

TYPE:	Administrative
TITLE:	Accessible Customer Service
NO.:	ADMIN-249
RESPONSIBILITY:	Chief Administrative Officer; Vice-President, Student Affairs
APPROVED BY:	Durham College Leadership Team
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1. Introduction

Durham College is committed to equal access to goods and services, providing exceptional and accessible customer service for its customers, and is obligated to comply with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA)* and *Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service)*. To ensure these outcomes, operational policies and procedures developed for any department of Durham College are developed under the guidelines of dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity, in compliance with AODA.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish accessibility standards for customer service. This policy applies to all employees, agents, volunteers and contracted staff of Durham College.

Durham College recognizes that people with disabilities achieve accessibility to the provisions of goods and services by Durham College, consistent with the following principles:

- 2.1. The goods or services must be provided in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.
- 2.2. The provision of goods or services to people with disabilities must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporary or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain or benefit from the goods or services.
- 2.3. People with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from goods or services.

3. Definitions

Refer to [Durham College's Standard Definitions](#).

4. Policy statements

4.1. Guide Dogs, Service Animals

If persons with a disability are accompanied by a service animal, Durham College will permit the persons to enter the premises with the animal and keep the animal with them, unless it is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. If the service animal is excluded by law from the premises, Durham College will look to other available measures to enable the persons with a disability to access, obtain, use or benefit from Durham College's goods and services. The service animal must be under the care and control of the individual at all times.

4.2. Support Persons

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, educational assistant or coach, Durham College will ensure that both parties are permitted to enter the premises together, and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person. Durham College may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on Durham College premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises. Where fees for programs, goods and services are advertised or promoted by Durham College, it will provide advanced notice of the amount payable.

4.3. Disruption of Services

If there is a disruption in a particular facility or service used to allow a person with a disability to access goods or services, Durham College will give notice of the disruption to the public by posting the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration of the disruption, and alternative facilities or services that may be available. This posting will be on the Durham College website, ICE and DC Connect as well as being physically posted in a conspicuous place on the premises of Durham College, or by other reasonable methods in the circumstances. If the disruption is anticipated, Durham College will provide a reasonable amount of advance notice of the disruption. If the disruption is unexpected, notice will be provided as soon as possible. Durham College will provide a document setting out the steps to be taken in connection with a temporary disruption, upon request.

4.4. Assistive Devices

If a person with a disability requires assistive devices to access programs, goods or services at Durham College, they are allowed to use such devices. When available, Durham College will provide assistive devices in order to allow people with disabilities to access College programs, goods and services while on the premises conducting College business.

4.5. Feedback Process

Durham College provides a mechanism which allows the public to provide feedback on the manner in which Durham College provides programs, goods and services to people with disabilities through DC Cares. The feedback process permits the person to provide feedback in person, by telephone, in writing, or by electronic text, by email or on a secure flash drive, or otherwise. The feedback process details Durham College's process for receiving and responding to feedback including timelines and contact information and is available on Durham College website.

4.6. Training for Staff

All College employees (including administrators, faculty, support staff), volunteers, agents, contractors and all other persons who deal with the public or third parties on behalf of Durham College, and those involved in developing customer service policies, practices and procedures, will receive Accessible Customer Service training. Durham College will keep records of the training provided, including dates training is provided and number of persons trained. The training will be delivered in a variety of formats and will be provided on an ongoing basis for employees in order to stay current with changes in policies, practices and procedures. Training will be provided to individuals as soon as practicable after they are assigned their duties. Managers will receive a list of all employees in their area who have and have not completed the training on an annual basis and are responsible for ensuring that all employees in their areas have completed the training. The training will include the following:

- 4.6.1. The purpose of the AODA and the requirements of the customer service standard
- 4.6.2. How to interact and communicate with persons who have a disability, and in a manner that takes into account their disability
- 4.6.3. How to provide goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities
- 4.6.4. The process to provide feedback to Durham College about the provision of services to persons with disabilities in any department or school and how Durham College responds to the feedback and takes action on any complaint
- 4.6.5. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person to access goods or services
- 4.6.6. How to use equipment or devices available on Durham College premises or provided by Durham College that may help with the provision of goods and services to a person with a disability.

4.6.7. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Durham College's programs, goods or services

4.7. Notice of Availability of Documents

This document and other policies and procedures related to the provision of goods and services for people with disabilities will be available through a variety of methods. These documents will be made available on request and in a format that takes into consideration, the person's disability.

5. Procedure

This section is not applicable.

6. Roles and responsibilities

- 6.1. The vice-president, Student Affairs (VPSA) oversees the accessibility mandate and is responsible for its overall implementation. The VPSA is also responsible for developing and promoting the five-year AODA and accessibility plans.
- 6.2. The vice-president, Academic provides a leadership role in the development and implementation of the Accessibility Standard for Information and Communications of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.
- 6.3. The chief administrative officer, Administration provides a leadership role in the development and implementation of the Employment standards of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.
- 6.4. All members of Durham College Leadership Team are responsible for fostering and championing an accessible environment.
- 6.5. All College employees have responsibility for ensuring the ongoing development of an accessible, open and supportive learning environment.

7. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act considerations

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards have been considered in the development of this policy and procedure and it adheres to the principles outlined in the College's commitment to accessibility as demonstrated by the Accessibility Plan (ADMIN-203).

8. Non-compliance implications

The Ontario government established an Administrative Monetary Penalties scheme under AODA. The scheme allows a ministry director or a designate to issue an order against a person, organization or corporation to pay a penalty amount as a result of non-compliance with the AODA or the accessibility standards. The maximum penalty that could be issued to an individual is \$2000 per day and to an organization is \$15,000 per day.

Failure to comply with applicable federal and provincial legislation may lead to legal costs arising from potential lawsuits for non-compliance

9. Communications plan

- A message will be posted on ICE alerting employees when new or revised policies and procedures are added to ICE.
- A message will be posted on MyCampus alerting students when new or revised policies and procedures are added.

10. Related forms, legislation or external resources

- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 S.O. 2005*
- *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, O.Reg. 429/07*
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982
- Durham College Campus Accessibility Plan
- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act RSO 1990, c.F.31*
- *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, O.Reg.191/11*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code R.S.O. 1990, c.H.19*
- *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.32*
- *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*