

# MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN



**2025-2029**



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**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Durham College is situated on the traditional lands of the First Peoples of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. These lands are covered under the Williams Treaties and rest within the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg.

We offer our gratitude to the Indigenous Peoples who care for and, through the treaty process, share the lands on which we live, learn, teach and prosper today.



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

At Durham College (DC), we are dedicated to fostering a people-centred, equity-driven, and inclusive environment—one where every individual feels supported, welcomed, and empowered to thrive.

As the world around us evolves, shaped by technological advancements and societal shifts, we recognize the emerging challenges and opportunities in accessibility. Innovation and agility remain essential as we create spaces that enable individuals of all abilities to succeed.

Our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2025-2029 celebrates our accomplishments to date while outlining a bold path forward. Aligned with our Strategic Vision, this plan reinforces DC's commitment to accessibility, ensuring a barrier-free campus where everyone belongs. Our collective dedication is guided by the core values of diversity, inclusion, respect, and social responsibility.

I am proud of all that we have achieved and excited by the ambitious goals ahead. By weaving accessibility into every aspect of our institution, we continue to build a future where everyone has the support and opportunity to reach their full potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elaine Popp".

Dr. Elaine Popp  
President

## INTRODUCTION

In 2005, the Ontario Government passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). As set forth in the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11, this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) outlines the Durham College (DC) strategy to meet the various requirements under the AODA legislation. It also frames the next steps in our commitment to create an inclusive and accessible campus community. This Plan was developed, reviewed and updated by DC's Accessibility Coordinating Committee (ACC).

The ACC plays a key role in advancing a barrier-free campus for individuals with disabilities and exceptionalities. The Committee brings together representatives from departments across the college, as well as individuals with lived experience, community partners and those with expertise in accessibility. The ACC continues to guide and support the development, implementation, and evaluation of accessibility planning at DC. Each year, it publishes an Accessibility Status Report that highlights accomplishments and sets priorities for the year ahead.

This work aligns closely with the college's Strategic Vision, which emphasizes our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and cultivating a welcoming campus where everyone can thrive.



# CUSTOMER SERVICE, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

DC is committed to providing exceptional and accessible customer service and communicating information in accessible formats.

## PAST ACHIEVEMENTS TO REMOVE AND PREVENT BARRIERS

- » Hosted inclusive photoshoots at both the Oshawa and Whitby campuses to showcase accessibility features and ensure DC communications and publications have representation from our entire campus community.
- » Updated campus tours to consider accessibility. Introduced campus bus tours during Open House events, highlighting DC's accessibility features.
- » Promoted Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) initiatives while marking National AccessAbility Week, encouraging participation in accessibility committees and training. Wrote and shared blogs on our website and through social media channels to further showcase DC's inclusion efforts and services for current and prospective students.
- » Expanded flexible service options through LiveChat, virtual appointments and closed-captioned online resources.
- » Provided training and asynchronous tools to employees to support accessible communication. Provided new assistive devices to students, like the Tobii Eye Tracker 5, which support hands-free technology use.
- » Reviewed all public website content to meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards, achieving and maintaining an average accessibility score of over 99% through regular audits and updates, including as new microsites are introduced.
- » Developed a sensory lounge in residence equipped with fidget tools, sound masking devices and other calming supports to provide a decompression space for students who benefit from sensory-friendly environments.
- » Launched the Wellness To-Go initiative in the Access and Support Centre (ASC), offering self-directed wellness activities supported by guided videos designed specifically for students with disabilities and exceptionalities.
- » Introduced inclusive activities in Athletics and Recreation such as sledge hockey try-it sessions and a sitting volleyball extramural team with proposed Parasport participation. Continued to be a host site for accessible sporting competitions such as wheelchair basketball.

## MYAP STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

DC will continue to create an inclusive, accessible, and user-centred campus environment by integrating universal design principles into our operations, services and communications, working toward equitable access and participation for all campus community members.

We will:

- » Enhance navigation across campus through accessible, user-friendly physical and digital wayfinding tools.
- » Establish consistent, accessible practices for creating and sharing digital documents across the institution.
- » Maintain accessibility standards on the DC website in alignment with AODA and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) guidelines.
- » Develop inclusive user experiences with accessibility standards for student-facing customer service technology (e.g., appointment booking software, self-service kiosks).
- » Establish accessibility standards for event planning.
- » Develop a communication strategy to share ongoing accessibility initiatives and progress with the campus community.



# EMPLOYMENT RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

DC is committed to using fair and accessible employment and education practices, complying with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, established under AODA, and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

