

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2026-2031



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Land Acknowledgement

Queen's University is situated on the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek peoples, land that is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant.

To acknowledge this land is to recognize a history far longer than the history of Queen's, and to recognize that Indigenous peoples lived, and continue to live, in an ongoing relationship with this territory that is grounded in reciprocity, responsibility, and care for all beings.

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan draws on the Garden of Accessibility Framework, a metaphor that is rooted in ecological framing of shared responsibility and cycles of pruning and flourishing. We recognize that Indigenous peoples have long held and practiced knowledge systems that understand the natural world as relational, reciprocal, and alive with meaning. We commit to ongoing consultation with our Indigenous communities to shape and, where needed, revise the language and framing of this iterative 5 year Plan.

An institution that is genuinely committed to accessibility must also be committed to the sovereignty, dignity, and inclusion of Indigenous peoples and communities. Our I-EDIAA commitments (Indigenization, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Anti-Racism) are interconnected. We acknowledge our collective responsibility to follow the principles of care, sharing, and cooperation embodied in the Dish With One Spoon Covenant, and to nourish the land and relationships that sustain Queen's and its community.

MESSAGE

from the Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Queen's University is committed to building a campus where every member of our community can fully participate in the academic, research, and social life of the institution. The launch of our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2026-2031) is a significant and necessary step in that commitment that reflects our obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and, more importantly, our shared values as a University. I encourage all members of the Queen's community to engage with this plan and to hold us accountable to its goals.

This plan is the result of meaningful consultation with students, staff, faculty, and community partners. It sets a clear direction for how Queen's will identify and remove barriers across our physical, digital, academic, and social environments. I am grateful to the many individuals and committees whose expertise and lived experience shaped this work, and I look forward to supporting and reporting on our progress in the years ahead.



PATRICK DEANE
PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

from the Vice Principal (Culture, Equity, and Inclusion)

Accessibility is a matter of equity, dignity, and belonging. The launch of Queen's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2026-2031) reflects our recognition that an accessible university is a stronger, more inclusive university for everyone. This plan is grounded in the understanding that barriers are systemic and must be addressed through sustained, coordinated institutional action.

As Vice Principal (Culture, Equity and Inclusion), I am proud to endorse this plan and the collaborative process that produced it. The work ahead will require ongoing commitment from leadership, departments, and individuals across the institution. I invite the entire Queen's community to see themselves as partners in this effort. It is through collective efforts and actions that we move this important work forward together.



STEPHANIE SIMPSON
VICE PRINCIPAL (CULTURE,
EQUITY, AND INCLUSION)
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requires public sector institutions to establish, implement, and maintain [multi-year accessibility plans that are reviewed and, updated every five years](#). These multi-year plans outline strategies and initiatives to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility across institutional operations, programs, and services. Additionally, in alignment with the requirements laid out in the AODA, Queen's [Accessibility Policy](#) affirms the University's commitment to fostering an equitable, inclusive, and accessible environment for disabled people¹ across learning, working, and community spaces.

As part of the development of the Plan (2026-2031), broad consultations were conducted to ensure it is informed by the lived experiences, professional expertise, and institutional responsibilities of members across the campus community. Intentionally constructed, the consultation process prioritized the voices and experiences of disabled people. For a full description of the consultation process, please see Appendix A.

Themes from the provincial *Development of Proposed Postsecondary Education Standards – Final Recommendation Report (2022)* (hereafter referred to as 'the Postsecondary Education Standard' or PSE Standard) are considered and embedded within Queen's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2026-2031) as they contain essential considerations regarding sound practices for the removal and prevention of accessibility barriers in PSE, particularly for students with disabilities. While these Standards have not yet been enacted into law, and the timeline and scope of their eventual passage remains uncertain at this time, Queen's has chosen to engage with them as a holistic and meaningful articulation of what accessible postsecondary education can and should look like. Understanding that the university may need to adapt to a future, legislated PSE Standard, integrating the thematic elements of the proposed PSE Standards into the Plan ensures that our

¹ This Plan uses both the terms "disabled persons" and "persons with disabilities" interchangeably. This reflects community feedback, the evolving nature of disability language, and recognition of lived and embodied experiences. Language choices throughout this plan are intended to be respectful, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse ways individuals identify. A full glossary of language used in this Plan can be found in Appendix A at the end of this document.

accessibility commitments are both values-driven and aligned with sector priorities related to teaching and learning, information and communications, institutional policies, and student supports. Acknowledging the AODA Standards, including the proposed PSE Standards within the Multi-Year Accessibility Framework supports coordinated, institution-wide planning, and accountability, and continuous improvement, allowing the University to move towards a proactive, systems-level design that advances equitable access and participation across the academic and campus experience. By orienting towards these Standards now, the University positions itself to lead in accessible education, ensuring that our commitments are durable and equity-informed regardless of external timelines. A selection of the AODA Postsecondary Standards that are aligned with the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan's Priority Commitments are included as Appendix D.

