

Access Forward

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Land Acknowledgment

“To begin, let us acknowledge that Queen’s is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory. We are grateful to be able to live, learn and play on these lands.”

In acknowledging the land that Queen's University is situated upon, it is important for all of us to consider our own positionality and relationship to the land. It is also important to pause and reflect on what reconciliation, decolonization, and Indigenization look like for each of us.

To learn more about the significance and importance of land acknowledgments please view the following video.

[Meaningful Land Acknowledgements](#)

Additional supporting links:

- [Office of Indigenous Initiatives \(Land Acknowledgement\)](#)
- [Decolonizing and Indigenizing Teaching and Learning](#)
- [Find out more about local Indigenous territories and languages.](#)

Accessibility

Accessibility is not only an important safety measure on campus but a key part of building community. Accessibility refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people who experience disabilities. Whether you have a disability yourself or are starting or continuing your learning and (un)learning about disability and accessibility, this training is a critical step to understanding our collective responsibilities and rights to accessibility.

This training will help you learn more about the accessibility legislation you need to know to self-advocate, and/or provide the best support possible to

your colleagues, peers, customers, clients, friends, and family with disabilities here at Queen's University.

Thinking about your "why" for completing this Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act training is a great place to start.

- What perspective are you approaching training from and in what ways can you expand your learning?
- What impact could learn more about accessibility have on your life, the lives of others, and the Queen's community?
- What impact will you have on the Queen's community in putting this important knowledge about accessibility into everyday practice?

Activity: Self Reflection

1. What's your unique motivation for learning about accessibility
2. Why would accessible practices involving information and communications, employment, public space and transportation be important for you, your role and your relationship to disability and accessibility

A Note on AODA: AccessForward Training

The Queen's University: AccessForward AODA Training you are about to complete focuses on a variety of ways we all can make campus space more accessible, such as: general legislative requirements, information and communications, employment, design of public space, and transportation. This training is just one component of the larger AODA (the Accessible Training for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) training suite. If you haven't already, be sure to continue your learning with the newly redesigned Queen's University: Accessible Customer Service Training, which looks generally at how we can best provide accessible service, support, and interactions for one another here at Queen's.

Learning, practicing, and meeting accessibility standards is mandated by AODA (the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act). In fact, it is a requirement of Integrated Accessibility Standards that those working or volunteering at Queen's University complete this training so we can each take responsibility in creating an accessible campus.

AccessForward training will not make you an expert. Rather, it is about starting, continuing, or enhancing your learning about disability and accessibility. This training is about becoming more aware of the legislation in place to ensure accessibility across campus. We hope you will reflect specifically on how this training relates to you, your experience, and your role here at Queen's. Remember, sometimes it's as simple as asking "How can I help?".

Learning Outcomes

This training covers:

1. What is accessibility?
2. Purpose of the Integrated Accessibility Standards
3. Accessibility plans, policies, and legislation at Queen's and across Ontario.
4. Learn about some general and specific accessibility measures important relevant to your role at Queen's.

This training is grouped into 4 major sections, reflecting the AODA Training modules:

- General Requirements
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Designing Public Spaces

Knowledge Check

1. What is something you think you know about accessibility
2. Where and when did you learn about this and how did your belief develop?
3. What is something you think you don't know about accessibility?

Defining Accessibility

According to Accessibility Services Canada:

“Accessibility refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people who experience disabilities”.¹

Accessibility is about removing barriers so that everyone has fair and equal access. Accessibility is an important part of respecting diversity and ensuring Queen’s equitable space for all.

While this module will focus on accessibility in Queen’s policies and procedures it is important to remember that true accessibility is built on systems change and building community relationships. One helpful concept for thinking through accessibility in this way is from artist and accessibility advocate, Carmen Papalia’s concept of “5 Tenets of Open Access”.²



Put simply, Papalia’s vision of open access suggests we view accessibility not simply as policy but as a matter of ongoing work and negotiation of how to support our own access needs and the access needs of others. Open access validates the knowledge that people have about their bodies and access needs and disrupts the barriers that “limit one’s agency and potential to thrive.”

Barriers to accessibility include:

- Attitudinal
- Organizational of systemic
- Architecture of physical
- Information and communication

¹ Constance Exley, “Definitions - Accessibility Services Canada,” <https://accessibilitycanada.ca/>, April 5, 2016, <https://accessibilitycanada.ca/aoda/definitions/>.

² Carmen Papalia, “An Accessibility Manifesto for the Arts,” Canadian Art, January 2, 2018, <https://canadianart.ca/essays/access-revived/>.

- Technological barriers

The above five barriers stem from ableism

Ableism

Ableism is a set of beliefs that result in discrimination and social prejudice against persons with disabilities. It assumes that typical or conventional abilities are the standard, and therefore superior. It is rooted in the idea that disabled persons need to be ‘fixed’ or ‘protected.’ Ableism is a system of oppression that assigns values to bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, productivity, intelligence, excellence, and fitness.³ Ableism is deeply rooted in discrimination, oppression, and violence more broadly and as such is connected to racism, colonialism, sexism, and classism, to name a few.

An accessible community is barrier-free and doesn't limit anyone's participation in everyday life. Accessible communities ensure persons with disabilities can be active participants. Ensuring that such communities exist — and thrive — is — important because for persons with disabilities and a benefit to all. For example, automated doorways, ramps, and elevators are not only helpful for persons with physical disabilities but all persons with diverse physical access needs such as persons pushing a stroller. Accessible web design, such as high contrast colours and clear font, is another example of how greater accessibility standards can improve everyone's experience.

At Queen's University, ensuring accessibility is important across campus, for example, in classroom layouts, online events, customer service desks and job applications.

