

# Status Report on Accessibility

May 2020 to May 2021

Bureau des droits de la personne  
Human Rights Office



uOttawa

# Forward

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## Accessibility at the University of Ottawa during the COVID-19 pandemic

Shortly after the release of the uOttawa Accessibility Report 2019–2020 the University was required to plan for an academic year prioritizing remote learning, teaching and working. On one hand, this requirement raised many concerns for the general uOttawa community and particularly for community members with disabilities. On the other, it has helped lift many accessibility barriers, generate opportunities and foster a greater sense of belonging in our campus community.

The mandatory health and safety measures related to the pandemic over a prolonged time period meant that the University needed to identify all community members who could learn, teach and work remotely over an extended period.

This meant looking at the essential requirements for every course, program and job on campus. Flexible yet robust, accessible, bilingual and sustainable solutions were necessary to accommodate learners, teachers and workers in different time zones and different home situations. More resources needed to be mobilized, and rapid long-term investment in technological infrastructure and IT support for staff, professors and students became a top priority. Flexible, inclusive long-term social distancing health and safety protocols were put in place and extensive accessible and inclusive campaigns were used to keep our campus community abreast of these changes.

Large-scale online climate surveys were also conducted to assess adaptation to the new learning, teaching and working environment as well as the mental health of our campus community. In addition to remote learning, teaching and working methods, online ways to socialize were also developed to maintain a sense of community and belonging. These are just few of the innovative and unprecedented steps taken by the University to help everyone learn, teach and work safely and stay connected.

This year many of our uOttawa community members have experienced a type of accommodation for the first time and now know first hand the importance of receiving proper, timely accommodation to help them contribute and thrive in their learning, teaching or working environment. This year also showcased how the University of Ottawa can efficiently develop disability-inclusive approaches and find innovative ways to respond to accommodation needs swiftly and effectively.

Let's work together to ensure these great lessons are remembered and that the steps taken during this pandemic set a precedent to help build a more inclusive campus.

*Human Rights Office Team*

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# Background

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## Legislation

The [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) (AODA) sets out a process to assist public sector organizations such as the University of Ottawa to become fully accessible by 2025. According to the [Ontario regulations on integrated accessibility standards](#) (OIAS), which took effect in 2011, the University must take measures to become accessible in five areas: customer service, information and communications, transportation, employment and design of public spaces. These areas are governed by general provisions that relate to creating accessibility policies; accessibility plans; procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities; training; and submission of reports on accessibility.

## Status reports

According to section 4(1) of [Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards](#), under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, the University of Ottawa must publish reports on the measures taken to implement the strategy set out in its Multi-year Accessibility Plan.

## About this report

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### Objectives

This document reports on the action plans that services committed to undertaking in 2020–2021 as part of the [2019–2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan](#).

The objectives of this legally mandated document are:

- ✓ To monitor the University of Ottawa's progress
- ✓ To identify barriers that must be eliminated to fulfil commitments set out in the plan
- ✓ As required, to review the strategies outlined in the 2019–2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan

### Scope

This document is limited to the annual and ongoing commitments stated in the [2019–2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan](#) for 2020–2021. It also covers the 2019–2020 commitments delayed due to COVID-19 and identified in the Status Report on Accessibility 2019–2020. To learn more about HRO commitments with respect to other legislation, see the [Human Rights Office plans and reports](#).

# Roles and responsibilities

The Human Rights Office, working with the faculties and services, is responsible for compiling and evaluating the status reports on accessibility plans submitted by various units under [Policy 119 — Accessibility](#), to design, draft and publish University-wide reports.

Services designated under Policy 119 must annually submit accessibility reports to the Human Rights Office according to HRO processes and timelines, in accordance with [accessibility rules for educational institutions in Ontario](#).

## Designated services

- ✓ Procurement
- ✓ Human Resources
- ✓ Communications Directorate
- ✓ Facilities
- ✓ Protection Services
- ✓ Library

## Methodology

In June 2021, the Human Rights Office received status reports on the progress in meeting multi-year accessibility plans from the services designated under [Policy 119 — Accessibility](#). These plans were required to include, among other items, a status report on the commitments undertaken in accordance with the [2019–2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan](#).

The HRO relied on this information to draft this report, which was submitted to the Administration Committee for information purposes prior to publication.

