UNIVERSITY
of GUELPH

Accessibility Plan

for the period
October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011

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Glossary of Acronyms

ADO	Accessibility Directorate of Ontario	CSD	Centre for Students with Disabilities
AODA	*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*	HREO	Human Rights and Equity Office
		HR	Human Resources
APDAC	Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee	ISC	Information Services Committee
		LAS	Library Accessibility Services
APP	Accommodation Partnership Program	ODA	*Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*
CAC	Campus Accessibility Committee	OOL	Office of Open Learning
CCS	Computing and Communications Services	TSS	Teaching Support Services
		UD	Universal Design
COU	Council of Ontario Universities	UID	Universal Instructional Design
CSA	Central Student Association	W3C	World Wide Web Consortium
COLES	Centre for Open Learning and Educational Support		

1.   Commentary/Introduction

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)* requires institutions to review their policies, programs and services as they relate to persons with disabilities, and to develop accessibility plans to address the associated needs of its constituent groups. In 2005 the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (*AODA*) was passed. It does not alter our obligations under the *ODA* but it does provide us with standards we must meet in the upcoming years in relation to customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation and the built environment.

This year, much of our effort in advancing accessibility has focused on ensuring the University continues to bein compliance with requirements in the *AODA* Accessible Customer Service Standard. This has involved developing and delivering training in providing accessible customer service, creating a process for receiving and responding to accessibility-related feedback and developing required policies pertaining to service animals, support persons and the use of personal assistive devices. Members of the University community have responded in a positive and supportive way to our efforts. There has been a high level of participation and engagement in the accessible customer service training.

The University of Guelph is committed to not only achieving compliance with the province's accessibility legislation but to realize real improvements in the experience of persons with disabilities as they participate in the life and work of the University. The University continues to promote and explore new frontiers in accessibility at its' annual Accessibility Conference, a conference increasing in information and size each year and continues to be the only such post-secondary conference in the country. It also continues to work in partnership with the Council of Ontario Universities to develop tools and strategies that will enable Universities to fulfill accessibility goals and requirements under other *AODA* standards

The following pages detail much of the work undertaken at the University in the area of accessibility in 2010-2011. They also provide a strategy for the coming year, outlining initiatives we plan to undertake.

2.   Objectives and Structure of the Accessibility Plan

The *ODA* requires universities to prepare an accessibility plan that addresses the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities in their policies, programs, practices and services. These plans must report on:

(a)   accessibility initiatives that have occurred in the past year;
(b)   accessibility initiatives planned for the coming year;
(c)   measures taken to ensure proposals for policies, programs, practices and services are assessed to determine their effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities;
(d)   policies, programs, practices and services that will be reviewed in the coming year to identify barriers to persons with disabilities.

The *AODA*, which passed in June 2005, does not currently change our reporting requirements under the *ODA*. The legislation does, however, have associated accessibility standards that contain additional reporting requirements. The University is working towards meeting compliance requirements in both the Customer Service Standard and the recently released Integrated Accessibility Standard (which combines information and communication, employment and transportation accessibility requirements). Although this accessibility plan is in response to *ODA* reporting requirements, one section of this plan is dedicated to providing information on our progress under the *AODA*.

This plan addresses the following seven areas as they pertain to the above *ODA* reporting requirements. These are the areas of particular concern identified by the 2002 Council of Ontario Universities (COU) *Report of the Working Group on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001:*

(a)   publications and information resources;
(b)   equipment and adaptive technology;
(c)   physical facilities;
(d)   human resources issues;
(e)   awareness issues for faculty and staff;
(f)   academic services and policies for students with disabilities;
(g)   non-academic student support services.

The central reporting mechanism of this Accessibility Plan is contained in sections 3 and 4 as follows:

Section 3. *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.* This section describes how the University intends to address the requirements of the *AODA* and associated standards.