Check out this video to learn more about [what accessibility means for persons with disabilities](#).⁴

³ Lewis, Talila A. “Working Definition of Ableism - January 2022 Update.” TALILA A. LEWIS. <https://www.talilalewis.com/blog/working-definition-of-ableism-january-2022-update>.

⁴ What is Accessibility. YouTube. Annie Elaine, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsMo7SOuB1c&feature=emb_title&ab_channel=AnnieElaine

While this module focuses primarily on accessibility, disability cannot be ignored or removed from the conversation. Because of the diversity of experiences and perspectives amongst persons with disabilities, self-identifications with disability and accessibility related language and definitions are also unique. Further, definitions and language are always evolving and therefore best practices and people's relationship to language changes.⁵

One way of understanding disability and accessibility is the Social Model of Disability. Rather than seeing disabilities as a deficit, the social model of disability looks at how one's environment or society presents barriers to access. Barriers to access include structural barriers like stairs, doorways, or materials as well as processes and policies that fail to affirm the independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity of persons with disability. The Social model of disability contrasts with Medical Models of disability which say people are disabled by their impairments, seeing people as the problem and disability as a barrier itself. In this sense, inaccessibility is the result of social and environmental barriers rather than a person's disability. Therefore, in a social model of disability to remove barriers to accessibility involves changing structures, attitudes, policies, and procedures rather than suggesting persons with disabilities change to fit the inaccessible status quo.⁶

To learn more about the social model of disability check out: [The Social Model of Disability](#)

After you have completed this course, complete the AODA: Accessible Customer Service Training to learn more about accessibility and people with disabilities.

⁵ Liebowitz, Cara. "I Am Disabled: On Identity-First versus People-First Language." The Body Is Not An Apology, March 12, 2015. <https://thebodyisnotanapology.com/magazine/i-am-disabled-on-identity-first-versus-people-first-language/>.

⁶ The Social Model of Disability. YouTube. WhizzKidsUK, 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-rEnKcZ5w0&ab_channel=WhizzKidzUK.

A Review of the AODA Legislation

Let's briefly review the AODA legislation and what it involves. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was passed in 2005 with the goal of creating an accessible Ontario by 2025. This legislation is unique because it:

- Applies to both public and private organizations
- Requires obliged organizations to be proactive in identifying, preventing and removing barriers to accessibility
- Shifts the focus from the individual who requires an accommodation to the obligation of organizations to remove barriers

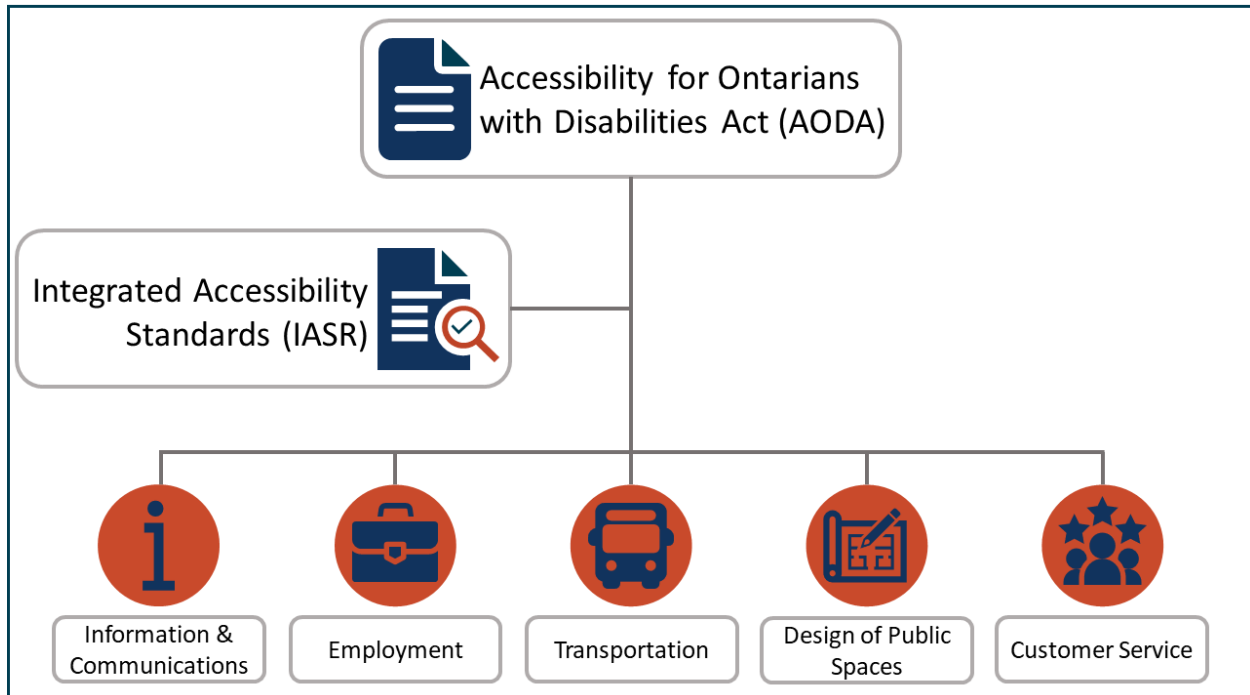
The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11. is implemented on an ongoing basis through Accessibility Standards that have been developed to designate areas, create rules, and provide timelines around enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities in Ontario. The shifts the focus from the individual who requires accommodation to the obligation of organizations to remove barriers.

Five Standards under the AODA are the Customer Service Standard and the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR), which comprises four integrated Standards. These include:

- Information & Communications Standard
- Employment Standard
- Transportation Standard
- Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment) Standard

The AODA requires that the province review the standards every five years. The aim of this review is to determine if the standards need to be updated.

The Act contains the IASR (the Regulation) which contains all the Standards.



