



**Durham College
Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
2021-2025**

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Message from the President

Durham College (DC) is a leader in post-secondary education, with strong values in diversity, inclusion, integrity and respect that drive our organization forward. It is these values that reinforce our commitment to ensuring all those who visit us – whether virtually or in person – have access to a positive and inclusive environment in which they can work and learn.

As these environments evolve, influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing need for virtual spaces and services, we are reminded that a changing world brings new challenges for accessibility, and a need for innovative solutions and swift response.

Our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2021-2025 demonstrates the ways in which we have already prioritized accessibility with dexterity and forward-thinking action at DC. It also outlines the work that continues to be done as we endeavor to create a truly barrier-free campus.

I am proud of our past accomplishments, as well as our current initiatives and goals. They are ambitious, but necessary, as we transform DC into a welcoming place for people of all abilities and strengthen Ontario's culture of accessibility.



Don Lovisa, President

Introduction

In 2005, the Ontario Government passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), which requires that Ontario be an accessible province by 2025. As set forth in the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11, this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) outlines Durham College (DC)'s strategy to meet the various requirements under the AODA legislation. It will also frame the next steps in our effort to create an inclusive and accessible environment by preventing and removing barriers keeping persons with disabilities or exceptionalities from participating fully in the campus community. This plan has been established, reviewed, and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and DC's Accessibility Coordinating Committee (ACC).

The ACC was established in 2003 with the intent of creating a campus that is barrier free to all individuals with disabilities or exceptionalities. The committee consists of individuals representing many operating areas across our college, and includes persons

with disabilities, community stakeholders and individuals with specific knowledge in accessibility considerations. The ACC continues to advise on and assist with the development, implementation and evaluation of accessibility planning at DC and publishes an annual Accessibility Status Report wherein accessibility achievements of the past year are highlighted, progress on the removal of accessibility barriers is reported on, and objectives for the current planning year are established, all while achieving compliance under the AODA.

Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

Customer Service

DC is committed to providing equal access to goods and services, and providing exceptional and accessible customer service for its customers. An overview of projects and programs DC has implemented to improve accessibility include:

- DC's new Strategic Plan (2020 – 2023) embraces accessibility as an important element to ensure an inclusive, barrier-free campus.
- The Accessible Customer Service policy was revised in 2018, refreshing our commitment to equal access to goods and services, providing exceptional and accessible customer service for its customers, and compliance with the AODA.
- Developed DC's first policy on Service Animals, demonstrating our commitment to assisting and accommodating service animals and their partner. This policy outlines the guidelines for ensuring that students, employees and visitors of the college requiring the support of a service animal are accommodated.

Information and Communications

DC values and actively promotes the right of all individuals to have an equal opportunity to experience success in their academic and/or employment endeavors within the institution. The college has established standards for information sharing and communications ensuring all students and employees experience an optimally-accessible learning and working environment. An overview of projects and programs DC has implemented to improve accessibility include:

- Information provided in alternate accessible formats and with communication supports upon request.
- Accessibility checking software established for websites and web content measuring existing AODA standards.
- AODA compliance for the DC website completed by the January 1, 2014 deadline and January 1, 2021 deadlines (WCAG 2.0 A and AA).
- Accessible school library resources and other printed learning materials provided upon request.
- DC Cares, the college's official feedback mechanism, was reviewed to ensure it is accessible to all users.

- Administrative software applications (Banner and DC Connect) upgraded to ensure AODA compliance.
- The academic software procurement process was modified to include checking for AODA compliance.
- Procedure for emergency plans reviewed to ensure individualized information is provided to staff with disabilities or exceptionalities.

Training

- Developed resources for faculty on Office365 to use in the classroom, including key accessibility features.
- Training on AODA and accessible documents delivered and available to employees as a resource.
- Developed online training modules in customer service and integrated AODA for educators which all employees, visitors and volunteers are required to complete.

Employment

AODA standards have been considered in the development of recruitment and selection policies and procedures and adhere to the principles outlined in the college's commitment to accessibility. An overview of employment practices DC has implemented to improve accessibility for people with disabilities include:

- Employment contracts now distributed electronically in a format compatible with assistive technology.
- Accessibility standards reviewed and updated for virtual employee recruitment now include closed captioning and all candidates are provided with interview questions both verbally and in written format.
- Released a Self-Identification Survey to all staff and members of the campus community. This survey was the first of its kind at the college, and results will be used to identify and remove barriers that exist in our employment system and create equitable practices.
- Recruitment processes continue to adapt to accessibility needs through all stages of hiring. Through DC's Applicant Tracking System we ensure that all information in job postings aligns with accessibility requirements.
- Candidates being invited for interviews are made aware of the availability for accommodation and asked if they require any accommodation for any component of their interview. When offers of employment are made, the successful applicant is notified of the policies for accommodating and supporting persons with disabilities.
- DC's policy on employment related accommodations was reviewed in 2019 and outlines the procedure for identifying the need for an accommodation, developing individualized workplace emergency response information, developing and reviewing Individualized Accommodation Plans, and the process for employees returning to work after an injury or illness.

