

# ACCESSIBILITY ANNUAL STATUS REPORT



2022-2023

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Durham College (DC) is committed to ensuring that all those who visit us – whether online or in person – have access to a positive and inclusive environment in which to work and learn. To support this commitment, DC has established a multi-year plan to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and to meet requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards.

This Annual Status Report outlines the progress of measures taken during the 2022-2023 academic year to improve accessibility at DC and develop an accessible and inclusive environment in the context of our values of respect, diversity and inclusion. The college has welcomed the pro-active approach of the AODA in setting standards to identify and remove barriers that ultimately ensure the success of our entire community.

DC honoured National AccessAbility Week in 2023 by sharing our accessibility accomplishments and goals to celebrate and promote accessibility on campus. We also distributed a call for feedback to provide employees with an opportunity to share how they support accessibility at DC. The successes and feedback gathered from employees have been incorporated into this report.

We are pleased with the progress towards an inclusive campus during the past year, through the annual prioritization of removing barriers in the built environment and through progress on initiatives outlined in our multi-year accessibility plan and the objectives from the 2022-2023 progress report.

## ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2022-2023

**Objective #1: Continue improving the accessibility of physical spaces on campus as identified in the 2020 accessibility audit five-year plan.**

Priority areas have been identified and improved accordingly, such as:

- » Stairway upgrades - 5 completed at Oshawa campus.
- » Automatic Door Operator (ADO) upgrades throughout Oshawa campus (replacement of units beyond life) and additions.
- » Replacement of 4' ADO buttons with 36" column button.
- » Door hardware upgrades – doorknob round-style replacements with AODA compliant lever-style.
- » Installation of swing clear hinges on Gordon Willey building interior doors.
- » Removal of centre mullions between doors to open interior corridor access points.
- » Exterior door retrofits – AODA compliance.
- » Campus Recreation Wellness Centre sidewalk extension and river rock removal and replacement with raised gardens and pavers.
- » I-Wing and H-Wing entrance way – river rock removal and paver installation.
- » Purchase of additional AODA compliant picnic tables.
- » Exterior directional signage for non-accessible and dead-end walkway.
- » Exterior civil repairs to address damaged concrete and asphalt.
- » New wheelchair and mobility scooter charging stations installation in progress at Oshawa campus Marketplace and Whitby campus Main Building.

**Objective #2: Launch new portal for legislated training resources and communicate requirements to employees to complete the training modules.**

- » The Brightspace portal is live and includes AODA legislated training modules. Campus communications related to the launch of the portal will take place in September 2023 with an announcement on the college intranet site and campus-wide distribution via the weekly employee newsletter, DC Digest.

**Objective #3: Continue communicating accessibility projects and procedures to students and employees.**

- » Conducted an inclusive photoshoot at Oshawa campus that showcased many of DC's accessibility features.
- » Updated Accessibility Tours for both campuses, including the re-implementation of bus tours at Open House events.
- » Distributed a campus-wide communication to employees and students that shared annual Committee updates, promoted National AccessAbility Week and asked for employee input on how they support and celebrate accessibility at DC.
- » Published a blog post on accessibility and inclusion efforts at DC to help inform prospective and current students on the accessibility features and services available on campus.

**Objective #4: Continue the process of updating all college forms to be consistently formatted and accessible.**

- » The Forms Management Committee continues to work with all departments at DC to ensure our forms support accessibility. All forms include an opening sentence indicating alternate formats are available upon request.
- » To date, 192 forms have been made accessible, with 114 forms remaining.
- » All fillable PDF forms created using Adobe Acrobat Pro are checked using the built-in Accessibility Checker.
- » Forms created using Microsoft Forms must have an immersive reader enabled as well as the ability to increase and decrease font size to support the readers' needs.

**Objective #5: Begin the next phase of reviewing the AODA post-secondary Education Standards Development Recommendations Report.**

- » Two sub-committees focused on supporting recommendation 40 – teaching and learning, and recommendation 105 and 106 – accessible software procurement of the report.
- » Developed a survey for faculty to share their current practices of Universal Design for Learning and Universal Instructional Design to determine the resources needed for courses to become more accessible at DC. The survey will be distributed in fall 2023.
- » Recommendation 105 and 106 – Software Sub-Committee:  
Continued auditing software for accessibility. This year, the following software was audited:
  - » Audacity
  - » FileZilla
  - » Gimp
  - » Indentifix
  - » Komposer
  - » Irfanview
  - » PC Law
  - » Power Bi
  - » Quickbooks
  - » Trello
  - » ULaw Practice



