

Status Report on Accessibility

May 2023 to May 2024

Bureau des droits de la personne
Human Rights Office



uOttawa

Foreword

Lessons learned over the past five years

The Human Rights Office 2022–2023 Annual Report noted that the main concern regarding accessibility at the University of Ottawa related to the application of its 2019–2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan. At the request of senior management, the Human Rights Office identified five priorities in connection with the commitments made in the plan, which were to be completed by the time the accessibility report was submitted to the ministry in 2023. We worked with the stakeholders responsible for those priorities and were able to honour the commitments in time. The following 2023–2024 progress report addresses the five priorities, in anticipation of the drafting of the new 2025–2030 Multi-year Accessibility Plan.

Forging ahead

The Government of Ontario, together with persons living with different kinds of disabilities, has drawn up a list of minimum mandatory actions that institutions must incorporate into their processes in order to make living, learning and work spaces in the province more accessible. The requirements are set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). We intend to help the University focus its efforts in the 2025–2030 Multi-year Accessibility Plan on meeting core commitments, particularly those that affect the University's compliance with the AODA. It is incumbent on key sectors to reduce the barriers preventing them from meeting their commitments and to report on their progress in fulfilling them, so that University leadership can make informed decisions and eliminate barriers to the inclusion of persons with disabilities on our campus.

The Human Rights Office continues to make itself available to strategic-level decision-making bodies and committees seeking input from experts, with a view to incorporating accessibility considerations into University processes. In addition, we recommend that one of our staff members sit on governance and decision-making bodies (e.g., Building Inventory Improvement Plan, University Information Governance Council) where feasible, or that an accessibility checklist be drawn up for the University to consider when selecting and evaluating goods and services to be procured, and that this checklist become part of design and functionality processes where possible.

The Human Rights Office Team

Table of contents

Foreword.....	2
Lessons learned over the past five years	2
Table of contents.....	3
Background.....	4
Legislation.....	4
About this report.....	4
Objectives	4
Scope.....	4
Roles and responsibilities.....	5
Methodology	5
Report on the five priorities	6
Priority 1: Website accessibility	6
Priority 2: Workplace emergency response information.....	7
Priority 3: Notice of temporary service disruptions and maintenance.....	8
Priority 4: Provide training for educators.....	9
Priority 5: Incorporating accessibility into procurement.....	10
Procurement Services.....	11
Partners	11
Appendices	12

Background

Legislation

The [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 \(AODA\)](#) (external link) provides for a process to assist public-sector organizations, such as the University of Ottawa, to become fully accessible by 2025. Pursuant to the standards described in [Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards](#) (external link), which took effect in 2011, the University must take steps to become accessible in five areas: customer service, information and communications, transportation, employment, and design of public spaces. These areas are governed by general requirements that relate to establishing accessibility policies; creating accessibility plans; procuring goods, services and facilities; providing training; and submitting reports on accessibility.

Status reports

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

About this report

Objectives

This document reports on the priorities selected from the unmet commitments in the [2019–2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan](#) (external link).

The objectives of this statutorily mandated activity are:

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

Scope

This document addresses only the five priorities selected from the unmet commitments in the [2019–2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan](#) (external link). These priorities were to be completed by the time the accessibility report was submitted to the ministry in 2023. For more information about the Human Rights Office's commitments under other legislation, see the [accessibility plans and reports](#) (external link).

Roles and responsibilities

The Human Rights Office, working with the faculties and services, is responsible for compiling and assessing the status reports submitted by the units under [Policy 119 – Accessibility](#) (external link), to develop, draft and publish University-wide reports.

To comply with Ontario's [accessibility rules for public sector organizations](#) (external link), services designated under Policy 119 must submit annual compliance reports to the Human Rights Office, according to the conditions and deadlines set by it.

