

Postsecondary Course Accessibility Guide



This Postsecondary Course Accessibility Guide includes accessibility criteria based on provincial requirements and recommendations.

Use this fillable checklist to review and improve accessibility at Queen's. It can be used during course design or annual course updates to help ensure that Queen's courses reflect equitable, inclusive, and learner-centred educational practices.

How to Use this Guide

Use the Guide to review the accessibility of a course, and refer to the Reference Manual as needed

- This Guide is also available in a fillable-pdf from the [Guide's website](#) along with a web-based version.
- In the space provided at the beginning of page 3, enter the name of the course you are reviewing.
- Use the checkboxes to identify how a course already meets accessibility criteria and where gaps exist. For each of the criteria, select from the response options:
 - **Yes:** This criterion is met
 - **No:** This criterion is not met
 - **Unsure:** I'm unsure if this criterion is met
 - **NA:** Not Applicable to this course
- If you need clarification on an accessibility criterion, click the Criterion Help link below the criterion for more information (i.e., definitions, rationale, examples of impact, sources for the criteria) which will take you to the [Reference Manual](#) at the end of the document.

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matter experts from various Ontario universities and colleges, representing both STEM and non-STEM disciplines. Individuals with and without disabilities contributed to the testing process.

This guide was adapted from the University of Waterloo's Guide for Postsecondary Course Accessibility Guide through a Creative Commons license. This guide has been developed for Queen's University.

Bigras, E., Brothers, K., Burtch, A., Shannon, L., Sweetman, R., 2025. *Postsecondary Accessibility Guide for Queen's University*. Adapted from Zaza, C. (2024). *Postsecondary Course Accessibility Guide*. University of Waterloo. Licensed under [CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/). The styling of the guide was modified to meet Queen's University's visual identity guidelines.

Postsecondary Course Accessibility Guide for _____

Section 1: Course Outline

Section 1 criteria are for the individual(s) who create the course outline, learning plan, or syllabus. The information on a course outline enables students to plan and make informed decisions as they select courses and progress through a program of study. While advance notice of expectations benefits all students, it can be essential for individuals with disabilities who often expend time and energy to manage their disabilities.

Instruction and Assessment Formats Used in the Course

Accessibility Criteria	Yes	No	Unsure	NA
<p>1.1 Does the course outline identify the formats that will be used for instruction (e.g., in-person lectures, online synchronous or asynchronous lectures, group discussions, etc.)?</p> <p>See Reference Manual: Criteria 1.1</p>				
<p>1.2 Does the course outline identify the formats of assessments and learning activities (e.g., online or in-person tests or discussions, essay assignments, group projects, presentations, etc.)?</p> <p>See Reference Manual: Criteria 1.2</p>				
<p>1.3 Does the course outline identify the technologies that will be used for instruction (e.g., learning management system, student immediate feedback tools, online authoring tools, third-party tools, interactive simulations, etc.)?</p> <p>See Reference Manual: Criteria 1.3</p>				
<p>1.4 Does the course outline identify the technologies that will be used for assessments and learning activities (e.g., quizzes, online dropboxes, online group collaboration spaces, etc.)?</p> <p>See Reference Manual: Criteria 1.4</p>				
<p>1.5 Is the course outline produced in an accessible format according to established guidelines?</p> <p>See Reference Manual: Criteria 1.5</p>				

Processes and Policies

Accessibility Criteria	Yes	No	Unsure	NA
<p>1.6 Does the course outline link to Queen's processes that students need to follow in order to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• request accessible formats• resolve accommodation-related disputes <p>See Reference Manual: Criteria 1.6</p>				

Accessibility Criteria	Yes	No	Unsure	NA
<p>1.7 Does the course outline link to your Queen's disability-related policies for students, regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disability-related disruptions to learning (e.g., if a student needs to withdraw from their course because of a disability) • accommodation policies and procedures • the development of accommodation plans <p>See Reference Manual: Criteria 1.7</p>				

Essential Requirements

Accessibility Criteria	Yes	No	Unsure	NA
<p>1.8 Does the course outline link to your program's essential academic requirements, if available?</p> <p>See Reference Manual: Criteria 1.8-1.9</p>				
<p>1.9 Does the course outline explicitly identify how each assessment is connected to the course's essential academic requirements?</p> <p>See Reference Manual: Criteria 1.8-1.9</p>				

Section 2: Course Organization and Navigation

Section 2 criteria pertain to how students find and interact with course materials and tools in the course site in the learning management system. Clear course organization and navigation helps all learners focus on learning course content rather than finding course content and can be essential for students with disabilities.

onQ Setup of Modules

Accessibility Criteria	Yes	No	Unsure	NA
<p>2.1 Within your course in onQ, are the following course components clearly identified?</p> <p>Course components include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course outline • Lectures • Tutorials • Readings • Assignments/Assessments • Activities • Ungraded learning activities • Rubrics <p>See Reference Manual: Criteria 2.1-2.6</p>				
<p>2.2 Do the titles of the module pages in your onQ course clearly and concisely describe their purpose?</p> <p>See Reference Manual: Criteria 2.1-2.6</p>				

