

# Queen's University

## Accessibility Annual Status Report

### May 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020

This document is available in alternate formats upon request. Please contact us at 613-533-2563 or by email at [equity@queensu.ca](mailto:equity@queensu.ca).

## Public Communication of the Accessibility Plans and Annual Reports

Queen's current and past Accessibility Plans and Annual Reports are available:

- Online at the Equity Services website at [Reports and Plans](#)
- By telephoning Equity Services at (613)533-2563
- By sending an email request to [equity@queensu.ca](mailto:equity@queensu.ca)
- By mailing a written request to:  
Human Rights and Equity Office  
Queen's University  
Mackintosh-Corry Hall, Room B511  
99 University Avenue  
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6
- In alternate formats as requested.

### Accessibility Feedback

Queen's recognizes that feedback is critical to the process of identifying and removing barriers to participation as well as improving how we deliver our services to persons with disabilities. The [Accessibility Feedback Online Form](#) can be used to submit feedback about accessibility to Accessibility Services.

Feedback may also be given by emailing Equity Services at [equity@queensu.ca](mailto:equity@queensu.ca), by telephone at (613) 533-2563, or by fax at (613) 533-2031. You may also send feedback via mail to:

Human Rights and Equity Office  
Queen's University  
Mackintosh-Corry Hall, Room B511  
99 University Avenue  
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6.

# QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY ACCESSIBILITY ANNUAL REPORT 2020

---

- Coronavirus COVID-19 .....4**
- Section One: Introduction .....4**
  - Background ..... 4
  - Vision & Commitment..... 4
  - Informed & Committed Leadership ..... 4
  - Queen’s University’s Comprehensive Strategic Framework for Accessibility ..... 5
- Section Two: Status Update – (2019/2020) – Meeting AODA Requirements .....5**
  - Customer Service Standards ..... 5
  - Information and Communication Standards ..... 6
  - Design of Public Spaces and the Built Environment ..... 6
  - Education, Training, & Awareness ..... 7
- Section Three: Status Update – (2019/2020) – Exceeding AODA Requirements .....9**
  - Accessibility Cafés ..... 9
  - Accessibility Hub ..... 9
  - DEAP Tool..... 9
  - Education, Training, & Awareness ..... 10
  - Student Wellness Services ..... 11
  - Steve Cutway Accessibility Award ..... 12
- Section Four: Moving Forward to 2025 .....12**
  - AODA Requirements ..... 12
  - Future AODA Standards ..... 12
  - Accessible Canada Act..... 13
  - Accessibility is Key for Success in Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion ..... 13
- Section Five: Conclusion.....13**

## Coronavirus COVID-19

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared a world-wide pandemic for COVID-19 and the Provincial government ordered all non-essential services, including universities, to shut down. As a result, staff and faculty had to work remotely and students moved to online learning for remaining courses, assignments and exams. Queen's created a [COVID-19 information webpage](#) and used its social media platforms to notify and share information with the Queen's community.

Remote learning and working have exposed many accessibility challenges for persons with disabilities such as captioning videos for student learning, virtual events, document and website accessibility to name a few. These challenges and solutions will extend beyond the timeframe of this report and shape accessibility at Queen's for the future.

## Section One: Introduction

### Background

Under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* ("AODA"), Queen's University is considered a large designated public sector organization. As such, Queen's is required to establish, implement, maintain, and document a multi-year accessibility plan. That document constitutes Queen's University's Accessibility Plan ("[the Plan](#)") for the period 2016 – 2025.

AODA legislation also requires public sector organizations to prepare an Annual Report ("the Report") relative to the multi-year accessibility plan. This Report documents the planning and implementation activities undertaken by Queen's as part of the multi-year Plan, for the period May 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020.

### Vision & Commitment

Queen's vision is to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the strategic identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to their full participation. Accessibility planning provides the university with the opportunity to take a comprehensive look at its services, policies, procedures, practices, and programs to determine which aspects of its operations require action towards advancing accessibility. In order to support progress and meaningful implementation of the Plan, a strong foundation built upon the following principles is necessary.

### Informed & Committed Leadership

- All Departments and Units are asked to provide input into the Plan.
- Accountability is demonstrated through the Plan and its related accessibility documentation, made publicly available and in alternative formats upon request.
- Mandatory accessibility and human rights training is offered for all staff, faculty, and students acting on behalf of the university.

