# Multi-Year AODA Accessibility Plan 2020-2025 Annual Status Report May 2021-April 2022

This document is available in alternate formats upon request. Please contact us at 905.721.3173 or by email at aoda@ontariotechu.ca

## Introduction

## Background

This report is a collaborative effort between the multiple units represented on the campus-wide Accessibility Working Group (AWG). The AWG was established at Ontario Tech University in September 2010 with the intent of creating a campus that is inclusive and barrier-free for all individuals with disabilities. In response to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) and more recently the *Integrated Accessibility Standards and Regulations* (IASR), which mandated province-wide accessibility planning to address the staggered implementation of the accessibility standards. The [Ontario Tech AODA Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](https://shared.ontariotechu.ca/shared/department/accessibility/documents/2020-aoda-multi-year-plan.pdf) (“Multi-Year Plan”) published in 2020 reaffirms the University’s commitment towards developing and maintaining a study and work environment that is inclusive and facilitates the full participation of all students and employees with disabilities.

## Statement of Commitment

Ontario Tech University is committed to creating a campus community that is inclusive of all individuals and ensures equal opportunity among its members to achieve success in their academic and/or employment endeavors. The University recognizes that successful learning and employment outcomes are the result of a shared responsibility and commitment on the part of students, faculty, and staff, and expects that all members of the community will advance the ongoing development of an environment that is accessible and inclusive, while actively working to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities.

## Accessibility Feedback

Ontario Tech University recognizes community feedback as a critical process in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers in its accessibility strategy. Feedback is an essential part of the University’s plan to improve on how we deliver our services and encourage inclusive community participation. Feedback may be given by emailing the University Secretariat and General Counsel’s office at aoda@ontariotechu.ca, or by telephone at 905.721.3173. You may also send feedback via mail to:

Office of the University Secretariat and General Counsel

2000 Simcoe Street North

Oshawa, Ontario L1G 0C5

# Section 1: Status Update

## Navigating through COVID-19

The COVID19 Global Pandemic created a drastic shift in the way that services and education are delivered in Ontario. Looking forward, Ontario Tech is not only responsible for compliance, but to align with our core [vision, mission and values](https://ontariotechu.ca/about/university-vision-mission-and-values.php). Ontario Tech has an opportunity to foreground greater inclusivity through innovative approaches to accessibility. Greater accessibility not only fosters the necessary technological infrastructure to evolve, but also provides a competitive edge for our sticky campus. Accessibility provides greater rates of recruitment and retention for students who have historically been underrepresented and excluded from Canadian higher education institutions.

Since May 1, 2021, the AWG focused its efforts on meeting the commitments outlined in the Multi-Year Plan for continued alignment with the Statement of Commitment. The achievements of the AWG subcommittees, and administrative departments are highlighted below for the period of May 1, 2021 – April 30, 2022.

## AWG - Subcommittees

The AWG has focused on achieving demonstrated compliance with the AODA. During the 2020-2021 academic year, the AWG through its subcommittees targeted three (3) areas of focus including accessibility training, workplace accessibility and accessible procurement practices to foster innovative approaches to inclusion. These initiatives have enabled the dedicated members of the AWG, and the larger campus community to identify barriers in an effort to provide greater inclusion through accessibility initiatives.

### Education Subcommittee

**Susan Forbes**, Manager, Teaching & Learning Centre **(Sub-committee Chair)**

**Stephanie Cork,** Faculty Development Coordinator, Teaching & Learning Centre

**Julie Day**, Health and Disability Management Specialist, Human Resources

**Tina Murray**, Manager, Student Accessibility Services, Student Accessibility Services

*(Interim) Monica Jain (Aggarwal), Director, Careers, Counselling and Accessibility*

**Shay Babb**, Manager, Compliance Risk & Ethics, University Secretary and General Counsel’s Office

#### **Achievements**

* Developed and implemented the [Ontario Tech AODA Training Modules](https://accessibility.ontariotechu.ca/training/index.php) deployed through Catalog
* Coordinated the audit of Accessibility Hub resources to comply with WCAG 2.0 Level AA (WCAG) compliance
* The Teaching & Learning Centre (TLC) led the development and presentation of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) training and resources across campus (to faculty, staff and students)
* Communications & Marketing (C&M), TLC, and the Office of Research Services (ORS) collaborated on various guidance materials including:[**Guidance and Checklists**](https://accessibility.ontariotechu.ca/resources/index.php)