Accessibility Criteria	Yes	No	Unsure	NA
2.3 Are the course components organized consistently throughout your onQ course? See Reference Manual: Criteria 2.1-2.6				
2.4 Are the tools in onQ used for their intended purpose (e.g., lecture materials are housed in content modules rather than the announcements section or the discussion forums)? See Reference Manual: Criteria 2.1-2.6				
2.5 Is the course organized in a way that aligns with how students progress through the course (e.g., weekly modules)? See Reference Manual: Criteria 2.1-2.6				
2.6 Are course materials housed in your onQ course (rather than sent to students via email, or housed in a personal website)? See Reference Manual: Criteria 2.1-2.6				

onQ Setup of Assessments

Accessibility Criteria	Yes	No	Unsure	NA
2.7 Are the assessment submission instructions and processes clear , and presented consistently throughout the course? See Reference Manual: Criteria 2.7-2.9				
2.8 Are assessment settings in onQ setup consistently (e.g., consistent deadlines and settings within dropboxes, quizzes) to reduce student confusion ? See Reference Manual: Criteria 2.7-2.9				
2.9 Do students who make a submission error have the opportunity to reverse or fix their error ? See Reference Manual: Criteria 2.7-2.9				

Section 3: Course Materials

Section 3 criteria pertain to course materials used in classrooms, labs, tutorials, studios, off-campus learning environments, and virtual learning spaces (synchronous and asynchronous).

Creating and selecting accessible course materials benefit students with a variety of learning needs. For students with disabilities, accessible course materials can reduce the time it takes to receive alternate formats from the [The Adaptive Technology Centre](#). Accessible materials also benefit students with non-disability-related learning needs.

Course Content Created by the Instructor (e.g., lecture slides uploaded to the course site in onQ, lecture content created on HTML content pages in onQ, video recordings of demonstrations, simulations, etc.)

Accessibility Criteria	Yes	No	Unsure	NA
3.1 Are idioms, jargon, abbreviations, and acronyms defined the first time they are used? See Reference Manual: Criteria 3.1				
3.2 Are learning materials produced in an accessible format ? See Reference Manual: Criteria 3.2-3.4				
3.3 Are instructor-created multimedia materials available in more than one format (e.g., a video includes closed captions)? See Reference Manual: Criteria 3.2-3.4				
3.4 Are PDFs accessible (e.g., electronic and printed)? See Reference Manual: Criteria 3.2-3.4				

Course Content That Is Sourced (i.e., authored by others), e.g., Textbooks, Journal articles, Reading packages, Guest lecture materials shared or uploaded to onQ, Videos (e.g., YouTube videos)

Accessibility Criteria	Yes	No	Unsure	NA
3.5 Are sourced course materials available in more than one format (hard copy, electronic copy, audio, etc.)? See Reference Manual: Criteria 3.5-3.7				
3.6 If sourced materials are not accessible, can the library or accessible learning services convert the materials to an accessible format , in compliance with the <i>Copyright Act of Canada</i> and other relevant legislation (e.g., electronic copy, audio, etc.)? See Reference Manual: Criteria 3.5-3.7				
3.7 Can an alternate format be created by the library or accessible learning services within a reasonable timeframe ? See Reference Manual: Criteria 3.5-3.7				

Assessments and Learning Activities

Accessibility Criteria	Yes	No	Unsure	NA
3.8 Are assessments (including multimedia assessments) created by the instructor/teaching team produced and available in an accessible format that can be converted to another format if required? See Reference Manual: Criteria 3.8-3.11				
3.9 Is feedback provided in an accessible format (e.g., typed rather than hand-written comments)? See Reference Manual: Criteria 3.8-3.11				

3.10 Are alternatives available for course assessments that are not accessible? See Reference Manual: Criteria 3.8-3.11				
3.11 Are alternatives available for sourced multimedia assessments (i.e., those not created or produced by the instructor/teaching team) that are not accessible? See Reference Manual: Criteria 3.8-3.11				

Educational Technologies

Accessibility Criteria	Yes	No	Unsure	NA
3.12 Are educational technologies that are used for instruction, learning activities, and assessments (e.g., collaboration tools, peer review tools, video assignment tools, etc.) accessible ? See Reference Manual: Criteria 3.12				
3.13 Are all students given time to learn and practice educational technologies (e.g., online quiz, online sharing spaces, video assignments, etc.) before having to use them in learning activities, assessments, including off-campus experiential learning activities? See Reference Manual: Criteria 3.13				
3.14 Are students with disabilities given time to learn and practice the accessibility features (e.g., shortcut keys) of educational technologies before having to use them in learning activities or assessments? See Reference Manual: Criteria 3.14				

Section 4: Communication Barriers

Section 4 criteria pertain to the ways in which students become aware of institutional processes and policies concerning disabilities and how they communicate disability-related needs. Communication in various accessible formats helps all students and is necessary for students with disabilities.

Accessibility Criteria	Yes	No	Unsure	NA
4.1 During the term, are students offered a variety of ways to communicate with the instructor and teaching team (e.g., in-person meetings, virtual meetings, email, telephone)? See Reference Manual: Criteria 4.1				
4.2 If new technology is introduced after the start of term, is class input sought through a variety of options, including anonymous feedback? See Reference Manual: Criteria 4.2				
4.3 Does the course outline or course homepage in onQ let students know where they can find out about				

Accessibility Criteria	Yes	No	Unsure	NA
temporary barriers and disruptions (e.g., building closure, elevator malfunction, etc.)? See Reference Manual: Criteria 4.3				
4.4 If any course-related changes or disruptions occur during the term (e.g., cancelled office hours, moving an in-person lecture to a virtual lecture), is notice of the change given to all students as far in advance as possible? See Reference Manual: Criteria 4.4				

Section 5: Physical Learning Space Barriers

Section 5 criteria pertain to barriers in physical learning spaces that instructors are likely to have some control over (e.g., the instructor's office).