## Other services consulted

The Teaching and Learning Support Services (TLSS) also provided information on the commitments the Student Academic Success Service (SASS) made as part of the 2019–2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan.

## Consultations with members of the University community living with disabilities

The Annual Status Report 2020–2021 on the 2019–2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan was presented to the [uOaccessible Advisory Board](#) and the Administration Committee (AC). See the [Annex 1 Report feedback from uOaccessible board members](#) for more information.

Members of the uOaccessible Advisory Board include two staff members living with a disability, two students living with a disability (one undergraduate and one graduate) and one representative of the Centre for Students with Disabilities.

# Status report on 2020–2021 commitments

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## Human Rights Office

### Plans and reports on accessibility

The current annual status report describes the progress between 2020 and 2021 on measures undertaken to implement the strategies described in the [2019–2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan](#). The Human Rights Office compiled and assessed the designated services' status reports on meeting the commitments they made in their multi-year accessibility plans to draft this annual status report. A draft University-wide progress report was shared with the AC and the uOaccessible Advisory Board for information purposes.

## Accessibility feedback process

### uOaccessible Advisory Board

At the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year, the University's new [uOaccessible Advisory Board](#) held its first meeting. Meetings are held online every two weeks. The focus this year was to address accessibility-related needs for our campus members with disabilities navigating remote working and learning settings and to create the [board framework](#). Board members provided high-quality advice in a short amount of time, and under challenging conditions. They also met with Noël Badiou, director of the Human Rights Office, to discuss the uOaccessible Advisory Board Consultative Framework and with Alain Erdmer, director general of the Teaching and Learning Support Service, to advise on disability-inclusive remote learning approaches during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Develop an accessible online feedback form

Clarification on the difference between providing feedback and filing a discrimination complaint was added to our accessible [Feedback, Comments and Suggestions webpage](#). This page is available on the Accessibility Hub and Human Rights Office websites. The creation of an online form has been postponed until the website migration to Drupal 8 and 9. A deeper analysis of the online form security measures available to the Human Rights Office once the migration is complete will be needed before adopting a form.

## Inform the services responsible for applying the AODA of the Human Rights Office online consultation service

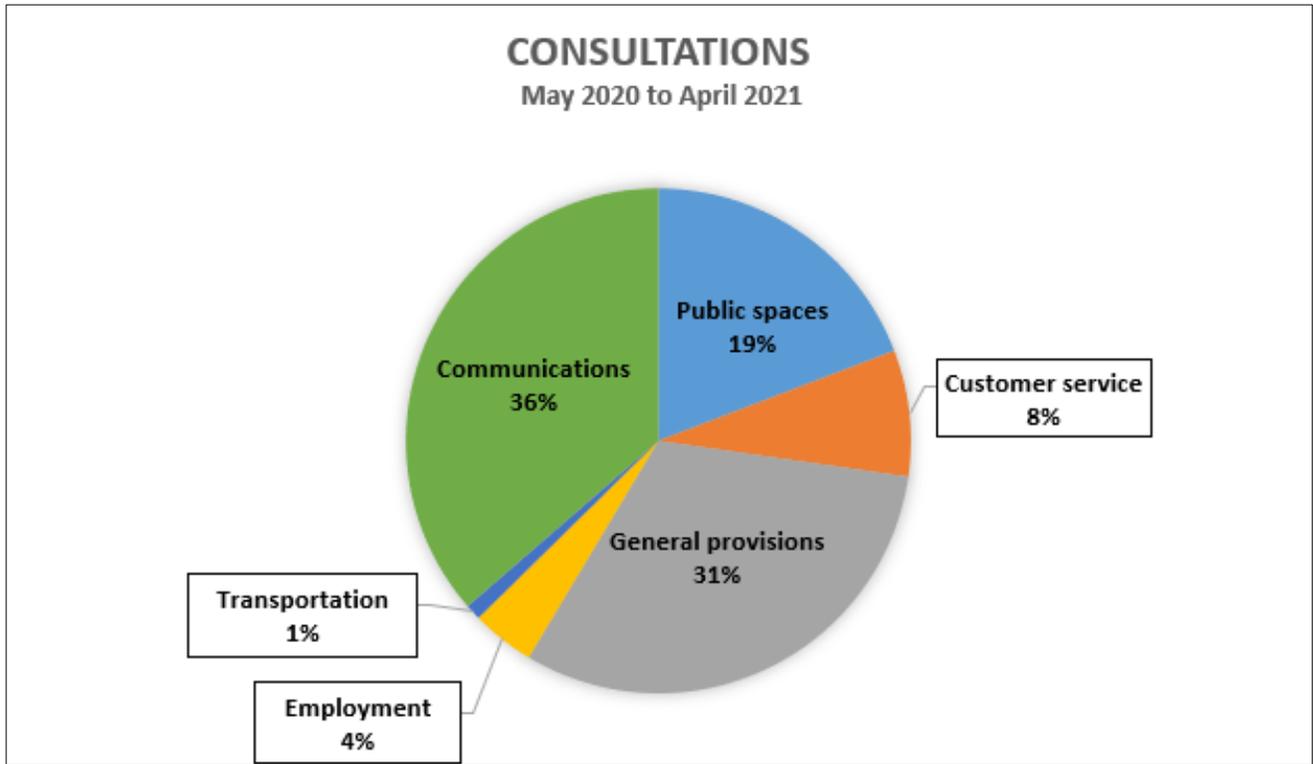
- ✓ The new uOaccessible Advisory Board was publicized in University online communications (internal and external) on December 3, 2020, to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
- ✓ The Human Rights Office has been working in collaboration with Information Technology to integrate consultations in the new PPM framework and to have students with disabilities included in the TLSS inclusive education feedback and testimonial exercise.
- ✓ The Human Rights Office has been working with Facilities to ensure students with disabilities are

