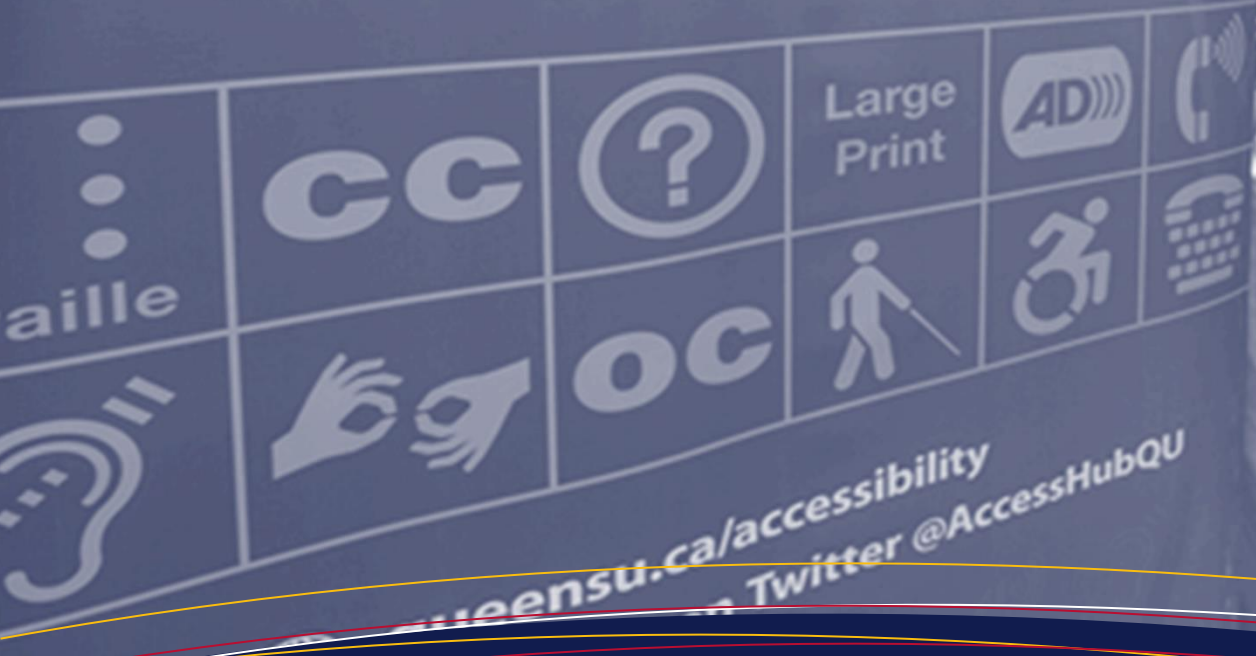


ACCESS Queen's

Building an Inclusive and
Accessible Community



aille

[queensu.ca/accessibility](https://www.queensu.ca/accessibility)

Twitter @AccessHubQU

Queen's University Accessibility Annual Status Report

May 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024

Public Communication of the Accessibility Plans and Annual Reports

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

- Online at the Accessibility Hub on [Reports and Plans page](#)
- 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 Manager, Accessibility Services (HREO) 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

QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY ACCESSIBILITY ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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Section One: Introduction

