

Accessible Service Provision

Meeting the Needs of the Community

About this Pamphlet

This brochure serves as information to all employees about the provisions of the Customer Service Standard of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. More detailed information concerning the Standard will be provided through online and face-to-face sessions.

Ensuring Accessible Service Provision

The University provides educational services to students, as well as various facilities that support the needs of students, staff and faculty. The University is committed to ensuring its services and facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities, so that they have the same opportunities and benefits as others.

Ensuring accessible service provision includes communicating with persons with disabilities in a way which takes into account their abilities.

What Is a Disability?

Disabilities include past, present and perceived conditions. They range in type and severity and include physical, psychological, learning, intellectual, developmental, cognitive and medical disabilities, as well as hearing and vision loss.

Some disabilities are evident, such as a person with paraplegia who uses a wheelchair. However, the nature or degree of certain disabilities might render them non-evident to others. Chronic fatigue syndrome and learning disabilities for example, are non-evident conditions. Other disabilities might remain hidden as a result of their episodic nature, such as epilepsy.

A disability might become apparent over time through extended interaction or it might only become known when a disability accommodation is requested. Otherwise, the disability might remain non-evident if the individual chooses not to disclose it.

Disclosing a Disability

Persons with disabilities choose whether or not to disclose a disability based on a number of factors, including the type of relationship, the context of the interaction, their perception of the inquiry (curiosity versus assistance) and their comfort level.

Students who have a disability do not necessarily request service or accommodation or identify themselves on campus as having a disability.

Persons with disabilities who disclose information about their disability are revealing information regarding their own health and body that would ordinarily be considered private between persons who do not know each other well.

How a disclosure is received can affect how a person will approach a new situation or relationship. For example, how a professor responds to a student's disclosure can determine whether the student persists and completes the program. Disclosures should always be received respectfully and sensitively.

If you are unsure of how to assist someone with a disability, ask them - they are their own expert regarding accommodation!

Links

The University's accessibility website is available at:

www.uoguelph.ca/accessibility

The Campus Accessibility Committee is responsible for analysis of physical access issues including major construction and renovation projects, ramps, door openers, etc. Contact jselby@pr.uoguelph.ca with physical accessibility suggestions.

The Human Rights and Equity Office website is available at:

www.uoguelph.ca/hre

Universal Design (UD) is the design of products and environments to be useable by all people, without the need

for adaptation or specialized design.

Universal Instructional Design (UID) centres on a curriculum that is designed to support a broad spectrum of learners with divergent backgrounds and learning styles.

Resources for UD and UID are available at:

www.uoguelph.ca/accessibility/universaldesign

Accessible web design:

www.uoguelph.ca/accessibility/internet

More information on the AODA and the Customer Service Standard is available at:

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/>

Communications Strategy

In the coming weeks, please look for the following communications about implementing the Customer Service Standard:

1. Memo to all Deans, Chairs and Directors
2. Message in pay stub
3. Information on the University website
4. Article in "At Guelph"

Reporting Service Disruptions

The AODA requires service disruptions to be posted or communicated to individuals. This includes closure of facilities (buildings, entrances, elevators, etc.) and altered schedules (change in office hours). Notification methods can include announcements, postings on websites, emails and outgoing telephone messages.

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