedom from discrimination. The Code recognizes the dignity and worth of every person in Ontario. It applies to the areas of employment, housing, facilities and services, contracts, and membership in unions, trade, or professional associations.

The Code prohibits discrimination in employment on grounds of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or disability.

There are 4 key concepts....

- Primacy

- Remedial

- Effect vs. Intent

- Provincial

1. The Code has power over most other laws; this is called "primacy"

2. The Code is remedial — it tries to make a bad situation better, not punish people.

3. The Code looks at what actually happened, not whether someone intended or "meant" to discriminate (effect not intent).

4. The Code covers areas that come under provincial law.

What is Discrimination?

Discrimination is treating somebody differently because of their race, disability, sex or other personal characteristics. Discrimination has many different forms.

- Discrimination can target one person...

- or a group

- it can be hard to see or be part of a system

- it can also be a reprisal, a poisoned environment, harassment or racial profiling

People can discriminate directly against one person or group of people. An example is when someone is told she can't have a job because she has a disability.

Direct Discrimination
This means discriminating against someone because you think they are different from you. It includes practices or behaviours that have a negative effect on a person or a group of people who belong to a ground listed under the Code. It doesn't matter that you didn't intend to treat them differently. What matters is whether your actions or what you said results in discrimination.

Indirect Discrimination

Also called constructive discrimination, happens when certain demands or rules seem to be fair, but actually keep out some people under grounds listed in the Code or gives some people special treatment over others.

Systemic Discrimination

Discrimination may be part of a system like how decisions are made, and the practices and policies or the culture of the organization. For example, the head of the company likes golf and only wants to promote managers who play golf. Think about who gets invited to the golf game.

Reprisal

Reprisal means punishing someone because they have a human rights complaint, or because they say they have witnessed discrimination.

A Poisoned Environment

This is created when comments or actions based on grounds listed in the Code make you feel unwelcome or uncomfortable at work they poison the workplace. Sometimes all it takes is one comment to poison the environment.

Harassment

What was said or the behaviour usually happened more than once; the person responsible for the comment or conduct should have known that it is not welcome.

Racial Profiling

This happens when you take action because you're worried about safety, for security reasons or for the public's protection, and your decision is based on stereotypes about a person's race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion or place of origin.

Human Rights in the Workplace

All employees are entitled to a harassment and discrimination free environment based on the human rights grounds named above.

In the workplace, employees with disabilities are entitled to the same opportunities and benefits as people without disabilities. This may include special arrangements or "accommodations" to enable them to fulfill their job duties.

Public and private education providers must also make sure their facilities and services are accessible, and that students with disabilities are accommodated.

The Duty to Accommodate

In the workplace employees are entitled to be accommodated based on all of the human right grounds named above.

Even when facilities and services are designed as inclusively as possible, you may still need to accommodate the individual needs of some persons with disabilities. Under the Code, the University has a legal "duty to accommodate" persons with disabilities. The goal of accommodation is to allow persons with disabilities to equally benefit from and take part in services, housing, or the workplace.

Accommodation is a shared responsibility. Everyone involved, including the person asking for accommodation, should work together, exchange relevant information,

and look for accommodation solutions together.

There is no set formula for accommodating persons with disabilities. You need to consider individual needs each time a person asks to be accommodated. A solution for one person may not work for someone else. Some examples of accommodation include:

- increased flexibility in work hours or break times

- providing reading materials in alternative formats

- providing sign language interpreters or real-time captioning

Many accommodations can be made easily and at low cost. In some cases, putting the best solution in place right away may result in "undue hardship" for the University because of costs or health and safety factors. Even if this happens, the University still has a duty to look at and take next-best steps that would not result in undue hardship. Such steps should be taken only until more ideal solutions can be put in place or phased in.

Accommodation Responsibilities

As a person with a disability:
- tell your employer what your disability-related needs are related to your job duties

- provide supporting information about your disability-related needs, including medical or other expert

opinions where needed

- take part in looking at possible accommodation solutions

As an employer:
- accept requests for accommodation in good faith

- ask only for information that you need to provide accommodation. For example, you would need to know that an employee's loss of vision prevents them from using printed material, but you do not need to know that they have diabetes

- take an active role in looking for accommodation solutions that meet individual needs

- deal with accommodation request as quickly as possible, even if it means creating a temporary solution while you develop a long-term one

- respect the dignity of the person asking for accommodation, and keep information confidential

- cover the costs of accommodation, including any needed medical or other expert opinion or documents

Resources

Accessibility Hub: http://www.queensu.ca/accessibility/home

AccessON: http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/en/mcss/programs/accessibility/

Ontario Human Rights Commission: www.ohrc.on.ca

Equity Office: www.queensu.ca/equity

Human Rights Office: www.queensu.ca/humanrights