Designated services

- Procurement
- Human Resources
- Communications
- Facilities
- Office of the Chief Risk Officer
- Library

Methodology

In June 2023, the Human Rights Office received status reports from the services designated under [Policy 119 – Accessibility](#) (external link). The submissions had to include a report on commitments made on the five priorities selected from the 2019–2024 Multi-year Accessibility Plan. The Human Rights Office relied on that information in drafting this report, which was submitted to the Administration Committee for information purposes prior to publication.

Consultations with members of the University community living with disabilities

The 2023–2024 status report was presented to the [uoAccessible Advisory Board](#) (external link) and the Administration Committee. The uoAccessible Advisory Board consists of two staff members and two students with disabilities, as well as a representative of the Centre for Students with Disabilities.

Report on the five priorities

Priority 1: Website accessibility

Background

On January 1, 2022, the University of Ottawa submitted a report of non-compliance with web accessibility requirements to the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (MSA). In collaboration with the Marketing and Branding Office (renamed the Office of Communications and Public Affairs in May 2024), the Human Rights Office agreed with the MSA on a Web Accessibility Remediation Plan. Fulfilling those commitments was a priority.

Remedial action

The following remedial action was taken:

- On November 30, 2023, the Office of Communications and Public Affairs confirmed that it had fulfilled its commitments under the Web Accessibility Remediation Plan.
- On December 22, 2023, the Human Rights Office submitted its Web Accessibility Remediation Plan progress report to the MSA, indicating that the University of Ottawa had honoured all of its commitments.
- On December 31, 2023, the secretary-general's office submitted an AODA compliance report, indicating that the University of Ottawa was compliant with web accessibility requirements, as per the Web Accessibility Remediation Plan.
- On May 1, 2024, the Office of Communications and Public Affairs confirmed that it had fulfilled the commitments and preserved the achievements set out in the 2023–2024 Web Accessibility Remediation Plan.

Priority 2: Workplace emergency response information

Background

VirtuO's new workplace accommodation process for employees with disabilities contained conflicting directives on roles and responsibilities for following up on emergency response plans. Without that information, it was difficult to meet the following AODA requirements:

Workplace emergency response information (external link):

- (4) Every employer shall review the individualized workplace emergency response information,
 - (a) when the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
 - (b) when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
 - (c) when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 27 (4).

Remedial action

By November 30, 2023, Human Resources, in collaboration with the Emergency Management sector, had to describe how persons with disabilities can request an individualized workplace emergency response plan, and how it keeps and communicates these plans to ensure they are taken into account as required by Ontario Regulation 191/11, section 27 (external link).

Follow-up conducted

On November 30, 2023, Human Resources, in collaboration with the Emergency Management sector, updated the information concerning emergency response plans on the Accommodating Disability at Work (VirtuO) (external link) webpage, to clarify roles and responsibilities:

Individual emergency plan

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (external link) requires that employers provide accessible emergency information to employees who have self-identified as requiring disability-related accommodations.

If you need an individual emergency plan, or assistance in developing one, let your supervisor know. Emergency Management (external link) can be consulted as a subject-matter expert.

Priority 3: Notice of temporary service disruptions and maintenance

Background

Notices of temporary disruptions related to malfunctions and repairs (including specific services used by persons with disabilities, such as platform lifts), as well as information on accessible alternatives and the duration of disruptions, were not all made public and therefore did not all comply with the following requirements of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#) (external link) with respect to [temporary disruption notices](#) (external link):

80.48 (1) If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from a provider's goods, services or facilities, persons with disabilities usually use other particular facilities or services of the provider and if there is a temporary disruption in those other facilities or services in whole or in part, the provider shall give notice of the disruption to the public. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16.

(2) Notice of the disruption must include the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16.

(3) Every provider, other than a small organization, shall prepare a document setting out the steps that the provider will ensure are taken in connection with a temporary disruption and, on request, shall give a copy of the document to any person. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16.

(4) Every provider, other than a small organization, shall notify persons to whom it provides goods, services or facilities that the document required by subsection (3) is available on request. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16.

