



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

**FOR THE PERIOD
OCTOBER 1, 2012 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2013**

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Glossary of Acronyms

ADO	Accessibility Directorate of Ontario	HREO	Human Rights and Equity Office
AODA	<i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005</i>	HR	Human Resources
APP	Accommodation Partnership Program	IAS	Integrated Accessibility Standard
CAC	Campus Accessibility Committee	ISC	Information Services Committee
CCS	Computing and Communications Services	LAS	Library Accessibility Services
COU	Council of Ontario Universities	ODA	<i>Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001</i>
CSA	Central Student Association	OLES	Centre for Open Learning and Educational Support
CSD	Centre for Students with Disabilities	UD	Universal Design
		UID	Universal Instructional Design

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.

We are well positioned to meet the ongoing compliance requirements of the *Accessible Customer Service Standard* through our ongoing training. This year, however, much of our effort in advancing accessibility has focused on bringing the University into compliance with requirements in the *AODA Integrated Accessibility Standard* which includes information, communication and employment accessibility. There has been a high level of participation and engagement in the *Integrated Accessibility Standard* planning process at both the strategic planning level, on the Steering Committee, and at the implementation level through area-specific working groups.

The University of Guelph is committed to not only achieving compliance with the province's accessibility legislation but also 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 range of topics 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 2011-2012. The report also provides 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. A primary focus for the University this year will be to work towards meeting compliance requirements in both the Customer Service Standard and the Integrated Accessibility Standard (which combines information and communication, employment and transportation accessibility requirements). Although this accessibility plan is in response to *ODA* reporting requirements, given the high priority of the *AODA* 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. *Ontarians with Disabilities Act - Accessibility Initiatives and Plans*. Outside of the *AODA* compliance initiatives in section three, this section details other 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 regulations have been released: the Accessible Customer Service Standard and the Integrated Accessibility Standard (IAS).

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. At present, over 7,300 employees and service providers, including student volunteers, have completed the training. The University is currently following up with employees who have not completed the module. In addition, accessible customer service training occurs continually as the workforce changes and new employees join the ranks.

University policy and procedures relating to the Accessible Customer Service Standard can be found on the [accessibility website](#).

The IAS was officially released in June, 2011. This Standard combines the Information and Communication Standard, the Employment Standard and the Transportation Standard. The first requirements, with compliance due this reporting cycle, include creating individual emergency plans for employees with disabilities and ensuring public safety information is available in accessible format upon request.

The University passed a recent file review by the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario - Ministry of Community and Social Services with respect to compliance with the Accessible Customer Service Standard and these initial IAS requirements.

Given the breadth of scope of the IAS, the University created a steering committee to develop a strategic plan to meet its remaining requirements. This committee includes the AVP Human Resources, the AVP Finance and Services, the Chief Information Officer, the AVP Communications and Public Affairs, the AVP Academic, the AVP Student Affairs & Acting Director Human Rights and Equity Office, the Director of Faculty Relations, the Director of Hospitality Services and HREO staff.

Several area-specific working groups were created to address elements of the IAS including Website Accessibility, Library Accessibility, Employment, Training to Educators and Accessible Formats. These working groups are focused on identifying specific requirements and their deadlines, completing an internal gap analysis, identifying current and required resources and challenges, and developing draft compliance plans that prioritize tasks to be done.

The Steering Committee is tasked with reviewing and revising the working group plans and coordinating implementation efforts.

The University has partnered with the Council of Ontario Universities, York University and the University of Toronto to develop an Educators toolkit. It is also looking across the sector for other partnership opportunities to meet our obligations.

4. Accessibility Initiatives and Plans

This section of the report details new accessibility initiatives and significant enhancements of core programs that occurred during this reporting period as well as accessibility plans to address barriers in the coming year. 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 2011-2012:
- Renovation of the fifth floor Library washrooms to make them barrier free
 - Completion of door modifications within the OVC complex to promote accessibility
 - Completion of accessibility upgrades to the main reception counters within the Student Health Services Dept. on the first floor of the Powell Building
 - Change of door knob to lever handles in the Stewart Building (OVC) Room 1549
 - Re-deployment of an accessible teaching station from the Alexander Building extra inventory to the Crop Science Building room 116/117
 - Provision of accessible seating and tables to meet the semester by semester need to accommodate individual student's barrier free classroom requirements
 - Construction of a barrier free ramp off Reynolds Walk at the vicinity of the Richards and Crop Science Buildings
 - Installation of power door operators on the first floor of the Animal Science Building
 - Blackwood Hall ramp reconstruction