included in the development and renovation of public spaces on campus.

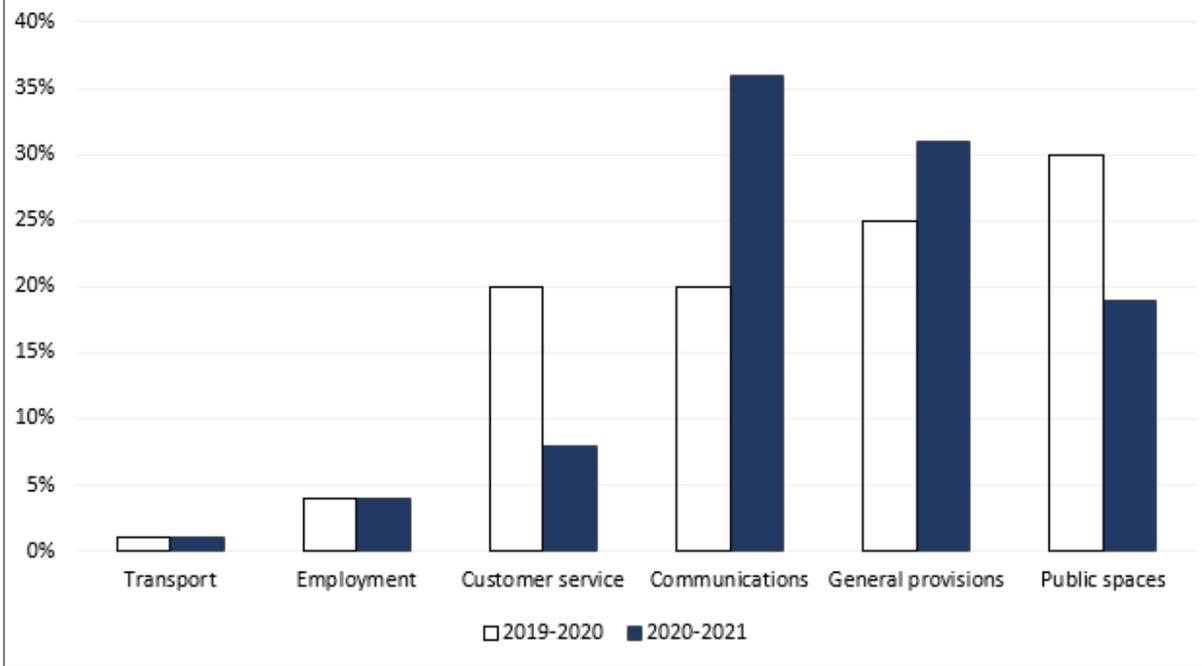
## Advisory services

### Requests by service and by faculty

- ✓ Between May 2020 and April 2021 (one year), the HRO fulfilled 154 requests for advice from services and faculties on the following accessibility standards:
- ✓ 30 regarding the design of public spaces (19%)
- ✓ 48 regarding general provisions on accessibility (procurement) (31%)
- ✓ 56 regarding information and communication standards (36%)
- ✓ 13 regarding customer service standards (8%)
- ✓ 6 regarding employment standards (4%)
- ✓ 1 regarding transportation standards (1%)



