

# Multi-Year AODA Accessibility Plan 2020-2025

## Annual Status Report May 2024 – April 2025

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Please see [Page 9](#) for our contact information.

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# Introduction

## Background

This report is a collaborative effort between the multiple units represented on the university-wide [Accessibility Working Group](#) (AWG). The AWG was established at Ontario Tech in September 2010 to create an inclusive and barrier-free campus 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 2020 – 2025 Ontario Tech AODA Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (“Multi-Year Plan”) reaffirms the university’s commitment to 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 is committed to creating a campus community that includes all individuals and ensures equal opportunity among its members to succeed in their academic and/or employment endeavors. The university recognizes that successful learning and employment outcomes result from shared responsibility and commitment by students, faculty and staff. Therefore, the university expects all community members to advance the ongoing development of an accessible and inclusive environment while actively working to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities.

## Accessibility Feedback

Ontario Tech recognizes community feedback as a critical process in identifying, removing and preventing barriers in its accessibility strategy. Feedback is essential to the University’s plan to improve how we deliver our services and encourage inclusive community participation. Feedback may be given by emailing the Office of Risk Management at [aoda@ontariotechu.ca](mailto:aoda@ontariotechu.ca) or by telephone at 905.721.3201. You may also send feedback by completing our [Accessibility Feedback Form](#) or by mailing us:

Office of Risk Management  
2000 Simcoe Street North  
Oshawa, Ontario L1G 0C5

# Institutional Achievements and Accomplishments

## General

*Initiatives related to accessibility may or may not be directly associated with a regulatory requirement or initiatives that do not fall within a particular standard.*

- The Accessibility Working Group (AWG) held two meetings during the 2024-2025 academic year, where members engaged in strategic discussions and accessibility priority planning.
- Human Resources (HR), the Office of Risk Management (ORM), and Student Accessibility Services (SAS) collaborated to host Ontario Tech University's first [National Accessibility Awareness Week](#) (NAAW) in May and [Disability Employment Awareness Month](#) (DEAM) in October.
- Athletics and Recreation:
  - ◆ Sitting volleyball became a regular intramural sport for students and was highly successful.
  - ◆ The YMCA partnership in downtown Oshawa provided students with additional fitness opportunities and was well received.
  - ◆ At the Soccer Nationals, Ontario Tech partnered with Oshawa Kicks to introduce walking soccer, an accessible version of the sport where participants must walk instead of run.
- Library Accessibility & Professional Development:
  - ◆ Library staff regularly participate in professional development webinars offered through the Ontario Council of University Libraries' accessibility community.
  - ◆ An Ontario Tech Library representative has been appointed to the Collaborative Futures Accessibility Subcommittee (2024-2026), advocating for an equitable user experience within Ontario Council of University Libraries' (OCUL) Omni catalogue.
  - ◆ The Library is actively engaging with the Proposed Postsecondary Education Standards – Final Recommendations Report (2022) to assess its impact on university libraries.
- SAS launched a pilot program for SAS groups and workshops to support social connections, time management, and organization skills.
  - ◆ Participated in internal and external events to promote SAS services and engage with potential incoming students with disabilities.
  - ◆ Hosted the [Summer Transition Program](#) for students and parents and provided support for Fall and Winter university orientations.
- Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) – University Committees Participation:
  - ◆ TLC team members actively serve on various accessibility-related committees, including the Accessibility Working Group and Test Centre.
- Brilliant Catalyst – Experience Ventures Program (2024-2025):
  - ◆ 10 participants identified as Persons with Disabilities.
  - ◆ 3 participants were part of winning teams in the Catalyst Challenge with Lakeridge Health.

## Customer Service

*Initiatives implemented related to the Customer Service Standards. For example, this can include training employees, updating/establishing policies and following up on feedback received.*

- Athletics and Recreation has enhanced accessibility at the FLEX by introducing fully accessible weight and cardio stations.

