



Queen's University

Accessibility Annual Status Report

May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021

Public Communication of the Accessibility Plans and Annual Reports

Queen's current and past Accessibility Plans and Annual Reports are available:

- Online at the Equity Services website at [Reports and Plans](#)
- By telephoning Equity Services at (613)533-2563
- By sending an email request to equity@queensu.ca
- By mailing a written request to:
Human Rights and Equity Office
Queen's University
Mackintosh-Corry Hall, Room B511
99 University Avenue
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6
- In alternate formats as requested.

Accessibility Feedback

Queen's recognizes that feedback is critical to the process of identifying and removing barriers to participation as well as improving how we deliver our services to persons with disabilities. The [Accessibility Feedback Online Form](#) can be used to submit feedback about accessibility to Accessibility Services.

Feedback may also be given by emailing Equity Services at equity@queensu.ca, by telephone at (613) 533-2563, or by fax at (613) 533-2031. You may also send feedback via mail to:

Human Rights and Equity Office
Queen's University
Mackintosh-Corry Hall, Room B511
99 University Avenue
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

This document is available in alternate formats upon request. Please contact us at 613-533-2563 or by email at equity@queensu.ca

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY ACCESSIBILITY ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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Coronavirus COVID-19

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared a worldwide pandemic with respect to the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The Provincial government ordered many shut downs of non-essential services, including universities, during this report's timeframe. Students, staff and faculty continued to learn and work remotely.

This continuation of remote learning and working have exacerbated many accessibility challenges for persons with disabilities such as captioning videos for student learning, virtual events, document and website accessibility to name a few. These challenges and resulting solutions will continue to shape accessibility at Queen's for the future.

Section One: Introduction

Background

Under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* ("AODA"), Queen's University is considered a large designated public sector organization. As such, Queen's is required to establish, implement, maintain, and document a multi- year accessibility plan. That document constitutes Queen's University's Accessibility Plan ("[the Plan](#)") for the period 2016 – 2025.

AODA legislation also requires public sector organizations to prepare an Annual Report ("the Report") relative to the multi-year accessibility plan. This Report documents the planning and implementation activities undertaken by Queen's as part of the multi-year Plan, for the period May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021.

Vision & Commitment

Queen's vision is to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the strategic identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to their full participation. Accessibility planning provides the university with the opportunity to take a comprehensive look at its services, policies, procedures, practices, and programs to determine which aspects of its operations require action towards advancing accessibility. In order to support progress and meaningful implementation of the Plan, a strong foundation built upon the following principles is necessary.

Informed & Committed Leadership

- All Departments and Units are asked to provide input into the Plan.
- Accountability is demonstrated through the Plan and its related accessibility documentation, made publicly available and in alternative formats upon request.
- Mandatory accessibility and human rights training is offered for all staff, faculty, and students acting on behalf of the university.

- Engaged and aware employees incorporate accessibility into daily practices at all levels of the organization and are encouraged to use an inclusionary lens when preparing policy and procedural documents or developing programs and services.

Queen's University's Comprehensive Strategic Framework for Accessibility

1. Consult with persons with disabilities whose input is shared with the five working groups and throughout the cycle.
2. The names and processes of each working group and committee are as follows:
 - a. **Site Improve Advisory Group:** continue to monitor Queen's websites and departmental compliance efforts (with WCAG 2.0 Level AA).
 - b. **Built Environment Advisory Group:** continue its work to meet obligations of the Design of Public Space requirements, which came into force in 2016.
 - c. **Community of Practice** (*formerly the Education, Training, and Awareness Working Group, which has been put on hiatus*): include input from the Centre for Teaching and Learning, IT Services, and the Human Rights and Equity Office.
 - d. **The Policy Advisory Subcommittee (PASC)** (*formerly the Policy Advisory Working Group, which has folded*): has agreed to expand its Terms of Reference to include providing feedback on Accessibility policies, procedures, and guidelines.
 - e. **Employment Working Group:** has been put on hiatus. The AODA requirements have been met operationally by the Human Resources department through the development of the [Accommodation of Disabilities in the Workplace Policy](#), [Individualized Accommodation Procedures](#), [Disability Accommodation Guidelines](#), [Return to Work Policy](#), and [Return to Work Procedure](#).