Section 4*. Accessibility Initiatives and Plans*. This section details the University's accessibility initiatives in this last reporting year and accessibility plans to address current barriers and prevent future barriers

3. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The *AODA* contains regulations establishing specific requirements for meeting the needs of persons with disabilities. To date, two *AODA* accessibility standards have been released: the Accessible Customer Service Standard and the Integrated Accessibility Standard

The Accessible Customer Service Standard requires the University to provide accessible service provision training to customer service providers. The University is using both e-learning and face-to-face training to meet this requirement. The Human Rights and Equity Office hired a trainer to co-facilitate face-to-face training with senior managers and administrators, employees/volunteers/contractors that have extensive client contact and employees with limited access to computers. The remainder of the workforce and relevant volunteers and contractors have been registered in the e-learning module on the University's learning management system (Courselink). At present, approximately 5250 employees and service providers have completed the training. Follow up is currently underway for employees who have not completed the module.   Accessible customer service training will occur continually as the workforce changes and new employees join the ranks. Both the e-learning module and face-to-face training will be used meet training demands. There is discussion about offering the face-to-face training as an ongoing course through the Human Resources Learning and Development unit.

The University's Customer Service Policy which permits use of service animals, use of assistive devices, and access for support persons can be found on the accessibility website.

The HREO and Physical Resources are in the process of developing policy and method to provide real time notice of temporary disruptions to facilities and human services as required by the Accessible Customer Service Standard.

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario held several public consultations on the draft Integrated Standard (which addresses information and communication, employment and transportation accessibility). The University provided feedback several times during public consultations. The last such response was submitted in March, 2011. The Standard was officially released in June, 2011. The University is now evaluating the Standard and will consider how to meet the requirements.

4. Accessibility Initiatives and Plans

New accessibility initiatives and significant enhancements of core programs that occurred during this reporting period as well as accessibility plans to address current barriers and prevent future barriers are detailed in this section of the report. Details of ongoing core activities are located on the University's Accessibility website.

4.1 Physical Facilities/Barriers

(a) The Campus Accessibility Committee (CAC) continues to be responsible for the analysis of all major construction or renovation projects for accessibility features and for review of proposed smaller accessibility projects (retrofits) on the Guelph campus. The CAC submitted a call to the University community for accessibility-related construction projects, and assessed and prioritized the requests according to importance and fiscal possibility. The CAC recommended to the Vice-President (Finance & Administration) that specific projects be funded from the University's facility accessibility renewal funds ($125,000) or other sources.

The CAC has representation from the Centre for Students with Disabilities (CSD), Physical Resources, Classroom Technical Support, Student Housing, students, and faculty.

The CAC will continue these primary activities at the Guelph campus in the next year.

(b) As part of an ongoing program addressing issues of physical accessibility on the main campus, the following modifications to physical plant have been made in 2010-2011:

- the fourth floor mens' and womens' washrooms in the Library were renovated for accessibility complete with power door operators and appropriate signage;
- an FM Hearing Assisting Device was purchased and is available for loan at the Centre for Students with Disabilities;
- the Powell Building accessible lift control panel was relocated to a more user friendly location within the lift;
- a new accessible teaching station was installed in the Animal Science and Nutrition Building Room 156,
- an accessible teaching station was re-deployed to Thornbrough Building Room 1200;
- new power door operators were installed in the Bovey Building, Graham Hall, the Ontario Veterinary College and the Powell Building;
- a street level accessible entrance was created to the second floor of the Powell Building, including signage;
- new curb cuts were installed on Powerhouse Lane and East Ring Road;
- a CSA funded ramp was installed at the CSA Food Bank.

Funding made available through the Federal Government's Enabling Accessibility Fund was used to install a concrete ramp between Zavitz Hall and the McNaughton building, and to install a concrete sidewalk along South Ring Road from Christie Lane to the University Centre bus loop.

An application has been submitted to this same Fund to begin accessibility renovations on Johnston Hall.

