

# **Accessibility Awareness Training for Educators**

**Fulfilling our commitment to  
accessible education**

**Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation  
Section 16: Training to Educators**



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# Executive Summary

## Committing to accessibility

- ⇒ *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005*
- ⇒ *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), 2011*
- ⇒ *Section 16: Training to Educators*

## Supporting students with disabilities

- ⇒ *Equal opportunities for and equal access to learning*
- ⇒ *Access through individualized accommodations*

## Moving from accommodations to accessible education

- ⇒ *Setting accessibility standards to remove barriers*
- ⇒ *Building on principles of effective teaching and learning*
- ⇒ *Creating sustainable access with advantages for all*

## Considering UDL as a framework for accessible education

- ⇒ *Principles of Universal Design for Learning*
- ⇒ *Multiple approaches to teaching and learning*
- ⇒ *Technology as a tool to enhance learning*

# Committing to accessibility

⇒ *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005*

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# **Ontario colleges are committed to ensuring accessibility to their services, programs and courses.**

**The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)** obliges organizations in the public and private sectors to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in five areas: customer service, information and communications, transportation, employment and the built environment.

Ontario Regulation 191/11, the **Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)**, became law on July 1, 2011.

- It harmonizes the customer service standards, which became law in 2008, with accessibility standards in the areas of information and communication, employment, and transportation. Compliance dates run from 2011 to 2025.
- It contains specific requirements to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities to the services, programs and courses provided by educational and training institutions in Ontario such as colleges.

# **As part of this commitment, colleges must provide educators with accessibility awareness training as it relates to program or course delivery and instruction.**

Section 16 of the IASR requires colleges to provide accessibility awareness training to educators: employees who are involved in course design, delivery and instruction.

The compliance date for this requirement is January 1, 2013.

This training has been designed to help us meet this obligation.

## ***Section 16: Training to Educators***

*“... school boards or educational or training institutions shall provide educators with accessibility awareness training related to accessible program or course delivery and instruction.”*

O. Reg. 191/11, s. (16)

# **This training will familiarize you with accessible education as a way to reduce barriers for students with disabilities.**

This training provides you with an introduction to

- the AODA and the IASR and their impact on program and course design, delivery and instruction.
- the barriers some students with disabilities may face in accessing learning.
- sample strategies for improving accessibility.
- the principles of Universal Design for Learning as one framework for accessible education that removes barriers.
- resources for accessible education.

# Supporting students with disabilities

⇒ *Equal opportunities for and access to learning*

⇒ *Access through individualized accommodations*



# The IASR uses the definition of disability contained in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

## A disability may be

- **visible.**
- **invisible.**
- **temporary.**
- **permanent.**

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness.
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability.
- A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.
- A mental disorder.
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety & Insurance Act, 1997*.

**Ontario Human Rights Code**

# Students with disabilities have the right to equal opportunities for and equal access to learning.

The fundamental principles underlying the IASR support equal opportunities for and equal access to learning for students with disabilities:

- **Dignity** Each student is able to maintain privacy, self-respect and respect of others.
- **Equal Opportunity** All students have the same opportunity to benefit from the learning experience.
- **Independence** Each student can undertake learning tasks without unnecessary help.
- **Integration** Every student is able to benefit from the same education, in the same place and in the same way as others.

# **Students with disabilities have the right to academic accommodations tailored to their individual needs.**

The **Ontario Human Rights Code** provides for equal rights and opportunities and freedom from discrimination for people with disabilities.

As required by the Code, colleges already provide individual academic accommodations, such as adaptive measures or support, to give students with disabilities equitable access to the same education as others in their program of study.

Common examples of academic accommodations include

- extending the time allotted for a test.
- arranging for a note-taker during classes.
- using text-to-voice translation software for course materials.

## **We currently offer services to provide individual academic accommodations to students with disabilities.**

Students do not need to disclose the nature of their disability to their professor in order to access individual academic accommodations.

Professors may make a general announcement at the beginning of each semester to

- inform students that Canadore College provides services to students with disabilities who require individual academic accommodations.
- direct them to contact Student Success Services if they require this assistance.

For more information on arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities, contact Kim Lindsay at [kim.lindsay@canadorecollege.ca](mailto:kim.lindsay@canadorecollege.ca) or by telephone at 705-474-7601, Ext. 5205.

# Moving from accommodations to accessible education

- ⇒ *Setting accessibility standards to remove barriers*
- ⇒ *Building on principles of effective teaching and learning*
- ⇒ *Creating sustainable access with advantages for all*

# **Academic accommodations serve as an individualized, but largely retro-fit, solution for students with disabilities.**

- **Retro-fit solution**      Accommodations are made after the program, curriculum, course or instruction has been designed.
- **Individual problem**      Accommodations adapt the material or situation to the specific, unique needs of individual students.
- **Student-initiated**      Accommodations rely on the student to initiate the process for getting his or her needs taken into account.

## **The AODA and IASR focus on establishing accessibility standards to prevent and remove barriers to access.**

The AODA (2005) requires organizations to remove and prevent barriers to access for people with disabilities.

It emphasizes developing, implementing and enforcing standards for accessibility to promote inclusivity and reduce the potential for discrimination.

“Accessibility” describes the extent to which all intended populations are able to use a product, device, service or environment.

Identified barriers to accessibility fall into five categories:

- attitudinal
- organizational
- architectural/physical
- information and communications
- technology.

## **Accessible education builds on principles of effective teaching and learning, many of which you may already use.**

- Takes into account the diversity of students, including ethnic background, race, abilities, disabilities, age, gender, language abilities.
- Anticipates that students have diverse learning styles.
- Considers the learning needs of all students, including students with disabilities, when designing curriculum, courses, materials and instruction.
- Removes barriers to learning and thereby reduces the need for individual accommodations.
- Presents course content clearly and logically.
- Recognizes that students can express their understanding of course content in multiple ways.
- Provides equal access to learning, not just equal access to information.



