York University
Accessibility Report 2014

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Executive Summary

York University continues to work towards making the University a fully accessible environment for all persons. The University is committed to meeting the requirements outlined in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA),* 2005.

Year in Review

This report highlights the measures taken by York University to date, to achieve compliance with the standards and describes initiatives undertaken over the past year to prevent and remove barriers.

Legislative Requirements

The new requirements for 2014 are as follows:

- Internet websites and web content to conform with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

- Provide training on the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standard and on the *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities

- Implement regulations to address employment practices and policies to create a workplace that is more accessible to existing and prospective employees

Actions

York University has achieved compliance in the following:

- New website content published after January 1, 2014 will be developed in accordance with WCAG2.0.

- Human Resources and the Centre for Human Rights have developed a training brochure and training plans to implement the general training requirements.

- York University has a long-standing policy for accommodation of employees and prospective employees with disabilities. Some process were refined to achieve compliance with the new Integrated Accessibility Standard requirements.

York's commitment to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities is stated in its [Statement of Commitment: Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities](). In accordance with the *AODA* and *The Code*, York recognizes the importance the dignity for every individual.

Accessibility Planning Process

In developing this report, input was received from the *AODA* Coordinating Committee regarding measures that were adopted by various departments over the last year to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility. This pan-university committee was established and is chaired by the University Secretary and General Counsel. It's to assist York University in developing and overseeing implementation of the compliance framework for the *AODA* requirements.

Accessibility Services

York University's commitment to accessibility is supported throughout the University. The following offices are particularly involved in this important initiative.

- Counselling and Disability Services (CDS) is comprised of three units on the Keele campus that offer a variety of academic support to students with disabilities. These units facilitate the provision of reasonable academic accommodations to students with learning, mental health, physical, sensory and medical disabilities to help maximize their educational experience. The three disability service units include:

    - [Learning Disability Services](#) (LDS): provides educational support to university students with documented learning disabilities, attention disorders, and autism spectrum disorders.

    - [Mental Health Disability Services](#) (MHDS): provides educational support to university students with mental health disabilities.

    - [Physical, Sensory & Medical Disability Services](#) (PSMDS): provides educational support to university students with physical, sensory & medical disabilities.

- Employee Well Being Office (EWO) assists in disability management and return to work accommodation for employees.

- Library Accessibility Services (LAS) provides equitable access to the full range of library services, resources and facilities for all York University students, faculty and staff.

- Campus Services and Business Operations (CSBO) is responsible for overall planning, development, expansion, alteration, maintenance, and operation of all physical facilities (buildings, grounds and plant equipment) for the University. CSBO provides the University with services that help achieve the goals of the University while enhancing University life for all.

- Centre for Human Rights (CHR) advocates and educates individuals regarding the provisions of the *Ontario Human Rights Code (Code*) as well as all human rights policies at York University. The CHR assists individuals and groups to address and resolve allegations of discrimination and harassment as defined by the *Code* through an accessible, impartial,

non-adversarial and confidential process.

AODA Standards

The Accessibility Standard for **Customer Service** was the first standard to be enacted. Since January 1, 2010 York University has implemented the Customer Service Standard ensuring that its policies, practices and procedures comply with the requirements of the standard.

The **Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR)** was released in June 2011. It combined the following standards under one integrated regulation:

- Information and Communication

- Employment and

- Transportation

The requirements under this regulation will be phased in accordance with the timelines established by the regulation, i.e., between 2011 and 2025.

Report on Accessibility Standards

Customer Service

In 2008 the **Customer Service Standard** s became the first regulation to come into effect under the *AODA.* York has developed practices, policies and procedures to ensure access to goods and services by persons with disabilities

York University demonstrates compliance with the Customer Service Standard with the following actions:

- Incorporating the AODA Customer Service training modules into new employee onboarding orientation.

- Provided training to all employees, volunteers, persons who participate in developing policy; all persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of York University regarding the requirements of the accessibility standards as it relates to persons with disabilities through the distribution of a training brochure.

Information and Communications

The **Information and Communications Standard** focuses on the requirement to create, provide and receive information and communication in accessible formats and with communication supports for persons with disabilities. The timelines for compliance vary. York University has taken or will take the following steps:

- Created a dedicated email to address questions and concerns.

- Implemented a mechanism on the [accessibility website](#) allowing individuals to communicate feedback on specific policies, procedures, governance or compliance issues.

- Provide emergency procedures, plans and public safety information in accessible formats or with communication supports upon request. The [Emergency Preparedness Guide](#) is available online.

- Introduction of a new university web template which is compliant and barrier free.