# COMPARISON



## Internal committees

The HRO sits on the following internal committees:

- ✓ Web Community Advisory Group
- ✓ Administrative Services Modernization Program
- ✓ Advisory committee on the design of public spaces
- ✓ Mandatory training committee

## External committees

The HRO sits on the following external committees:

- ✓ City of Ottawa Winter Maintenance Quality Standards Review Project Team
- ✓ UDL Training Project
- ✓ D2L Accessibility Advisory Board
- ✓ eCampus Ontario Virtual Learning Strategy
- ✓ Canadian Accessibility Network (CAN)
- ✓ Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee

The HRO advises the following committees:

- ✓ Architecture Review Board
- ✓ Committee on essential program requirements

## Policy on accessibility

The Human Rights Office has an ongoing commitment to work with the designated services and other services who have committed to reviewing and developing administrative procedures, guidelines and practices under the [2019–2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan](#). The progress on this work can be found under their respective sections below.

## Client service

### 2020–2021 commitments postponed until 2021–2022

The following commitment was postponed:

- ✓ Publish a procedure and guidelines concerning service animals on campus.

### Additional details

This commitment was postponed to give stakeholders more room, time and assistance to better address urgently needed COVID-19 measures.

# General requirements

## New 2021–2022 training commitment

A commitment to provide interim mandatory training on customer service and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation requirements as they relate to employees' work and to keep records on dates and number of participants has been added.

### Justification:

On January 1, 2021, software company Adobe stopped supporting and updating its Flash Player. This means that the video portion of the mandatory Accessibility Standards for Customer Service training (online workshop) is no longer useable. At this time, employees are required to use the text-only training.

Due to the limit of the resources available (government and university) to develop the extensive material required for mandatory AODA, Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and bilingualism policy and practice training, we are relying on the free training made available by the Ontario government. The University of Ottawa has been working with the Ontario government to help ensure that the French training on the Integrated Accessibility Standard Requirements (IASR), *Vers l'accessibilité*, is on par with the English version before making it mandatory for employees. Technological compatibility between the government training and the University's system has also presented a challenge with regards to using SCORM.

The Human Rights Office is also looking into interim solutions to merge the outdated Customer Service Training with the tabled new training requirements under the Postsecondary Education Accessibility Standards, the Information and Communication Accessibility Standard and the Health Care Accessibility Standard.

# Procurement

## Purchasing accessible goods and services

### Ongoing commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, Procurement worked on the following commitments:

- ✓ Promote the procurement policy, along with associated policies, procedures and practices as they are amended.
- ✓ Integrate accessibility elements when updating procurement practices.

### 2020–2021 commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, Procurement completed the following commitments:

- ✓ Procurement website: All new documents uploaded to the Procurement website (for example, policies, procedures and training records) are now accessible. Any non-accessible documents are simultaneously uploaded with accessible versions.
- ✓ Procurement communications: All new campus-wide communication by Procurement (for example, updates on special projects) is now accessible.
- ✓ New procurement policy: Procurement's new policy highlights accessibility obligations in greater detail than the previous version. The previous policy mentioned Procurement's commitment to meet accessibility legislation but failed to guide staff on what to do. The new version (1) acknowledges accessibility laws and (2) advises staff to consider accessibility design, criteria and features in their procurement processes.
- ✓ New procurement procedure: Procurement's new procedure provides clearer guidance to staff on accessible procurement. The previous version was silent on accessibility. The new version provides links to (1) Ontario's Accessibility Rules for Procurement and (2) the University of Ottawa Human Rights Office (in case staff need help on incorporating accessible design, criteria and features in their purchases).

### Postponed 2019–2020 commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, Procurement completed the following commitments postponed from the previous year:

- ✓ Support the integration of accessibility standards in new IT and construction terms of reference.
- ✓ Ensure that new documents uploaded to the Procurement website comply with accessibility standards.