(5) The notices required by subsections (2) and (4) may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the provider, by posting it on the provider's website, if any, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16.

Remedial action

By November 30, 2023, Facilities had to describe the measures taken in connection with temporary service disruptions at the University of Ottawa, as required by [Ontario Regulation 413/12, section 6](#) (external link).

Follow-up conducted

On November 30, 2023, Facilities began adding the previously missing information to the [Interruption notices](#) (external link) webpage, the @uOfacilities X account (which feeds the SecurUO application) and email notices sent to staff and faculty through Central Communications. The [Interruption notices](#) (external link) webpage is updated two or three times a week, or more frequently if required.

Priority 4: Provide training for educators

Background

In its 2022–2023 report, the Human Rights Office reported that the training topics covered by the Teaching and Learning Support Service had been modified and no longer included modules on accessibility awareness in program and course delivery. As a result, the training courses no longer met the following AODA requirements:

Training to educators (external link)

16. (1) In addition to the requirements under section 7, obligated organizations that are school boards or educational or training institutions shall provide educators with accessibility awareness training related to accessible program or course delivery and instruction. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 16 (1).

(2) Obligated organizations that are school boards or educational or training institutions shall keep a record of the training provided under this section, including the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 16 (2).

Remedial action

By November 30, 2023, the Teaching and Learning Support Service (TLSS) had to provide accessibility awareness training to educators on accessible program or course delivery and instruction, and to keep a record of the dates and number of people participating, as required by Ontario Regulation 191/11, section 16 (external link).

Follow-up conducted

On November 30, 2023, the TLSS informed the Human Rights Office that phrases and terms such as “reducing barriers to learning,” “accessibility” and “students with disabilities or different abilities” were included in the summary for some of the training courses, specifically in the accessibility training component, along with the design of accessible teaching materials (see Appendix A).

The TLSS also provided the Human Rights Office with some slides from the second section of the webinar, covering numerous aspects of accessibility beyond simply raising awareness: normative documents, statistics, barriers and impact, accessibility and inclusion strategies, case studies and resources.

Priority 5: Incorporating accessibility into procurement

Background

The update of [Policy 36- Procurement](#) (external link) has enabled more staff to manage transactions and process large sums of money. However, these buyers did not receive training on accessible purchasing, the contract templates provided did not include provisions related to the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#) (external link) and information on accessible procurement was not migrated to the new website designed to assist them in their new roles. That made it difficult for them to fulfil their obligations according to the following AODA requirements:

[Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities](#)(external link)

5. (1) The Government of Ontario, Legislative Assembly and designated public sector organizations shall incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 5 (1); O. Reg. 413/12, s. 4 (1).

(2) If the Government of Ontario, Legislative Assembly or a designated public sector organization determines that it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, it shall provide, upon request, an explanation. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 5 (2); O. Reg. 413/12, s. 4 (2).

Remedial action

By November 30, 2023, Procurement Services had to describe how departments and staff involved in procurement processes, regardless of scope, incorporate accessibility when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, unless it is not feasible to do so, and how they provide this information on request.

Follow-up conducted

On November 30, 2023, Procurement Services informed the Human Rights Office that it had done the following:

- On November 28 and 29, 2023, it held information sessions on incorporating accessibility considerations into procurement for central procurement and decentralized procurement specialists. The sessions were recorded, and the material was passed on to the participants. Procurement Services ensured that those who had not been able to participate familiarized themselves with the material by the end of the year.
- The list of accessibility consultants was updated and distributed at the above-mentioned information sessions. Procurement Services, in collaboration with the Human Rights Office, undertook to update the list as required (i.e., should an expert change jobs).
- Procurement Services announced its intention to hold an annual refresher session for all staff.

- The website was updated to provide information on accessibility considerations for procurement purposes. See the [Accessibility webpage](#).