## PAST ACHIEVEMENTS TO REMOVE AND PREVENT BARRIERS

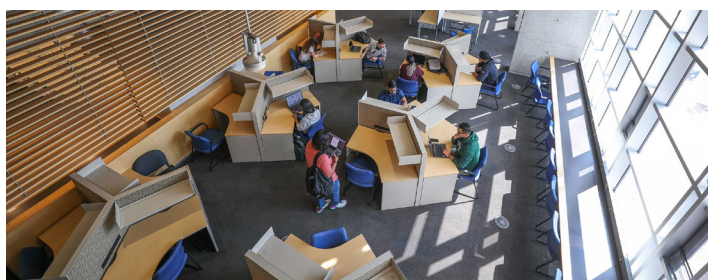
- » Reviewed and updated all legislated accessibility training to ensure AODA compliance and launched a centralized e-learning platform in 2021. Required all employees to retake the updated training for improved tracking and to reinforce current standards. Training is now fully accessible and housed on the Brightspace portal, with communications shared through internal college channels.
- » Launched a Faculty survey on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and accessibility to determine needs of our educators. The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) introduced self-paced UDL training, virtual workshops and revised the learning management system for accessibility. CTL also developed teaching resources to support accessibility, including implementing a course quality rubric that includes AODA criteria. New Faculty orientations include resources for creating accessible courses and inclusive learning environments.
- » Expanded adaptive services in the Library by offering alternate formats, accessible workstations, and assistive technology. It also supported the creation of an accessibility assessment database for electronic resources, provided staff training and ensured accessible communication across digital platforms. All accessibility-related feedback was reviewed to guide ongoing improvements.
- » Implemented a range of specialized supports in the ASC to enhance accessibility and student success, including introducing an Accessibility Coach for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, streamlining the ADHD referral processes and the opening of a fully accessible lab. AI-powered assistive technology and same-day counselling services were also introduced, along with a One-at-a-Time therapy model. To further support students, the ASC strengthened placement supports by providing ASL guidance to employers and expanded its suite of assistive technology tools.

## MYAP STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

DC will continue to embed accessibility principles across all human resource and teaching practices, enhancing support and resources and continuously improving recruitment, onboarding, and education processes.

We will:

- » Enhance ongoing accessibility training and inclusive practices for staff and faculty, including dedicated accessibility resources for inclusive teaching practices and accessible learning environments.
- » Ensure employee resources are accessible and inclusive (e.g., employee onboarding, professional development, return-to-work procedures, emergency response plans).
- » Enhance recruitment strategies and materials to actively engage and support applicants from diverse backgrounds, with particular attention to individuals with disabilities and exceptionalities.



# PROCUREMENT

DC is committed to selecting accessible technology for campus use.

## PAST ACHIEVEMENTS TO REMOVE AND PREVENT BARRIERS

- » Streamlined the Software Procurement Checklist, communicated to employees, and paired with a video guide to support proper use. The ACC, in partnership with IT Services and the ASC conducted ongoing software audits to review commonly used academic tools like Audacity, Gimp, PowerBI and SketchUp for accessibility compliance. The Software Procurement Checklist was embedded into all technology procurement processes.
- » Updated 348 forms, led by the Forms Management Committee, to meet accessibility standards. This included adding alternate format statements, using accessibility tools for PDFs and shifting to Microsoft Forms for features like immersive reader and adjustable fonts. Key forms, such as new program proposals and the ASC intake summary, were also revised to improve usability and include support resources.

## MYAP STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

DC will advance digital equity by prioritizing accessibility when selecting, developing and using software technology.

We will:

- » Establish standardized guidelines for managing academic software that is essential for industry use but presents accessibility barriers.
- » Conduct regular reviews of procurement policies, software acquisition procedures and related resources to ensure accessibility remains a core consideration.
- » Maintain regular audits of high-use software to monitor accessibility compliance and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.



# DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES

DC is committed to continuing to build and maintain inclusive and accessible campuses and sites.

## PAST ACHIEVEMENTS TO REMOVE AND PREVENT BARRIERS

DC has significantly improved physical accessibility across its campuses and sites. A phased campus-wide audit focused first on high-traffic areas and washrooms, leading to many barrier-free upgrades.

Key initiatives included the construction of a fully accessible Ontario Power Generation Centre for Skilled Trades and Technology at the Whitby campus and upgrades to athletic facilities to reduce barriers and promote a sense of inclusivity.

Accessibility enhancements:

- » Installed Tactile Walking Surface Indicators, accessible service counters and new mobility device charging stations on both campuses.
- » Conducted braille wayfinding audits.
- » Installed AODA-compliant doors, hardware, and automatic operators in multiple buildings.
- » Renovated pathways, stairwells, vestibules, and landscaping to improve accessibility and safety.
- » Improved accessible parking features and door hardware at key Whitby campus buildings.
- » Conducted accessibility upgrades to classrooms, including accessible furniture and door operators.
- » Upgraded South Village Residence, including accessible door handles and synchronized Dining Hall doors.
- » Added accessible fitness equipment and plans for seated volleyball equipment.
- » Installed wheelchair-accessible picnic tables, paved paths, rest stops and an accessible pedestrian crossing in a major parking lot.
- » Installed automated card access from transit areas and timed door openers in the Student Services Building and mailroom areas.
- » Created new universal washrooms and improved handrails in some Academic wings.
- » Renovated the Multi-Faith and Quiet Room at the Oshawa campus, with accessible washrooms.

## MYAP STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

DC will continue to foster inclusive and accessible environments by integrating accessibility into the planning, design, maintenance, and continuous improvement of its built environment across all campuses and sites. This commitment extends beyond new construction and renovation to include the ongoing assessment and response to accessibility improvement requests.

We will:

- » Establish a working group to develop a framework for evaluating and prioritizing accessibility across the college's built environment.
- » Implement a streamlined process for requesting, identifying, assessing and addressing accessibility needs in DC built environments.
- » Ensure accessibility is embedded in all capital project phases, from early planning and design through construction and renovation, with clear standards and review points built into project workflows.
- » Update the 2021 campus-wide accessibility audit and develop a prioritized list of related projects and initiatives.

