# Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

This legislation places a legal obligation on the University to provide accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, building, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2014.

Under the AODA, the following Ontario Regulations establish the accessibility standards the University is required to meet as a public service provider.

- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07)
- Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11)

The University is committed to creating and maintaining an accessible university community under this Act. All procurement authorities of the University shall incorporate, where appropriate, accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities.

## What you need to do

Public sector organizations must include accessibility criteria in their processes for buying and acquiring goods, services and facilities. This means you must consider accessibility, where possible, along with other criteria like the quality and cost of the items. You must also incorporate accessible design and features where possible.

**For example:**

- Santosh is buying a new printer for the office. There are accessible models that are easier to use for people in wheelchairs, but none will work with the company network. Instead, Santosh buys a regular printer and puts it on a lower table to make it more accessible for employees who use a wheelchair. When it's time to buy new computers or replace the company network, he plans to choose technologies that will work with an accessible printer.
- Stacy is looking for a conference centre to host her company's annual staff day. Cost and location are important, of course. But Stacy also ensures the facility has an accessible entrance and washrooms, as well as staff who are trained in providing accessible customer service.
- The Town of Anywhere considers accessibility in all of its buying decisions. Where possible, the Town tells vendors in writing the accessibility criteria and features it will consider. The Town also provides guidelines on how it will evaluate vendor proposals based on accessibility. Where it is not practical to address accessibility concerns, the Town will explain why in an accessible format, on request.
- Jonas was buying new computer monitors for his company. He requires the monitors to offer adjustable colours and contrast so they would be accessible to people with vision loss. The monitors also have to include buttons that users could identify by feeling them and be able to operate easily with one hand. Finally, Josh asked the vendors to ensure that the instructions on using the monitors are available in accessible formats.
- Omar is opening a new office downtown. When viewing possible locations, Omar looks for a visible alarm system to alert people with hearing loss. He also looks for elevator buttons that use raised lettering for people who are blind.
- When interviewing consultants to train staff, Linda asks the companies how they would accommodate people with different disabilities. She also asks if they provide training materials in accessible formats.

## Questions to ask about accessibility

When you're buying and acquiring goods, services or facilities, you should ask these questions to ensure your meeting accessibility standards.

**For goods**

- Can the product be used by someone:
    - in a seated position?
    - using one hand, with limited upper body strength?
    - with limited fine motor skills?
    - with vision loss or low vision?
    - with hearing loss?
- Does the product meet ergonomic standards?
- Can the product be customized to meet different needs?
- Are instructions for using the product clear and easy to follow?
- Are support materials (e.g., manuals or training materials) available in accessible formats at no extra charge?

**For services**

- Does the firm provide accessible customer service [1]?
- Can the service provider accommodate the needs of people of all abilities? For example, if you're hiring someone to do research for you, do their surveys and interviews accommodate people with different types of disabilities?
- Will the company use accessible signage, audio and/or print materials? For example, if you're hiring an event coordinator, will they use high contrast signs for the event?

**For facilities**

- Can someone using a mobility aid (e.g., wheelchair or walker) move around the facility?
- Are signs placed at an accessible height?
- Does the facility have emergency procedures to assist people with disabilities?

## If accessibility is not an option

If you cannot find or use an accessible product, service or facility, you must be prepared to:

- explain why
- provide your explanation in an accessible format or with communication supports, when requested

To learn more about the AODA requirements, please visit the University's Accessibility website [2]and Human Rights and Equity website [3].

**Source URL:**https://www.uoguelph.ca/finance/departments-services/procurement-and-payables/getting-started-procurement/accessibility-ontarians

**Links**
[1] https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-make-customer-service-accessible [2] http://www.uoguelph.ca/accessibility/ [3] http://www.uoguelph.ca/hre/disability.shtml