Accessibility Criteria	Yes	No	Unsure	NA
5.1 Is accessibility considered and prioritized in physical learning spaces where possible (e.g., instructor's office)? See Reference Manual: Criteria 5.1-5.2				
5.2 When selecting off-campus environments for course-related experiential learning , is accessibility considered and prioritized? See Reference Manual: Criteria 5.1-5.2				

Postsecondary Course Accessibility Guide Reference Manual



Section 1: Course Outline

Instruction and Assessment Formats Used in the Course

Criteria 1.1

Does the course outline **identify the formats** that will be **used for instruction** (e.g., in-person lectures, online synchronous or asynchronous lectures, group discussions, etc.)?

Rationale:

The formats of instruction impact a student's ability to manage their disabilities. At the start of term, students may need to arrange accommodations or balance the demands in a given term.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Caleb is on a 6-week course of medication that compromises his immune system and he needs to limit his exposure to large, crowded in-person gatherings. Knowing whether or not his large in-person courses offer lecture material online will help him determine which courses he can select.
- Bettina, a student with low vision, needs to know the format of instruction so that she knows what tools to bring to her in-person class. For instance, she might need to bring in a mini-CCTV to capture lecture content.
- Raffi's disabilities affect his attention and information processing; he excels in courses that have synchronous formats of instruction and lecture recordings posted online so that he can re-visit content that he missed in class.

How to meet the criteria:

- Include all formats of instruction on the course outline.

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [**Postsecondary Education Standards**](#)
 - Recommendation #73: Identify and communicate digital learning & technology intentions

Criteria 1.2

Does the course outline **identify the formats of assessments and learning activities** (e.g., online or in-person tests or discussions, essay assignments, group projects, presentations, etc.)?

Rationale:

The assessment format impacts students. Students might need to balance their course demands and/or request appropriate accommodations.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Kieran requires an alternate format for all tests and exams. He needs to know the format of his assessments at the beginning of term so that he can schedule his tests with accessibility services.
- Kayla lives with social anxiety and is prone to panic attacks. She needs to know which courses involve group projects because she is unable to manage the social demands of participating in several group projects in one term.

How to meet the criteria:

- List all assessment types on the course outline (e.g., online or in-person tests, online or in-person discussions, essay assignments, group projects, presentations, etc.).

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [**Postsecondary Education Standards**](#)
 - Recommendation #73: Identify and communicate digital learning & technology intentions

Criteria 1.3

Does the course outline **identify the technologies** that will be used for **instruction** (e.g., learning management system, student immediate feedback tools, online authoring tools, third-party tools, interactive simulations, etc.)?

Rationale:

Students may be using assistive technologies in addition to the instructional technologies used in the course. Use of assistive technologies often depend on their ability to interact with instructional technologies, which must also be designed for accessibility.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Sara has low vision and needs to limit their screen time. Knowing the extent to which each of their courses uses instructional technologies enables Sara to select courses that do not require more screen time than they can manage.
- Connor, who uses a note-taking software in class, needs to determine if his software and the student engagement technologies his instructors use in class are compatible.
- Liang uses assistive technology and needs to consider how many new technologies they will encounter in all of their Fall courses so they can gauge how much time it will take them to apply their assistive technologies with all of those new technologies.

How to meet the criteria:

- List all course technologies and tools on the course outline (e.g., learning management system, student feedback tools, online authoring tools, third-party tools, simulations etc.).

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [**Postsecondary Education Standards**](#)
 - Recommendation #73: Identify and communicate digital learning & technology intentions

Criteria 1.4

Does the course outline **identify the technologies** that will be used for **assessments and learning activities** (e.g., quizzes, online dropboxes, online group collaboration spaces, etc.)?

Rationale:

Students may be using assistive technologies in addition to the technologies used for assessments; if the technologies are not compatible, the student might need to request accommodations at the beginning of term.

Students might need to consider how many new technologies they will encounter in all of their courses in a given term and how much time it would take them to learn how to use their assistive technologies with those new technologies.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Jessica uses screen enlargement software and needs additional time to navigate her course in the learning management system.
- Noah needs to request alternative testing accommodations because his text-to-speech software does not work within the learning management system's quiz functions. Also, his text-to-speech software does not work with the computer exam card used for filling in responses to multiple choice questions.
- Rabia needs time to practise the immersive reader feature embedded in an online teaching and learning platform with which she is unfamiliar.

How to meet the criteria:

- List all technologies and tools used for assessments in the course outline.

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [**Postsecondary Education Standards**](#)
 - Recommendation #82: Assessment methods

Criteria 1.5

Is the course outline produced in an **accessible format** according to established guidelines?

Definition of Accessible Format: A format that can be perceived by the majority of students as is, or that can readily be converted to an alternate format by the library or accessibility services, if required.

Rationale:

A course outline needs to meet accessibility guidelines so that students with disabilities can access the course outline.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Eun-Ju uses a screenreader. The proper use of heading structure, embedded links, and alternative text for images enables Eun-Ju to read and navigate the course outline.
- Neil is colour blind and would not be able to make sense of a course outline where the colour of text indicates which readings are required and which are optional.