The Importance of Accessibility Compliance

Achieving greater accessibility is everyone's responsibility. It is a community value, social responsibility, and codified in legislation.

Compliance Requirements

- The regulation applies to organizations with at least one employee, and that provide goods, services, or facilities
 - Under the regulation, businesses and organizations are divided into five classes.
1. The Government of Ontario and the Legislative Assembly
 2. Large designated public sector organizations with 50 or more employees
 3. Large organizations with 50 or more employees
 4. Small organizations with 1 to 49 employees. Your organization's requirements and timelines for compliance depend on which of these classes it falls under.

Queen's is a large designated public sector organization. The regulation influences how the university operates; therefore, it's important for people in the Queen's community to be aware of the requirements and the importance of accessibility. This is why training is a requirement. Organizations must provide training on the requirements of the regulation as it relates to a person's duties – and on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.

Training must be provided to:

- All existing and new employees and volunteers
- People who participate in developing your organization's policies
- Other people who provide goods, services, or facilities on behalf of your organization

For example, training as it relates to a person's duties means a web developer with IT Services may need training on the Information & Communication Standard, whereas an administrative assistant may not. Similarly, a human resource professional or manager may need training on the Employment Standard, while this may not be necessary for a security guard or accountant.

Queen's is required:

- to provide training when the university's accessibility policies change
- to keep a record of the training provided, including the dates the training took place and the number of individuals trained.

All Accessibility Measures listed within this module were assigned deadlines between January 2012-January 2021 for fulfilling compliance. As of January 2021, the final compliance measure was to be in place in all appropriate settings across Ontario.

Understanding Barriers to Accessibility

Beyond compliance, meeting accessibility standards is a critical part of creating a supportive and safe environment. Inaccessible environments prevent people with disabilities from engaging in community in affirming ways. Some examples of barriers are:

- Attitudinal (Eg. stereotypes about disabilities, the harmful assumption that accommodations are unfair advantages, etc.)
- Organizational or systemic (Ex. policy and procedure that doesn't offer accommodations in interviews, the intersectional financial barriers, costs, and impacts on people with disabilities)
- Architectural or physical (Ex. poor lighting that makes it hard to lip read or see, doorknobs that are difficult to grasp)
- Information or communications (Ex. signs or buttons that don't include braille, lectures that are confusing or poorly organized, etc.)
- Technological (Ex. A website without screen reading software, important material that's provided only in paper or "hard copy")

If you haven't already, check out the AODA: Accessible Customer Service training to learn more about barriers and accessibility.

Accessibility Policies and Plans

An Accessibility policy is a policy that states what rules or principles an organization will put in place to support achieving its accessibility goals. An example of a policy might be:

Our organization will meet the information and communication needs of people with disabilities by providing, upon request, information and communications materials in accessible formats or with communication support.

Queen's University has many policies to reflect and ensure University wide commitments to accessibility and accessibility regulation. These policies guide the everyday practices, work, culture, and environment at Queen's. As per regulation, these policies are available in written documents, are publicly available and in accessible formats upon request, and include a statement regarding Queen's commitments to accessibility. Queen's Accessibility policies include:

1. Accessibility Policy
2. Guidelines for Customer Service to Persons Who Use Support Persons

3. The Use of Personal Assistive Devices Guidelines
4. Service Animals on Campus Policy
5. Procedure for Managing Notifications of Temporary Service Disruptions
6. Accommodation of Disabilities in the Workplace Policy
7. Individualized Accommodation Procedures
8. Disability Accommodation Guidelines
9. Return to Work Policy Return
10. Return to Work Procedure

All of these policies are on the [course companion site](#).⁷

Accessibility Plans

An accessibility plan is a plan that describes the actions an organization will take to prevent and remove barriers and when it will do so. An accessibility plan creates a road map for an organization to increase accessibility. It's the actions that support an organization's commitment to accessibility and its accessibility policies. An example of an action item in an accessibility plan could be how the organization intends to meet the accessible formats and communication supports requirements of the regulation.

It is required that all organizations across Ontario develop an accessibility plan. A link to the Queen's multi-year plan and annual reports on the status of these efforts can be found on the [course companion page](#).⁸

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

When requested, you must provide information and communications in an accessible manner to people with disabilities. Alternatives to standard print

⁷ "Reports and Plans | Accessibility Hub," Queensu.ca, 2020, <https://www.queensu.ca/accessibility/across-campus/queens-accessibility-initiatives/reports-and-plans>.

⁸ "Reports and Plans | Accessibility Hub," Queensu.ca, 2020, <https://www.queensu.ca/accessibility/across-campus/queens-accessibility-initiatives/reports-and-plans>.

are often referred to as accessible formats, and ways to help communication between people are referred to as communication supports.

When a request is received, you must consult with the person to determine their accessibility needs. You have the flexibility to determine the most appropriate accessible format or communication support depending on the accessibility needs of the person and the capability of your organization to deliver. Accessible formats and communication supports must be provided in a timely manner and at a cost that is not more than the regular costs charged to other people. It is important to be proactive in these requests and ensure accessibility is built into the design of events rather than added in later.

What are some examples of alternate formats and communication supports?

- Reading written information to a person directly icon.
- Reading written information to a person directly.
- Text transcripts of audio or visual information.
- Handwritten notes instead of spoken word.
- Information written in plain language.
- Electronic documents formatted to be accessible for use with a screen reader.

Check out Queen's Accessible Documents and Accessible Events Training if you want to learn more about ensuring accessibility in your role on the course companion page.

Procurement

Relevant for people working for Strategic Procurement Services or who procure goods and services for their units.

It's important to incorporate accessibility criteria into procurement and buying practices. This may make a significant impact on preventing new accessibility barriers and addressing existing ones.