4.2 Awareness and Outreach/Addressing Attitudinal Barriers

(a) The University hosted its third annual Accessibility Conference on May 31 and June 1. This

internal/external conference dealt extensively with the *AODA* Integrated Accessibility Standard (specifically information and communications technology) and the Accessible Customer Service Standard (see section 5.3(b) for details).

(b)   The CSD hosted and organized Access Awareness Day in the winter semester. This day of events covered all areas of disability including speakers, a resource fair, adaptive technology presentations, a keynote speaker and an awards presentation. Events and planning were overseen by a peer helper supervisor, a senior peer helper, 2 peer helpers and 1 volunteer. The Access Awareness Day committee was granted funds from Special Grants to cover some of the operational costs.

The CSD plans to host this event next year.

(c)   CSD staff delivered a mental health awareness program called ALERT to faculty, staff and students. This program addresses the growing challenge of mental health issues experienced by students; helping the university community identify students-at-risk and to recognize the differences between mental health and mental ill-health. The module was designed in a way that would be helpful to all staff members regardless of their employment status. The program reviews the most relevant mental health issues that students experience (depression, anxiety, eating disorders, psychosis and suicide) and offers a model of intervention based on support and referral using university and community resources that is integrated with the University's crisis intervention plan. Specific video scenarios were presented to reinforce the content of the session. Over the last academic year, the workshop was presented to over 600 students and staff in over 25 different presentations. The feedback to the sessions was very positive in terms of developing awareness and increased comfort levels in responding to situations involving mental health issues.

The online mental health awareness handbook is available on the [Counselling Services website](#).

(d)   A CSD newsletter was produced in the Fall '10 and Winter '11 semesters by two peer helpers. It was sent out electronically to CSD students and contained articles written by students with disabilities, peer helpers and staff. The articles included current disability issues and events of interest to CSD students. The newsletter was produced each month, and was two pages long. The CSD will continue to produce the newsletter next year.

(e)   Two peer helpers planned and conducted several presentations for campus organizations wishing to give their members some instruction on including and working with people with disabilities. Presentations were given for Residence Assistants, Safewalk volunteers and First Responders. The requests for these presentations were primarily in the late summer early fall.

(f)   The Wellness Centre promoted mental health awareness on the main campus through the following initiatives:

- two bulletin boards in the University Centre: "Stick it to Stigma" and "Stress Free Zone". At the Stress bulletin board, stress balls were made available with donated rice and balloons.
- a raffle was held using "Mental Health Jeopardy" to raise awareness.
- a documentary called "How Mad Are You?" was shown in an attempt to educate attendees about the realities of living with mental illness, the fact that recovery is possible, and the harm of stigma.
- over 500 "Students in Touch" packages were distributed in residence, which included ways to deal with stress as well as places to go for help.

- inspirational quotes were drawn in chalk on the pavement around campus

The Wellness Centre hopes to continue its community involvement in the upcoming year and further develop collaborative programming with CSD to address increasing mental health issues at the University.

(g)   Aside from the AODA work outlined in section 3, the HREO promoted accessibility through the following initiatives:

- hosted the Manager of the Disability Centre (*Càtedra d'Accessibilitat: arquitectura, disseny i tecnologia per a tothom)* at the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (*Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya,* Barcelona, Spain). An exchange of information on disability and accessibility at both institutions occurred;
- joined the CSA Accessibility Working Group;
- joined the Campus Master Plan Steering Committee.

(h)   The CSA conducted several accessible event planning workshops for some student groups. Further accessible event planning workshops will be held in the next year.

(i)   OOL staff attended this past year's accessibility conference as an important component of education and awareness. Furthermore, OOL encouraged online instructors and distance education support staff to attend the conference in order to spread the awareness of accessibility issues, possibilities, and accomplishments. COLES will continue to support this activity

(j)   The University hosted the annual Guelph Wheels in Action event. This 2.5 kilometre wheel/walk through main campus and wheelchair sports demonstration event raised over $9,000 for quality of life initiatives for people with spinal cord injuries. All of the proceeds will remain in the area to assist individuals with equipment needs, recreation and other initiatives that enhance the quality of life of those with spinal cord injuries. There are plans to host the event at the University next year.