How to meet the criteria:

- See [Tips for Creating Accessible Materials](#).

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [Postsecondary Education Standards](#):
 - 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
- [WCAG 2.0](#):
 - Text (Guideline 1.4)
 - Headings (Guideline 1.3.1, 2.4.1, 2.4.6, 2.4.10)
 - Lists (Guideline 1.3.1)
 - Links (Guideline 2.4.4)
 - Use of colour (Guideline 1.4.1)
 - Alternative text (Guideline 1.1)
 - Tables (Guideline 1.3.1)
 - Captions and transcripts for audio-visual (Guideline 1.2)
 - Navigation (Guideline 2.1)

Processes and Policies

Criteria 1.6

Does the course outline link to Queen's **processes** that students need to follow in order to do the following:

- request accessible formats
- resolve accommodation-related disputes

Rationale:

Students need to be able to quickly find information about how to request alternate formats and getting accommodations. Note that your institution's accessibility services might have long wait times at certain times of the term, which affect the length of time it takes for a student to get accessible formats or accommodation dispute resolutions.

Examples of the impact on students:

- James acquired a head injury in the middle of the term and needs to know how to find out about the process for requesting accommodations.

How to meet the criteria:

- Post your course outline on the course website in the learning management system.

- Link to your institution's processes regarding how to request accessible formats.

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [**Postsecondary Education Standards**](#):
 - Recommendation #45: Student requests for accessible formats
 - Recommendation #96: Clear policies and procedures
 - Recommendation #97: Disability accommodation plans
 - Recommendation #112: Resolving disability accommodation refusal disputes

Criteria 1.7

Does the course outline link to your Queen's **disability-related policies** for students, regarding:

- disability-related disruptions to learning (e.g., if a student needs to withdraw from their course because of a disability)
- accommodation policies and procedures
- the development of accommodation plans

Rationale:

Students need to know your institutional policies in case they need to withdraw from a course because of a disability.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Caley has just been diagnosed with ulcerative colitis in week 10 of the term and is experiencing severe symptoms. She needs to know the policies and procedures for requesting an incomplete so that she does not withdraw from the course unnecessarily. Being able to locate policies and procedures quickly means that Caley doesn't have to spend more time at the computer than necessary, at a time when she is feeling ill. Caley also needs to request exam writing accommodations so that she is not disadvantaged by using exam writing time to go to the bathroom.

How to meet the criteria:

- Post your course outline on the course website in the learning management system.
- Link to your institution's policies regarding interruptions that students might experience related to disabilities.

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [**Postsecondary Education Standards**](#):
 - Recommendation #96: Clear policies and procedures
 - Recommendation #97: Disability accommodation plans
 - Recommendation #116: Disruption impacts

Processes and Policies

Criteria 1.8-1.9

- 1.8 Does the course outline link to your **program's essential academic requirements**, if available?
- 1.9 Does the course outline explicitly identify how each **assessment** is connected to the **course's essential academic requirements**?

The term “**essential requirement**” is used in the Ontario Human Rights Commission ([OHRC's The Duty to Accommodate](#)) to refer to the bona fide (indispensable, vital, necessary) duties or requirements that all students must meet in order to complete a course or program of study. Essential academic requirements can be met with or without academic accommodations.

Typically, the ways in which students demonstrate their ability to meet the course-level essential academic requirements can vary. However, in some cases, it may be essential for a skill to be performed in a specific way, and in those cases, an accommodation might not be possible.

Essential requirements are not the same thing as learning outcomes. (Learning outcomes refer to what students should be able to know, do, and value by the end of a course or program). In Ontario college programs, essential requirements might be referred to as “essential employability skills.”

Rationale:

Essential requirements are important to identify when academic accommodation plans are developed. Being able to review the essential requirements of a program or course enables prospective and current students to make an informed decision about whether or not they can complete a program or course.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Marie-France, a high school student with a disability that impacts physical strength and mobility, is interested in applying for a degree in nursing. Knowing the essential requirements of the nursing program enables Marie-France to determine whether or not she can meet them with accommodations. If this information is not explicitly and publicly posted, Marie-France risks investing significant time and money in a program before she finds out that she cannot meet the essential requirements even with accommodations.
- Ziigwan, a business student with performance anxiety, needs to know if the “Presentations Skills 101” course requires presenting in-person in front of the class, or if a pre-recorded presentation is acceptable.
- Ayla is a science student who is prone to severe life-threatening allergic reactions from scents. Ayla will be required to complete a lab that involves interacting with scented chemicals, some of which she is allergic to. Ayla needs to know if she can complete the lab in an alternate format (e.g., online) so that she can meet this lab requirement.

How to meet the criteria:

- Determine whether your program states essential academic requirements.
- Consult with accessibility services for accommodations.

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [**Postsecondary Education Standards**](#):
 - Recommendation #49: Identification and communication of bona fide and essential academic requirements
 - Recommendation #50: Linking assessments to essential academic requirements
- Ontario Human Rights Commission
 - [**Policy and guidelines on disability and the duty to accommodate**](#)
 - [**Policy on ableism and discrimination based on disability - 8. Duty to accommodate**](#)
 - [**Policy on accessible education for students with disabilities**](#)

Section 2: Course Organization and Navigation

onQ Setup of Modules

Criteria 2.1-2.6

- 2.1 Within your course in onQ, are the following **course components clearly identified?**
Course components include:
 - Course outline
 - Lectures
 - Tutorials
 - Readings
 - Assignments/Assessments
 - Activities
 - Ungraded learning activities
 - Rubrics
- 2.2 Do the titles of the module pages in your onQ course clearly and concisely **describe their purpose?**
- 2.3 Are the course components **organized consistently throughout** your onQ course?
- 2.4 Are the tools in onQ used for their **intended purpose** (e.g., lecture materials are housed in content modules rather than the announcements section or the discussion forums)?
- 2.5 Is the course **organized** in a way that aligns with how students progress through the course (e.g., weekly modules)?
- 2.6 Are course materials **housed in your onQ course** (rather than sent to students via email, or housed in a personal website)?