Procurement Services also described how departments and staff involved in procurement processes, regardless of scope, incorporate accessibility into the procurement or acquisition of goods, services or facilities, unless it is not feasible to do so, and how they provide this information on request (see [Appendix B](#)).

Partners

The Human Rights Office would like to sincerely thank everyone who contributed to this report.

- ✓ Procurement: Éric Fortin and Angèle Herger
- ✓ Human Resources: Kristie Fassen
- ✓ Office of Communications and Public Affairs: Nathalie Blanchard
- ✓ Emergency Management: Dana Fleming
- ✓ Facilities: Julie Paquette (Communications)
- ✓ Teaching and Learning Support Service: Nancy Vézina

The Human Rights Office would also like to thank the members of the University community who, by taking the time to talk about their experiences and offer their recommendations, have helped the University in its quest to become more accessible.

Appendix A

Au-delà du « format unique » : soutenir la participation étudiante grâce à la CUA



Série spéciale – Inclusion pédagogique

Dans le paysage pédagogique actuel, une approche « format unique » en enseignement ne permet plus de répondre aux besoins d'apprentissage d'une diversité de personnes apprenantes. La **conception universelle de l'apprentissage** (CUA) offre des moyens pour libérer le potentiel de chaque étudiant et étudiante, éliminer les obstacles à l'apprentissage et favoriser la réussite scolaire de tous et toutes, en considérant la diversité des aptitudes, des contextes et des façons d'apprendre.

Durant ce webinaire, nous vous présenterons **le cadre de la CUA et ses principes** afin de faciliter la conception de matériel didactique, d'activités et d'évaluations flexibles et modulables qui répondent aux besoins d'une population étudiante diversifiée, sans pour autant diluer les attentes liées à vos cours. Nous discuterons également des **stratégies d'enseignement inclusives pour concevoir des environnements d'apprentissage accueillants, sécuritaires, ouverts et stimulants qui profiteront à tous et toutes.**

Que vous soyez un membre du corps professoral à temps plein ou à temps partiel, un assistant/une assistante d'enseignement ou un membre du personnel de soutien, ce webinaire vous permettra de réfléchir aux façons de rendre vos pratiques d'enseignement plus accessibles et universelles. Le but visé étant, entre autres, de réduire les besoins d'accommodements et de soutenir l'ensemble des étudiants et étudiantes dans leur parcours d'apprentissage, y compris ceux et celles qui présentent des incapacités ou des aptitudes différentes.

Un lien Zoom sera envoyé aux personnes inscrites le jour précédant le webinaire.

Au-delà du « format unique » : soutenir la participation étudiante grâce à la CUA

📅 Jeudi 7 décembre 2023 10 h 30 - 11 h 30

📍 Zoom (un lien sera envoyé le jour précédant l'événement)



Série spéciale – Inclusion pédagogique

Dans le paysage pédagogique actuel, une approche « format unique » en enseignement ne permet plus de répondre aux besoins d'apprentissage d'une diversité de personnes apprenantes. La **conception universelle de l'apprentissage** (CUA) offre des moyens pour libérer le potentiel de chaque étudiant et étudiante, éliminer les obstacles à l'apprentissage et favoriser la réussite scolaire de tous et toutes, en considérant la diversité des aptitudes, des contextes et des façons d'apprendre..

Détails et inscription

Beyond “one size fits all”: Engaging learners through UDL



Special Series – Inclusive Pedagogies

In today's diverse and dynamic educational landscape, a “one-size-fits-all” approach to teaching falls short in meeting individual student learning needs. **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** provides keys to unlocking the potential of every student, removing barriers to learning and fostering academic success for all, considering a diversity of abilities, backgrounds, and ways of learning.

This webinar will introduce **the UDL framework and its principles**, enabling you to create adaptable and flexible learning materials, activities and assignments that cater to a diverse student body, without watering down course expectations. We will also discuss **inclusive teaching strategies for designing welcoming, safe, open, and engaging learning environments that will benefit all**.