- Engaged and aware employees incorporate accessibility into daily practices at all levels of the organization and are encouraged to use an inclusionary lens when preparing policy and procedural documents or developing programs and services.

## Queen's University's Comprehensive Strategic Framework for Accessibility

### *Phase Two - Competency*

1. Consult with persons with disabilities whose input is shared with the five working groups and throughout the cycle.
2. The names and processes of each working group and committee are as follows:
  - a. **Site Improve Advisory Group:** continue to monitor Queen's websites and departmental compliance efforts (with WCAG 2.0 Level A).
  - b. **Built Environment Advisory Group:** continue its work to meet obligations of the Design of Public Space requirements which came into force in 2016.
  - c. **Community of Practice** (*formerly the Education, Training, and Awareness Working Group, which has been put on hiatus*): include input from the Centre for Teaching and Learning, IT Services, and the Human Rights and Equity Office.
  - d. **The Policy Advisory Subcommittee (PASC)** (*formerly the Policy Advisory Working Group, which has folded*): has agreed to expand its Terms of Reference to include providing feedback on Accessibility policies, procedures, and guidelines.
  - e. **Employment Working Group:** has been put on hiatus. The AODA requirements have been met operationally by the Human Resources department through the development of the [Accommodation of Disabilities in the Workplace Policy](#), [Individualized Accommodation Procedures](#), [Disability Accommodation Guidelines](#), [Return to Work Policy](#), and [Return to Work Procedure](#).

## Section Two: Status Update – (2019/2020) – Meeting AODA Requirements

The following is a summary of actions taken to achieve compliance with 2019/2020 applicable requirements under the AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR 191/11). Compliance deadlines appear in brackets and refer to January 1<sup>st</sup> of the given year.

### Customer Service Standards

In 2017, Queen's released new guidance for the use of Service Animals: [Guidelines for Customer Service to Persons Who Use Service Animals](#) and [Procedures for Persons Who Use Service Animals](#) through the work of an *ad hoc* committee representing Student Wellness, Exams Office, Residences, Environmental Health & Safety, Human Resources, Human Rights & Equity, Secretariat's Office, and QUFA.

Since the use of Service Animals by students has increased, the work of the ad hoc committee has continued to create a Service Animal Policy for guidance and awareness.

## Information and Communication Standards

Communicating and providing information in ways that are accessible to all is another cornerstone of building an accessible organization.

### ***191/11, section 14 – Websites conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines***

Although the compliance date has passed, work on compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level A (2014) continued in 2019/20.

- ✓ ITS has again purchased a one-year subscription to Site Improve.
- ✓ A new version of WebPublish (Drupal) will be launched later in 2020. New accessibility features will be integrated within the CMS and a new Queen's template design will be released which meets WCAG Level AA.
- ✓ The Site Improve Advisory Group developed an Action Plan regarding Queen's websites and compliance efforts (with WCAG 2.0/2.1 Level A/AA).

### ***191/11 Section 15 - Educational and training resources and materials, etc.***

The Office of the Vice Provost (Teaching and Learning), the Centre for Teaching and Learning, ITS Services and the Human Rights and Equity Office began to discuss ensuring educational materials are accessible for remote learning during the pandemic and how to support faculty in those efforts.

### ***191/11 Section 18 - Libraries of educational and training institutions***

With respect to digital or multimedia resources or materials (January 1, 2020), the Office of the Vice Provost (Digital Planning) and University Librarian along with the Adaptive Technology Centre created a process ensuring its [media resources are accessible to persons who require captioning](#). The library will arrange closed captioning for videos in their collection.

## Design of Public Spaces and the Built Environment

For new and significant construction or renovation projects, Queen's University will ensure:

- ✓ Newly constructed and redeveloped outdoor public-use eating areas shall adhere to accessibility requirements.
- ✓ Newly constructed and redeveloped exterior paths of travel shall adhere to accessibility requirements.
- ✓ Newly constructed and redeveloped off-street parking facilities and on-street parking spaces shall adhere to accessibility requirements.
- ✓ New service counters (inclusive of replacing existing service counters) shall adhere to accessibility requirements.
- ✓ Fixed queuing guides shall adhere to accessibility requirements.
- ✓ Newly constructed or redeveloped waiting areas where the seating is fixed to the floor shall adhere to accessibility requirements.

- ✓ Procedures are included for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces and for dealing with temporary disruptions when required accessible elements are not in working order.