Rationale:

Logical and consistent organization makes navigating the course easier and reduces cognitive load, allowing students to focus their time and energy on learning content rather than finding content.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Adam would need to take time from learning to sort out his confusion if an assignment called “Critical Appraisal Paper” on the course outline has a corresponding dropbox labelled “Assignment 1” and is shown in the gradebook as “Individual Assignment.”

Consistent labelling of this assignment throughout the course would mean that Adam could focus his time and energy on learning.

- Samantha is unable to use a computer mouse because of a physical disability. If the week 1 lecture slides, week 1 readings, week 1 tutorial instructions, and tutorial marking guide are all housed in different areas of the course site in the learning management system (LMS), Samantha would need to expend extra energy and time to tab through all of those sections in order to determine what they need to complete in week 1.
- Ekkam is autistic and has ADHD. A clearly organized course that includes explicit submission instructions reduces his anxiety and feelings of being overwhelmed.
- Dalia might miss all the assignment readings if they are listed in the discussion forum of the LMS rather than the module that provides the textbook information.

How to meet the criteria:

- Refer to assessments in a consistent way throughout the course; in class, on the course outline, in the dropbox or quiz tool, and in the gradebook.
- Place content in the content area of the course site in the learning management system (LMS) and clearly label all modules. If possible, organize all weekly materials (lecture materials, readings, learning activities) sequentially into weekly modules in the content area of the course website in the LMS.
- Clearly label each page using titles and proper heading levels. For example, if the material is for week one, then label it Week 1. If the page lists assignments, label it Assignments.
- Clearly list the weekly tasks or use the checklist feature if available in your LMS.
- If available, use your institution's course site in the LMS template so that course organization is consistent across courses.

Source of accessibility criteria:

- [**WCAG 2.0:**](#)
 - Guideline 2.4
 - Guideline 3.2

Criteria 2.7-2.9

- 2.7 Are the assessment **submission instructions and processes clear**, and presented **consistently** throughout the course?
- 2.8 Are assessment settings in onQ setup consistently (e.g., consistent deadlines and settings within dropboxes, quizzes) to reduce **student confusion**?
- 2.9 Do students who make a submission error have the **opportunity to reverse or fix their error**?

Rationale:

Clear and consistent submission processes help students avoid missing a due date or making an error when submitting an assignment or quiz.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Ethan might miss the Friday night due date of assignment 3 if assignments 1, 2 and 4 are due on a Sunday at 11:59pm and assignment 3 is due on a Friday at 5:00pm.
- Loic is an overwhelmed and sleep deprived medical student with dyslexia. Loic mistakenly submits an assignment for one course to a dropbox of a different course with a similar course code. Being able to immediately fix this error helps Loic avoid late penalties and helps reduce unnecessary stress.
- Jenn has anxiety and frequent panic attacks. She accidentally submits the draft of her assignment to the dropbox at 11:59pm on Sunday night. Being able to immediately fix this error helps Jenn avoid a panic attack or a sleepless night worrying about whether or not her instructor will accept her final draft. It also means that she doesn't need to spend time and effort contacting her instructor and that her instructor doesn't receive emails to remedy a problem that was avoidable.

How to meet the criteria:

- Whenever possible, be consistent with the day and time of due dates for the same type of assignment and highlight any deviations in announcements and in the course schedule.
- Consider providing instructions in more than one format (e.g., video and text).
- Provide detailed instructions that help students avoid submission errors.
- Check settings to ensure that students receive a confirmation after they have submitted.
- Allow for multiple submissions to a dropbox so that students who make an error when submitting have the opportunity to update their submission before the deadline.
- Avoid using 12:00pm and 12:00am as deadlines.
- Provide information on where to go for technical support.

Source of accessibility criteria:

- [WCAG 2.0](#)
 - Guideline 3.2
 - Guideline 3.3

Section 3: Course Materials

Course Content Created by the Instructor

Criteria 3.1

Are idioms, jargon, abbreviations, and acronyms **defined** the first time they are used?

Rationale:

Students may be unfamiliar with idioms, jargon, abbreviations as well as acronyms and they might be confused about how those terms relate to the course content.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Xiu's first language is not English. He is unfamiliar with expressions such as 'get into the weeds' and how that phrase relates to course content.

- Lauren is a neurodivergent computer science student who is used to interpreting the phrase "low bandwidth" in relation to internet connection. Lauren is confused by the use of "low bandwidth" in her mental health literacy course.
- Kalpita has ADHD and easily loses focus on course content when she needs to spend time trying to decipher several undefined acronyms or abbreviations.
- Mitchell is recovering from a brain injury and is having difficulty understanding the undefined acronym POS which refers to "positioning" in his kinesiology course and "point of sale" in his business course.