- Built and maintained [AODA Website Accessibility at York](#). A website which outlines how to make websites and online content comply with legislation and report accessibility issues with current websites.

- Training is being offered to staff and faculty regarding the requirements of AODA in terms of websites, online content and techniques in helping to ensure that content complies with the legislation requirements. Details regarding the training available are on the [AODA Website Accessibility at York](#) website.

- Provide services for captioning and transcripts for video and audio on a cost recovery basis.

- Developed strategies to implement new internet websites and web content that will comply with the WCAG2.0 standard, including. any new website content published after January 1, 2014 will be developed in accordance with this standard.

- Accessible formats of educational and training resources through York University Library's Papyrus System, upon request.

- Continue to offer York University's academic employees continue to use the Educator's Accessibility Resource Tool Kit to assist in delivery for accessible programming and instruction.

Employment

The **Employment Standard** regulations address employment practices and policies designed to create a workplace that is more accessible to existing and potential employees. York University has met the requirements in this standard by undertaking the following:

- Created policies that highlight to employees that York University is commitment to working towards a barrier-free workplace and expanding the accessibility of the workplace to persons with disabilities. These policies can be accessed on the [Careers](#) page website under "Links".

    o [Accessibility for Employees, Statement of Commitment](#)

    o [Accommodation in Employment for Persons with Disabilities](#)

    o [Accommodation in Employment for Persons with Disabilities, Procedures](#)

- Established policies of accommodation for employees and potential applicants to compete for positions perform their work and fully participate in employment at York by ensuring that process to provide supports are in place. A statement regarding accommodation has been added to all job postings.

- Implemented process to notify candidates that York University provides accommodation during the interview / selection process.

- Review policies with new employees at orientation.

Transportation

The **Transportation Standard** mandates that when providing transportation, York University arranges for accessible transportation upon request. York continues to have these procedures in place:

- Complimentary shuttles to the GO train station using wheelchair accessible vehicles.

- Shuttle service between Glendon and Keele using wheelchair accessible vehicles.

- VANGO Service is available to assist persons with disabilities.

Built Environment

The **Built Environment Standard** currently outlines recommendations on removing barriers in buildings and public spaces for people with disabilities and the timeline for compliance is January 1, 2016. The building standards will be addressed at a later date through amendments to the Ontario Building Code.

York is committed to ensuring that public spaces are free of barriers. Campus Services and Business Operations (CSBO) at York reviews all projects with a focus to creating a barrier-free environment.

Other Initiatives

Various divisions throughout the University are working to create a more inclusive and barrier free environment. The following are some of the initiatives undertaken for 2014.

Academic

- The Faculty of Health has added closed captioning to their online videos.

- The Faculty of Health with CHR and CDS host a session for undergraduate program directors, about accommodating students with disabilities.

- The Faculty of Environmental Studies installed *Inspiration* as a network application on January 30, 2014.

- Glendon hired a student to identify and on the areas of the campus that may present a physical challenge for people with disabilities.

- The ITS department at Glendon purchased a subscription to a tool called Siteimprove. This is a web governance tool that will help Glendon fall into AODA compliance by identifying and pin-pointing areas of non-compliance across the entire website.

- Graduate Studies created a task force in late 2012 which continues to identify accessibility issues impacting Graduate Students and work with constituent groups to support essential accommodation requirements. The Dean's Task Force on Graduate Studies with Disabilities: Report to Senate was completed in August 2014 listing 20 recommendations.

- The Faculty of Graduate Studies working with Faculty Relations updated the Graduate Studies Academic Petition Form. The intent is to clarify and improve processes related to the application for extension of program time limits and/or priority pool entitlement for CUPE members with disabilities. The new form is scheduled for implementation by December 2013.

- Graduate Studies made accessibility improvements to the Automatic Door Opener and modified the accessible light switch in the office/study room for Graduate Students in Critical Disabilities Studies.

- Schulich is updating their web pages in order to be AODA compliant. They have also added captioning to their enrolment instructions for the hearing impaired.

- Messages regarding Accessibility, Accommodations and Health have also been forwarded to the Schulich Community through the Welcome message from the AD Academic before the start of the Fall semester and throughout the Academics website. The Accessibility, Accommodations and Health is targeted mostly at Faculty and Staff.

York University Library (YUL)

- The SPARK website (Student Papers and Academic Research Kit Online tool) continues to be available for use. This website is designed for accessibility and tested with users of access technologies.

- The YUL's launched an AIF Project Video, blog and resource page "Connecting with Disability Services at York".

- Library Accessibility Services launched an online student feedback form to over 500 registered service users.

- The Bronfman Business and Steacie Science & Engineering Libraries have new accessible printing/scanning workstations.