4.3   Information Resources and Adaptive Technology

Information Resources

(a)   The University of Guelph held its third annual Accessibility Conference on May 31/June 1 of this year. The program was expanded this year to include a keynote speaker (David Lepofsky), 41 sessions, a panel discussion, two workshops, an evening of theatre focused on disability issues and a participant-driven A11ycamp.   Total attendance on the Tuesday of the Conference, including registrants, speakers and sponsors, was 232. The total attendance on the Wednesday was 222. 53 of the registrants were internal. The Conference Organizing Committee will continue to look for ways to grow and improve the Conference in future years.

(b)   In the 2011/12 strategic update to its integrated plan, the Library has committed to implementing "...the recommendations of the accessibility review of the Library's "soft services" (the Sanderson report), which will complement the physical facilities review already completed and enable full participation in the "academic town square" for people with disabilities and assist the Library in meeting AODA obligations."   A process for implementing the report was created during the summer of 2011 and focuses on: an accessibility review of Library services; the creation of accessible service procedures; and the development of formats and forums for

sharing these procedures, as well as other accessible amenities in the Library, with our patrons.

Adaptive Technology

(c)   With the support of the Birk's Foundation, the Library has expanded its licensing for the adaptive technology programs, Kurzweil 3000 and Dragon Naturally Speaking. The licensing for Kurzweil is both network and web-based, which means that students will be able to access the program in computer labs maintained by the colleges (as they are currently able to access Jaws and Zoomtext) and also for on-campus work and volunteer opportunities. The web-licensed versions of Kurzweil 3000 will enable Guelph students who cannot afford to purchase the program to use it off campus in their home study environment.

(d)   The Employment Accommodation Fund Committee has worked with Library Accessibility Services to arrange Kurzweil 3000 licenses for employees.

4.4   Student Support Services

Academic Student Support Services

(a)   The university established a committee of staff, faculty and students to review the policy that governs the University's mandate in supporting students with disabilities. The original policy was created in 1994 and because of the many changes in procedures, the more complicated needs of students with disabilities, and the increase in the number of students registered at the CSD, it was imperative to review the policy. The review was completed and Senate passed the **Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities** and the **Guidelines and Procedures on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities** in May 2011.

(b)   The CSD developed *Clockwork Technology* to allow students to book exams electronically. The new program was implemented in 2010/11 and proved to be highly successful in terms of efficiencies and student participation. The program will continue to be used.

(c)   TSS and OOL came together as one department: the Centre for Open Learning and Educational Support (COLES). COLES will be establishing a unified plan and approach to accessibility in support of enhanced teaching and learning. There will be continued efforts in areas that each former department has been focused in the past. It can be expected that through combining resources and with a renewed vision for the future, accessibility will be a key component in the future plans of COLES.

(d)   TSS accessibility-related accomplishments and future initiatives (as COLES) includes:

- participation in the Desire2Learn Accessibility Interest Group (D2L-AIG). D2L-AIG has been working directly with Desire2Learn Product Designers to address accessibility issues within the product itself, as well as working to raise awareness of accessibility issues in their individual institutions and among all users. COLES will continue to work closely with D2L and be an integral part of the accessibility interest group through valuable exchange of information and learning;

- Through D2L-AIG, TSS made templates for accessible course content available to Guelph instructors;

- TSS led facilitated usability testing of Desire2Learn's mobile web framework. COLES will continue to evaluate the user experience from an accessibility point of view and apply continuous improvement to its products, services, and processes;