How to meet the criteria:

- Avoid using jargon.
- Explain the words in context or provide a glossary.
- Write the terms in full the first time they are used followed by the abbreviation or acronym in parentheses (e.g., Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)).

Source of accessibility criteria:

- [**WCAG 2.0**](#)
 - Guideline 3.1

Criteria 3.2-3.4

- 3.2 Are learning materials produced in an **accessible format**?
- 3.3 Are instructor-created **multimedia** materials available in **more than one format** (e.g., a video includes closed captions)?
- 3.4 Are **PDFs** accessible (e.g., electronic and printed)?

Definition of Accessible Format: A format that can be perceived by the majority of students as is, or that can readily be converted to an alternate format by [**The Adaptive Technology Centre**](#).

Definition of Reasonable Timeframe: The definition of reasonable timeframe varies by institution.

Rationale:

Course content needs to meet accessibility guidelines so that students with disabilities can access the content without needing to wait a long time for alternate versions to be created.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Emily has hearing loss due to an ear infection in both ears and needs to use captions when viewing a video.
- Abdul has chronic headaches and uses described audio format of a video in order to reduce time spent in front of screens.
- Zehra, an English student with multiple learning disabilities, uses text-to-speech software to read course materials.
- Daniel, who is undergoing a 6-week cancer treatment which compromises his immune system, needs to avoid crowded classrooms. Daniel needs to access in-class lectures in an online format while going through his treatment.

- Taylor uses assistive technology and needs to spend time converting inaccessible PDFs into an accessible format before they can read them. Over the term, this adds up to a lot of extra time spent on making materials accessible, rather than learning.

How to meet the criteria:

- Identify Queen's supports and resources that you can use when you need help with increasing the accessibility of your course materials. Visit the [Accessibility Hub](#) to learn more about creating accessible materials.
- Use the "Plus One" approach – provide your materials in one additional format. For example, if the material is a video, include a video transcript, if possible.
- Gradually increase the number of core digital accessibility practices; e.g., in the one term, strive to incorporate some of the practices that you find the easiest to implement and gradually add to your skills.
- Choose an accessible format that can readily be converted to an alternate version (e.g., Braille). For example:
 - Create lecture notes using accessible software (rather than writing notes on a document camera)
 - Create assignment instructions using MS Word documents or HTML pages in the LMS (rather than PDF)
 - Use HTML pages on the course site in the learning management system (rather than PDF or hand-written lecture notes)
 - Share typed solutions to math problems on HTML pages (rather than PDFs or hand-written solutions)
- Find out your institution's definition of reasonable timeframe.
- When possible, provide course materials to accessibility services or the library **before** the start of term if alternate formats are known to be required.
- Refer to [Tips for Creating Accessible Material](#).

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [Postsecondary Education Standards](#)
 - 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 #89: Accessible PDFs
- [WCAG 2.0](#)
 - Text (Guideline 1.4)
 - Headings (Guideline 1.3.1, 2.4.1, 2.4.6, 2.4.10)
 - Lists (Guideline 1.3.1)
 - Links (Guideline 2.4.4)
 - Use of colour (Guideline 1.4.1)
 - Alternative text (Guideline 1.1)
 - Tables (Guideline 1.3.1)
 - Captions and transcripts for audio-visual (Guideline 1.2)
 - Navigation (Guideline 2.1)

Course Content That Is Sourced

Criteria 3.5-3.7

- 3.5 Are sourced course materials available in **more than one format** (hard copy, electronic copy, audio, etc.)?
- 3.6 If sourced materials are not accessible, can the library or accessible learning services convert the materials to an **accessible format**, in compliance with the *Copyright Act of Canada* and other relevant legislation (e.g., electronic copy, audio, etc.)?
- 3.7 Can an alternate format be created by the library or accessible learning services within a **reasonable timeframe**?

Definition of Accessible Format: A format that can be perceived by the majority of students as is, or that can readily be converted to an alternate format by the [**The Adaptive Technology Centre.**](#) if required.

Definition of Reasonable Timeframe: The definition of reasonable timeframe varies by institution.

Rationale:

Students need accessible formats in a reasonable timeframe in order to stay on track in the course. Some alternate formats take weeks to prepare. Providing course content in multiple formats can help address barriers associated with one format.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Olivia is a blind legal studies student. The alternate format she requires takes weeks to prepare. She needs course materials in a timely manner so that she can prepare for weekly quizzes and engage in learning activities. It can take time for Library services to acquire the necessary permissions to create an alternate format, in compliance with Canada's copyright legislation.
- Winona is an autistic grad student who uses closed captions when viewing videos, which helps her process the spoken word.

How to meet the criteria:

- Consult with instructional support staff or Library staff if assistance is needed to identify accessible formats.
- Explore course materials from your Library that are available in multiple formats and that have already had Copyright and accessible design incorporated.
- Whenever possible, select materials that are accessible and available in multiple formats. Make all content, instructions, and software available at the beginning of term.
- Find out your institution's definition of reasonable timeframe.
- When possible, provide course materials to accessibility services or the library before the start of term if alternate formats are known to be required

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [**Postsecondary Education Standards**](#)
 - Recommendation #43: Accessibility of textbooks and reading packages
 - Recommendation #69: Accessible technology alternative

Assessments and Learning Activities

Criteria 3.8-3.11

- 3.8 Are **assessments** (including multimedia assessments) created by the instructor/teaching team produced and available in an **accessible format** that can be converted to another format if required?
- 3.9 Is **feedback** provided in an accessible format (e.g., typed rather than hand-written comments)?
- 3.10 Are **alternatives** available for course assessments that are not accessible?
- 3.11 Are alternatives available for **sourced multimedia assessments** (i.e., those not created or produced by the instructor/teaching team) that are not accessible?