Accessibility at Queen's

Accessibility at Queen's is understood as a shared institutional responsibility that is grounded in human rights, disability justice, dignity, and belonging. This understanding is in fundamental relation to the contemporary understanding of disability as a positionality that may be (among other things) episodic, invisible, and variable in its presentation and lived experience.

Everyone at Queen's benefits from a collective lattice of shared responsibility and effort towards accessibility. Our University community benefits from the knowledge, skill and talent of those who identify as disabled, among other intersectional identities, moving us ever closer to the identified goal of "one connected institution" in 2041 (see [Queen's Bicentennial Vision](#)).

The University's previous [Multi-Year Accessibility Plan \(2016–2025\)](#) focused on increasing awareness and understanding of disability, strengthening accessibility practices, and embedding accessibility considerations into institutional processes. Progress on these initiatives has been reported annually through the Annual Accessibility Report, providing transparency and accountability to the campus community.

The new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2026-2031) ("the Plan") builds on that foundation, reflecting evolving understandings of disability, emerging accessibility

needs, and the University's continued commitment to systemic, proactive, and sustainable accessibility practices over the next five years and beyond. These strategies are purposefully informed by and built upon the understanding of a shared responsibility for accessibility; namely, that by "reinforcing the relationships and partnerships that unite us, we create the conditions necessary for progress toward our vision." ([Queen's Bicentennial Vision](#)).

Additionally, the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan embodies the [University's values](#) of responsibility, respect, and wellbeing by promoting accessibility, equity, and full participation for all members of the Queen's community. These values are enacted through the deliberate and sustained work of identifying and removing barriers and fostering inclusive systems. Through the Plan, Queen's University demonstrates its commitment to its mission of advancing knowledge and education in service to an inclusive and sustainable society, as articulated in the UN's Sustainable Development [Goal #10: Reduced Inequalities](#). Disability inclusion is central to that goal: reducing inequality requires dismantling the structural, attitudinal, and environmental barriers that continue to limit the full participation of disabled people in academic, civic, and professional life.

Ongoing progress on the Plan will be supported by continuing to publish the Annual Accessibility Report and fostering ongoing and diverse forms of engagement with the university community. This continued communication will prioritize transparency, accountability, and aid in identifying opportunities for improvement.

The Garden of Accessibility Framework (Brothers, 2025)

The Garden of Accessibility is a systems-based framework used in this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to show how accessibility is created, sustained, and strengthened across the university. Instead of treating accessibility as a set of isolated initiatives or compliance tasks, the Garden Framework understands accessibility as an interconnected ecosystem that requires care, coordination, and shared responsibility over time.

The Garden of Accessibility Framework is authored by Kate Brothers, an accessibility professional at Queen's and a disabled woman living with Treacher

Collins Syndrome. The lived experience of navigating institutional environments as a disabled person shapes the values, priorities, and design of this framework in ways that policy expertise alone cannot. This Plan and the Framework that informs it, reflects a commitment to the disability justice principle that disabled people must lead the work of accessibility.

In this framework, institutional culture is the soil that shapes what can grow; services, systems, policies, and processes are the roots that facilitate access; information and communication provide the sunlight that enables participation; physical environments form the paths and garden beds that make movement and belonging possible; people and inclusion represent the gardeners (i.e., all people) who sustain and lead the work; and teaching, learning, and research are the growing plants, i.e., the visible expression of accessible and inclusive practices.

In this framework, seeds represent capacity-building and professional development in accessibility and are intentionally scattered throughout all Priority Commitments of this Plan. They reflect the understanding that sustainable accessibility depends on continually planting and nurturing knowledge, skills, relationships, and shared practices across roles, faculties, and portfolios, rather than concentrating expertise in a single unit. Seeds will emerge organically from the needs for professional development and learning opportunities offered by the Human Rights and Equity Office alongside campus partners.