## **Additional details**

Digital technologies: The pandemic brought an increased need to purchase digital technologies to support distance learning and remote work. This coincided with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility's new IT accessibility requirements. The Human Rights Office and Communications team provided additional support to ensure related procurement processes complied with the AODA requirements. The HRO is collaborating with Information Technology and Procurement to ensure capacity is being developed to meet the procurement accessibility requirements.

# Communications content team

## Accessible websites

### Ongoing commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, the communication content team worked on the following commitments:

#### CAPACITY BUILDING:

- ✓ Build an on-campus community of experts in website and web content accessibility and provide expert advice on web accessibility for large-scale University projects.
- ✓ Renew staff training on accessibility of websites and web content; train campus stakeholders and raise awareness of web accessibility issues.
- ✓ Ensure access to up-to-date online reference material and work tools.
- ✓ Extend commitments under the plan to the actions of other campus bodies (e.g., Architecture Review Board, information and communications committee, Procurement, Human Rights Office, Human Resources, Language Services and the Teaching and Learning Support Service).

#### MONITORING:

- ✓ Ensure accessibility of officially recognized websites under the control of the University through an automated audit, notification and follow-up solution.
- ✓ Regularly conduct audits of website accessibility and faculty and service compliance.
- ✓ Conduct an accessibility review of the University's website and make improvements.
- ✓ Regularly produce reports on web accessibility as well as notices of non-compliance to the University community.
- ✓ Report on the state of web accessibility at the University of Ottawa.
- ✓ Work with those responsible for non-compliant websites to help them meet WCAG 2.0 AA requirements.

### 2020–2021 commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, the communication content team worked on the following commitments:

- ✓ Training: Develop guidelines on legal responsibilities and creation of accessible content for social media, web and mobile-based applications; video production; and creation of accessible PDFs and online forms.
- ✓ Enumerate and consolidate campus tools, online resources, best practices, reference websites and expertise related to accessibility.

## 2020–2021 commitments postponed until 2021–2022

The following commitment was postponed:

- ✓ Creation and implementation of the 2020–2024 web accessibility operational plan in collaboration with other University stakeholders.

### Additional details

Due to limited resources available (government and university), the communication's team was unable to receive the additional staff requested to help implement the 2020–2024 web accessibility operational plan. In the context of upgrading the web platform and infrastructure, governance will be revised to reflect the new roles and responsibilities required for the new solution. Guidelines related to web governance will be included in the web style guide as part of the [Web Perspective Project](#).

The communication's team used funding from the Web Perspective Project to provided the following five-part training on web accessibility held on five consecutive Thursdays starting May 20, Global Accessibility Awareness Day:

1. Overview of Web Accessibility Legal Requirements (*May 20*)
2. SiteImprove as a Web Accessibility Monitoring Tool (*May 27*)
3. Web Accessibility for Content Creators (*June 3*)
4. Accessible PDFs: Considerations and Implications (*June 10*)
5. Creating Accessible Videos Everyone Can Enjoy (*June 17*)

Recordings of these bilingual training sessions, resources and notes are available on the Sway [Web Accessibility Training pages](#). The communications team will review this training at the end of the Web Perspective Project and we will work to make it mandatory.

## Human Resources

### Accessibility training

#### Ongoing commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, Human Resources worked on the following commitments:

- ✓ Include the number of people who have taken the mandatory accessibility training in the annual status reports on this plan.
- ✓ Include a member of the Human Rights Office on the committee for mandatory training. Part of this committee's mandate is to ensure that the University complies with government requirements concerning mandatory training, to oversee other types of training and to implement measures to ensure training quality.
- ✓ Include Human Resources initiatives to promote mandatory training for University employees in

annual status reports on this plan.

### 2020–2024 commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, Human Resources completed the following commitment:

- ✓ Work with the Human Rights Office to provide training on universal design for learning to University trainers (see [Teaching and Learning Support Service](#)).

### 2020–2021 commitments postponed until 2021–2022

The following commitment was postponed:

- ✓ Clarify information regarding target audiences for mandatory training.