- [Assistive Technology Site Launch](#): During DEAM, HR collaborated with the AWG subcommittee to develop an Assistive Tech site. This platform centralizes information on available assistive technologies for employees, students, and visitors at Ontario Tech University.
- [Assisted Use Carrel Room](#): This space includes a computer equipped with:
  - ◆ ZoomText, Read&Write, a 22" LCD monitor (usable with a laptop), and a height-adjustable table
- [Library Equipment Lending](#): Students can borrow various accessibility tools, including:
  - ◆ Headphones, high-contrast wireless keyboards, adaptive and ergonomic computer mice, laptops, portable DVD players, and energy lights
- [Library Accessibility Support](#): The Library provides assistance with printing, photocopying, extended loan periods, in-depth research support, and online appointment booking.
- International Student Advising:
  - ◆ Transitioned to QuadC, a student-friendly booking platform with built-in accessibility features.
  - ◆ Expanded both in-person and virtual advising options to better support students.
- SAS Full-Time Status Update: Starting Winter 2025, students enrolled in a single course (3 credit hours) will qualify for SAS Full-Time Status and Fees, reducing barriers and ensuring continued access to essential services.
- Office of the Registrar Updates:
  - ◆ Deferred exams have been relocated to a first-floor room, enhancing accessibility.
  - ◆ Collaborated with faculties to schedule classes that meet specific instructor accessibility needs.
- Student Accessibility Services (SAS):
  - ◆ Provided academic, placement, and lab accommodations.
  - ◆ Continued working with university stakeholders to improve inclusivity and accessibility in university processes.
  - ◆ Increased collaboration with Risk Management to develop policies on emotional support and service animals on campus and in labs.
- Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) – Educational Technology Support:
  - ◆ Accessibility remains a key factor in all educational technology tool reviews.
  - ◆ Partnering with SAS to help instructors better understand students' assistive technology needs.
  - ◆ Developing a campus-wide workshop on assistive technology in collaboration with SAS.
- Office of Research Services: Hosted the annual [Undergraduate Research Awards](#) event in a hybrid format to continue advancing accessibility efforts.

## Information and Communication

*Initiatives implemented related to the Information and Communications Standards. For example, this can include creating accessible documents, updating websites to meet accessibility requirements, developing new policies to ensure information/documents are provided in alternate formats, and following up on feedback.*

- As part of our ongoing commitment to accessibility, Ontario Tech's Communications and Marketing team continues to prioritize accessible design and communication across all channels.
  - ◆ Our website, built on the accessible Hannon Hill Cascade Server CMS, follows WCAG standards using accessible templates, regular audits, and responsive support for content contributors. Recent CMS updates have provided more comprehensive accessibility reports to CMS contributors.