- Soil – culture, leadership, and shared values
- Roots – systems, policies, and processes
- Sunlight – information and communication
- Paths and garden beds – physical environments
- Gardeners – the workforce, leadership, and students are all co-cultivators and agents of change
- Growing plants – teaching, learning, and research
- Seeds (threaded throughout sections) - Employee and student learning and development

The garden framework that overlays the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2026-2031) aligns with Ontario’s accessibility and human rights obligations while also reflecting a disability justice perspective. It emphasizes proactive design, community care,

collective access, lived experience, and continuous improvement, and the belief that meaningful accessibility emerges when the institutional values, systems, people, and practices that sustain it are intentionally cultivated together.

Disability justice scholars are clear that accessibility and colonialism cannot be treated as separate concerns. The disability justice framework, developed by Sins Invalid and cited by scholars including Mia Mingus and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, explicitly links ableism with extractive and dehumanizing practices found in racism, colonialism, capitalism, and other interlocking systems of oppression. (Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018). The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2026-2031) engages with this framework and is meant to align with institutional commitments to such documents as the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action](#) and the [Scarborough Charter](#) by advancing efforts to dismantle structural barriers to equity and inclusion, and to address discrimination, underrepresentation, and inequity across institutional practices.

As Piepzna-Samarasinha documents, disabled or sick bodies - particularly those of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour - have historically been treated as disposable under colonial and capitalist regimes. The “collective access” model that they advance - access as collective responsibility and shared practice, explicitly resists both ableism and the colonial logic of individual productivity as the measure of worth. (Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018).

Considerations of Decolonialism

The Garden of Accessibility Framework (Brothers, 2025) uses the image of a living, tended garden to describe how accessibility is cultivated across Queen's University. This metaphor is not chosen casually. It carries both possibility and responsibility, and the University names that responsibility here openly.

Gardens in many Western and colonial traditions have been sites of domination: the taming of “wild” land, the assertion of control over nature, and the imposition of order on ecosystems understood as resources to be managed. Colonial gardening practices have been inseparable from colonial land practices: clearing, enclosing, extracting, and remaking landscapes in ways that displaced Indigenous peoples and severed relationships between communities and the land they had tended for generations.

The Garden of Accessibility Framework is deliberately designed to work against this logic. The garden it imagines is not a site of control or uniformity. It is an ecosystem: interdependent, dynamic, and sustained through collective care rather than individual mastery. Scholar Anna Borrie's observation is apt here: "how you tend a garden is political" (Borrie, 2025). The choices embedded in this Garden of Accessibility framework (reciprocity over extraction, collective care over hierarchy, renewal over depletion) are political choices. Growth within this framework is reciprocal. Roots do not consume the soil but rather they strengthen it. The gardeners in this framework are not those who impose order but instead tend conditions for others to flourish.

Many Indigenous communities across Turtle Island have long understood land, ecology, and growth through frameworks that emphasize reciprocity, collective responsibility, seasonal renewal, and the inseparability of human and ecological wellbeing. These are living knowledge systems, grounded in specific relationships with specific territories, cultivated across generations. Potawatomi botanist and scholar Robin Wall Kimmerer articulates this orientation most clearly in her foundational work *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (2013). At the heart of Kimmerer's argument is the concept of reciprocity; or the idea that humans are not separate from nature but participants in a vast network of mutual care and responsibility. She challenges us to move beyond a mindset of extraction and consumption, instead, fostering a relationship of gratitude and stewardship. (Kimmerer, 2013). For Kimmerer, the simple act of planting a garden can be a beginning for restoring the relationship between people and land, though every action has repercussions on other ecosystems. (as described in Borrie, 2025).

It is therefore meaningful that the values embedded in the Garden of Accessibility Framework - interdependence over hierarchy, care over control, long-term sustainability over short-term yield, and collective access as a shared responsibility - share resonances with these ways of understanding ecological relationship.

A Living Document

Outlined in the remainder of this document are the priority commitments of the 2026–2031 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. These commitment areas are intentionally

broad and inclusive in scope, with each encompassing a set of goals that are neither exhaustive nor restrictive. Rather, the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2026-2031) is envisioned as a living framework, one that will grow and evolve over time, much like a garden, with its specific goals adapting to emerging needs and opportunities. In support of this dynamic approach, a more detailed and regularly updated companion document will provide further information on specific initiatives, goals, and programming aligned with the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2026-2031).