### ***5-year accessibility plan for barrier removal***

Facilities – Physical Plant Services has developed a 5-year accessibility plan for barrier removal in existing buildings. In 2018, the University approved Facilities funding in the amount of \$250,000 with the intent to increase funding each year by \$25,000 over the 5-year period. 2020 marked the third year of the Plan. With the assistance of the Built Environment Advisory Group, a strategy for barrier remediation for existing buildings was developed which included:

- Existing buildings that are not undergoing major renovations are grandfathered under the Ontario Building Code and are not required to be updated.
- Enhancing accessibility and creating inclusive environments on campus is a priority.
- With substantial accessibility components that would benefit from improvements, selecting key barriers for remediation requires a targeted approach.

For 2019, \$300,000 was approved for Facilities to address issues such as access to ‘Blue Lights’ (security) and additional automatic door openers.

### ***SeQure App***

The SeQure app now provides push notifications for “Notifications of Temporary Disruptions” (for example elevators that are out of service for at least 24 hours). This can be found under the support services button in the application. This work was completed in collaboration with Security, Risk and Safety Services, PPS fix-it and the Human Rights and Equity Office.

### ***Other Accessibility Projects***

- Grad Club ramp
- Accessible entrance and pathway to Summerhill
- The new dynamic symbol for accessibility was adopted in QFADS so the symbol will be used in Queen’s own property.
- BioSci accessible washroom.
- Accessibility improvements to the biology station (QUBS)

## **Education, Training, & Awareness**

Queen’s recognizes the importance of collaboration in order to share and gain expertise. We continue to strengthen our capacity to inform, educate, raise awareness, and involve persons with and without disabilities on and off campus. AODA training, face-to-face and online, continues to be undertaken in 2019/2020.

### ***191/11, section 7 & Section 16 – Training***

- ✓ Online training continues to be provided on the requirements of the accessibility standards under Ontario Regulations 191/11 and on the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- ✓ The [Queen's AODA Training Suite](#) can be found on the Human Rights and Equity Office website.
- ✓ Face-to-face training was made available upon request.
- ✓ The Human Rights and Equity Office tracked training completion and kept records for compliance purposes.
- ✓ Quarterly Compliance Progress Reports were sent to all departments and units.
- ✓ All employees and volunteers were encouraged and provided opportunities to access all available AODA training. However, for the purposes of tracking compliance of our employees, the Human Rights and Equity Office adheres to the Federal Contractors Program criteria: Employees are defined as those earning a salary and who are employed by the university for more than 12 weeks and/or work more than 14 hours per week. This excludes Adjunct 1s, Affiliates, Associates, Co-op Students, Guests, and Casual employees.
- ✓ The tables below are a comparison of percentages of completion by active employees between May 2019 and August 2020.
- ✓ Although the completion rates for Human Rights 101, Access Forward, and Accessibility Instruction for Educators training all increased, the table shows that more work is necessary for compliance.

August 2020				
	Customer Service Training	Human Rights 101	Access Forward	Accessibility Instruction for Educators
Active Faculty and Staff (5198)	89.1%	82.8%	84.0%	65.7% (1983, total Educators)
Students and Casuals (2785)	65.6%	60.6%	61.8%	N/A

May 2019				
	Customer Service Training	Human Rights 101	Access Forward	Accessibility Instruction for Educators
Active Faculty and Staff (4679)	84.1%	70.1%	72.3%	50.1% (1843, total Educators)



May 2019

Students and Casuals (3696)	57.9%	49.3%	49.2%	N/A
-----------------------------	-------	-------	-------	-----

### Section Three: Status Update – (2019/2020) – Exceeding AODA Requirements

Queen's strives to improve its ability to consult, engage, listen, and reframe accessibility issues so that the results work better to meet the expectations and needs of persons with disabilities. We continually seek new ways to engage with persons with disabilities about how Queen's might best ensure everyone's full participation. Below are some accessibility achievements that exceed AODA requirements.

#### Accessibility Cafés

Accessibility Cafés are a chance for the Queen's community to get together to discuss building an inclusive and accessible Queen's community that follows the requirements of the AODA. Each Café has a unique topic, and all participants are encouraged to share their perspectives and generate ideas around the question: "How can we improve upon what Queen's is doing already towards imagining and then building an even stronger inclusive and accessible Queen's community?"

- ✓ A Café was held on November 27, 2019. The event provided:
  - Accessibility features for the new proposed Queen's Residence
  - Accessibility Discussion – What are your big accessibility ideas for the campus?