- TSS continued to offer one-on-one consultations with faculty in the accessible learning technology lab in the library. Faculty can schedule these sessions by contacting TSS. COLES will continue to provide recommendations and best-practices with respect to accessibility when interacting with instructors in providing teaching and learning support'

- CourseLink was upgraded to the latest release of D2L's Learning Environment, including several usability and accessibility improvements;

- CourseLink course navbar design was updated to an accessible format;

- COLES will continue to consider accessibility when supporting the classroom environment through effective space design, use of technologies, and provision of equipment

(e)   The Office of Open Learning accomplishments and initiatives (as COLES) include:

- through the Distance Education Accessibility Planning Group, OOL continued to focus efforts into incorporating accessibility standards into online course development projects. COLES will continue to establish accessibility standards in the design and development of online and offline learning solutions and recommendations for learning support material;

- OOL created a development style guide that includes accessibility considerations while designing and developing distance education courses;

- OOL's efforts in establishing accessibility standards in the multimedia support area continued during the past year. It is common practice to add captioning to media presentations and to include transcripts as an optional method of content presentation when incorporating media.

(f)   COLES will continue to conduct research that generates an awareness and education of accessibility issues leading to positive influences and continuous improvement in our processes, in teaching practices, in the learning environments, and ultimately in the learning experience for each of our students.

Non-Academic Student Support Services

(g)   The CSA Accessibility Working Group, in conjunction with the Student Affairs and Guelph Independent Living, is investigating the potential extension of Guelph community Attendant Care Services to a site on main campus specifically for University students.

4.5 Initiatives for Faculty and Staff (Human Resources and the Office of the Provost)

(a)   Parts of the Accessible Service Provision (ASP) orientation created to meet AODA requirements has been incorporated into Recruitment and Selection Committee training for the Professional, managerial and temporary exempt positions. . Targeted outreach and applicant tracking are conducted to diversify applicant pool composition. These measures aim to improve the representation of designated group members including persons with disabilities among these occupations. The training is conducted jointly by HR and HREO

(b)   HR is considering creating an ASP course to be made available through HR Learning and

Development offerings.

(c)   HR provided feedback for the public consultations of the draft Integrated Accessibility Standard, most particularly to the employment section of that draft Standard.

(d)   A mentorship opportunity for the Student Help and Advisory Centre's Human Rights and Advocacy Coordinator has been established with the HREO for the upcoming year that will include accessibility issues.

(e)   The Office of the Provost continued to conduct its appointments process with a view to eliminating accessibility barriers in the collective agreement.

(f)   The Office of the Provost, the HREO and others continue to address the barriers to closing the gaps between the external availability of faculty from the four employment equity designated groups, which include persons with disabilities, and their internal University representation. Members of faculty search committees continue to be required to attend an orientation to the principles of equity hiring. The Office of the Provost continues to remind hiring departments of the need to hold these sessions early in the process, before profile positions have been drafted. HREO staff are available to advise search committees about the drafting of position profiles to attract a diverse pool of candidates and outreach for candidates with disabilities. Early orientation will also permit search committees to discuss and perhaps agree to candidate self-identification.

(g)   The Office of Faculty and Academic Staff Relations, working with College Managers and HREO, has facilitated the process of training all Teaching Assistants and Sessional Lecturers, by ensuring remuneration of training through articulated agreements.

(h)   The Office of Faculty and Academic Staff Relations is working with the Academic Units and CUPE 3913 to establish standardized appointment procedures for Teaching Assistants and Sessional Lectureres with a view to eliminating accessibility barriers.

APPENDIX – Consolidated List of Website Addresses

Ontario. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Ontario. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Ontario. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 Integrated Accessibility Standards

Ontario. Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

University of Guelph. Accessibility Website

University of Guelph. Accommodation Partnership Program

University of Guelph. Campus Accessibility Committee

University of Guelph. Centre for Open Learning and Educational Services

University of Guelph. Employment Accommodation Fund

University of Guelph. Student Sign Language Club