- Individual Accommodation Plans included sit/stand desks, specialized lighting, modified and reduced work schedules, noise cancelling headsets, microphones and speech to text assistive technologies, accommodated parking spaces.

Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment)

DC has committed to incorporating accessibility into public spaces that are newly constructed or redeveloped on and after January 1, 2016 and ensuring that existing requirements stated under the Design of Public Spaces Standards are followed. An overview of areas of the built environment where DC has implemented changes to improve accessibility include:

- A campus-wide physical audit that provided a five-year plan for accessibility improvements.
- The entrance to the Whitby campus was made accessible.
- Thirty-five height adjustable chairs and tables were purchased.
- Parking spaces symbols were changed to reflect “The Forward Movement” symbols.
- Classrooms were equipped with Automatic Door Operators.
- Accessible walkways were created at the Oshawa campus.
- Accessible ramp and door operator installed.
- Design and construction of an all-gender washroom at the Oshawa campus.

Other/General

Procurement and Self-Service Kiosks:

- The consideration of accessibility during the procurement process is ensured through the Purchasing By-Law 45-2016 Section 4.09 Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the AODA.
- Procurement policy revised to include accessibility requirements, best practices, and implementation at DC. Policy was last updated in 2019.
- Information Technology Services and Enrolment Services have considered accessibility, during the procurement, deployment and maintenance of the software such as Q-Nomy and Information kiosks. Accessibility standards were built into the existing kiosks in 2014.

MYAP Strategies and Actions

The following pages outline DCs MYAP, identifying the projects and programs we plan to implement between now and 2025 to meet the requirements of the AODA and to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

Customer Service

DC is committed to providing equal access to goods and services, providing exceptional and accessible customer service for its customers, and is obligated to comply with the AODA and Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

DC continues to:

- Provide training on how to provide accessible customer service to all employees, volunteers and individuals who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of DC.
- Monitor its customer service to maintain and improve upon the level of accessibility provided in programs, services and facilities.
- Offer multiple formats (virtual video calls with closed captioning, in-person, telephone, LiveChat, social media) for student services' functions such as registration, academic and medical appointments, mental health and wellness support, financial aid and career development support, etc.
- Provide additional technology and resources to ensure equal opportunity to online services and classrooms (some examples are scanners, height adjustable tables, and adaptive software, including Zoom Text, Kurzweil 3000 and Read and Write)
- Offer a variety of assistive/adaptive technology and alternate formats of college materials and forms, multimedia, course material, etc.

Customer Service Goals:

- Revise and update content in AODA legislated training modules.
- Student service areas to refine their web-based tutorials and educational workshops to increase accessibility for student participation.
- Increase awareness and use of the library's Accessible Content E-Portal (ACE). platform that provides access to a collection of books that have been digitized and made available online in accessible formats. ACE has been developed through Scholars Portal, improving access to university and college libraries across Ontario. ACE is part of the Scholars Portal Books platform, and is one of several accessibility initiatives at Scholars Portal that is focused on advancing equality for library users with print disabilities.
- Review and improve all-gender access at campus gym including in the change room and washroom, with modifications to existing inventory of spaces.

Information and Communications

DC is committed to providing and receiving information and communications in ways that are accessible, and has met all the current requirements of the Information and Communications Standard.

DC continues to:

- Maintain a process for receiving and responding to feedback in ways that are accessible.
- Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and provide accessible formats, upon request.
- Provide emergency information in alternative formats, upon request.

- Maintain an accessible website and web content.
- Monitor its website for compliance with accessibility standards.
- Review documents and templates to ensure they are accessible.

Information and Communication Goals:

- All public DC websites will meet or exceed WCAG 2.0 Level AAA by January 1, 2025.
- Ensure all videos are captioned campus-wide to align with AODA AAA plan.
- Ensure that print-documents are accessible.
- Ensure that documents and content posted online are in accessible formats.
- Ensure internal college forms are accessible, through the Forms Management Program.

Employment

DC is committed to using fair and accessible employment practices, and to comply with and exceed the standards described in the AODA Integrated Standards and the Ontario Human Rights Code. As highlighted in our Strategic Plan, we value diversity and inclusion and ensure a positive and inclusive work environment that is diverse, respectful and representative of our community.