- For example, meeting accessibility criteria when procuring new computer software so that it can accommodate the needs of people with vision loss.

This requirement applies to the Government of Ontario, the Legislative Assembly, and designated public sector organizations, including Queen's University. Procurement at Queen's must:

- Incorporate accessibility design, criteria, and features in procurement, except where it is not practicable to do so; for example, technological compatibility between older products and newer ones being procured.
- Provide an explanation, on request, as to why accessibility design, criteria, and features were not practicable to incorporate into the procurement; for example, when accessible goods, services, or facilities are not available.

[More information about procurement](#)⁹

Self-Service Kiosks

Self-service kiosks can be found in Mitchell Hall.

A self-service kiosk is an interactive electronic terminal, such as a point-of-sale device you use at a grocery store checkout or for fare or parking payment. People with disabilities should be able to use a self-service kiosk as independently and securely as possible. At Queen's there is a self-service kiosk in Mitchell Hall.

An example of a barrier to accessibility in self-service kiosks:

- Many organizations have self-service kiosks that use touch-screen technology, which is difficult or impossible to use for people with vision loss. This is a technical and structural barrier that can have a significant impact for people trying to make purchases independently and securely using a touch-screen kiosk. When determining what accessibility features can be included in the design or purchase of a

⁹ "Procurement | Accessibility Hub," Queensu.ca, 2020, <https://www.queensu.ca/accessibility/facultystaff/procurement>.

kiosk, you may want to consider including an alternate (non-visual) way to use it, such as a tactile keyboard and audio instructions.

The Government of Ontario, the Legislative Assembly, and designated public sector organizations including Queen's:

- Must incorporate accessibility features when designing, procuring, or acquiring self service kiosks.

QFADs Self-Service Kiosks and Information Systems Design Requirements

QFADs section 6.6.1: Self-Service Kiosks and Information Systems.

Where information is provided by video display terminals to the general public, clients or customers, the same information shall be provided in an alternative format, such as audio, braille and large-text print. The minimum font size for large-text print shall be 16 point. Refer to the Canadian National Institute of the Blind "Clear Print Guidelines" for further detail.

Information systems designed for direct access by the public, such as touch-screen video display, keyboard or keypad access, shall be mounted at a height suitable for use by a person using a wheelchair or scooter (Refer to 6.1).

Essential print information shall be printed in large text on a highly contrasting background colour, and should also be available in other formats, such as audiotape and large-text print.

Push buttons or other controls for accessing public information systems should be clearly identifiable by colour and/or tone from the background colour, and should include raised numbers, numerals or symbols for easy identification by persons with a visual impairment. Tactile identification shall comply with 9.2.

Exhibits that include important artefacts, labels and graphics, shall be placed 1000 - 1200 mm from the floor.

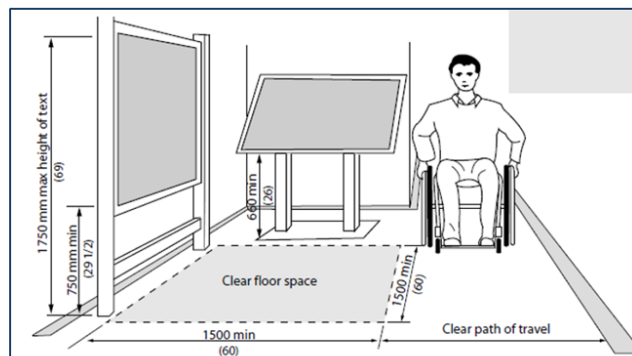
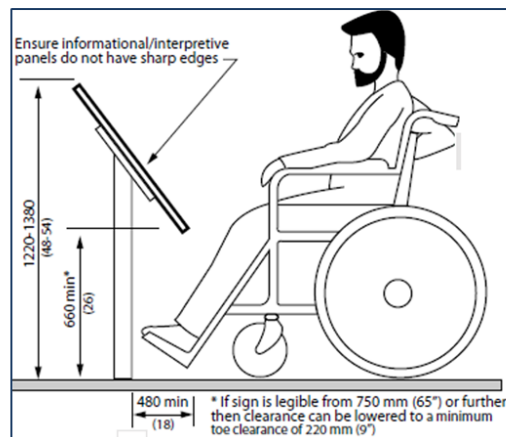
Labels and descriptive signage shall be inclined from horizontal for easier reading.

Inclined informational/interpretive panels that can't be read from 750 mm away shall have at least 660 mm of knee clearance and at least 470 mm depth. If displays are intended for viewing from 750 mm or further, less clearance is permitted to a minimum height of 220 mm for toe kick clearance. The top of the panel shall be not more than 1220 mm - 1380 mm high.

Vertical informational/interpretive panels shall have text located no higher than 1750 mm. Text shall not be lower than 750 mm above the floor.

No part of the sign shall encroach on the path of travel. If encroachment is unavoidable, cane-detection through colour and texture change shall be provided on the ground.

A minimum 1500 mm x 1500 mm clear space directly in front of the sign is required for its approach and use. The clear space must be of a hard surface material.



Information and Communications Standard

Take a moment to consider all of the things you've done so far today that have involved communicating with others or giving or receiving information.

Information and Communication Standards.

Perhaps you browsed a newspaper on the Internet or checked your email. Maybe you attended a meeting or used an online chat bot to schedule your next doctors appointment? So much of our world today is about information and communications - from chatting with your family to reaching out to colleagues.

Enter your own thoughts or just reflect on the question. Answers are not sent or stored.

Because information and communications are so critical to our interactions with each other and the world around us it is important to engage best practices to meet accessibility standards. When information and communications are not accessible it can become a barrier to engagement, participation, or even safety for people with disabilities.

Information or communication barriers occur when sensory disabilities, such as hearing, seeing or learning disabilities, have not been considered. These barriers relate to both the sending and receiving of information.