Definition of Accessible Format: A format that can be perceived by the majority of students as is, or that can readily be converted to an alternate format by the library or accessibility services, if required.

Rationale:

Some students with disabilities might need an accessible format alternative in order to access and complete the assessment.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Jacob has low vision and needs to write tests on the computer, using a screenreader when completing exams.
- Karyn uses captions or transcripts to access video lecture content because their learning disability affects the way they process information.
- Addalyn's disability affects her ability to control her muscle movement; she uses a special keyboard to navigate course material.
- Syabira, a student with low vision, needs instructor feedback to be typed, rather than hand-written so that her screenreader can read the comments to her.

How to meet the criteria:

- Identify your institution's supports and resources that you can use when you need help with increasing the accessibility of your course materials.
- Refer to [**Tips for Creating Accessible Material**](#).
- Choose an accessible format that can readily be converted to an alternate version (e.g., Braille). For example:
 - Lecture slides (vs writing notes on a document camera)
 - MS Word documents (vs PDF)
 - HTML pages (vs PDF or hand-written lecture notes)
 - Typed solutions to math problems on HTML pages (vs PDFs or hand-written solutions)

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [**Postsecondary Education Standards**](#)
 - Recommendation #46: Accessibility of course materials and assessments

- Recommendation #47: Accessibility of multimedia course materials and assessments

Educational Technologies

Criteria 3.12

Are **educational technologies** that are used for instruction, learning activities, and assessments (e.g., collaboration tools, peer review tools, video assignment tools, etc.) **accessible**?

Rationale:

All educational tools, including third-party software, need to be accessible so that students with disabilities can access the same educational tools as their peers and participate fully.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Raj broke his hand and needs to write his exams on the computer, using technology that does not require the use of a mouse. Queen's [Exams Office](#) need time to convert the exam to a format that Raj can use, and Raj needs extra time to complete his exam because it takes longer for him to use technology that he is unfamiliar with.
- Xiao uses an assistive technology to read course content and write essays. When working with other students in a group project that involves an educational technology, Xiao needs his assistive technology to work with the educational technology the group is using for their assignment.

How to meet the criteria:

- Prioritize accessibility when selecting educational tools – refer to [Tips for Creating Accessible Material](#).
- Before selecting a third-party tool that is not supported by your institution, check the accessibility statement of the tool.
- If you have selected an educational technology that is not accessible, work with accessibility services to determine an appropriate alternative.

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [Postsecondary Education Standards](#)
 - Recommendation #84: Barriers to digital technology in the learning environment

Criteria 3.13

Are **all students** given **time to learn and practice educational technologies** (e.g., online quiz, online sharing spaces, video assignments, etc.) **before** having to use them in learning activities, assessments, including off-campus experiential learning activities?

Rationale:

A student who is unfamiliar with how to use an educational technology needs time to learn how to use the tool so that learning the tool does not take time away from learning activities or completing assessments.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Naime is using a peer evaluation technology for the first time. She needs time to become familiar with how to use the technology before using it in a graded assessment.
- Leika has a total of 5 different educational technologies to learn in one term and 4 of her assignments are due in the same week. She needs time to learn the technologies before the week her assignments are due.

How to meet the criteria:

- Provide time and resources during the term for students to learn and practise educational tools before they need to use them for course activities and assessments. For example, spend time in the first class of the term to discuss and demonstrate how to use educational technologies in the course. If you include this information in the course outline, that also provides students with the additional time to familiarize themselves with the tools, and request alternatives if needed.

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [Postsecondary Education Standards](#)
 - Recommendation #82: Assessment methods
 - Recommendation #135: Prioritizing accessible experiential learning

Criteria 3.14

Are students with disabilities given time to learn and practice the accessibility features (e.g., shortcut keys) of educational technologies **before** having to use them in learning activities or assessments?

Rationale:

Students with disabilities might need time to learn and practise how to use the accessibility features of an educational technology so that they can effectively use it for course assessments.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Luca has a physical disability and needs to use shortcut keys in order to navigate the educational technology used in his course.
- Ishani needs time to get used to using her screenreader with the four other technologies used in her courses.

How to meet the criteria:

- Provide time and resources during the term for students to learn and practise the accessibility features of the educational tools you are using before they need to use them for course activities and assessments.

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [Postsecondary Education Standards](#)
 - Recommendation #80: Time to practise and learn digital learning and technology accessibility features

Section 4: Communication Barriers

Criteria 4.1

During the term, are students offered a **variety of ways to communicate** with the instructor and teaching team (e.g., in-person meetings, virtual meetings, email, telephone)?