Section Two: Status Update – (2020/2021) – Meeting AODA Requirements

The following is a summary of actions taken to achieve compliance with 2020/2021 applicable requirements under the AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR 191/11). Compliance deadlines appear in brackets and refer to January 1st of the given year.

Customer Service Standards

Over the years, the use of Service Animals by students has increased. Beginning in 2018, an ad hoc committee of campus stakeholders worked to draft 'a Service Animals on Campus Policy' that would offer guidance and awareness to community members. This policy draft will be submitted to the Policy Advisory Subcommittee and ultimate approval by the Senior Leadership Team is expected during the summer of 2021.

Information and Communication Standards

Communicating and providing information in ways that are accessible to all is another cornerstone of building an accessible organization.

191/11, section 14 – Websites conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

On January 1, 2021 Queen's began a new compliance phase with WCAG 2.0 web accessibility standards increasing to Level AA. Many efforts have been undertaken, or are currently underway, to achieve this revised standard:

- ✓ A new [Web Accessibility Policy](#) was approved by the Senior Leadership Team
- ✓ ITS has again purchased a one-year subscription to Site Improve.
- ✓ A new version of WebPublish (Drupal) launched in 2020 with increased accessibility features and a new Queen's template design will be released which meets WCAG Level AA.
- ✓ The Site Improve Advisory Group continues to raise awareness of website accessibility in their respective departments.

191/11 Section 15 - Educational and training resources and materials, etc.

The Office of the Vice Provost (Teaching and Learning), the Centre for Teaching and Learning, ITS services and the Human Rights and Equity Office continued to discuss ensuring educational materials are accessible for remote learning during the pandemic and how to support faculty in these efforts.

191/11 Section 18 - Libraries of educational and training institutions

With respect to digital or multimedia resources or materials (January 1, 2020), the Office of the Vice-Provost (Digital Planning) and University Librarian along with the Adaptive Technology Centre created a process ensuring its [media resources are accessible to persons who require captioning](#). The library will arrange closed captioning for videos in their collection.

Design of Public Spaces and the Built Environment

For new and significant construction or renovation projects, Queen's University will ensure:

- ✓ Newly constructed and redeveloped outdoor public-use eating areas shall adhere to accessibility requirements.
- ✓ Newly constructed and redeveloped exterior paths of travel shall adhere to accessibility requirements.
- ✓ Newly constructed and redeveloped off-street parking facilities and on-street parking spaces shall adhere to accessibility requirements.
- ✓ New service counters (inclusive of replacing existing service counters) shall adhere to accessibility requirements.
- ✓ Fixed queuing guides shall adhere to accessibility requirements.
- ✓ Newly constructed or redeveloped waiting areas where the seating is fixed to the floor shall adhere to accessibility requirements.
- ✓ Procedures are included for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces and for dealing with temporary disruptions when required accessible elements are not in working order.

5-year accessibility plan for barrier removal

Facilities – Physical Plant Services has developed a 5-year accessibility plan for barrier removal in existing buildings. In 2018, the University approved Facilities funding in the amount of \$250,000 with the intent to increase funding each year by \$25,000 over the 5-year period. 2021 marked the fourth year of the Plan. With the assistance of the Built Environment Advisory Group, a strategy for barrier remediation for existing buildings was developed which took into account the following:

- Existing buildings that are not undergoing major renovations are grandfathered under the Ontario Building Code and are not required to be updated.
- Enhancing accessibility and creating inclusive environments on campus is a priority.
- With substantial accessibility components that would benefit from improvements, selecting key barriers for remediation requires a targeted approach.

For 2020/21, \$325,000 was approved for Facilities to address accessibility issues. Examples of projects undertaken for this report's timeframe include:

Earl Hall / Biosciences Complex Classroom Renovations:

The main auditorium and two lecture theatres (combined into one larger theatre) were recently renovated and include accessibility enhancements in the spaces. The auditorium installed a new platform lift, accessible prime viewing spaces at the front and back of the auditorium, a variety of seating types and widths, space for mobility aid storage and electric, height-adjustable podiums for the instructors.