Examples of information or communications barriers include:

- Electronic documents that are not properly formatted and cannot be read by a screen reader.
- Lectures that are confusing and poorly organized.
- Language that is not clear.
- Print that is too small or in a font that is difficult to read.
- Videos that are not captioned and don't have transcriptions.

The Information and Communications Standard, as covered in this section, outlines how organizations will be required to create, provide, and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.

Limits to Accessible Information and Communications

There might be instances when information or communication cannot be made fully accessible.

For example, if:

- The technology to convert the information is not readily available, or
- Queen's Rare Books Collections

In this event, next steps will be determined in consultation with the person requesting the information or communications, if it is possible to provide it in an accessible format or with appropriate communication support. When it's not possible to convert requested material, it is required that the individual making the request is provided with the following:

- An explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible, an

A summary of the information or communications.

Because of the accessibility limitations on some pieces of information and communications, such as rare or antique books, it is important to consider Universal Design practices beforehand to ensure accessibility is built into structures rather than applied retroactively on top of inaccessible structures. To learn more about Universal Design for Learning refer to our Accessible Instruction for Educators module.

Feedback Processes

Under the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, organizations had to establish a customer service feedback process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which they provide goods or services to people with disabilities.

At Queen's, anyone can contact the Queen's Accessibility Coordinator through the Accessibility Hub website, email, and social media accounts (Twitter, Instagram).

The Accessibility Hub website contains the Accessibility Feedback Form. A link to this form can be found on multiple university sites, for example: Main Queen's site, Inclusive Queen's, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science etc. A link to the [Accessibility Hub](#)¹⁰ is included in the course companion site.

People with disabilities in the Queen's and Kingston communities are also invited and may participate and give feedback to the Accessibility Coordinator through Accessibility Cafés. Accessibility Cafés are a chance for the Queen's and Kingston communities to get together to discuss building an inclusive and accessible community that follows the requirements of the AODA.

Each Café has a unique topic, and all participants are encouraged to share their perspectives and generate ideas around the question:

How can we improve upon what Queen's is doing already towards imagining and then building an even stronger inclusive and accessible Queen's community?

Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information

It is vital that everyone be able to access emergency and public safety information. Emergency and public safety information must be easily available and provided in accessible formats upon request. Examples of emergency information include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency plans and procedures
- Maps, warning signs and evacuation routes
- Information you give the public about alarms or other emergency alerts
- Real-time emergency information (such as announcements and alarms) is not included in this requirement.

¹⁰ "Client Intake Accessibility Form | Accessibility Hub," Queensu.ca, 2020, <https://www.queensu.ca/accessibility/client-intake-accessibility-form>.

You can review Queen’s emergency and public safety information, but it will also be included in the course resource site at the end of this module.

[Emergency Communications:](#)¹¹

[Alerts, Incidents and News](#)¹²

[Emergency Response Procedures](#)¹³

Accessible Websites and Web Content

An organization’s website is often a primary way it shares information. That’s why it’s important that your website and web content be accessible. Your organization must conform with the international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, as outlined in the standard. The WCAG 2.0 guidelines explain how to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities. These guidelines were developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). WCAG 2.0 has different levels of compliance that determine how accessible a site is.

All Queen's public facing websites comply with WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

- Level AA: The second, more extensive level of accessibility is called Level AA. An example of a Level AA accessibility feature on a web page is properly named headings and labels, which enable people using screen reader technology to scan through the information on a web page efficiently. For example, to quickly identify what stories are on the home page of a newspaper, a screen reader can search just the headings for each story.

To assist in ensuring Queen's websites meet this obligation:

¹¹ “Emergency Communications | WebPublish Service and Support,” Queensu.ca, 2020, <https://www.queensu.ca/webpublish/about/emergency-communications>.

¹² “Alerts, Incidents & News | Office of Risk and Safety Services,” Queensu.ca, 2020, <https://www.queensu.ca/risk/security/alerts-incidents>.

¹³ “Emergency Response Procedures | Office of Risk and Safety Services,” Queensu.ca, 2020, <https://www.queensu.ca/risk/security/emergency-response-procedures>.

1. The university offers the [WebPublish](#)¹⁴ content management system (CMS) for creating websites and the Site Improve tool used to identify your website's accessibility errors.
2. [Created a Web Accessibility Policy](#)¹⁵: The university's public presence online must be accessible. This policy establishes minimum standards for the accessibility of public-facing web-based information, communications and services considered necessary to meet the university's goals of creating and sustaining a culture of inclusivity and ensuring compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).
3. Created a [Queen's Web Standards and Accessibility Guide](#)¹⁶:
4. Offers support for WebPublish and Site Improve through [ITServices and tutorials through the Accessibility Hub](#).¹⁷

Education Institutions and Training Resources

If your role at Queen's falls broadly under education or training and a student notifies you of a need due to a disability, you must:

- Provide learning resources or material in an accessible format that takes into account their accessibility needs.
- Provide student records and program information in an accessible format that takes into account their accessibility needs.

You can provide the student with one of the following:

- An accessible or conversion-ready electronic format, where available or

¹⁴ "Web-Accessibility Compliance Auditing for Queen's Websites | Accessibility Hub," Queensu.ca, 2020, <https://www.queensu.ca/accessibility/tutorials/website-accessibility/web-accessibility-compliance-auditing-queens-websites>.

¹⁵ "Web Accessibility Policy | University Secretariat and Legal Counsel," Queensu.ca, 2020, <https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/information-technology/web-accessibility-policy>.

¹⁶ "Web Standards and Accessibility Development Guide | Accessibility Hub," Queensu.ca, 2020, <https://www.queensu.ca/accessibility/across-campus/web-standards-and-accessibility-development-guide>.