4.2 Awareness and Outreach/Addressing Attitudinal Barriers

- (a) The University hosted its fourth annual Accessibility Conference on May 31 and June 1. This internal/external conference dealt extensively with the *AODA Integrated Accessibility Standard*. As in previous year, much focus was paid to information and communications; however, this year there were a number of sessions on employment. More information about the conference is available on its [website](#) (see section 5.3(b) for details).
- (b) The CSD and the Wellness Centre hosted the One in Five Campaign. One in Five included a number of distinct events related to mental health including panel discussions, mental health training sessions, self-care events and mental health resource fair. One of the unique aspects of the event was a T shirt campaign called one in five. One in five refers to the fact that one in five Canadians will experience a mental health issue in their lifetime. Faculty and staff were asked to

wear the T shirt and in doing so spur interest and discussion about mental health. Students approached their classroom professors in the days preceding the event to ask them if they would wear the T shirt. In total 600 T shirts were distributed and worn by community members.

The CSD and Wellness Centre plans to hold a weeklong mental health awareness event in the 2012-2013 academic 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 recognizing 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.

The ALERT program is now in its third year with academic departments, student groups and Student Affairs Departments participating. These sessions last from one to three hours depending on the group. In total there have been 40 unique presentations with over 1000 participants involved. The program is specific to Guelph but the material is generic in terms of its content and can be applied to all universities.

The program has been enhanced by posting the material online. The online version is open to anyone and covers all the material that is used during our "in house" mental health sessions and includes a "test your knowledge" section which is designed to assess how well an individual has grasped the information provided. The quiz has forty questions and covers all the information provided in each of the mental health topics. Members can test their knowledge contained in the modules by simply completing the quiz.

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

- (d) The Wellness Centre promoted mental health awareness on the main campus through the following initiatives:
- In collaboration with the CSD, brought to campus [Invisibilities](#), an organization that promotes awareness, education and support of young adults living with hidden, chronic illness. The organization's mission is to break down societal misconceptions associated with invisibilities (e.g. Crohn's disease, fibromyalgia, arthritis, endometriosis, colitis, lupus etc.) that individuals face on a daily basis.
 - Prepared 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.
 - Distributed "Students in Touch" packages in residence, which included ways to deal with stress as well as places to go for help.
 - Ran a series of stress management workshops

- 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.
- (e) The Multifaith Resource Team brought To Write Love on Her Arms (TWLOHA) to the University of Guelph. TWLOHA founder Jamie Tworkowski, came to Guelph in March with the musical artist, Noah Gundersen. Tworkowski shared the story of the organization, lead a conversation about issues that millions live with but few talk about--suicide, depression and self-injury. TWLOHA has gone from a simple attempt to help one friend in 2006 to a non-profit that has been called a "global movement." Through TWLOHA, thousands of people have begun to take steps towards getting help, and many others are learning to help their friends. Tworkowski spoke about the importance of honesty and community in a way that is dynamic, conversational, raw and ultimately hopeful.
- (f) Aside from the AODA work outlined in section 3, the HREO promoted accessibility through the following initiatives:
- Participation on the CSA Accessibility Working Group;
 - Participation on the Campus Master Plan Steering Committee.
- (g) 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. OLES will continue to support this activity.
- (h) Occupational Health and Wellness launched a Mental Health Awareness Campaign and supports 3 programs: [Working Through It™](#) - a series of videos is designed to speak directly to people struggling with mental health issues; [Check-Up from the Neck Up](#) - a simple, online, private, mental health check-to identify some symptoms of common mood disorders; and the [Stress Management Clinic](#) – an on-campus program to help manage personal wellbeing.
- (i) Occupational Health and Wellness also promotes a scent-free environment.
- (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 and or recreation needs, 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 fourth annual Accessibility Conference on May 29 and 30th of this year. This year's program included a keynote from Noelle Richardson, Chief Diversity Officer for Ministry of the Attorney General, plus 47 break-out sessions, an evening of accessible cinema hosted by the National Film Board of Canada and a participant-driven "unconference" event known as A11yCamp (Accessibility Camp). Total attendance on the Tuesday of the Conference, including registrants, speakers and sponsors, was 229. The total attendance on the Wednesday was 182. 51 of the registrants were internal. More information about the conference is available on its [website](#). The Conference Organizing Committee will continue to look for ways to offer

attendees innovative, engaging and useful content on information and communication accessibility and other relevant AODA standards.