Exterior Emergency Blue Light Poles:

The university will be installing several new accessible emergency blue light poles on campus to replace a less accessible model. The new poles will have a larger base in Safety Blue colour, with emergency wording in white for better visibility on campus, and the accessible distress button activation will include raised letters and braille.

Grad Club Exterior Accessible Ramp:

The existing Grad Club building on Barrie Street recently renovated the exterior entrance to include a new accessible ramp with a less steep slope and more generous widths on the landings of the switchback ramp.

Online 3-Dimensional Campus Map:

The university has updated its online campus map to a new interactive 3-D model map that will incorporate the Building Accessibility Directory and provide searches for accessible building components such as accessible washrooms, parking spaces and water fountains / bottle fill stations.

Residence Building on Albert Street:

The Albert Street New Residence Building is currently under construction. The building was designed with accessibility as a first principle. The project is built on a slope, which results in the ground floor at the north part of the building located at grade and rising above grade moving south. This dictated the location of the main entrance for the building. The residence will have several accessible suites for students with an ensuite accessible washroom. In addition to the accessible residences, there will be accessible washrooms and bookable event spaces available to non-residents and accessible, do-it-yourself service animal washing and drying services equipment will be provided within the residence.

Education, Training, & Awareness

Queen's recognizes the importance of collaboration in order to share and gain expertise. We continue to strengthen our capacity to inform, educate, raise awareness, and involve persons with and without disabilities on and off campus. AODA training, face-to-face and online, continued to be undertaken in 2020/2021.

191/11, section 7 & Section 16 – Training

- ✓ Online training continues to be provided on the requirements of the accessibility standards under Ontario Regulations 191/11 and on the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- ✓ The [Queen's AODA Training Suite](#) can be found on the Human Rights and Equity Office website.
- ✓ Virtual training was made available.
- ✓ Both synchronous and asynchronous training for [Creating Accessible Docs](#) and [Accessible Event and Meeting Planning have been made available](#).
- ✓ The Human Rights and Equity Office tracked training completion and kept records for compliance purposes.
- ✓ Quarterly Compliance Progress Reports were sent to all departments and units.
- ✓ All employees and volunteers were encouraged and provided opportunities to access all available AODA training. However, for the purposes of tracking compliance of our employees, the Human Rights and Equity Office adheres to the Federal Contractors Program criteria: Employees are defined as those earning a salary and who are employed by the university for more than 12 weeks and/or work more than 14 hours per week. This excludes Adjunct 1s, Affiliates, Associates, Co-op Students, Guests, and Casual employees.
- ✓ The tables below are a comparison of percentages of completion by active employees between May 2021 and August 2020.
- ✓ Although the completion rates for Human Rights 101, Access Forward, and Accessibility Instruction for Educators training all increased, the table shows that more work is necessary for compliance.

May 2021				
	Customer Service Training	Human Rights 101	Access Forward	Accessibility Instruction for Educators
Active Faculty and Staff (4983)	88.2%	83.0%	84.3%	64.5% (1833, total Educators)
Students and Casuals (4559)	70.5%	66.2%	64.6%	N/A

August 2020				
	Customer Service Training	Human Rights 101	Access Forward	Accessibility Instruction for Educators
Active Faculty and Staff (5198)	89.1%	82.8%	84.0%	65.7% (1983, total Educators)
Students and Casuals (2785)	65.6%	60.6%	61.8%	N/A

Section Three: Status Update – (2020/2021) – Exceeding AODA Requirements

Queen's strives to improve its ability to consult, engage, listen, and reframe accessibility issues so that the results work better to meet the expectations and needs of persons with disabilities. We continually seek new ways to engage with persons with disabilities about how Queen's might best ensure everyone's full participation. Below are some accessibility achievements that exceed AODA requirements.

Accessibility Cafés

Accessibility Cafés are a chance for the Queen's community to get together to discuss building an inclusive and accessible Queen's community that follows the requirements of the AODA. Each Café has a unique topic, and all participants are encouraged to share their perspectives and generate ideas around the question: "How can we improve upon what Queen's is doing already towards imagining and then building an even stronger inclusive and accessible Queen's community?"