The Café was well attended by students, staff, faculty, community members and alumni.

#### Accessibility Hub

- ✓ Since its launch, the Accessibility Hub has assisted over **120** Queen's Departments and Community Services with accessibility issues.
- ✓ Through the Accessibility Hub website, the Accessibility Coordinator has responded to:
  - Over **1200** specific requests since the website launched (October 2013).
  - Requests range from the simple to very complex, and include built environment, video captioning, workplace accommodations, audio transcripts, website and document accessibility, physical access, accessible transportation, and accessible parking.
- ✓ Since Google Analytics was added to the Hub (November 22, 2013) there have been over **183,000 visitors** to the website, viewing over **328,000 pages**.

#### DEAP Tool

The Diversity and Equity Self-Assessment & Planning (DEAP) Tool for Academic and Administrative Units was developed in 2015 by the Queen's University Human Rights and Equity Office to help Units better understand their working environment climate as it relates to equity and diversity.

Implementation of the DEAP Tool across units will be an additional method to help ensure the university not only meets, but also in some cases exceeds, the AODA requirements. The DEAP Tool is a self-audit tool for internal use to allow Units to:

- ✓ Understand the designated group demographic profile of their staff and faculty
- ✓ Assess how inclusive the Unit is
- ✓ Provide an opportunity to reflect on areas in need of improvement using the Diversity Score Card assessment template
- ✓ Support further commitments to equity and diversity
- ✓ Develop an action plan and timeline to enhance inclusion.

The Tool also is designed to complement other administrative responsibilities of units such as:

- ✓ Departmental Strategic Planning
- ✓ Cyclical Review Process (CPR) and Queen's University Quality Assurance Process (QUQAP's)
- ✓ Hiring and Appointments Processes
- ✓ Implementation of the Academic Plan.

### **Education, Training, & Awareness**

Queen's recognizes the importance of collaboration in order to share and gain expertise. We continue to strengthen our capacity to inform, educate, raise awareness, and involve persons with and without disabilities on and off campus.

- ✓ In April 2020, due to the campus shutdown due to COVID-19, training moved to virtual platforms.
- ✓ The 'From Diversity to Inclusion in the Workplace' Certificate Program, co-developed between Human Resources and the Human Rights and Equity Office, continues to achieve good enrollment rates.
- ✓ The Accessibility Coordinator presented at the new Faculty Orientation.
- ✓ The Accessibility Coordinator delivered accessibility training to Orientation leaders, Residence staff, AMS, ASUS, and the Engineering Society.
- ✓ The Accessibility Coordinator participates on the Campus Master Plan Advisory Committee (CMPAC), Advisory Committee on Academic Accommodations, Transition Resource Guide Advisory Board - Regional Assessment and Resource Centre (RARC), and the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC), City of Kingston.
- ✓ Throughout the year, the Accessibility Coordinator provided training and workshops to many Departments and Units regarding website accessibility, accessible documents, and social media accessibility, including Alumni Relations, Orientation leaders, Homecoming volunteers, ASUS, Facilities, Office of the Associate Vice-Principal (International), and Department of Finance.

## Student Wellness Services

[Student Wellness Services](#) (SWS) is the university's central health-care and related service provider comprising four streams of service: Health Promotion, Student Health Services, Counselling Services, and Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS).

Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS) continues to provide services to students with disabilities to ensure equitable access to the academic environment and works closely with faculty members to ensure an individualized response to challenges. In addition to accommodation planning, the QSAS team provides learning strategy support, transition support, education and awareness sessions, and advocacy. QSAS also continues to work with the Centre for Teaching and Learning and Faculties/Schools to integrate Universal Design for Learning principles into academic accommodation planning.

### ***Final Exam Accommodations***

QSAS arranges final exam accommodations through the Exams Office. The number of accommodated exams provided by the Exams Office has sharply increased over the years.

Total Exam Accommodations					
Dec-2017	Apr-2018	Dec-2018	Apr-2019	Dec-2019	Apr-2020
4654	4756	5443	5381	5,091	N/A due to COVID-19 campus shutdown

### ***Mental Health***

Student Affairs offers several programs designed to help students, faculty, and staff support those experiencing mental health issues. These programs aim to:

- ✓ Help provide timely, professional, compassionate care to students in distress.
- ✓ Raise awareness about the personal and developmental impact of mental-health problems.
- ✓ Help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.
- ✓ Provide information and support to members of our community who are supporting individuals experiencing mental-health challenges.
- ✓ Encourage people to talk and help create more openness about mental health.