Background

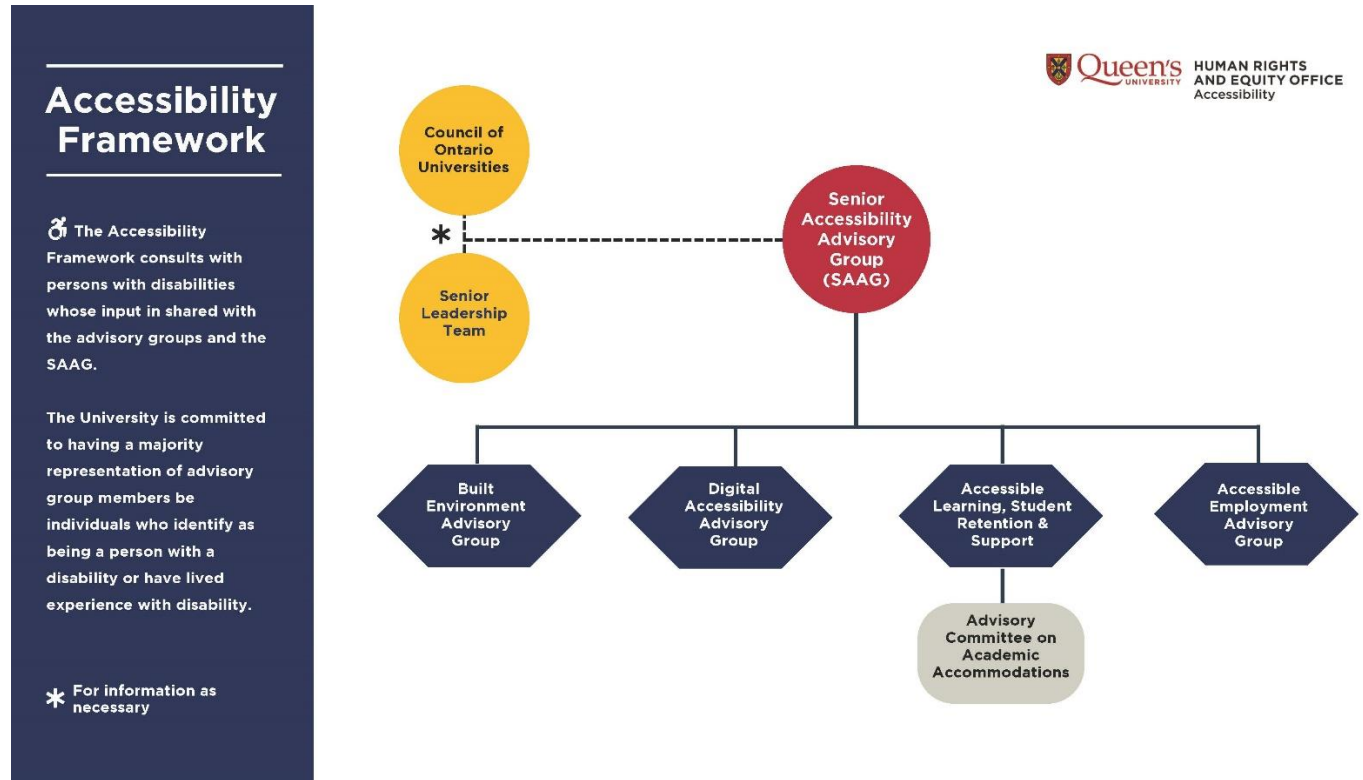
Under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (“AODA”), Queen’s University is considered a large designated public sector organization. As such, Queen’s is required to establish, implement, maintain, and document a multi-year accessibility plan. That document constitutes Queen’s 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, 2023, to April 30, 2024.

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.

Queen's University's New Accessibility Framework



In 2024, a new 'Framework' was adapted to address the universities current AODA obligations and the [Post Secondary Standards Recommendations](#). These recommendations, although not yet adopted into law by the Provincial Government, represent a sector-wide climate shift in post-secondary education for students with disabilities. Queen's is proactively developing responsive measures to the recommendations. As a result, a new [Senior Accessibility Advisory Group](#) was created, co-chaired by the Vice-Principal (Culture, Equity, and Inclusion) and Dean of the Faculty of Education, to lead three new advisory groups joining the existing Built Environment Advisory Group. The existing Advisory Committee on Academic Accommodations now supports the new Accessible Learning, Student Retention, & Supports Advisory Group.

The Advisory Groups

- **Senior Accessibility Advisory Group ("SAAG"):** provides oversight and leadership to a coordinated approach which underscores Queen's commitment to facilitate the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities. The SAAG will foster integration of efforts and services across the campus to create a seamless experience for students with disabilities to assist in achieving an accessible and inclusive campus environment.
 - **Built Environment Advisory Group:** provides advice to Queen's Facility Management on accessibility concerns, accessibility standards, and legislation, including the Design of Public Spaces Standards and relevant PSE Standards

recommendations that assist making the Queen’s campus and its facilities accessible to everyone.

- **Digital Accessibility Advisory Group:** provides strategic direction to enhance the university's digital accessibility in alignment with the Information and Communication Standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and proposed Post-Secondary Education Standards.
- **Accessible Learning, Student Retention, & Supports Advisory Group:** provides information, guidance, recommendations, and reports to the SAAG) on the AODA and proposed Post-Secondary Education Standards recommendations.
 - **The Advisory Committee on Academic Accommodations** supports [Queen's Student Accessibility Services \(QSAS\)](#) in accommodating students with disabilities. It also supports [Student Wellness Services](#) and Queen’s Faculties and Schools in responding to students who require accommodations for other issues.
- **Accessible Employment Advisory Group:** provides strategic direction on the Employment Standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and proposed Post-Secondary Education Standards recommendations as it applies to accessible and inclusive employment.

Section Two: Status Update – (2023/2024) – Meeting AODA Requirements

The following is a summary of actions taken to achieve compliance with 2023/2024 applicable requirements under the AODA and the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#) (IASR 191/11).

Employment Standards

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. The drafts were subsequently further updated to include accommodation for all protected grounds under OHRC (not just disability) based on initial feedback received. Final approval is expected during the summer 2024.