PRIORITY COMMITMENT: Institutional Culture of Accessibility

The soil – values, leadership, and shared responsibility

The University is committed to cultivating a shared institutional culture where accessibility is understood as foundational to equity, inclusion, and excellence. An institutional culture of accessibility requires leadership commitment, shared collaborative accountability, meaningful engagement with disabled community members, and ongoing education.

Our commitment to institutional accessibility will be embedded in disability justice, lived experience, and accountability, recognizing that accessibility is shaped by power, positionality, and intersecting forms of inequity.

Accessibility is not the work of one designated office, but rather the collective responsibility of leadership, faculties, administrative units, and governance structures across the university.

This Priority Commitment focuses on the conditions that allow accessibility to take root and flourish across the institution: leadership commitment, community trust, shared language, and collective ownership.

Healthy soil determines what can grow.

Goals

- Execute both qualitative and quantitative data-informed decision-making to reflect accessibility needs, trends, and outcomes across the institution.

- Develop governance and advisory structures, such as the Accessibility, Community and Equity (ACE) Committee, that provide strategic guidance, lived-experience perspectives (at least 50% members who identify as disabled), and cross-campus coordination. Reporting to ACE will be a comprehensive framework comprised of working groups and institutional initiatives that support and bolster accessibility across Queen's.
 - The re-conceptualized framework of working groups working in alignment with ACE will shift accessibility from a collection of unit-based projects to a coordinated, systems-level approach by aligning priorities across Queen's.
 - The Human Rights and Equity Office will serve as the coordinating arm of this collection of working groups and will facilitate and direct initiatives as per the Plan while actively maintaining a transparent communication process between ACE and the working groups.
 - A diagram of the re-conceptualized accessibility framework of working groups and ACE can be seen in Appendix C.

PRIORITY COMMITMENT: Accessible Services, Systems, Policies and Processes

The roots – how access is built into the institution's infrastructure

Foundational to an institutional culture of accessibility are systems, services, and operational policies and processes that shape the daily experiences for students, employees, and visitors. The focus in this priority commitment is on reducing systemic barriers and strengthening consistency, transparency, and responsiveness.

The University commits to embedding accessibility into the design and operation of our services, administrative systems, policies, and institutional processes.

Our goal is to reduce administrative, procedural, and documentation-based barriers that disproportionately exclude disabled people and those facing intersecting forms of marginalization.

Roots are unseen, but they determine whether the garden survives.

Goals

- Build a digital accessibility infrastructure, including the development and implementation of a Digital Accessibility Plan through the Digital Accessibility Working Group (DAWG), with attention to governance, accountability, and continuous improvement.
- Communicate resources to employees and students around the accommodation processes, including the work of the Academic Accommodation Action Team (AAAT), with an emphasis on clarity, timeliness, and equitable access to support.
- Review and revise as necessary the Accessibility Policy and related accessibility-oriented policies in consultation with disabled staff, students, and faculty.
- Continue to provide analysis and feedback on University policies and procedures through an equity-based lens.

PRIORITY COMMITMENT: Information and Communications

The sunlight – access to knowledge, communication, and participation

A commitment to ensuring that information shared by the University is accessible, usable, and inclusive across formats, platforms, and audiences.

The University commits to ensuring that information, digital environments, and institutional communications are accessible, usable, and inclusive for diverse users across abilities, technologies, and learning needs.

Access to information is foundational to participation, self-advocacy, and institutional trust.

Without sunlight, nothing flourishes.

Goals

- Continue to foster web accessibility and governance, including valuing the role of the Web Governance Committee in supporting compliance, consistency, and accessible content practices across Queen's.
- Deliver education and training on accessibility in various modalities, including institution-wide offerings coordinated through the Human Rights and Equity Office (HREO), with ongoing review of participation, reach, and impact.
- Provide centralized accessibility information, including the ongoing redevelopment and maintenance of the Accessibility Hub as a key institutional resource for students, employees, and community members.
- Maintain accessible communications practices, supporting plain language, alternative formats, and inclusive design principles across institutional communications.
- Review and revitalize the Accessibility Hub with the goal of producing a comprehensive digital resource for members of the University community.

PRIORITY COMMITMENT: Accessible Physical Environments

The garden beds and pathways where access is physically made possible

Addresses the accessibility of the built environment and physical campus spaces, recognizing their central role in enabling full participation in academic and campus life.