### Procurement Subcommittee

**Shay Babb**, Manager, Compliance Risk & Ethics, University Secretary and General Counsel’s Office (**Subcommittee Chair**)

**Julie Day**, Health and Disability Management Specialist, Human Resources

**Tina Murray**, Manager, Student Accessibility Services, Student Accessibility Services

*(Interim) Monica Jain (Aggarwal), Director, Careers, Counselling and Accessibility*

#### **Achievements**

* Reviewed and revised the procurement procedure to provide additional guidance and enhance the clarity of the university’s accessibility obligations
* Developed the Ontario Tech Accessible Procurement Toolkit to enhance the accessible procurement guidance available to the community

### Accessibility Compliance Reporting Subcommittee

**Shay Babb**, Manager, Compliance Risk & Ethics, University Secretary and General Counsel’s Office (**Subcommittee Chair**)

**Emily Tufts**, Associate University Librarian, Scholarly Resources, Campus Library

**Chris Woods**, Manager, User Experience, Communications & Marketing, Office of External Relations

**Ken Bright**, Director of Campus Infrastructure and Sustainability, Office of Campus Infrastructure and Sustainability

**Julie Day**, Health and Disability Management Specialist, Human Resources

**Susan Forbes**, Manager, Teaching & Learning Centre

#### **Achievements**

* Prepared the 2021 Accessibility Compliance Report for review and certification by the Vice President, Administration
* Analyzed and recorded follow up actions required by the AWG to continue meeting the university’s accessibility commitments
* Compliance presented the “*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* – *Accessibility Reporting 2021*” to the social media committee highlighting the bi-annual reporting process, and the WCAG requirements

### Institutional Achievements & Accomplishments

#### General

* The USGC and Provost demonstrated their ongoing commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion by maintaining the accessibility compliance framework
* The University developed its 2021-2029 equity target plans for the Canada Research Chairs Program, which included higher targets for persons with disabilities to better reflect the population
* The AWG had four (4) accessibility working group meetings in the 2021 calendar year where members took part in strategic discussions and accessibility priority planning.
* The concept of the Accessibility Hub was established, with planning around scope, objectives and design
* The AWG undertook an internal review of its Terms of Reference.  Form, content and membership changes were proposed and approved.  New members include:
* Director, Human Rights Office, Office of the University Secretary and General Counsel, or delegate
* Social Media Coordinator, Communications & Marketing, or delegate
* One (1) representative from Teaching & Learning Centre, Office of Learning Innovation
* Assistive Technology Specialist, Student Accessibility Services, Office of Student Life
* One (1) representative from the Office of Research Services, Office of Research & Innovation
* Director, Academic Advising, Office of the Deputy Provost or delegate
* One (1) representative from Information Technology Services
* Director, Ontario Tech Athletics or delegate
* One (1) representative from either the i) Teaching Staff or ii) Subject Matter Experts with direct knowledge and interest in accessibility.

#### Employment

* Human Resources (HR) followed the accessible procurement principles during the acquisition of the new Applicant Tracking System
* HR enhanced recruitment toolkits with additional disability resources for managers to strengthen and promote accessibility awareness throughout the recruitment life cycle
* HR collaborated with Durham College and other university stakeholders in the development and implementation of the [COVID-19 vaccine directive accommodation process](https://shared.ontariotechu.ca/shared/department/communications/documents/ready-for-you/covid-19-vaccination-accommodation-form.pdf)
* HR administered and monitored the institution’s [mandatory accessibility training compliance program](https://accessibility.ontariotechu.ca/training/index.php) including the “Ontario Tech AODA Modules” and the “Ontario Tech Accessible Instruction Module for Educators”
* Various HR representatives participated in networking events offered by the CNIB to diversify the university’s candidate pool during recruitment efforts