DC continues to:

- Notify applicants about the availability of accessibility accommodations in the recruitment process.
- Advise all new employees about the availability of accommodations for employees with disabilities with a link to accessibility policies in the employment contract.
- Inform all employees of supports available through the employee intranet.
- Ensure policies on accommodation and supporting employees with disabilities are posted to the employee intranet and communicated to all employees whenever there is a change.
- Offer accessible formats and communication supports for employees with disabilities who require them.
- Provide individually accessible workplace emergency response information for employees who require it and offer this through the return-to-work process.
- Develop and document individual accommodation plans for employees who require it and offer this through the return-to-work process.
- Offer a return-to-work process to support and accommodate employees who have been absent from work due to a disability.
- Consider the needs of employees with disabilities in performance management, career development and planning processes.

Employment Goals:

- Continue to regularly review employment related policies and practices to ensure applicants and employees with disabilities receive the supports and accommodations they require.
- Develop and implement a communications plan to raise awareness of the availability of individualized emergency response information accommodations for employees with disabilities.
- Refresh guidelines for DC management that outlines best practices in how to accommodate their employees with disabilities.
- Review the Self-Identification Survey responses to identify and remove barriers that exist in our employment system and create equitable practices. Develop and implement a strategy to address the results of this survey to ensure equitable and inclusive access for everyone on campus.

Design of Public Spaces Standard (Built Environment)

DC will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces. As described in our Strategic Plan, we will reimagine and grow our facilities to be more flexible, accessible and progressive.

DC will continue to:

- Consult with the ACC, the public and people with disabilities or exceptionalities prior to redeveloping or constructing new public spaces under this standard.
- Incorporate public consultations into existing processes wherever possible.
- Meet or exceed the technical requirements of Design of Public Spaces Standard (DOPS) 2018-2023 Public Spaces Goals.
- Explore the inclusion of mobility device charging stations in new and redeveloped public spaces.
- Offer at least one height-adjustable chair in each classroom, review and evaluate assistive technology availability and needs at both campuses.

Design of Public Spaces goals:

- Based on the audit completed in 2020, DC will address the areas below to ensure DOPS compliance:
 - Fire alarms
 - Walkways
 - Site ramps
 - Counters
 - Drinking fountains
 - Elevators
 - Parking
 - Exterior doors – non-vestibule
 - Exterior doors – vestibules
 - Communal washrooms
 - Interior doors
 - Learning spaces
 - Controls

- Change rooms
- Universal washrooms
- Stairs
- Interior ramps
- Path of travel/corridors

Other/General

Procurement and Self-Service Kiosks:

- DC will continue to incorporate accessibility when procuring goods and services including self-service kiosks.

Procurement goals:

- Monitor the accessible purchasing requirements through random audits of files and provide additional support where necessary.
- Purchasing and procuring accessible goods, services and facilities.
- Develop and implement a training cycle to ensure employees remain up to date on accessibility legislation, corporate policies and best practices for interacting with people with disabilities.

Teaching and Learning:

DC is committed to providing faculty with the tools they need to ensure their teaching and learning material is accessible to meet the diverse needs of the student population.

DC continues to:

- Provide faculty with resources and professional development opportunities at faculty orientation and throughout their careers so they are equipped with current and relevant instructional strategies to engage all students.
- Provide resources to empower full-time and contract faculty to incorporate accessibility in learning materials. For example, how to include closed captioning on recorded videos.
- Provide comprehensive material on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) curriculum design and delivery principles aimed at creating an inclusive and accessible learning experience for students. A detailed checklist and best practices are provided that include a structured method on how to incorporate UDL in assessment and evaluation, course outlines and lesson plans, and creating accessible documents.
- Offer resources, professional development and faculty toolkits to ensure faculty understand their role as educators in the AODA.

Teaching and Learning goals:

- Implement and review new Recording of Learning Activities policy to ensure closed captioning is made available for remote and recorded lectures.

- Ensure the systems provided to faculty for the purposes of teaching and learning are accessible to both the faculty and student and include the provision of autogenerated captioning to ensure accessibility in virtual synchronous delivery.
- Implement and review new Accessibly Formatted Course Materials for Students with Disabilities/Exceptionalities policy to ensure it is supporting a barrier-free learning environment.
- Offer new and more delivery options to students, both asynchronous and synchronous, including the Rotary Global Classroom, so that students can access their courses how and when they wish.
- Ensure that all experiential learning opportunities such as research, co-operative education, field placement opportunities, etc. consider the accessibility needs of the students.

For More Information

We encourage you to visit our Accessibility web page for helpful resources and updated information: <https://durhamcollege.ca/about/accessibility>.

DC will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that consider their disabilities. Therefore, as per the AODA, college documents are available in an alternate format upon request. DC policies are available in electronic format on our website: <http://www.durhamcollege.ca/about-us/corporate-links/governance/policies/>.

For more information on this accessibility plan or a to request a free accessible format of this document, please contact: Tara Koski, dean, Students at tara.koski@durhamcollege.ca or dccares@durhamcollege.ca.