- ◆ With Acquia Optimize, we actively monitor and resolve accessibility issues to ensure our web presence is usable by all.
- ◆ For video content, captions are automated, and when required we carefully review and edit them for accuracy and clarity.
- ◆ Our university communications are crafted with inclusive design principles in mind, ensuring messages are accessible across diverse formats and devices.
- ◆ All marketing materials are developed to meet accessibility standards, and our team works closely with campus partners to ensure events are inclusive and meet accessibility requirements.
- ◆ Our social media content also adheres to best practices, with accessible text, image descriptions, and captions to reach the broadest audience possible.
- Human Resources Document and Website Review (January 2025):
  - ◆ A review of HR documents and websites identified gaps in promoting the availability of accessible documents upon request.
  - ◆ Efforts were made to improve the onboarding process, enhancing awareness of support and services for individuals seeking accommodations.
- The Library continues to provide alternate formats for print materials in its collection via the Accessible Content E-Portal (ACE) ([ACE Portal](https://ace.scholarsportal.info/) - <https://ace.scholarsportal.info/>).
- The Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) ACE Working Group is assessing the ACE portal to identify usage barriers and ensure its development aligns with evolving policies and user needs.
- The Library offers transcripts or closed-captioned versions of all DVDs in its collection.
- Enrollment Services Accessibility Improvements:
  - ◆ Ongoing conversion of PDFs to MachForms, improving accessibility, readability, and navigation with hyperlinks.
  - ◆ Enhanced website wording to better support students seeking information on Deferred Exams and related services.
  - ◆ Continued website updates to maintain consistent layouts and formatting for AODA compliance.
- International Education Team – WCAG Compliance Efforts:
  - ◆ Provided text alternatives for non-text content in website and email templates.
  - ◆ Ensured link purposes are clear in context.
  - ◆ Improved text readability and comprehension across platforms.
- The Records and Registration department redesigned the Application for Full-Time Status and Fees MachForm, ensuring only approved SAS students can request additional fees. No additional steps are required from students.
- The department also expanded content posting for students and instructors across multiple platforms, including my.ontariotechu.ca, the mobile app, and the scheduling page.
- The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies:
  - ◆ Reviewed and updated forms, transitioning them to MachForms where possible
  - ◆ Moved all relevant forms to Student Awards and Financial Aid (SAFA) for easy access.
  - ◆ Updated webpages for improved navigation and compliance.
  - ◆ Expanded staff access for website updates.
- The Student Awards and Financial Aid updated their website to reflect changes to the UW program.
- Student Accessibility Services & Career Services Collaboration:
  - ◆ Developed the Job Search Guide for Students and Alumni with Disabilities.
  - ◆ Created a Disability Disclosure Resource Page to educate students on disclosure and workplace transition.

- Teaching and Learning Centre – Educational Media:
  - ◆ Continues to embed accessibility best practices into all online course media and e-learning resources.
- Office of Research Services:
  - ◆ Converted the Undergraduate Research Award application to an accessible MachForm.
  - ◆ Developed an accessible virtual Funding Bulletin website for faculty, replacing a traditional 30+ page Word document.
  - ◆ New Bulletin: [Funding Bulletin Website](https://research.ontariotechu.ca/faculty/funding/funding-bulletin.php) - <https://research.ontariotechu.ca/faculty/funding/funding-bulletin.php>
  - ◆ Old Bulletin: [Archived Funding Bulletin](https://research.ontariotechu.ca/faculty/funding/funding-opportunities-bulletin/index.php) - <https://research.ontariotechu.ca/faculty/funding/funding-opportunities-bulletin/index.php>
  - ◆ Next Steps: Working on an accessible RSS feed for funding updates.
- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA): Implemented accessible MachForms for event registration.

## Employment

*Initiatives implemented related to the Employment Standards. This can include, for example, accommodating all candidates during the recruitment process and employment life cycle, steps taken to ensure accommodation plans, and ensuring employees have accessible emergency information.*

- Disability Awareness & Workforce Inclusivity
  - ◆ Hiring the Right Talent (DEAM Initiative):
    - In support of Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM), Ontario Tech developed and published the Hiring the Right Talent document.
    - This resource aimed to raise awareness about the benefits of a diverse workforce and dispel common myths surrounding hiring individuals with disabilities.
- Professional Development & Conferences
  - ◆ Community of Practice Annual Conference (June 2024):
    - Over 75 professionals from Canadian universities and colleges specializing in health and disability management attended the conference.
    - The event was organized and hosted by Ontario Tech's Wellness at Work team.
    - A notable speaker, Mary Ann Baynton from Workplace Strategies for Mental Health, presented on creating an inclusive work environment and supporting colleagues effectively.
  - ◆ Health & Disability Management Presentation:
    - A Health and Disability Management Specialist from Human Resources spoke at an Ontario Tech Student HR Professionals meeting.
    - The presentation covered:
      - HR's role in supporting accommodations.
      - Strategies for making classrooms more inclusive.
- Training & Development Initiatives
  - ◆ Staff Training & Development Programs:
    - Training offered in:
      - Mental Health First Aid.
      - Wellness at Work.
      - Customer Service best practices.

- ◆ Teaching and Learning Centre – Accessibility Workshops:
  - Between Fall 2024 and March 2025, the TLC hosted four (4) workshops on accessibility, universal design, and inclusive teaching.
  - A total of 38 faculty and staff members participated across various faculties and departments.