### Additional details

Below are the numbers of employees who took the training required under the AODA:

	<i>Training</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Faculties</i>	<i>Services</i>
<i>Travaillons ensemble : Le Code des droits de la personne de l'Ontario et la LAPHO</i>	3,548	773	2,775	
<i>Working Together: The Code and the AODA</i>	10,337	1,751	8,586	
<i>Normes d'accessibilité pour les services à la clientèle</i>	5,390	807	4,583	
<i>Accessibility Standards for Customer Service</i>	15,475	2,155	13,320	

## Workplace accommodation measures for employees with disabilities

### 2020–2024 commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, Human Resources worked on the following commitment:

- ✓ Provide managers with information on accommodation measures as part of Mental Health First Aid Training and during the Leadership and Management Program workshop on this topic.

### 2019–2020 commitments postponed until 2021-2022

The following commitment was postponed again:

- ✓ Modify the managers' guide on return to work for employees on disability-related leave created in 2018 to include advice and best practices on facilitating workplace reintegration of employees.

## 2020–2021 commitments postponed until 2021–2022

The following commitments were postponed:

- ✓ Finalize the onboarding project, in which information on accessibility will be further developed.
- ✓ Include in the annual status reports on this plan the number of managers who have benefitted from consultations, support and training by Human Resources on workplace accommodation measures for employees with disabilities.

### Additional details

The Human Rights Office has been working in collaboration with Human Resources, Protection Services and the Office of Risk Management to ensure that campus safety measures during the COVID-19 pandemic respect the needs of employees with disabilities. For example: transparent masks were made available, workplace accommodation for remote work was offered and worker mental health surveys were conducted.

On September 9, 2020, the Human Rights Office launched the online *Be uOaccessible!* campaign and trained all new employees hired as health ambassadors on the importance of being mindful of disability-related needs of employees and students when enforcing safety measures on campus.



# Teaching and Learning Support Service

## Training for educators

### Ongoing commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, Human Resources worked on the following commitments:

- ✓ Work with the Human Rights Office to include the number of professors who have taken TLSS training on accessible learning in future annual status reports (see chart in “Human Resources” section).
- ✓ Include in the annual accessibility reports TLSS initiatives that promote training on accessibility issues for professors who are members of the APUO and the APTPUO.

### Additional details

The Human Rights Office has also worked in collaboration with the Teaching and Learning Support Service to provide guidance and create resources for faculties and professors to help ensure that remote learning complies with the AODA.

For example, on June 3, 2020, guidance was published in the Gazette article “[Accessibility during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).” The resource for professors *Accessibility in Five (5) Steps*, and a list of pros and cons of various streaming tools was also made available on the [TLSS “Teaching remotely” page](#).

The Human Rights Office, in collaboration with the TLSS, worked with nine other universities to receive a government accessibility grant to produce accessible, bilingual and customizable micro-training with certification in accessible universal design and learning with an intersectional lens.

TLSS continues to include various aspects of accessibility in all of the workshops it offers, to educate professors on this important topic and their obligations. In addition, TLSS is redesigning its web pages on inclusive education to cover all elements covered in this report. This material should be available in the fall.

### Course Design Webinar Series \*

This series addressed the key aspects of course design (including the importance of considering the diversity of learners and inclusive pedagogy) and the shift to distance learning.

First series: April 2020	APUO Members		APTPUO Members	
	French Webinar	English Webinar	French Webinar	English Webinar
Step 1 — Mapping	42	29	39	75
Step 2 — Communicating	45	31	35	83
Step 3 — Building Content	31	26	34	70
<b>Grand total: 540 participants</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>228</b>

*Note: Figures reflect the fact that many participants attended more than one webinar.*

Second series: May 2020	APUO Members		APTPUO Members	
	French Webinar	English Webinar	French Webinar	English Webinar
Step 1 — Mapping	73	103	64	61
Step 2 — Communicating	62	91	58	55
Step 3 — Building Content	41	59	49	48
<b>Grand total : 764 participants</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>164</b>

*Note: Figures reflect the fact that many participants attended more than one webinar.*

### Training for teaching assistants

TLSS also regularly offers training for teaching assistants on diverse of ways of learning (pedagogical inclusion). This training was offered again this year (in webinar format) in January 2021.

**Accessibilité et diversité des façons  
d'apprendre : rôles et stratégies de l'AE**

**Accessibility and diversity for learning:  
roles and strategies for TAs**

9 participants	23 participants
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# Protection Services

## Information on emergency procedures, plans and public safety

### Ongoing commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, Protection Services worked on the following commitments:

- ✓ Maintain the [Are You Ready? website](#), which includes the procedure for members of the University community with disabilities to request a personalized emergency plan.