Whether you're a professor, instructor, teaching assistant, or support staff, join us on the path to making teaching practices more accessible and universal, with the goal of reducing the need for accommodations and empowering all students on their learning journey, including those with disabilities or different abilities.

A Zoom link will be sent to registered participants the day before the webinar.

Nouvelle série – Formation AE

Es-tu un assistant ou une assistante d'enseignement? Es-tu à la recherche de stratégies pour accomplir tes tâches de façon professionnelle et efficace? Nous te proposons une nouvelle série d'activités de formation pour répondre à tes besoins!

8^e activité de la série

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

Dans cet atelier, les participants auront la chance de se familiariser avec les exigences d'accessibilité et d'inclusion et leurs conséquences sur le soutien qu'offrent les assistants d'enseignement. Nous aborderons les concepts suivants : la diversité des façons d'apprendre, l'inclusion, les obstacles à l'apprentissage et les stratégies à utiliser pour optimiser le processus d'apprentissage en fonction des particularités des étudiants.

Nous offrons la pizza!

Fais vite, les places sont limitées!

New Series – TA Training

Are you a teaching assistant? Are you in search of strategies to accomplish your tasks in a professional and efficient way? We are offering a new series of training activities to meet your needs!

8th Activity of the Series

Accessibility and Diversity for Learning: Roles and Strategies for TAs

In this workshop, participants will have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the requirements of accessibility and inclusion and its consequences on support provided by teaching assistants. The following concepts will be discussed: learning diversity, inclusion, barriers to learning and strategies used to maximize learning according to the specific needs of students..

Beyond “one size fits all”: Engaging learners through UDL

📅 Thursday, December 7, 2023 13:00 - 14:00

📍 Zoom (a link will be sent the day before the event)



Special Series – Inclusive Pedagogies

In today's diverse and dynamic educational landscape, a “one-size-fits-all” approach to teaching falls short in meeting individual student learning needs. **Universal Design for Learning** (UDL) provides keys to unlocking the potential of every student, removing barriers to learning and fostering academic success for all, considering a diversity of abilities, backgrounds, and ways of learning...

[Details and registration](#)

Appendix B

The University has implemented a decentralized procurement process below \$100,000 and a centralized (public) process above \$100,000. Staff involved in the procurement of goods and services, including construction services, are required to comply with [Policy 36 – Procurement \(external link\)](#):

1.2 This Policy complies with the University's obligations with Procurement laws and trade agreements such as the Ontario Broader Public Sector (BPS), the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA), the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) and with its obligations with granting agencies and research sponsors. It also complies with the Board By-law No. 3 on Delegation of Approval and Signing Authority.

4.2 The University is also committed to:

including accessibility criteria, accessible design and features in its Procurement processes where possible.

Procedure 4-3 also contains the following information:

Accessibility

4. Procurement Services takes pride in promoting accessibility at the University. Employees are required to incorporate accessibility design criteria and features when purchasing for University requirements. Contact the Human Rights Office to learn more about how to incorporate accessibility into your procurement activities. If accessibility is not an option, you must document the reason why. For more information, please visit our website or Ontario's accessibility rules for procurement.

If it is not possible to source accessible goods or services, Procurement Services offers staff two ways of documenting this so that they can, on request, go back and provide the required information:

- In procurement process documentation
- In internal comments in the purchase requisition or purchase orders in the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system

Procurement Services also includes a number of clauses in documents available to staff, such as article 3.2 of the [Standard purchase order terms and conditions](#) :

Without limiting the general interpretation of the previous sentences in this section 3.1, the Supplier shall comply with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, (AODA) and its regulations and with the University's Policies and Procedures to fulfill the University's commitment to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities. Suppliers providing services directly to the public must ensure that persons providing the Services are trained in the AODA, the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and must keep records of this training, including dates when training is provided, the number of employees who have received training and individual training records. Suppliers must provide this information if requested by the University.