Cafés were held on:

- ✓ October 19, 2020: JDUC renovation and accessible features.

- ✓ January 27, 2021: WE-Can/HREO: Accessibility Café for Women Entrepreneurs with Disabilities.
- ✓ March 10, 2021: Accessibility Cafe with the CNIB - Myth-busting Vision Loss at Work.
- ✓ April 28, 2021: The New Inclusivity: Neurodiversity and Workplace Inclusion.

Each Café was well attended by students, staff, faculty, community members and alumni.

Accessibility Hub

- ✓ Since its launch, the Accessibility Hub has assisted over **120** Queen's Departments and Community Services with accessibility issues.
- ✓ Through the Accessibility Hub website, the Accessibility Coordinator has responded to:
 - Over **1200** specific requests since the website launched (October 2013).
 - Requests range from the simple to very complex, and include built environment, video captioning, workplace accommodations, audio transcripts, website and document accessibility, physical access, accessible transportation, and accessible parking.
- ✓ Between May 1, 2020 and April 30, 2021 there were **27,369** visitors viewing **66,429** web pages.
- ✓ Assisted the University of Calgary create their own "Hub".

DEAP Tool

The Diversity and Equity Self-Assessment & Planning (DEAP) Tool for Academic and Administrative Units was developed in 2015 by the Queen's University Human Rights and Equity Office to help Units better understand their working environment climate as it relates to equity and diversity.

Implementation of the DEAP Tool across units will be an additional method to help ensure the university not only meets, but also in some cases exceeds, the AODA requirements. The DEAP Tool is a self-audit tool for internal use to allow Units to:

- ✓ Understand the designated group demographic profile of their staff and faculty, including representation of persons with disabilities in the unit
- ✓ Assess how inclusive the Unit is
- ✓ Provide an opportunity to reflect on areas in need of improvement using the Diversity Score Card assessment template
- ✓ Support further commitments to equity and diversity
- ✓ Develop an action plan and timeline to enhance inclusion.

The Tool also is designed to complement other administrative responsibilities of units such as:

- ✓ Departmental Strategic Planning
- ✓ Cyclical Review Process (CPR) and Queen's University Quality Assurance Process (QUQAP's)
- ✓ Hiring and Appointments Processes
- ✓ Implementation of the Academic Plan.

Education, Training, & Awareness

Queen's recognizes the importance of collaboration in order to share and gain expertise. We continue to strengthen our capacity to inform, educate, raise awareness, and involve persons with and without disabilities on and off campus.

- ✓ In April 2020, due to the campus shutdown due to COVID-19, training moved to virtual platforms.
- ✓ The 'From Diversity to Inclusion in the Workplace' Certificate Program, co-developed between Human Resources and the Human Rights and Equity Office, continues to achieve good enrollment rates.
- ✓ The Accessibility Coordinator presented at the new Faculty Orientation.
- ✓ The Accessibility Coordinator delivered accessibility training to Orientation leaders, Residence staff, AMS, ASUS, and QSAS staff.
- ✓ The Accessibility Coordinator participates on the Campus Master Plan Advisory Committee (CMPAC), Advisory Committee on Academic Accommodations, Transition Resource Guide Advisory Board - Regional Assessment and Resource Centre (RARC), and [Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee \(MAAC\)](#) for the City of Kingston and is a member of the [Technical Committee for Outdoor Spaces Standards](#) for the new Federal legislation, the "Accessible Canada Act".
- ✓ Throughout the year, the Accessibility Coordinator provided training and workshops to many Departments and Units regarding website accessibility, accessible documents, and social media accessibility, including Alumni Relations, Orientation leaders, Homecoming volunteers, ASUS, Facilities, Office of the Associate Vice-Principal (International), and Department of Finance.

Student Wellness Services

[Student Wellness Services](#) (SWS) is the university's central health-care and related service provider comprising four streams of service: Health Promotion, Student Health Services, Counselling Services, and Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS).

Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS) continues to provide services to students with disabilities to ensure equitable access to the academic environment and works closely with faculty members to ensure an individualized response to challenges. In addition to accommodation planning, the QSAS team provides learning strategy support, transition support, education and awareness sessions, and advocacy. QSAS also continues to work with the Centre for Teaching and Learning and Faculties/Schools to integrate Universal Design for Learning principles into academic accommodation planning.

Final Exam Accommodations

Total Exam Accommodations					
Dec-2018	Apr-2019	Dec-2019	Apr-2020	Dec-2020	Apr-2021
5443	5381	5,091	N/A due to COVID-19 campus shutdown	3896 (COVID skewed)	5118 (COVID skewed)

Mental Health

Student Affairs offers several programs designed to help students, faculty, and staff support those experiencing mental health issues. These programs aim to:

- ✓ Help provide timely, professional, compassionate care to students in distress.
- ✓ Raise awareness about the personal and developmental impact of mental-health problems.
- ✓ Help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.
- ✓ Provide information and support to members of our community who are supporting individuals experiencing mental-health challenges.
- ✓ Encourage people to talk and help create more openness about mental health.

Mental Health Training

- ✓ Identifying and Responding to Students in Distress (IRSD)
- ✓ Mental Health: Awareness, Anti-Stigma, Response
- ✓ Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Canada.

Section Four: Moving Forward to 2025

AODA Requirements

The following chart indicates future AODA requirements that Queen's University will have to meet. As with all the preceding AODA requirements, failure to meet these requirements could lead to a non-compliance designation and result in financial implications for the University.

Information and Communications

Timeline	Requirement
January 1, 2021	1. Ensure all internet website and web content will conform to established WWW Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA (some exceptions)

Expected Future AODA Standards

Education Standard

The provincial government has decided to develop two Education Standards: one for K-12 and a second for post-secondary. The Standard Development Committee (SDC) will develop recommendations for a proposed accessibility standard to address barriers in publicly funded post-secondary education provided by colleges and universities, as required by Section 9 of the AODA. The draft version of both Education Standards was due in May/June 2020, but work was halted during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown in March 2020. The draft is expected to be released for public feedback during the summer of 2021.

Health Care Standard

As part of Ontario's Accessibility Action Plan, the Government of Ontario has committed to identifying and addressing accessibility barriers in the health-care sector through the creation of a Health Care Standard. The SDC will develop a new accessible Health Care Standard as required by Section 9 of the AODA. The draft version of the Standards was due in 2020 but work was halted during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown in March 2020. The draft is expected to be released for public feedback during the summer of 2021.

Accessible Canada Act

The [Accessible Canada Act](#) (long title: *An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada*) builds on the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, focusing on the prohibition of discrimination based on disability. This is a Canada-wide accessibility act that applies to the federal public sector, Crown Corporations, and all federally regulated organizations. The federally regulated organizations include the following industries:

- railways, airplanes and inter-provincial buses
- banks, mining companies, railways, airlines, and trucking
- television and radio

Accessibility is Key for Success in Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion

Over the years, and especially of late, a great deal of work has gone into equity, diversity and inclusion efforts. The university has made clear its intention to put these efforts into action to ensure tangible and lasting positive change. As the authors of the Principal's Implementation Committee on Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion [Report](#) rightly points out, goals for equity, diversity, and inclusion fit within a larger framework of institutional cultural norms at Queen's, which are foundational to the mission of the university. However, with so much moving the diversity and inclusion needle, we need to be mindful to continue to include persons with disabilities in this critical work. An intersectional perspective is needed to understand fully the interaction of different social identities within a context of connected systems and structures of power. The accessibility principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equality of opportunity are key to successful equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts.

Section Five: Conclusion

Queen's University has made great strides toward greater accessibility for our students, staff, faculty, and visitors. With the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation acting as a primary driving force, the Accessibility Framework has focused its efforts on achieving legislative compliance through the development and implementation of best practices approaches to accessibility in the post-secondary environment. As awareness of how accessibility contributes to student, staff, and faculty engagement expands, so too will the barrier-identification processes and responses that bring continuous improvement in accessibility for persons with disabilities. We are a community that works together to create an environment where everyone has a full and enriching Queen's experience.