Rationale:

Some disabilities can make it very challenging for students to communicate in a particular format. Offering a variety of ways to communicate enables students to use the format that meets their needs.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Diya is autistic and has social anxiety. When overwhelmed, she needs to communicate asynchronously because it takes her more time than usual to process information and form responses.
- Jonathan is immunocompromised and feels safer attending meetings with the teaching assistant virtually so that he can reduce the number of times he needs to take public transit to get to campus.
- André is sensitive to bright lights and needs to attend a virtual meeting so they can control the lighting.
- Chiara has a 1.5-hour commute to campus, which means that she stays on campus all day and goes to the library between classes. She needs to attend office hours in person because she has no access to a private space where she can have a virtual meeting.
- Sadia has inflammatory bowel disease. Being able to meet virtually reduces her anxiety and allows her to focus on what her instructor is saying rather than being anxious about her symptoms.
- Ailbhe lives with a rare physical disability that involves weakness, chronic pain, and fatigue. Travelling to campus in inclement weather is particularly stressful because she is prone to falls. Meeting over the phone, or virtually with her camera off, is less fatiguing and less anxiety-provoking than meeting on campus.
- Céline, a student with ADHD, lives with several roommates. Celine needs to meet with her instructor in person rather than virtually, so that she can focus during her meeting.

How to meet the criteria:

- Provide options for communication; i.e., in-person meeting, virtual meeting, email, telephone.
- Provide contact information for the options of communication you offer (email addresses, phone numbers, office location and office hours).

Source of accessibility criteria:

- AODA Customer Service Standard
 - [Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards](#)

Criteria 4.2

If new technology is introduced after the start of term, is **class input** sought through a variety of options, including anonymous feedback?

Rationale:

Inaccessible technologies can pose barriers for students with disabilities.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Omar is a student with low vision and a physical disability. Omar needs to be able to give input to his instructor if the instructor introduces a new technology during the term because Omar uses a screenreader and a keyboard to navigate technology, and is unable to effectively navigate technology that requires the use of a mouse.
- River has had a concussion and has difficulty navigating a technology that has a complex interface, without clear instruction. They need to be able to let their instructor know that they need more time to learn the technology before using it on a graded assignment.

How to meet the criteria:

- Provide multiple formats for students to provide feedback.
- Provide options for providing feedback anonymously.

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [**Postsecondary Education Standards**](#)
 - Recommendation #73: Identify and communicate digital learning & technology intentions

Criteria 4.3

Does the course outline or course homepage in onQ let students know **where they can find out about temporary barriers and disruptions** (e.g., building closure, elevator malfunction, etc.)?

Rationale:

Students with disabilities need to be aware of temporary barriers as far in advance as possible so that they can plan accordingly.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Satish, a student with chronic back pain, needs to know before coming to campus that the route to his building is blocked by construction, so he can plan a new route and avoid making unnecessary detours that exacerbate his symptoms.
- Lauren has low vision and locates their classes ahead of time, either by using a mobility assistant or with the help of a friend. Advance notice of a temporary barrier in the building helps them plan ahead so they can attend class on time.
- Matt uses a mobility aid and uses an elevator to access his classroom. If the elevator is out of service, Matt needs to know in advance so that he can avoid making an unnecessary trip to the building in inclement weather.

How to meet the criteria:

- Provide information about temporary barriers and disruptions as far in advance as possible.
- Send important information about course-specific barriers far in advance whenever possible.
- Send important information in several different formats.
- Post reminders on the course website in the learning management system.
- Include a link to where your institution posts notices about temporary disruptions.

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [Postsecondary Education Standards](#)
 - Recommendation #154: Notice of temporary accessibility barriers

Criteria 4.4

If any **course-related changes** or **disruptions** occur during the term (e.g., cancelled office hours, moving an in-person lecture to a virtual lecture), is notice of the change given to all students as far in advance as possible?

Rationale:

Students with disabilities need to be aware of changes to the course as far in advance as possible so that they can plan accordingly.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Zach is a student who wears a prosthetic known as an ostomy bag. Knowing about the cancellation of a class in advance enables Zach to avoid the time, effort, and fatigue involved in making an unnecessary trip to campus.
- Talisa is neurodivergent and has difficulty with transitions and unexpected change. Knowing in advance that an in-person lecture is being moved to a virtual lecture helps Talisa adjust to this unexpected change.

How to meet the criteria:

- Provide information about temporary barriers and disruptions as far in advance as possible.
- Send important information about course-specific barriers far in advance whenever possible.
- Send important information in several different formats (e.g., posting an Announcement in onQ and communicating via email to students).

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [Postsecondary Education Standards](#)
 - Recommendation #154: Notice of temporary accessibility barriers

Section 5: Physical Learning Space Barriers

Criteria 5.1-5.2

- 5.1 Is accessibility considered and prioritized in **physical learning spaces** where possible (e.g., instructor's office)?
- 5.2 When selecting **off-campus environments** for course-related **experiential learning**, is accessibility considered and prioritized?

Rationale:

Students need to be able to access all learning environments that are part of the course or program, or be provided with an alternative, so that their learning is not disrupted.

Examples of the impact on students:

- Evelyn uses a mobility aid and is not able to participate in a field trip in a wooded area with uneven terrain.
- Ahsan has low vision and uses a mobility cane. He needs clearly marked and uncluttered floor space in order to safely navigate his instructor's office.

How to meet the criteria:

- Remove items that would interfere with passage or movement for individuals who use mobility aids.
- Provide accommodations such as virtual office hours, or asynchronous learning.
- Inquire about accessibility and make it a priority when selecting off-campus learning spaces. Whenever possible select off-campus environments that are accessible.
- When it is not possible to remove a physical barrier, create an alternative learning experience that the students with disabilities can access.

Source of accessibility criteria:

- Proposed [Postsecondary Education Standards](#)
 - Recommendation #134: Experiential learning off campus