- Library Computing Services implemented customized online access for students using adaptive technologies for room booking calendar and door entry code access.

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- Library Computing Services implemented customized online access for students using adaptive technologies for room booking calendar and door entry code access.

- Library Accessibility Services (LAS) collaborated with York University's Copyright and Privacy Officers to ensure compliance of the LAS referral process, and LAS hosted subsequent workshop to launch the new form and processes with counsellors and managers from the three Disability Services units in Counselling & Disability Services (MHDS, LDS, PSMDS). Library Services provided training to all library staff on Universal Design and A Blind Student's Experience.

- YUL arranges for Instructional Librarians to attend training for addressing accessibility for students experiencing physical, sensory and mental health disabilities.

- Assistant University Librarians (AUL) and Librarians participated in the development of an Ontario-Wide "Accessibility Information Toolkit for Libraries" for AODA compliance. The Manager of Library Accessibility Services (LAS) also participated in the creation of a provincial repository of alternate format texts (Accessible Content E-Portal). Both initiatives are under the aegis of Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) and Scholar's Portal.

Student Services

Enable York (*formerly Access York*)

- The York University Accessibility Fund, a pan-university fund established in January 2013, to fund accessibility expenditures that make the University more accessible to persons with disabilities supported applications for funding of initiatives to broaden accessibility for persons with disabilities within the York University community.

Career Centre

- The Career Centre, York Internship and Co-op websites have been upgraded to most recent templates created by Communications & Public Affairs and UIT (which have been designed in accordance with W3C Content Accessibility standards 2.0). Also made ongoing accessibility improvements to websites have been made to ensure that users with screen reading software are more easily able to navigate and use the site.

- A video transcription project has been started which will ensure the Career Centre's online video resources meet web accessibility requirements.

- Accessible Microsoft word templates have been created to ensure handouts distributed electronically meet AODA requirements. The Career Centre's website includes a webpage that directs students with disabilities to on-campus and community career resources and events.

- The Career Centre works in partnership with York's Counselling & Disability Services (CDS) and initiated a Disability & Career Committee (one representative from MHDS, LDS, PSMDS and the Career Centre), with the goal of developing a direct referral for students with disabilities to access career counselling supports as required. This partnership has also resulted in:

- o an annual event called "Career Success: Employment Supports for Students with Disabilities"; and

- o the development of a new workshop, "To Disclose or Not to Disclose? Workplace Considerations for Students with Disabilities", offered twice annually.

- The Who Am I?" Self-Assessment game has been adapted to include a series of game cards specifically referring to issues of disability as it relates to careers, and the workshop is offered in closed sessions exclusively for students with disabilities.

- A community partnership was created with the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW) with a focus on the Workplace Essential Skills Partnership (WESP) program, which provides employment supports to job seekers with disabilities.

- A community partnership was created with JobStart which provides employment and retention supports to job seekers with disabilities. A Job Developer from Job Start attends York University and meets with students with disabilities to complete intakes on the York campus.

- Employer partners host recruitment sessions (at various locations including the York campus) to recruit York students and recent graduates with disabilities and post related job postings on the Career Centre's on-line job posting system.

Counselling & Disability Services (CDS)

- CDS adapted the new student orientation for students with disabilities to include a "virtual orientation" whereby students could access much of the information online 24/7 to increase ease of access to the information.

- CDS developed new online instructional videos for students with disabilities, e.g. how to apply for the Bursary for Students with Disabilities, how to access disability services on campus, etc.

- Counselling and Disability Services worked with over 2800 students with physical, sensory, medical, learning, and mental health disabilities to ensure appropriate academic accommodations in their undergraduate and graduate course work.

- Disability Services in collaboration with Library Accessibility Services launched a mobile application that provides students, staff and visitors with quick and easy access to information using a mobile device.

- Each of the units' mobile-friendly websites under the Disability Services umbrella – Learning Disability Services, Physical, Sensory & Medical Disability Services, and Mental Health Disability Services – as well as Library Accessibility Services can be accessed at the touch of a button, saving users the difficulty of searching and clicking through mobile web browsers on their device.

Registrar's Office

- The Registrar's Office continues to ensure that all websites and forms are AODA compliant

- The website for students requiring test or exam accommodations was updated in the Fall of 2014 to use the university's new online template.

Student Client Services (SCS)

- SCS provided an information session related to services for the incoming class of students in Counselling and Disability Services.

- The Director of CDS continues to attend staff sessions to provide an overview of Counselling and Disability Services.

- LDS, OSAP and Scholarships & Bursaries pursued discussions to ensure clear communication about financial support to students with disabilities.