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 (“WCAG”)

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.
- ✓ Some units within Queen’s continuing to migrate to the WP3 environment:

- 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.
- All "go live" requests are reviewed and feedback is provided by members of the WGC.
- ✓ There is an Academia Service 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 for site owners/administrators is the same as above.

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 (CTL), ITServices and the Human Rights and Equity Office (HREO) continued work ensuring educational materials are accessible for synchronous and asynchronous learning environments and continue to support faculty in these efforts. For example, the CTL, the HREO, and Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII) have a [variety of resources](#) that are excellent starting points relating Indigenization - Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility (I-EDIAA).

Design of Public Spaces and the Built Environment

For new and significant construction or renovation projects, Queen's University will ensure Queen's Facilities Design Standards (QADS) and the AODA (Design of Public Spaces Standards) are followed for:

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

Plan for barrier removal in Queen's spaces

The Facilities department at Queen's University developed a multi-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 multi-year period. With the assistance of the Built Environment Advisory Group, a strategy for barrier remediation for existing buildings was developed which considered the following:

- Existing buildings that are not undergoing major renovations are a legacy of an earlier 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.

Examples of projects undertaken for this report's timeframe include:

West Campus Stadium Pavilion

This project includes new accessible locker rooms for players and coaches, a new single-user, gender-inclusive universal publicly accessible washroom with a power door operator on the door, new public multi-user stall washrooms that include partition dividers with lockable doors around all toilets and urinals, a new food court area and accessible observation area. There are accessible pathways to access the pavilion and new, accessible emergency blue light poles on the grounds to increase accessible safety points around the pavilion. Project completion was in 2023.

Leonard Hall Cafeteria

This residence building received a new accessible entrance to the cafeteria from the building exterior with power door operator buttons and includes an accessible pathway outside of the building to this entrance, so members of the public who do not reside in this residence can also use this cafeteria. The kitchen food service area was redesigned, and food counters are now at a wheelchair accessible counter height for self-service. The seating area also provide accessible table spaces for wheelchair and mobility scooter users to sit at the tables. Two existing single-user washrooms received new single-user, gender-inclusive washroom signage. Completed spring 2024.

Numerous Single-User, Gender-Inclusive Universal Accessible Washrooms

These washrooms were planned in the following buildings: one in Mac-Corry Hall (completed spring 2024), one in Robert Sutherland Hall (completed spring 2024), one in Coastal Lab Building that includes accessible shower (completed spring 2024), one in Kinesiology and Health Studies with accessible shower (completed spring 2024). Some of these universal washrooms that have electric, height-adjustable adult change tables also include a baby change table and some include an accessible urinal with grab bars. All include power door operator buttons to the washrooms.

Indigenous Outdoor Gathering Space & Accessible Outdoor Ramp and Accessible Entrance at Mackintosh-Corry Hall

This outdoor space's design inspiration was in traditional Anishinaabe wigwams and is a space for Indigenous learning, ceremony, and community event space that includes outdoor ceremonial fires. The curved, wooden shake roof structure design has accessible entrance opening and will provide accessible seating spaces within the structure and around the exterior of the structure. The project also included an accessible ramp and accessible entrance that connects the Outdoor Indigenous Gathering Space with the south-west entrance of Mackintosh-Corry Hall. Off the new accessible entrance includes the already completed indigenous Kanonhweratonhtshera G'di-mikwanim (The Welcoming Room) Event Space and Classroom. Completed between 2023 and summer 2024.

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 2023/2024.

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.
- ✓ The [Ableism](#) training in the HREO Learning Catalog has been well received.
- ✓ Both synchronous and asynchronous trainings for [Creating Accessible Docs](#) and [Accessible Event and Meeting Planning](#) are 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 May 2023 and July 2024.
- ✓ When Working Together and Staff Hiring became mandatory, we noticed many employees were completing trainings within an implausible timeframe (for example 5 minutes). 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.

July 15, 2024	Customer Service Training	Human Rights 101	Access Forward	Accessibility Instruction for Educators
Active Faculty and Staff (5233)	86.8%	83.5%	84.0%	61.8% (2021, total Faculty)
Students and Casuals (3562)	72.3%	69.5%	69.3%	N/A

May 16, 2023	Accessible Customer Service Training	Human Rights 101	Access Forward	Accessibility Instruction for Educators
Active Faculty and Staff (5345)	86.9%	81.6%	82.5%	55.1% (1929, total Educators)
Students and Casuals (3693)	65.6%	62.6%	62.7%	N/A

Section Three: Status Update – (2023/2024) – 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.

The Office of the Vice-Principal (Culture, Equity, and Inclusion)

Oversees the work of the Human Rights and Equity Office, University Ombudsperson, Indigenous Initiatives, and Complaints and Investigations.