### 2020–2021 commitments postponed until 2021–2022

The following commitments were postponed:

- ✓ Include accessibility-related elements in emergency exercises on campus to prepare Protection Services members and ensure that members of the University community with disabilities are informed.
- ✓ Hold annual meetings with the Human Rights Office's senior policy officer, accessibility and diversity, to ensure that emergency preparedness programs and training address the requirement to meet the needs of members of the University community with disabilities.

### Additional details

Due to COVID-19 pandemic working at home orders, there were no emergency exercises this year (other than mandatory fire drills in the few occupied residences).

Many measures were taken to ensure COVID-19 health and safety measures on campus were inclusive regarding members of our community with disabilities required to be on campus. For example, clear masks were made available on request and building closures took into account access to computer labs by opening adjacent buildings with an access ramp.

## Maintenance of accessible elements

### Ongoing commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, Protection Services worked on the following commitments:

- ✓ Ensure that building entrances and emergency exits are accessible, safe and clear during patrols.
- ✓ Work with Facilities when problems are reported concerning accessible elements in public spaces (e.g., elevators, road and sidewalk conditions, snow removal).

## Accessible parking spaces

### PARKING AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION OFFICE

#### Ongoing commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, Protection Services worked on the following commitments:

- ✓ Provide accessible parking spaces in excess of the minimum ratio needed, when practicable.
- ✓ Minimize the impact on accessible parking spaces during renovation or construction projects.

For more on initiatives related to these requirements, [see the Facilities section](#).

#### 2020-2021 commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, Protection Services worked on the following commitments:

- ✓ Clearly define responsibilities for managing taxi vouchers provided by SASS — Academic Accommodations.

#### Additional details

The commitment to define responsibilities for managing the taxi vouchers was postponed to give stakeholders more room, time and assistance to better address urgently needed COVID-19 measures.

The Human Rights Office worked with Protection Services to ensure that adequate accessible parking spaces remained available for students and employees who had to be on campus during the stay-at-home order.

In addition, the Human Rights Office was consulted on the acquisition of a new accessible shuttle service and training requirements for the drivers.

In general, accessible parking spaces are not used to install temporary construction site bins or equipment.

In terms of the impact of construction projects, a plan to limit encroachment on accessible parking spaces has been drafted. This plan is the result of a joint effort between the project lead and Protection Services.

# Facilities

## Outdoor spaces, service counters and waiting areas

### Ongoing commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, Facilities worked on the following commitments:

- ✓ Ensure maintenance of an accessible, interactive campus map once it is developed.
- ✓ Consult members of the University community with disabilities to decide on priority initiatives and measure progress.

### 2020–2021 commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, Facilities worked on the following commitments:

- ✓ Update washrooms and outdoor spaces in all priority locations as determined by the needs of the University community and the results of the Quadrangle Architects accessibility study conducted between 2015 and 2018.
- ✓ Improve classroom accessibility in Simard and Hagen halls.
- ✓ Alter service counters in all priority locations as determined by the needs of the University community and the results of the Quadrangle Architects accessibility study conducted between 2015 and 2018.
- ✓ Install accessible picnic tables and increase the number of benches in outdoor spaces in all priority locations as determined by the needs of the University community and the results of the Quadrangle Architects accessibility study conducted between 2015 and 2018.
- ✓ Develop an online map showing construction areas and accessible detours.
- ✓ Develop a rapid response program for accommodation requests from University students and employees.

### Postponed 2019–2020 commitment

From May 2020 to May 2021, Facilities worked on the following commitment:

- ✓ Modernized and replaced platform lifts and stairlifts for wheelchairs, with 100% of the project complete.

### Additional details

On December 3, 2020 (International Day of Persons with Disabilities) Facilities took part in a conversation with the Centre for Students with Disabilities to discuss accessibility plans and priority initiatives.

In summer 2020, Facilities provided additional information to the Human Rights Office so it could maintain current information on the accessible interactive campus map.

All platform lifts and stairlifts for wheelchairs have now been modernized and are operating with the same key. Facilities is now looking into converting key access to a card system.