The focus is on buildings, classrooms, residences, outdoor spaces, wayfinding, and emergency procedures.

The University commits to creating physical environments that are inclusive, navigable, and responsive to the diverse bodies, sensory needs, and mobility experiences of our community.

Accessibility in the built environment is foundational to dignity, safety, and full participation in academic, social, and working life.

Paths, entrances, and spaces determine who can reach the garden.

Goals

- Continue working with the Built Environment Accessibility Working Group (BEWG) and related advisory bodies in supporting planning, prioritization, and oversight of physical accessibility initiatives.
- Provide updates on campus facilities planning and upgrades, including barrier identification, remediation, and long-term accessibility considerations in capital planning.
- Enhance wayfinding, signage, and campus navigation, supporting independence and safety for all community members via numerous communications channels.

PRIORITY COMMITMENT: People and Inclusion

The gardeners – who are supported to work, lead, and thrive at the institution

A focus on accessibility and inclusion across the employee lifecycle and the overall student experience

The University commits to building an inclusive campus in which disabled employees and students are supported across all parts of the institution.

Employment accessibility will move towards systemic inclusion in career development, leadership pathways, performance management, and workplace culture.

A sustainable garden depends on the people who care for it.

Goals

- Continue to foster informed Human Resources processes, including accommodations, policies, and service delivery models, with attention to consistency, transparency, and employee experience.
- Maintain equitable hiring practices, including ongoing review and enhancement of the employment equity process and procedure to better support disabled applicants and employees.
- Identify and work on closing employment-related gaps for persons with disabilities in key employment groups, including leadership, across the University.
- Confer and collaborate with disabled students on programming, policy development, and other initiatives aimed at enhancing the student experience

PRIORITY COMMITMENT: Teaching, Learning, and Research

The growing plants – learning, assessment, and academic participation

There will continue to be a focus on accessibility within teaching, learning, and academic programs, recognizing accessibility as integral to student success. Frameworks like Universal Design for Learning will continue to be implemented in areas such as curriculum design, course delivery, research, assessment, experiential learning, academic policies, and incorporating the lived experience of students into pedagogical practice.

The academic experience will continue to be designed to anticipate learner variability and support diverse ways of engaging with content, demonstrating learning, and participating in academic life while maintaining academic integrity and program standards.

As a research-intensive institution, Queen's University recognizes that accessibility is integral to the excellence, impact, and relevance of its research enterprise.

Accessibility considerations will continue to be embedded across all stages of the research lifecycle, therefore ensuring equitable participation and inclusive practices that strengthen research outcomes and address complex societal challenges.

Within this priority commitment, the university is dedicated to advancing students with disabilities as active co-cultivators of accessible academic environments through consultation, feedback, and collaborative efforts.

This is what the garden exists for: growth.

Goals

- Foster faculty and instructor development, including supports provided through the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL).
- Support the delivery of equity-focused academic research initiatives, such as the Dimensions program, that intersect with accessibility and inclusive excellence.
- Support the Facilitation of departmental and faculty-level accessibility plans supporting alignment between institutional priorities and local academic contexts.

CONCLUSION

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be supported by annual reporting, cross-campus collaboration, and ongoing engagement with disabled community members. Progress will continue to be communicated through the Annual Accessibility Report, ensuring transparency, accountability, and opportunities for continuous improvement.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consultation Plan

Purpose of the Consultation

The purpose of this consultation plan was to ensure that Queen's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2026-2031) is informed by the lived experiences, professional expertise, and institutional responsibilities of members across the campus community.

Consultation supported:

- meaningful participation by disabled students, staff, faculty, and community members;
- cross-departmental collaboration and shared accountability;
- identification of systemic and structural accessibility barriers; and
- the development of actionable, realistic, and equity-informed priorities for implementation

Consultation Objectives

Consultation was used to:

- identify priority barriers and opportunities across all MYAP focus areas;
- validate and refine proposed goals, actions, and performance indicators;
- surface intersecting experiences of disability, Indigeneity, race, gender, and employment status.
- inform implementation sequencing and institutional responsibilities; and
- strengthen governance and reporting structures.