### ***Mental Health Training***

- ✓ Identifying and Responding to Students in Distress (IRSD)
- ✓ Mental Health: Awareness, Anti-Stigma, Response
- ✓ Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Canada.

## Steve Cutway Accessibility Award

- ✓ Established in 2008, this award recognizes students, staff, and faculty who demonstrate innovation, enthusiasm, and compassion in creating learning and work environments that allow the full participation of persons with disabilities.
- ✓ The Human Rights and Equity Office coordinates the nominating group as well as the event.

The 2019 award was presented to the Human Resources Return to Work Unit - Sydney Downey, Angela Geris and Katrina McCann - for organizing THRIVE week on campus. THRIVE is a week-long series of events designed to promote positive mental well-being for students, staff and faculty at Queen's. Its purpose is to reduce stigma, foster a supportive community, increase mental health literacy and promote available resources.

The Return to Work Unit builds on each year's successes by carefully crafting a series of activities appealing to individuals from a variety of backgrounds with diverse interests.

## Section Four: Moving Forward to 2025

### AODA Requirements

The following chart indicates future AODA requirements that Queen's University will have to meet. As with all the preceding AODA requirements, failure to meet these requirements could lead to a non-compliance designation and result in financial implications for the University.

#### *Information and Communications*

Timeline	Requirement
January 1, 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Make available, upon request, accessible or conversion ready versions of printed material that are educational or training supplementary learning resources</li><li>2. Where available, our Libraries will be required to provide an accessible or conversion ready format of digital and multimedia resources or materials, upon request (some exceptions)</li></ol>
January 1, 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. Ensure all internet website and web content will conform to established WWW Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA (some exceptions)</li></ol>

### Future AODA Standards

#### *Education Standard*

The provincial government has decided to develop two Education Standards: one for K-12 and a second for post-secondary. The Standard Development Committee (SDC) will develop recommendations for a proposed accessibility standard to address barriers in publicly funded post-secondary education provided by colleges and universities, as required by Section 9 of the AODA. The

draft version of both Education Standards was due in May/June 2020, but work was halted during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown in March 2020.

### ***Health Care Standard***

As part of Ontario's Accessibility Action Plan, the Government of Ontario has committed to identifying and addressing accessibility barriers in the health-care sector through the creation of a Health Care Standard. The SDC will develop a new accessible Health Care Standard as required by Section 9 of the AODA. The draft version of the Standards was due in 2020 but work was halted during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown in March 2020.

### **Accessible Canada Act**

The [Accessible Canada Act](#) (long title: *An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada*) (ACA) builds on the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, focusing on the prohibition of discrimination based on disability. Carla Qualtrough presented Bill C-81 for its final reading on June 21, 2019, where it received Royal Assent. This is a Canada-wide accessibility act that applies to the federal public sector, Crown Corporations, and all federally regulated organizations. The federally regulated organizations include the following industries:

- railways, airplanes and inter-provincial buses
- banks, mining companies, railways, airlines, and trucking
- television and radio

The purpose of this Bill is to ensure that Canada becomes fully accessible to persons with disabilities, effectively implementing the equality rights which the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act* guarantee.

### **Accessibility is Key for Success in Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion**

Over the years, and especially of late, a great deal of work has gone into diversity and inclusion efforts. The university has made clear its intention to put these efforts into action to ensure tangible and lasting positive change. As the authors of the Principal's Implementation Committee on Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion [Report](#) rightly points out, goals for equity, diversity, and inclusion fit within a larger framework of institutional cultural norms at Queen's, which are foundational to the mission of the university. However, with so much moving the diversity and inclusion needle, we need to be mindful to continue to include persons with disabilities in this critical work. An intersectional perspective is needed to understand fully the interaction of different social identities within a context of connected systems and structures of power. The accessibility principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equality of opportunity are key to successful equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts.

### **Section Five: Conclusion**

Queen's University has made great strides toward greater accessibility for our students, staff, faculty, and visitors. With the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation acting as a primary driving force,

the Accessibility Framework has focused its efforts on achieving legislative compliance through the development and implementation of best practices approaches to accessibility in the post-secondary environment. As awareness of how accessibility contributes to student, staff, and faculty engagement expands, so too will the barrier-identification processes and responses that bring continuous improvement in accessibility for persons with disabilities. We are a community that works together to create an environment where everyone has a full and enriching Queen's experience.