- (b) In the 2011/12 strategic update to its integrated plan, the Library 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." Although progress has been slowed due to competing priorities, the Coordinator of Library Accessibility Services is planning to begin implementing the report during the Fall of 2012.
- (c) In its 2012-2017 Integrated Plan, the Library has committed to ensuring that staff are fully informed on all AODA compliance measures and to generate "awareness, and provide education and support across campus to facilitate compliance with the AODA...as it relates to relevant copyright licenses and legislation." This is a joint initiative involving Library Accessibility Services and Library E-Reserve to ensure that University faculty, staff and grad students are aware of the twin institutional priorities of document accessibility and copyright compliance. The multi-year initiative will involve enhancing Library services for the creation of copyright-compliant and accessible document content, implementing a university-wide program of education via the Library website, targeted workshops, information sessions and one-on-one instruction, and collaborating with Centre for Open Learning and Educational Support and other university partners (e.g academic departments) to enhance awareness of AODA and copyright requirements.

Adaptive Technology

- (d) The Library's Information Technology Services (ITS) Department has installed the network-authorized version of Kurzweil 3000. Library Accessibility Services will work with ITS to ensure that campus IT staff who support student labs are made aware of the program. LAS will continue to work with ITS to ensure that the web-based version of Kurzweil 3000 (permitting off-campus use of the program by students) is also set up and that access to Dragon Naturally Speaking software within the Library is enhanced.

4.4 Student Support Services

Academic Student Support Services

- (a) The CSD revised its policies on note taking and exam accommodation services for better efficiency and to meet student needs.
- (b) The centre for Open Learning and Educational Support (OLES), formerly Teaching Support Services and the Office of Open Learning, continues to establish a unified plan and approach to accessibility in support of enhanced teaching and learning. The previously established efforts of each former department continue to move forward.
- (c) Some of OLES accessibility-related accomplishments and future initiatives include:
 - 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. OLES continues to work closely with D2L as an

integral part of the accessibility interest group taking part in this valuable exchange of information and learning;

- Through D2L-AIG, OLES made templates for accessible course content available to Guelph instructors;
- Following usability testing of Desire2Learn's mobile web framework, OLES continues to evaluate the user experience from an accessibility point of view and apply continuous improvement to its products, services, and processes;
- OLES continues to offer one-on-one consultations with faculty in the accessible learning technology lab in the library. Faculty can schedule these sessions by contacting OLES. OLES will continue to provide recommendations and best-practices with respect to accessibility when interacting with instructors in providing teaching and learning support;
- Once again, CourseLink was upgraded to the latest release of D2L's Learning Environment, including several usability and accessibility improvements;
- OLES will continue to consider accessibility when supporting the classroom environment through effective space design, use of technologies, and provision of equipment;
- Through the Distance Education Accessibility Planning Group, OLES continues to focus efforts into incorporating accessibility standards into online course development projects, including review of material. OLES will continue to establish accessibility standards in the design and development of online and offline learning solutions and recommendations for learning support material;
- OLES continues to use the development style guide that includes accessibility considerations while designing and developing distance education courses;
- OLES'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.
- OLES 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

- (d) The CSA partnered with the CSD and Guelph Independent Living to secure Ministry of Health funding to implement an on-campus attendant care program for students with disabilities. The program began in September 2012.
- (e) The CSD facilitated support groups for students with particular disabilities including: the Bipolar Support Group, the Asperger's Social Group, Building Social Confidence (Anxiety), Assertiveness Group, Dealing With School When You're Dealing with Depression, Eating Disorders Support Group, Men's Support Group, Mindfulness, Stress Management, Feel Stronger Self Esteem Group, and Building Healthy Relationships for Women.

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

- (a) Human Resources, the HREO and others have been addressing equity gaps amongst the four employment equity designated groups, including people with disabilities, between external availability and their internal University staff representation. In particular, members of the search committees for Professional and Managerial Employee Group (P&M) positions are oriented to the principles of equity hiring. P&M applicants are provided applicant tracking questionnaires to assist in furthering equity goals. Employment equity principles are also incorporated in the Recruitment and Selection Guidelines.
- (b) Parts of the Accessible Service Provision (ASP) orientation created to meet AODA requirements have been incorporated into Recruitment and Selection Committee training for the P&M Group. This training is conducted by HR.
- (c) A mentorship opportunity for the Student Help and Advisory Centre's Human Rights and Advocacy Coordinator continues and a new opportunity for an Assistant Residence Life Manager has been established with the HREO for the upcoming year that will include accessibility issues.
- (d) The Office of the Provost is in the process of developing outreach resources to assist hiring departments reach a more diverse body of applicants including people with disabilities.
- (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.

APPENDIX – Consolidated List of Website Addresses

Invisibilities

[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 Conference](#)

[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. Counselling Services](#)

[University of Guelph. Employment Accommodation Fund](#)

[University of Guelph. Occupational Health and Wellness](#)

[University of Guelph. Student Sign Language Club](#)