¹⁷ "Website Accessibility | Accessibility Hub," Queensu.ca, 2020, <https://www.queensu.ca/accessibility/tutorials/website-accessibility>.

- A comparable resource in an accessible or conversion-ready format, if the resource cannot be obtained or converted into an accessible format.

If your role at Queen's involves producing training material such as textbooks, educational tools, and print based learning resources you must provide accessible or conversion-ready versions, when requested.

Examples of producers include, but are not limited to:

- Publishing companies
- Universities
- School boards

Students registered with the Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS) may require these course materials in alternate format prepared by Library Services for Students with Disabilities located in the [Adaptive Technology Centre \(ATC\) in Stauffer Library](#).¹⁸ Processes such as this may take time, either weeks or months, so proper planning and preparation on behalf of educators and trainers can reduce the response time to individual requests.

Employment Standards

When it comes to the workplace, barriers can be in processes, in a tool we use in our work like a computer, an aspect of the physical environment, workplace “etiquette”, or... norms and attitudes.

According to Statistics Canada, Ontarians with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed or under-employed due to employment barriers. By ensuring and following through on accessible recruitment processes and employment policies Queen's is opening the door to a larger resource pool of highly qualified and diverse applicants.

¹⁸ “What Are Alternate Formats? | Accessibility Hub,” [www.queensu.ca](https://www.queensu.ca/accessibility/tutorials/what-are-alternate-formats), accessed October 18, 2024, <https://www.queensu.ca/accessibility/tutorials/what-are-alternate-formats>.

Some of you may be familiar with the Employment Standards Act. It sets out the minimum fairness standards for the workplace. The Employment Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation is different. It deals with accessibility in the employment cycle. It builds on the obligations that employers have under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The Employment Standard, as outlined in this module, addresses the processes and procedures organizations follow in recruiting and accommodating their employees.

In this section you will learn about the requirements of the Employment Standard. The Employment Standard will help Queen's make its workplaces more accessible to new and current employees with disabilities.

Did you know?

The majority of employees with a disability require no accommodation at all. A recent study found that when accommodation is required, employers reported that 56% of accommodations cost absolutely nothing to make, while the rest typically cost only \$500 or less. There are also many grants and programs to help financially support workplaces in ensuring employees with disabilities are properly accommodated and can access their workplaces safely and with dignity.

About the Employment Standard

The Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) requires all employers to meet the accommodation needs of employees with disabilities to the point of undue hardship. Should you run into a barrier or challenge in meeting this standard Queen's University Human Rights Advisory Services are helpful in navigating best practices and problem solving any challenges regarding employment standards and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The Employment Standard builds on the OHRC requirement accommodating employees. It requires employers to have processes in place to determine an employee's accommodation needs. The standard applies to organizations with one or more employees in Ontario, and which provide goods, services, or facilities to the public or to other organizations.

The requirements:

- Apply to paid employees.
- Do not apply to volunteers and other non-paid individuals.

Informing Employees of Support

The Employment Standard requires employers to inform all employees, both new and existing, of their accessible employment practices. This employment standard also applies to Queen's volunteer, casual, and student employees such as research assistants and teaching assistants.

The Employment Standard includes, but is not limited to, Queen's policies on providing job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability. This will make all employees aware of how the organization will support them if they have a disability – or should they acquire a disability later in their career.

Accessible Recruitment Process

An employment relationship with an employee typically begins through a recruitment process. When planning your accessible recruitment process, there are three requirements to follow:

- When advertising job positions, state that accommodations for job applicants with disabilities are available on request.
- When inviting job applicants to participate in the selection process, state that accessibility accommodations are available on request to support their participation.
- When offering a job to a successful applicant, inform them of your organization's policies on accommodating employees with disabilities. This could be verbally, in person, by email, or in an offer letter.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Once hired, new Queen's employees may request accessible formats and communication supports. This requirement is similar to those in the Information and Communications Standard. Employers must consult with employees to determine their accessibility needs and how best to accommodate them. Accessible formats and communication supports can be requested for:

- Information required for the employee to perform their job, and
- Information generally available to all employees

The standard requires Queen's to have a written process to document individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. What is an individual accommodation plan?

- Individual accommodation plan: An individual accommodation plan is a formal way of recording and reviewing the workplace-related accommodations that will be provided to an employee with a disability.

The university must work with an employee with a disability to find the appropriate accommodation to meet the individual's accommodation needs. For example, it might include the need to provide screen reader software for a computer. Elements to Include:

The standard specifies a number of elements that must be included in the process for developing documented individual accommodation plans, including:

- How the employee can participate in the process
- How Queen's can seek outside expert advice to help determine an employee's accommodation needs
- How the privacy of personal information will be protected
- How often the plan will be reviewed

Workplace Emergency Response Information

Individualized emergency response information can help both employees with disabilities and organizations be better prepared for a range of emergencies such as fire, power outages or severe weather. For example, an employee who cannot hear a fire alarm will need to know how and when to safely exit the building in the event of a fire. Every employer must provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees with disabilities if:

- The person with the disability requires it, and
- The employer is aware of the need.

With the employee's consent, you must ensure the information is shared with anyone designated to help them in an emergency. This information must be reviewed when:

- With the employee's consent, you must ensure the information is shared with anyone designated to help them in an emergency. This information must be reviewed when:
- The employee's overall accommodation needs or plan are reviewed.
- You review your organization's emergency response policies.