#### Information & Communications

* Communications & Marketing (C&M) transitioned the university’s public-facing website to a cloud-based content management system that integrates backend accessibility scanning into workflow activities
* The University’s Advancement Team received a renewal gift of the assistive technology tool eSSENTIAL Accessibility
* C&M worked with various departments across campus to support WCAG compliance
* C&M managed the accessible documents request intake process to support administrative departments with accessible document requests
* C&M conducted a brand accessibility review to identify accessible colors, font and text
* The Office of Student Life conducted website testing to assess the readability of graphic content that use screen readers
* The Office of the Registrar conducted a content inclusivity review to promote inclusive language usage in all department policies and published content
* The Office of the Registrar assumed a WCAG social media review to identify opportunities to address video captioning, hashtag camelcase usage, and style guidelines
* The Office of the Registrar examined its website hyperlinking actions to enhance the user experience for those using assistive technology
* The Campus Library reviewed and addressed alt text on all social media posts
* During the pandemic, the Campus Library expanded the accessibility of their services by offering online appointment booking and virtual appointment options via Zoom, Google Meet, MS Teams (or any other requested secure application)
* TLC expanded support service options to include pedological accessibility support and one on one consultations with subject matter experts
* TLC presented an Open Education Resources (OER) Lab to faculty development officers, multimedia developers, and student teams promoting accessible education through the creation and promotion of open educational resources
* TLC provided six hundred (600) hours of support to the virtual learning strategy addressing accessibility compliance and UDL
* TLC administered the accessible procurement principles during the procurement of educational technologies

#### Customer Service

* The Campus Library developed an [accessible services](https://ontariotechu.ca/sites/library/services/accessibility.php) webpage offering information on the equitable access to library services, resources and facilities
* The Campus Library continues to provide students with alternate formats for material held in its collections, including: hard copy conversion, captions, and/or text transcripts for multimedia content (available upon request).
* Through the Campus Library’s ongoing relationship with Scholars Portal, Ontario Tech users were granted access to an additional 45,000 digitized books held by the library
* The FLEX Centre staff commenced an accessibility audit to identify and address barriers to persons with disabilities
* Athletics prioritized the accessibility and accommodations of group fitness classes as on campus services resumed allowing for enhanced inclusivity for all members of the community
* The Office of Vice-President, Research & Innovation – ORS offered summer programming through the Brilliant Incubator and the Catalyst Challenge wherein thirteen (13) students with disabilities (anonymous self-identified) participated.
* Three (3) students with disabilities participated in the Office of Vice-President, Research Innovation’s “Project-Based WIL” opportunities, sponsored under the Experience Ventures Grant

#### Public Spaces

* Office of Campus Infrastructure and Sustainability (OCIS) completed accessibility audits of the Science, Business & IT, Engineering, Library and ERC buildings
* Project proposals have been submitted by the Campus Library to increase the accessibility of the north and south campus proposing the expansion of adaptive technology and height adjustable workstations.
* OCIS and the Campus Library collaborated on the design and construction of a universal accessible washroom on the second floor of the North Oshawa Library. Construction of the universal washroom will include automatic doors, adult change table, and accessible turning radius for AODA compliance.
* Stairwells in the Science, Business & IT, Engineering, Library and ERC have been upgraded through the installation of textile platting and replacement of all stair nosing.

#### Other

* In an effort to strengthen its commitment to campus accessibility, Ontario Tech became a member of the Canadian Accessibility Network (CAN) to optimize inclusivity for persons with disabilities through collaboration with cross-sectoral organizations in the areas of research, design and innovation, education and training, policy, employment, and community engagement.
* The University updated the Appointed Institutional Representative (AIR) to the Inter-University-Disability Issues Association (IDIA).
* C&M, HR and the AWG sponsored the CNIB’s Phone it Forward Program and donated a number of phones to the organization
* Institutional participation in an eCampus Ontario advisory initiative that will support the post-secondary sector with accessible procurement of educational technology
* Appointed new Ontario Tech member to the DC Accessibility Committee

**For more information**

For more information on this Annual Status Report, please contact:

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Website: accessibility.ontariotechu.ca

Attention: Manager, Compliance Risk & Ethics

Standard and accessible formats of this document are available upon request.