Queen's University

Accessibility Annual Status Report

May 1, 2021, to April 30, 2022

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
- 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 regarding accessibility issues to the Accessibility Coordinator at the Human Rights and Equity Office.

Feedback may also be given by emailing Equity Services at 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

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

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QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY ACCESSIBILITY ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Coronavirus COVID-19

Following the many shutdowns caused by the pandemic, Queen's is beginning to transition from remote learning and working to offering in-person classes and services.

The enormity of accessibility challenges continues to be felt by persons with disabilities. The scale of response by Ontario universities is at the forefront of planning for the 2022-2023 academic year. These challenges and resulting solutions will continue to 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, 2021, to April 30, 2022.

Vision & Commitment

Queen's vision is to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to ensure 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. To support progress and meaningful implementation of the Plan, a strong foundation built upon the following principles and expectations 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

Consultation with and involvement of with persons with disabilities is key to the success of five working groups responsible for actioning and reporting on the Framework throughout each annual cycle.

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 AA).

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 – (2021/2022) – Meeting AODA Requirements

The following is a summary of actions taken to achieve compliance with 2021/2022 applicable requirements under the AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR 191/11). Compliance deadlines appear in brackets and refer to January 1st of the given year.

Employment Standards

During the first quarter of 2022, updated drafts of the Accommodation of Disabilities in the Workplace Policy, Individualized Accommodation Procedures, Disability Accommodation Guidelines, Return to Work Policy, and Return to Work Procedure were completed with the intention for gaining approval spring/summer of 2022. This work was completed by an adhoc committee comprising of many original members of the Employment Working Group and the Ombudsperson.

Customer Service Standards

During the summer months of 2022, the Human Rights and Equity Office (HREO) will update the online asynchronous trainings for Accessible Customer Service, Access Forward, and Accessible Instruction for Educators, with completion expected during the Fall 2022 term.

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

Many processes have been operationalized to assist in achieving web accessibility.

- ✓ ITS has again purchased a one-year subscription to SiteImprove.
- ✓ A new version of WebPublish (WP3) launched in 2020 with increased accessibility features and a new Queen's template design will be released which meets WCAG Level AA.
- ✓ To create a new or migrate an existing Queen's site to WP3:
  - o a request for an WP3 account must be submitted and reviewed by members of the WebPublish Governance Committee (WGC). After the brief review period, and if/when all conditions of participation and service are met, a WebPublish account will be created.
  - o When a website is ready to be published, an account owner or administrator can make a request to "go live" via an online form. Before site owners/administrators can submit to go live, they must:
    - ▪ Ensure all accessibility issues identified by the built in Sa11y tool and by SiteImprove are addressed.
  - o All "go live" requests are reviewed by members of the WGC.
- ✓ ITS also launched an Academia Service intended to support active and emeritus Queen's University faculty members who wish to leverage Queen's web hosting and content management system (CMS) to manage a website. The process fo2r site owners/administrators is the same as above.
- ✓ The Site Improve Advisory Group continues to raise awareness of website accessibility in their respective departments.

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, ITServices and the Human Rights and Equity Office continued to discuss ensuring educational materials are accessible for remote learning during the pandemic and how to support faculty in these efforts.

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.

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✓ 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. 2021 marked the fourth year of the Plan. With the assistance of the Built Environment Advisory Group, a strategy for barrier remediation for existing buildings was developed which took into account the following:

- 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 2021/22, $350,000 was approved for Facilities to address accessibility issues. Examples of projects undertaken for this report's timeframe include:

QUBS:

With funding assistance from South Frontenac Township, Community Foundation of Kingston and Area, and the TD Friends of the Environment fund, QUBS is renovating a 200 m section of the Red trail to be accessible for all users. This wheelchair accessible trail will take visitors through several habitats, concluding at a thriving beaver pond.

Leonard Hall:

A renovation project to improve Leonard Hall's east-side entrance. Previously the wheelchair access was limited to the south-west of the building, so this will allow for a more easily accessible environment.

Campus Map:

The university has updated its online campus map to a new interactive 3-D model map that incorporates the Building Accessibility Directory and allows searches for accessible building components such as accessible washrooms, parking spaces and water fountains / bottle fill stations. The map also provides a wayfinding tool that in the future is expected to have the capability to plan a 'best accessible route' for the user.

Residence Building on Albert Street:

The Albert Street New Residence Building project is nearing completion. The building was designed with accessibility as a first principle. The project is built on a slope, which results in the ground floor at the north part of the building located at grade and rising above grade moving south. This dictated the location of the main entrance for the building. The residence will have several accessible suites for students with an ensuite accessible washroom. In addition to the accessible residences, there will be accessible washrooms and bookable event spaces available to non-residents and accessible, do-it-yourself service animal washing and drying services equipment will be provided within the residence.

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, continued to be undertaken in 2021/2022.

> *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.
- ✓ Virtual training was made available.
- ✓ Both synchronous and asynchronous training for Creating Accessible Docs and Accessible Event and Meeting Planning have been made available.
- ✓ 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 snapshots of training completion by active employees captured July 2022 and May 2021.
- ✓ When Working Together and Staff Hiring became mandatory, we noticed many employees were completing trainings within an implausible timeframe (for example 5 min). We looked at the 'average completion time' based on employees that had fully engaged with the training and decided to incorporate a mandatory time to complete. This mandatory time to complete is only half of the time expected for full engagement with the training. For example, if the average time of engagement is 1 hour, we have set the minimum time to 30 minutes. Some of our trainings are prerequisites to other trainings and some are part of the Learning Challenges where employees, staff and faculty receive certificates. Also, many TAs are paid to take our trainings. This new system encourages employees to meaningfully engage with training content within at least half the recommended time for completion.