Performance Management, Career Development, and Redeployment

There are other processes that help support employees. The standard also includes requirements for these:

- Performance Management
- Career development
- Redeployment

The standard requires these processes to take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and their individual accommodation plans. Some examples of how these requirements could apply:

- Performance Plan: Providing a performance plan document in large print to an employee with low vision.
- Accommodation Plan: Reviewing an employee's accommodation plan to understand the individual's accommodation needs and determine whether it needs adjusting to improve his or her performance on the job.
- Accommodation Supports: Adjusting accommodation supports or updating an accommodation plan, with the employee's participation, to meet the employee's new role or responsibilities if the employee is promoted or redeployed.

You should review the Queen's relevant policies and information provided on the course companion site:

- [Accommodation of Disabilities in the Workplace Policy](#)
- [Individualized Accommodation Procedures](#)
- [Disability Accommodation Guidelines](#)
- [Return to Work Policy](#)
- [Return to Work Procedure](#)

Design of Public Spaces Standards

Public spaces connect us to where we want to go. Accessible public spaces provide the important link between places of work, travel, shop and play. Removing barriers on recreational trails, outdoor play spaces, parking, along sidewalks, and at pedestrian crossing areas will make public spaces easier to navigate, allowing people with disabilities to participate in community in safe and affirming ways.

Within the next 20 years, as the population ages, the number of people with disabilities will increase. This means increased demand for accessible public spaces that support independence and mobility, for example, increased availability of accessible parking that can provide better access to shopping and services. Ontario is making public spaces accessible through the Design of Public Spaces Standard.

The Design of Public Spaces Standard builds on accessibility design practices we already see emerging in our communities when new public spaces are built, and when major changes are made to older spaces. Though change takes time, considering the needs of people with disabilities from the earliest stages when designing, planning and constructing public spaces will result in more accessible and livable communities for all Ontarians.

In this section you will learn about the requirements of the Design of Public Spaces Standard. The standard sets requirements for specific features of our physical environment that will make it easier and safer for people with disabilities to move through, use and enjoy public space.

About the Design of Public Standards

As we know from the social model of disability structural spaces pose a significant barrier to people with disability.

Accessible public spaces make it easier for people with disabilities to move through and use the environment. The requirements of the standard are divided into seven sections:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes
- Outdoor public use eating areas, like those found at rest stops or picnic grounds
- Outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths of travel (sidewalks or walkways) and their associated elements, such as ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signals
- Accessible off-street and on-street parking spaces
- Obtaining services (service counters, fixed queuing guides and waiting areas)

The scope of the requirements:

The standard requires organizations to incorporate accessibility when:

- Building new public spaces, or

- Making planned significant alterations to existing public spaces.

Organizations are not required to retrofit public spaces to meet the requirements. This means that organizations are not required to alter their public spaces if they have no plans to do so. Accessibility for elements related to buildings, for example, building entrances, washrooms and barrier-free paths of travel, are not addressed in this standard. They are addressed through Ontario's Building Code.

Check out some of the ways Queen's ensures best practices in accessibility below.

Queen's Facility Accessibility Design Standards (QFADS)

Queen's has created its own Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) to ensure what we build and renovate at a higher accessible standard to what is required through the Ontario Building Code (OBC). To date, Queen's is only the fourth of twenty-two universities in Ontario to have its own FADS. [Queen's University Building Design Standards can be found on the companion site for this course.](#)¹⁹

The Built Environment Advisory Group (BEAG)

The role of the BEAG is to provide advice to Queen's Facility Management on accessibility concerns, standards, and legislation, including the Design of Public Spaces Standard that assists in making the Queen's campus and its facilities accessible to everyone

- Advise the Associate Vice-Principal (Facilities) about the requirements, procurement for, and implementation of various standards.
- Review and endorse accessibility projects funded within the 5-year plan.
- Review site plans and floor plans for new construction and renovation projects on capital projects of a value of \$2.5M or greater and accessibility projects that receive grants.

¹⁹ "Queen's Building Design Standards | Facilities," Queensu.ca, 2024, <https://www.queensu.ca/facilities/building-design-standards>.

Queen's Facilities ensures that DoPS Standards are met or exceeded for outdoor eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel and parking.

For detailed support and guidance on these areas of DoPSS, please contact Facilities to ensure adherence to QFADS.

Outdoor Spaces

Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas

Outdoor public use eating areas are public areas with tables and intended for use by the public as a place to consume food, such as picnic tables in parks, on hospital grounds or university campuses, and outdoor food courts at amusement parks.

When building new or making planned significant alterations to existing outdoor public eating areas, organizations must make sure:

- At least 20 percent of new tables added, and no fewer than one of the new tables, are accessible to people using mobility aids, such as wheelchairs,
- The ground surface leading to and under the accessible tables is level, firm, and stable to accommodate mobility aids, and
- Enough clear space around the accessible tables is provided so people using a mobility aid can approach the tables.

How many accessible tables do you need? The 20 percent requirement applies to the purchase of new tables added to a public use eating area. For example, a town decides to purchase five new tables to add to the five it already has in the park. To comply with the law, one of the five new tables must be accessible.

Outdoor Play Spaces

Accessible outdoor play spaces can provide play opportunities for all children and their caregivers regardless of their abilities.

The requirements apply to outdoor play spaces containing:

- Play equipment, such as swings, and/or
- Play features such as logs, rocks, sand or water

The requirements also specify that organizations must:

- Incorporate accessible play space features for children and their caregivers with various disabilities, such as sensory components that promote active play experiences. For example, sensory play experiences can include sand or water play, or a sound or music panel.
- Make sure there is enough room for children and their caregivers with various disabilities to move through, in and around the play space, and
- Make sure the ground surface is firm, stable and able to absorb the shock of a fall to help prevent injuries

Exterior Paths of Travel

Exterior paths of travel are sidewalks and walkways that help us get to our intended destination, that's why accessibility considerations are important. The standard includes certain technical requirements when organizations except small organizations build new or make planned significant alterations to existing exterior paths of travel. The standard does not apply to paths of travel that are regulated by Ontario's Building Code (e.g., a path of travel from a parking lot with accessible parking spaces to an accessible building entrance).