## Objective #6: Continue AODA compliancy initiatives.

- » The DC website auditing tool, Site Improve, maintained a 99% score from last year based on Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA accessibility standards.
- » The Office of the Registrar has updated tutorials to be video-based to meet the needs of students.
- » The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) promotes accessibility features for faculty to use such as automatic Microsoft Teams captions and subtitles, and Microsoft Stream video captions.
- » The DC library provides information and communications to support accessibility on campus.
  - » Information about our accessible Library services is available online.
  - » A dedicated email address is monitored by Library employees regarding accessibility issues.
  - » All feedback and comments are reviewed by the Library Leadership Team and functional department employees as appropriate.
  - » Alternate Formats & Communication Supports:
    - » The Library is a member of the Accessible Content E-Portal (ACE Portal) which provides alternate formats for print material in the Library's collection at no cost to users. Alternative format material is available in EPUB, DAISY, PDF and plain text formats.
    - » Upon request, Library employees provide complimentary captioned versions or text transcripts of multimedia resources.
    - » As part of the Library E-resource Accessibility Project, DC Librarians completed accessibility assessments of subscription e-resources and contributed to the development of a database of accessibility evaluations led by College Libraries Ontario and the Ontario Colleges Library Service.
    - » The Library offers adaptive technology, including scanners, height adjustable tables and adaptive software, including: Zoom Text, Kurzweil 3000 and Read and Write.
    - » The Library's Assisted Use Carrel space includes adaptive technology, height adjustable workstation and is available for use by students with accessibility needs on a first-come, first-served basis.
    - » The Communications and Assessment Officer ensures that Library social media posts are tagged for accessibility.
    - » Library employees are available to assist with onsite needs such as retrieval of material, assistance with printers, plus much more.
- » Employee Training & Development:
  - » Librarians who have responsibility for Research Guide creation in the LibGuides content management system are required to complete the Accessibility for LibGuides vendor training.
  - » Access to additional accessibility training opportunities are available through provincial consortia groups including: the Ontario Council of University Libraries Accessibility Interest Group and College Libraries Ontario Library E-resource Accessibility Project.





## ACCESSIBILITY SUCCESSES AT DURHAM COLLEGE

The following accessibility successes were collected during National AccessAbility Week in 2023 when DC employees shared various accomplishments related to accessibility on campus:

- » Campus Athletics and Recreation began hosting Activity & Adaptive Sport Day events with staff and academic groups, which expanded to weekly programming open to all students in the winter semester. Each event included a diverse set of adaptive games that anyone could play with a learning component. Adaptive sports were also implemented into the second semester kickoff Campus Recreation Day, with sitting volleyball being a popular sport amongst students.
- » Access and Support Centre (ASC) supported the use of grant funded technology for students with assistive technology needs.
- » ASC started an American Sign Language (ASL) group for students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing or who wish to learn and practice ASL.
- » ASC purchased new dictation software, Equatio, which allows students to speak equations aloud and have them created digitally
- » DC was successful in securing iHub funding through the Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning to support self-identified students with disabilities or exceptionalities participating in work-integrated learning activities over the next two semesters by providing bursaries to help remove barriers to participation, such as; transportation, technology, childcare, etc.
- » CTL promotes a new feature within DC Connect that easily allows faculty to provide additional time on quizzes for students who require accommodation.
- » An AODA compliant hydroponic unit was recently installed for the Barrett Centre Ajax Urban Farm and new pathways were created to improve accessibility to the fields.
- » The Occupational Therapist Assistant and Physiotherapist Assistant (OTA/PTA) program Avvampato & Patterson (2022) started an initiative to offer Occupational Therapy (OT) to students at DC. The pilot started with supporting Community Integration through Co-operative Education students with customized programs to support client-centered goal achievement. The program combines eliminating barriers, skill development, coaching, one on one support and other customized programs through an OT lens.
- » The OTA/PTA program also offers a Social Connections Group, held in-person and virtually throughout the academic year.

## NEXT STEPS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2023-2024

In addition to what is described in the multi-year plan, the following key initiatives have been identified as objectives for the Accessibility Coordinating Committee (ACC) to lead in the upcoming year. The following objectives were developed by the ACC, as well as through a call to the DC community during AccessAbility week for ideas to enhance accessibility on campus.

1. Continue improving the accessibility of physical spaces on campus as identified in the 2020 accessibility audit five-year plan.
2. Continue the inclusive photography initiative at Whitby campus to showcase unique accessibility features available for students, employees and visitors.
3. Implement a quarterly employee newsletter feature that aligns with notable accessibility dates of significance, progress updates and successes throughout the year.
4. Continue updating college forms to be consistently formatted and accessible.
5. Continue to audit existing software for AODA compliance.
6. Conduct Durham College faculty survey focused on Universal Design for Learning and Universal Instructional Design analyze results to determine the resources needed for improved accessibility in DC's learning environments.
7. Analyze feedback collected from the 2023 National Accessibility Week, determine next steps, and communicate to DC community.
8. Continue initiatives to remain compliant with AODA requirements.