Furthering the university’s mission of advancing I-EDIAA, the Office of the Vice-Principal (Culture, Equity, and Inclusion) was established June 1, 2023. Among the Office of VPCEI’s many important responsibilities are enhancing the university’s commitment to ensuring a workplace culture that truly welcomes and celebrates diversity and inclusion. Additionally, the office has been established to support the university in ensuring we live our values and that our human resources, organizational structure, processes, and culture are properly aligned to fulfill our mission.

The Office of VPCEI is committed to fostering a university culture rich in inclusivity, equity, and belonging, while empowering individuals to reach their full potential.

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:

- ✓ Accessible and Inclusive Procurement – October 2, 2023
 - Session Description: This session will introduce the concept of the accessible procurement life cycle and will explore the importance of accessibility and anti-ableist practices throughout the procurement process. Procurement of learning technologies, products and services is a central aspect of the education system. Accessible procurement conceptualizes a policy and practice framework to enhance the learner experience for students with disabilities, as well as the teaching experience for instructors with disabilities.

- ✓ Disability and Queerness – November 20, 2023
 - Session Description: This session is an introduction to the intersectionality between disability and queerness. It will touch on some main intersections between the two communities, highlight the value of disabled knowledge across all social movements, and inspire further education on the disabled community.

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

Accessibility Hub

- ✓ In October 2023, the Accessibility Hub celebrated its 10-year anniversary.
 - *As Queen’s moves forward with a strategy to positively impact society and the planet, we understand that students, staff, and faculty of all backgrounds and abilities must be a part of that process. The Accessibility Hub, celebrating its 10th year, is an example of how an impactful culture of inclusion is being fostered within our campus community, which will in turn influence the world. I am proud of the Accessibility Hub’s advocacy and look forward to what this group will achieve in the next 10 years.*

Stephanie Simpson

Vice-Principal (Culture, Equity and Inclusion)

- *For the past 10 years, the Accessibility Hub has been an essential resource for the Queen’s community. Under the leadership and guidance of Andrew Ashby, the Manager of Accessibility in the HREO, the Hub has provided invaluable support and resources to meet the diverse accessibility and accommodation needs of the students,*

staff and faculty at Queen's. I look forward to the continued great work and services that the Accessibility Hub will offer in the years to come.

Lavonne Hood

Associate Vice-Principal (Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion)

- ✓ Social Media accounts for the Hub continue to be popular within the community with posts for accessibility information, events, and notices of service disruptions at the university.
- ✓ Through the Accessibility Hub website, the Manager, Accessibility Services (HREO) has responded to:
 - Thousands of 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.
- ✓ Between May 1, 2023, and April 30, 2024, there were **23,000** visitors viewing **56,000** web pages.
- ✓ The Manager, Accessibility Services (HREO) 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. Over the past two years, the Manager 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 Manager, Accessibility Services (HREO) 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 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, accommodation, and continues to achieve strong enrollment rates.
- ✓ In April 2024, the HREO launched the "Learning Challenge 2024". The challenge is a set of virtual and self-directed learning opportunities designed to build foundational understandings of Indigenization-Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility (I-EDIAA).
- ✓ Throughout the year, the Manager, Accessibility Services (HREO) 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.

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.

The [Ventus](#) system continued to be used by QSAS with support provided by CTL. Ventus:

- Is a management system that allows students, instructors, Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS), and other University stakeholders to communicate easier about accommodations for students with disabilities.

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-2021	Apr-2022	Dec-2022	Apr-2023	Dec-2023	Apr-2024
5159	6232	6760	7539	9129	8973
		(5120 in-person, 1640 online)	(6072 in-person, 1476 online)	(7718 in-person, 1411 online)	(7699 in-person, 1274 online)

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.

Section Four: Moving Forward to 2025

Review of Academic Accommodations and Related Procedures at Queen's

As part of our commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, and our legal duty to accommodate and support students with disabilities as they pursue their academic goals, Queen's is launching an external review of its academic accommodations and related procedures.

The goal of the review is to ensure that all academic accommodations processes at Queen's are effective, equitable, and straightforward for the students, faculty, and staff who navigate them. Everyone involved in the process should feel supported and empowered.

The review will focus on the adequacy and fairness of our policies, procedures, and programs in relation to student academic accommodations and considerations to ensure that they are aligned with evolving best practices in the post-secondary sector and beyond.

The final report will be finalized and made public spring/summer of 2024.

Section Five: Conclusion

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. The [2023 Indigenization - Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Anti-Racism Annual Progress Report](#) (PDF, 12.7 MB) highlights initiatives underway that are designed to create a campus that welcomes and reflects diverse identities, cultures, and perspectives. The accessibility principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equality of opportunity are key to successful equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts.

Queen's University continues to make great strides toward greater accessibility for our community. 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 cultural shift in education toward a UDL approach to our teaching and learning environments, both physical and digital. 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.