Here are some examples of the technical requirements for exterior paths of travel:

Sidewalks or walkways

Requirements for minimum width to support the passage of mobility aids, minimum height clearance to remove barriers for people with vision loss, and maximum steepness of slopes.

Ramps

Requirements for minimum width, maximum steepness of slopes, size of landings, and handrails.

Stairs that connect to an exterior path of travel

Requirements for step size, high tonal contrast markings for edge of steps, and tactile walking surface indicators at the top of each flight to indicate change of level for people with vision loss.

Pedestrian curb ramps *or curb cuts*

Requirements to align with direction of travel, minimum width and maximum steepness of slope for people with mobility aids, and tactile walking surface indicators at the bottom of curb ramps to warn people with vision loss that they are approaching a roadway.

Accessible pedestrian signals

Requirements identify essential features for people with vision loss and those who are deaf-blind, such as a locator tone for a signal box that is distinct from a walk indicator tone, tactile arrows that align with direction of crossing, and both audible and vibrotactile walk indicators.

Rest areas

Requirements to consult with the public and people with disabilities on the placement and design of rest areas when building new or making planned significant alterations to an existing sidewalk or walkway; municipalities must also consult with their accessibility advisory committee, if one has been established.

Accessible Parking

This section of the standard includes requirements for both public off-street and on-street accessible parking spaces when building new or making planned significant alterations to existing parking spaces.

What is off-street parking?

Off-street parking includes open and covered lots for short term parking by the public, such as a hair salon's customer parking lot or an underground parking garage at a shopping centre. People may or may not need to pay to use off-street parking facilities.

What is on-street parking?

On-street parking can be located on a public highway, street, avenue, parkway, bridge or similar type of road. Public sector organizations, such as municipalities, hospitals, universities and colleges, may own and maintain on-street parking spaces. On-street parking may provide direct access to shops, offices and other facilities. People may or may not need to pay to use on-street parking.

Obtaining services

The standard includes requirements for making service counters, fixed queuing guides and waiting areas accessible to people with disabilities. These elements can be located both inside and outside of buildings. It is important to note that these elements are not covered by Ontario's Building Code.

Clarity and details regarding Queen's Facilities responsibilities and adherence to services and infrastructure can be found in the multi-year plan. The course companion site will include the following resources:

- [Managing temporary service](#)²⁰
- [Building standards](#)²¹

Requirements of this section apply to all organizations.

Service Counters

When building new or replacing existing service counters, at least one service counter must be made accessible to people who use mobility aids, such as wheelchairs. You can make the counter accessible by making sure it: Is useable by someone sitting in a mobility aid, and has enough clear space in front for a person using a mobility aid to approach the counter. A queuing area is a place where people line up for services. If your

²⁰ "Procedure for Managing Notifications of Temporary Service Disruptions | University Secretariat and Legal Counsel," Queensu.ca, 2020, <https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/administration-and-operations/procedure-managing-notifications-temporary-service>.

²¹ Queen's University, "Queen's University Facilities Accessibility Design Standards (QFADS) ," April 19, 2019, chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.queensu.ca/facilities/sites/facilwww/files/uploaded_files/Buildings%20Standards/QFADS%20Final%2004-09-2019.pdf.

organization has one queuing line for several service counters, such as a coffee shop, each service counter must be accessible.

If your organization offers different types of service counters, each with its own queuing line, such as a large grocery store with regular, express and self-serve checkouts, you must make sure at least one of each type of service counter is accessible. Where there are multiple queuing lines and service counters you must clearly identify all your accessible service counters with signage.

Fixed queuing guides

Fixed queuing guides are permanent or built-in fixtures that require people to line up and follow a set path. For example, an amusement park may use fixed queuing guides to help people line up at booths where they can purchase tickets for rides. When installing new fixed queuing guides, you must make sure: The queuing area is wide enough for people using mobility aids, such as wheelchairs, and mobility assistive devices, such as canes, crutches and walkers, to move through the line, including when the line changes direction. People who are blind or have low vision can find the queuing guides with a cane.

Waiting areas

When building new or making planned significant alterations to your organization's existing waiting areas that have seating fixed to the floor, you must make sure that at least three per cent of the new seating space is accessible (but there must be at least one accessible seating space). Accessible seating means a space in the waiting area where someone using a mobility aid, such as a wheelchair, can wait to receive service in the same area as other customers or patrons.

Maintenance Planning

All organizations (except small organizations) have a requirement under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation for multi-year accessibility plans. Organizations must make sure that their multi-year accessibility plans include the following:

- Procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible parts of their public spaces, such as frequency of inspecting sidewalks for cracks.
- Procedures for [handling temporary disruptions when an accessible part of their public spaces is not useable](#),²² such as putting up a sign explaining the disruption and outlining an alternative (under the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, all organizations are required to let the public know when their facilities or services that people with disabilities usually use are temporarily unavailable).

Conclusion

You have now completed the Access Forward module.

This learning is a key step in ensuring our peers, colleagues, alumni, visitors, friends, and family with disabilities and access needs different than our own can engage in campus and community in safe, accessible, and affirming ways.

You have learned about:

- Disability and accessibility.
- The Integrated Accessibility Standards and why they were created.
- Accessibility plans, policies, and legislation at Queen's and across Ontario.
- General and specific accessibility measures relevant to your role at Queen's.

Don't forget to check our Accessible Forward Companion Site includes links to resources and references highlighted in the course.

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²² "Procedure for Managing Notifications of Temporary Service Disruptions | University Secretariat and Legal Counsel," Queensu.ca, 2020, <https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/administration-and-operations/procedure-managing-notifications-temporary-service>.

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