Key Parties

Consultation intentionally included:

- Students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs), including students who identify as disabled
- Faculty and instructors, including those who identify as disabled

- Staff, including professional, administrative, and operational staff), including those who identify as disabled)
- Departmental leadership, including Facilities and Campus Planning, Human Resources, the Centre for Teaching and Learning, Human Rights and Equity Office, University Relations, Student Affairs, Information Technology Services, Libraries, and others.
- ACE and its various Working Groups
- Alma Mater Society & Society of Graduate and Professional Services I-EDIAA officers or committees

Consultation Structure and Purpose

Consultation methods included:

- Facilitated listening sessions
- Written submissions including anonymous feedback options
- Review sessions of draft plan content

Consultations resulted in:

- Refining proposed priorities, actions, and timelines
- Clarifying institutional roles and responsibilities
- Identifying risks, dependencies, and resourcing considerations

Governance and Oversight

The consultation process was coordinated by the Accessibility Coordinator and the Associate Director of Accessibility, Equity, and Inclusion within the Human Rights and Equity Office, in collaboration with institutional partners.

Appendix B: Glossary

Ableism

A system of beliefs, practices, and structures that assume non-disabled bodies, minds, and ways of working and learning as the norm, and that devalue, exclude, or pathologize disability.

Ableism operates at interpersonal, organizational, and policy levels.

Academic Experience

The full range of learning and scholarly participation, including teaching and assessment, curriculum and course design, laboratories, fieldwork, placements, experiential learning, research participation, advising, and academic policies.

Accessibility

The intentional design of environments, services, policies, technologies, and learning experiences so that people with diverse disabilities can participate fully, equitably, and with dignity.

Accessibility is understood in this Plan as a systems-level responsibility, not an individual burden.

Accommodation

An individualized adjustment or modification made to remove a barrier and support a person's participation.

In higher education, accommodations are part of a broader access ecosystem and do not replace the responsibility to design inclusive systems in the first place.

Collective Access

A disability-justice concept that recognizes access as relational and shared.

Rather than focusing only on individual needs, collective access asks how environments and practices can support many people, especially those facing intersectional or overlapping barriers.

Cultural Change

Long-term shifts in values, behaviours, expectations, leadership practices, and informal norms that shape how accessibility is understood and enacted across the institution.

Cultural change is necessary for accessibility efforts to be sustained beyond policies and projects.

Disability

A lived and socially produced experience that arises when physical, social, cultural, institutional, and technological environments do not account for human diversity.

This Plan recognizes disability as both an individual experience and a structural and political reality.

Disability Justice

A framework and movement that understands disability as inseparable from race, gender, class, colonialism, migration, and other systems of power.

Disability justice emphasizes:

- collective access,
- leadership by those most impacted,
- recognition of lived expertise;
- and a commitment to dismantling intersecting forms of oppression.

Duty to Accommodate

The legal obligation to remove barriers and provide accommodations to the point of undue hardship.

In Ontario, this obligation is grounded in human rights law and is interpreted and enforced by the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Essential Requirements

The knowledge, skills, and professional or academic capacities that students must demonstrate to successfully complete a course or program.

Essential requirements describe what must be demonstrated, not how it must be demonstrated, and must be compatible with accessible and flexible approaches to learning and assessment.

Inclusive Design

An approach to designing environments, services, technologies, and policies that intentionally considers a wide range of users and lived experiences from the outset, particularly those who have been historically excluded.

Information and Communication

All forms of institutional information and messaging, including websites, learning platforms, documents, signage, events, learning technologies, and public communications.

Accessible information and communication support autonomy, participation, and trust.

Intersectionality

A way of understanding how multiple systems of oppression (such as ableism, racism, sexism, colonialism, and economic exclusion) interact to shape people's access, safety, and opportunities.

In this Plan, intersectionality is foundational to disability justice and equity-informed accessibility work.

Lived Experience

Knowledge rooted in people’s own experiences of disability, access, and exclusion.

In this Plan, lived experience is recognized as a legitimate and essential form of expertise alongside professional, technical, and academic knowledge.

“Nothing About Us Without Us”

A principle that affirms that disabled people must be meaningfully involved in decisions, policies, and practices that affect them.

This principle affirms participation in governance, planning, evaluation, and leadership instead of only relying on consultation models.

Proactive Accessibility

The practice of anticipating access needs and removing barriers in advance, rather than relying on individuals to disclose disability and request accommodations after barriers are encountered.

Psychological Safety

The extent to which individuals feel safe to disclose access needs, ask for support, raise concerns, and challenge exclusion without fear of stigma, retaliation, or negative academic or employment consequences.