## Design of Public Spaces

*Initiatives implemented related to the Design of Public Spaces Standards. This can include, for example, installing accessible playgrounds, tactile walking surface indicators, and establishing design guidelines that consider accessibility.*

- Universal Change Room/Washroom (Summer 2025 Completion):
  - ◆ A fully accessible and inclusive universal change room/washroom will be completed as part of the latest renovations to the Campus Recreation and Wellness Centre (CRWC).
- Library Accessibility Enhancements
  - ◆ Assisted Use Carrel Room (4th Floor, North Oshawa Library):
    - Available for booking by Ontario Tech and Durham College students online
    - Between May 1, 2024, and March 24, 2025, the Assisted Use Carrel Room was used by 167 unique users, with a total of 683 bookings.
- Library Facilities Include:
  - ◆ Automatic doors at building entrances.
  - ◆ Desk-height countertops at service desks.
  - ◆ Wheelchair-accessible elevators in all multi-floor libraries.
  - ◆ Wheelchair-accessible washrooms, including an all-gender accessible washroom with a change table on the second floor of the North Oshawa Library.
- Adjustable Height Desks:
  - ◆ Available in all open study spaces on each floor of the North Oshawa Library.
  - ◆ Two height-adjustable desks are available at the Social Science, Humanities, and Education Library (Charles Hall).
- Campus Infrastructure & Accessibility Improvements
  - ◆ Physical Space Audit (2024):
    - The Office of Campus Infrastructure and Sustainability conducted audits in CFH, CIC, CERL, and exterior Code Blue stations at the North Campus.
    - The audit was aligned with the Design of Public Spaces (IASR amendment) to identify non-compliant areas and needed accessibility enhancements.
  - ◆ Facility Upgrades & Accessibility Enhancements:
    - Lighting upgrades (2024-2025):
      - Restored several areas to design-level brightness, including offices, corridors, and stairwells.
    - Visibility Enhancements (2025):
      - Doors and frames repainted to improve visibility.
    - Automatic Door Openers (2025):
      - Installed in BIT, LIB, and ENG buildings.
    - Wayfinding Signage Upgrades:
      - Science, Business & IT, and OPG/ACE buildings upgraded in collaboration with Communications & Marketing (2024).

- Further wayfinding improvements planned for 2025.
- Emergency Phones (2025):
  - Lowering and relocating emergency phones to meet accessibility standards.
- Charles Hall Accessibility Upgrade:
  - Concept design for a new accessibility ramp completed.
  - An accessibility grant was approved (Feb 6, 2025).
  - The project was revised to include an interior elevator instead of a ramp.
  - Construction of the new accessibility elevator to replace the existing lift begins in 2025.
- Exterior Accessibility Improvements:
  - Replaced damaged or removed Textile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSI) due to snow clearing.
  - 28 new TWSI installed in 2024 at North Campus, with additional installations planned for 2025.
- Partnered with Durham College to invest in hardscape repairs at various North Campus locations.

→ Accessible Bathroom Upgrades:

- ◆ Outfitted four bathrooms at North Campus with accessible equipment for student use.

## Next Steps

The university's multi-year plans emphasize investing in new technologies and continuously updating policies and processes in line with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Ontario Tech is committed to creating a respectful and accessible environment, supporting all community members to reach their full potential, thereby strengthening the university community.

As we approach the final year of our multi-year accessibility plan, we are preparing to develop a refreshed strategy for the next five years. As part of this process, we will take the opportunity to review the following next steps in preparation:

- Review and update all accessibility-related policies and procedures.
- Review and update our current Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- Develop a new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the next 5 years.
- Monitor and propose any changes based on 'proposed postsecondary education standards — final recommendations report 2022.'

## For more information

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

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Website: [accessibility.ontariotechu.ca](https://accessibility.ontariotechu.ca)

Attention: Compliance Officer

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