Facilities hired the consulting firm Adaptability Canada to help develop a five-year plan to improve accessibility and inclusion features on 40 of our buildings.

The University also took advantage of the complimentary Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) to receive ratings for four of its buildings.

# Library

## 2020–2021 commitments

From May 2020 to May 2021, the Library worked on the following commitments:

- ✓ Update guidelines for finding and requesting titles in accessible formats as well as information on technologies and services available to University community members with disabilities on its “Accessibility” page. A new scan-on-demand service that was added during the pandemic now offers PDF scans with OCR (Optical Character Recognition) for all users.
- ✓ Work with the Human Rights Office to receive feedback from students with disabilities who use the library (through surveys, focus groups, one on one interviews, etc.) and hold discussions with representatives of students with disabilities to identify accessibility-related barriers.
- ✓ Raise library staff and professors’ awareness of universal design principles through training and presentations.
- ✓ Develop online training on inclusive learning practices to be adopted by library employees who provide information and instruction to members of the University community.
- ✓ Develop internal processes to reduce the number of steps required for library users to request and receive accessible material and to make the process as transparent as possible.
- ✓ Increase collaboration and knowledge sharing on accessibility issues across campus, through outreach to the UOSU Centre for Students with Disabilities.
- ✓ Increase communication with campus stakeholders who deal with accessibility issues, including SASS and TLSS.

## 2019–2020 commitments postponed until 2021–2022

The following commitments were postponed:

- ✓ Provide refresher training to library staff on accessibility standards for customer service and production of accessible documents.
- ✓ Work with the vice-provost, graduate and postdoctoral studies, and the faculties to encourage students to submit their theses to the uO Research digital repository in an accessible format.

## Additional details

The Library has worked in collaboration with the Human Rights Office and Teaching and Learning Support Service to provide online workshops on how it can assist professors on access to and provision of accessible educational resources and online information for students on access to accessible books from home.

In response to the pandemic, the Library has facilitated provision of accessible formats for students and professors with perceptual disabilities by signing on with the HathiTrust Accessible Text Request Service and the Centre for Equitable Library Access, increasing availability of accessible books for students.

The Library also created a new accessible workstation room at the Brian Dickson Law Library, which includes a new door with a lever handle and window, and changes to lighting and paint. Installation of an automatic door opener for this room is forthcoming.

## Partners

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The Human Rights Office would like to sincerely thank all those who helped produce this document:

- Procurement: Monica Mendoza
- Human Resources: Marie Parish and Sophie Ménard
- External Relations: Marie-Cine Renaud, and Mélanie De La Chevrotière and Stephanie Jackson-MacKenzie (Communications Directorate)
- Protection Services: Dana Fleming and Luc Nadon
- Facilities: Marc-Antoine Joly, Geoffrey Frigon and Jodi Courchaine
- Library: Cecilia Tellis and Megan McMeekin
- Teaching and Learning Support Service (TLSS): Pascal Wickert and Alain Erdmer

The Human Rights Office would also like to warmly thank the members of the University community who took the time to share their experiences and make recommendations to assist the University in its quest for accessibility.

# **Annex 1**

## **Report feedback from uOaccessible board members**

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July 13,2021

### **Human Rights Office Status Report on Accessibility May 2020 to May 2021**

On pages 11 and 12 of the report, the board notes that statistics are provided for mandatory training required under the AODA. There are statistics on training on the Customer Services standards and the Human Rights Code. Missing from the mandatory AODA training is training on the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The board would like to see the creation of this mandatory training as a priority item.

### **Human Rights Office 2020–2021 report**

This report notes the impact that the pandemic has had on students and other members of the uOttawa community. This includes mention of additional barriers faced by students with disabilities in the new online learning environment. The board notes that the transition to online learning brought about more inclusive and accessible options for students with disabilities. It recommends that these options remain in place even when in-person classes and services resume. We suggest that the HRO provide guidelines or best practices to the uOttawa community to ensure that going forward, the inclusive practices put in place during the pandemic will remain in place. An example of this would be continuing to offer flexibility in course delivery and virtual options for students.

The board also suggests that additional details be provided in the report related to requests received by the HRO. The report notes that the category of disability had the largest number of requests. We would like to see this broken down further, if possible. For example, could details be provided on what service area requests concern accessibility complaints related to course delivery, campus services, etc.?