Systems and Processes

The internal rules, workflows, technologies, forms, approvals, eligibility criteria, and decision-making structures that shape how the institution operates.

Barriers often arise not from single actions, but from how systems and processes are designed.

Teaching, Learning, and the Academic Experience

The design and delivery of curriculum, instruction, assessment, learning activities, and academic policies, including both in-person and digital learning environments.

In this Plan, accessibility is positioned as a dimension of academic quality and educational integrity.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

A curriculum and instructional design framework that supports learner variability by offering multiple ways for students to:

- engage with learning,
- access information and content, and
- demonstrate learning.

UDL complements, *but does not replace*, individualized accommodations.

Workforce Inclusion

An institutional commitment to ensuring disabled employees are equitably recruited, supported, retained, and advanced, and are represented across roles, leadership, and decision-making structures.

Workplace Accommodation

Adjustments or supports that are provided to employees to enable equitable participation in their work, including in recruitment, onboarding, performance management, professional development, and career advancement.

Appendix C: Accessibility Framework

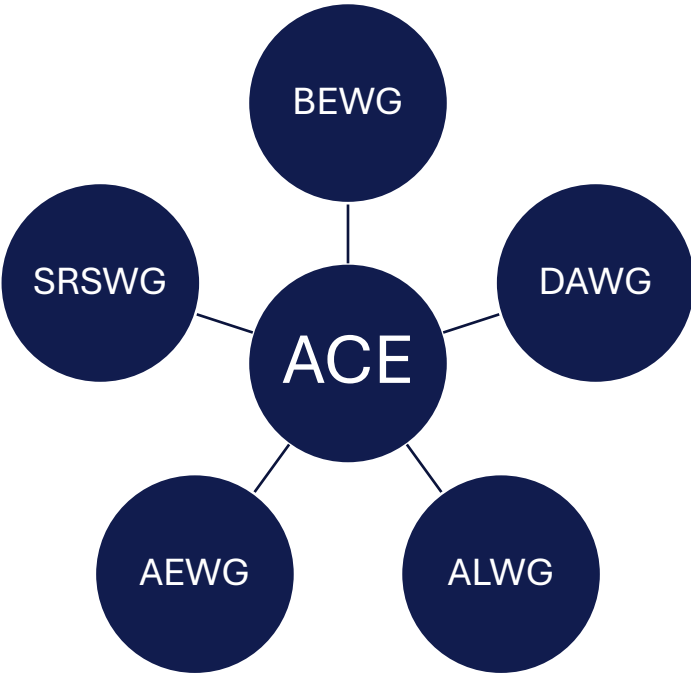
Built Environment Working Group (BEWG)

Digital Accessibility Working Group (DAWG)

Accessible Learning Working Group (ALWG)

Accessible Employment Working Group (AEWG)

Student Retention and Supports Working Group (SRSWG)



Appendix D: Postsecondary Education Standards

AODA Postsecondary Education Standards that Nourish Institutional Culture of Accessibility

Recommendation 11: Change management plan

Recommendation 17: Establish an accessibility advisory committee

Recommendation 19: Metrics and performance measures

Postsecondary Education Standards that Nourish Accessible Services, Systems, Policies and Processes

Recommendation 71: Digital accessibility plan

Recommendation 97: Disability accommodation plans

Recommendation 103: Alternate program pathways

Recommendation 105: Accessible procurement policies and procedures

Recommendation 108: Review policies and procedures

Postsecondary Education Standards that Nourish Information and Communications

Recommendation 104: Transparent policies and procedures

Recommendation 118: Accessible information about supports

Postsecondary Education Standards that Nourish Accessible Physical Environments

Recommendation 127: Minimum accessibility technical specifications

Recommendation 128: Adopt minimum accessibility technical specifications

Recommendation 129: Inclusive design principles in policies, practices and procedures

Postsecondary Education Standards that Nourish People and Inclusion

Recommendation 95: Full participation

Recommendation 125: Enhance student life and satisfaction

Postsecondary Education Standards that Nourish Teaching, Learning, and Research

Recommendation 40: Accessibility standards for teaching and learning

Recommendation 43: Accessibility of textbooks and reading packages

Recommendation 46: Accessibility of course materials and assessments

Recommendation 47: Accessibility of multimedia course materials and assessments

Recommendation 49: Identification and communication of bona fide and essential academic requirements

Recommendation 50: Linking assessments to essential academic requirements

REFERENCES

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