AODA Training Snapshot July 2022	Customer Service Training	Human Rights 101	Access Forward	Accessibility Instruction for Educators
Active Faculty and Staff (5202)	81.5%	72.4%	74.0%	47.8% (1950, total Educators)
Students and Casuals (2985)	62.0%	57.9%	58.6%	N/A

AODA Training Snapshot May 2021	Customer Service Training	Human Rights 101	Access Forward	Accessibility Instruction for Educators
Active Faculty and Staff (4983)	88.2%	83.0%	84.3%	64.5% (1833, total Educators)
Students and Casuals (4559)	70.5%	66.2%	64.6%	N/A

Section Three: Status Update – (2021/2022) – 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 meets 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?"

Cafés were held on:

- ✓ May 27, 2021: We-Can HREO: Accessibility Cafe for Women Entrepreneurs with Disabilities part 2.
- ✓ December 9, 2021: We-Can HREO: Accessibility Cafe for Women Entrepreneurs with Disabilities part 3.
- ✓ January 26, 2022: Accessibility Café – Duncan McArthur Hall renovation/expansion
- ✓ February 14, 2022: Accessibility Café - Disclosure and Accommodations
- ✓ March 21, 2022: Accessibility Café - Transitions to Work

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

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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:

  - o Over **2000** specific requests since the website launched (October 2013).
  - o 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.
- ✓ Between May 1, 2021, and April 30, 2022, there were **29,896** visitors viewing **71,838** web ages.
- ✓ The Accessibility Coordinator is frequently asked to provide guidance to higher education colleagues, as well as public sector organizations and not for profits, on the creation of accessibility resources. This year the Coordinator was pleased to mentor staff at the University of Calgary who are creating their own "Hub" based on the Queen's model.

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, including representation of persons with disabilities in the unit
- ✓ 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.

- ✓ 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 Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC) for the City of Kingston and is a member of the Technical Committee for Outdoor Spaces Standards for the new Federal legislation, the "Accessible Canada Act".
- ✓ The 'From Diversity to Inclusion in the Workplace' Certificate Program, co-developed between Human Resources and the Human Rights and Equity Office, offers content on accessibility and accommodation and continues to achieve strong enrollment rates.
- ✓ The Accessibility Coordinator presented at the new Faculty Orientation.
- ✓ In January 2022, the HREO launched the "Learning Challenge 2022". Staff, faculty and student learning challenges cover content on equity, inclusion, sexual and gender diversity, human rights, accessibility, and sexual violence. Learning streams are a mix of both self-paced (online) modules and virtual (live) sessions. The Accessibility Coordinator presented 6 sessions on 'Creating Accessible Documents'.
- ✓ Throughout the year, the Accessibility Coordinator provided training and workshops to many Departments and Units on a wide range of accessibility issues such as; website accessibility, the built environment, accessible events, customer service, accommodations, accessible documents, and social media accessibility.
- ✓ During the summer months of 2022, the Human Rights and Equity Office (HREO) will update the online asynchronous trainings for Accessible Customer Service, Access Forward, and Accessible Instruction for Educators. The HREO will also create a new training module on Ableism.

Student Wellness Services

Student Wellness Services (SWS) is the university's central healthcare, wellness, and accessibility student service provider comprising four streams : 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

With an increase of students seeking academic accommodations, the trend correlates to students requesting exam accommodations year over year.

Total Exam Accommodations					
Dec-2019	Apr-2020	Dec-2020	Apr-2021	Dec-2021	Apr-2022
5,091	N/A due to COVID-19 campus shutdown	3896*	5118*	5159	6232
* Numbers may not be representative due to COVID measures					

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.

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Section Four: Moving Forward to 2025

Future AODA Standards

Post-secondary Education Standards

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) put forward initial recommendations (July 2021) and after public feedback, final recommendations (April (2022) were completed and delivered to the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. The government is reviewing the recommendations and may accept them in full, in part, or with modification.

The recommendations require a fundamental shift in design and delivery of post-secondary education and a proactive and systemic level of barrier removal. The wide scope of recommendations addresses: attitudinal barriers; awareness and training; assessment, curriculum, and instruction; digital learning; admission and accommodation processes; and physical and financial barriers, demonstrates an important holistic view of students with disabilities.

Health Care Standards

The Health Care Standards Development Committee seeks to reduce, and preferably eliminate, the variety of barriers faced by persons with disabilities during all stages of their life, including youth and seniors, throughout their patient journey within hospitals and when receiving health care. The final recommendations of the SDC were released in April 2022.

Accessible Canada Act

The Accessible Canada Act (long title: *An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada*) builds on the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, focusing on the prohibition of discrimination based on disability. 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.

Indigenization- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility (I-EDIAA)

Throughout campus, much work has gone into equity, diversity, inclusion and indigeneity 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 point 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 this critical work around campus, accessibility and people with disabilities were often overlooked. Thus, the HREO has introduced a new acronym to the Queen's community, I-EDIAA, in order to ensure indigenization, anti-racism, and accessibility were forefront in minds and efforts. The new term further encourages an intersectional perspective that takes into account 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 continues to make great strides toward greater accessibility for our students, staff, faculty, and visitors. Much more proactive accessibility work needs to be done to reduce barriers and address Ableism in our campus environment. The proposed Post-secondary Education Standards will require a fundamental shift in education toward a UDL approach to learning and much time and effort will be required from the entire Queen's community to meet new and more comprehensive obligations. As awareness and understanding of how accessibility contributes to student, staff, and faculty engagement expands, it will bring continuous improvement in accessibility for persons with disabilities to our community. We are a community that works together to create an environment where everyone has a full and enriching Queen's experience.