Student Community & Leadership Development

Residence Life:

- Residence Life partners with the Centre for Human Rights to offer training to Residence Dons to cover diversity and inclusion. Staff are educated on ability and the Ontario Human Rights Code, respect and principles of inclusivity.

- AODA training is provided for Residence Dons and Residence Porters.

Student Community:

- A workshop on how to ensure orientation events are inclusive and accessible During Orient the Leader, 1250 orientation leaders are trained in inclusivity by the CHR.

YU Start (New Student Program)

- All student leaders complete AODA accessibility awareness training.

- All videos for online enrolment were captioned.

Finance and Administration

Campus Services and Business Operations (CSBO)

- CSBO has undertaken detailed accessibility audits of all residences within Keele and Glendon Campus, representing 16 projects; this work is part of overall housing renovations, and will include for each building a description of barriers and the identification of priority improvements; the ambition is to set a standard approach to accessibility auditing and for

more building audits across both campuses.

- York University Transportation Services actively works with local public transit agencies to provide the best possible services to meet the transportation needs of the community.

- Transportation Services also offers complimentary shuttles to the GO Train Station, a shuttle between the Glendon-Keele campus and also VANGO, an on-campus mobility service for persons with disabilities.

- York University employees have been trained to post notice of service disruptions to services used in particular by persons with disabilities using the temporary service disruption tool.

- CSBO created, posted and provides in accessible formats or with communication supports, upon request, *An Emergency Preparedness Guide for Persons with Disabilities*.

- CSBO has continued to work closely with Centre for Counselling and Disabilities Services (CDS) through Student Community Development (Physical, Sensory and Medical Disability Services) to ensure that every student registered for the VanGO services has a plan to ensure "door to door" service.

- CSBO reviews all renovation projects with a focus to creating a barrier free environment.

- All projects earmarked to improve accessibility will be addressed promptly. All Service Requests have a tick-off box in the application called "Accessibility".

Learning and Organizational Development – Human Resources

- Learning and Organization Development provided consultation to Communications & Public Affairs Division to ensure that University-branded templates for electronic presentations, stationery and reports include accessibility features.

- Learning and Organizational Development converted Questions for all standard multiple-choice tests to text-only format for conversion to accessible formats as required.

- Basic accessibility features have been incorporated into existing computer skills courses for MS Office.

- Learning and Organizational Development have developed in-class courses with a focus specifically on the accessibility principles and techniques available in Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint to ensure that electronic documents are as accessible as possible.

Centre for Human Rights (CHR)

The CHR continues to contribute to enhancing York U's accessibility in four ways:

1. **Policy Advice:** The CHR supported York University's administration to develop and

implement policies related to accessibility.

- In collaboration with Enable York and other community members, the CHR updated the [guidelines on hosting an accessible and inclusive event](#).

- In partnership with the Vice-Provost Academic and the Executive Director of CDS, the CHR sends out a letter at the beginning of each academic term (January 2014 and September 2014) to all faculties about the responsibilities and obligations to accommodate students with disabilities.

- The CHR created and forwarded to internal departments and units a fact sheet on rights and responsibilities in providing accommodations for persons with disabilities.

2. **Training:** Over the past year, the CHR provided a number of workshops on the following topics which include a component relating to accessibility and accommodations for persons with disabilities.

- 'Inclusivity' workshops for:

  - o Osgoode Staff and Faculty;
  - o Youth Connection camp;
  - o Community Safety Council members;
  - o Security Officers;
  - o Schulich Students.
  - o York managers through L&OD; and
  - o GoSafe staff (comprised of students);

- 'Human rights' training for Academic Administrators

- 'Diversity' and 'Respect in the Workplace' workshops for student groups, staff groups such as managers, as well as faculty groups such as Teaching Assistants.

  The CHR also upgraded the online tutorial "Respect, Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity" to include captioning and described video.

3. **Educational Events:** The CHR supported disability awareness events on campus:

- CHR supported Access York's presentation of the play 'R.A.R.E.' in January 2014.

- The CHR supported the "Deconstructing Madness" event in March (symposium by Mad Positive Student Coalition, a new student group at York University advancing issues of mental health awareness) a presentation about the meaning of mad positive space and highlight the importance of the term "mad positive" as a fundamental approach to working with the consumer, survivor and mad community.

4. **Case Resolution**: On an ongoing basis, the CHR addresses accessibility concerns raised by York U students, faculty and staff.

Summary

York University has worked together as a community over the past year on a number of initiatives which focus on York's commitment to increase accessibility at our institution.

We continue to focus on the best way possible to provide support for persons with disabilities at York as we strive towards compliance. Achieving accessibility and inclusivity is a commitment of all members of our community and can only be achieved through the commitment of faculty, staff and students.