# **Accessible education allows students with disabilities to focus on learning in an inclusive environment.**

## **Advantages for Students**

- Anticipates and is designed to include students from a variety of backgrounds and abilities, which may increase overall student retention.
- Enables students with disabilities to focus on course content and not on arranging individual accommodations.
- Avoids special-treatment status; doesn't single students out for being different.

# **Accessible education complements good teaching practices to enhance student learning.**

## **Advantages for Educators**

- Is a proactive approach to ward identifying and removing barriers in the learning environment before they can affect students.
- Changes the overall approach to course design and instruction so the learning experience is enhanced for all students.
- Broadens effect of removing barriers for everyone in the class, and may thereby improve overall student engagement.
- Reduces the need to arrange specialized accommodations on a student-by-student basis.

# **Accessible education takes a proactive approach to preventing or removing barriers at the outset.**

## **Accommodation**

- Access to learning is an individual issue centred around disability.
- Access should be addressed by the student and the disability services office.
- Access is achieved retroactively through accommodations or retrofits.
- Access is often provided through special treatment.
- Access is consumable because it's reconsidered for each student.

## **Accessible Education**

- Access to learning is a collective issue centred around design.
- Access should be addressed by the designer of the learning experience.
- Access is achieved by designing the learning experience to be accessible by all.
- Access is provided through considering everyone's needs.
- Access is sustainable because it's built into the learning experience.

# In a college context, accommodations provide one way to address barriers for students with disabilities.

## Example of Barriers

**Attitudinal:** Treating accommodation as a special favour.

**Organizational:** Holding office hours only in person in a set location.

**Architectural / Physical:** A classroom that is difficult for a student in a wheelchair to navigate.

**Information and Communications:** Lectures that are poorly organized; using language that is unclear.

**Technology:** Documents without features to provide access to information presented in images.

## Accommodation Approach

Implementing accommodations willingly.

Inviting students with disabilities to make special arrangements.

Reserving seats in a specific location for students in a wheelchair.

Providing note-takers or tutors for students with disabilities.

Having materials transcribed into accessible formats through the disability services office.

# Accessible education provides sustainable alternatives to reducing barriers for students with disabilities.

## Example of Barriers

**Attitudinal:** Treating accommodation as a special favour.

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**Information and Communications:** Lectures that are poorly organized.

**Technology:** Handouts without features to provide access to information presented in images.

## Accessible Education Approach

Offering multiple ways for students to demonstrate comprehension.

Providing students with multiple ways to contact you.

Taking the needs of students in wheelchairs into account when designing the classroom layout.

Providing clear, well-organized lectures using advanced organizers and summaries.

Providing all students with accessible, properly formatted handouts.

# Considering UDL as a framework for accessible education

⇒ *Principles of Universal Design for Learning*

⇒ *Multiple approaches to teaching and learning*

⇒ *Technology as a tool to enhance learning*

# **Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is one example of an effective framework for accessible education.**

- Emphasizes flexible curriculum and teaching materials to differentiate instruction.
- Uses multiple modes of engaging students, presenting content and assessing comprehension.
- Uses evolving communication technology to maximize learning opportunities for all students.

# **The seven principles of Universal Design for Learning serve as a foundation for creating accessible education.**

1. Be accessible and fair.
2. Provide flexibility in use, participation and presentation.
3. Be straightforward and consistent.
4. Ensure information is explicitly presented and readily perceived.
5. Provide a supportive learning environment.
6. Minimize unnecessary physical effort or requirements.
7. Ensure the learning space fits students' needs and instructional materials.



# UDL advocates using multiple ways to engage and motivate students.

- Builds on the concept that that a single teaching style may not work for a classroom of students who learn in a variety of ways.
- Plans to address the needs of different learners from the design stage.
- Incorporates active learning by building in more interaction between professor and students.

## *Examples*

- *incorporating active reading strategies.*
- *using videos to supplement or replace readings.*
- *providing opportunities for students to change tasks or activities during class.*

# UDL emphasizes multiple methods of presenting material so students have several ways to access the information.

- Recognizes that everyone sees, hears and reads information differently.
- Maximizes student learning by increasing the ways students get to see, hear and read information.
- Reaches more students more effectively by broadening the presentation approach.
- Promotes deeper learning by expanding presentation style beyond traditional lecturing.

## *Examples*

- *posting materials on a course website.*
- *using a variety of visuals.*
- *supplying audio to supplement text.*
- *staging interactive demonstrations.*
- *using social media or online discussion boards.*

## **UDL provides for multiple means of expression to give students alternatives for demonstrating what they know.**

- Recognizes that students process information in many ways.
- Moves away from recall and writing as the main method for demonstrating comprehension.
- Provides students with a variety of ways to demonstrate their understanding and mastery of a topic.

*Examples: portfolios, journals, posters, online discussion boards.*

- Encourages educators to use a variety of ways to evaluate students' comprehension.

*Examples: self-assessment, peer assessment, online quizzes.*

## **UDL taps into using new and emerging technologies to enhance learning for all students.**

- Builds on advances in wireless technology, the continued evolution of handheld devices.
- Offers opportunities to use technology-enhanced tools to reach students in multiple ways, such as
  - smart phones
  - laptops
  - scanning devices
  - digital recorders
  - screen readers
  - assistive listening devices.
- Delivers benefits to all students, including students with disabilities.

# Examples of UDL Principles in Action

## Principle

## Examples

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Be accessible and fair.   | Provide accessibility-checked course website; supply lecture outlines; use variety of media to provide information.  |
| 2. Provide flexibility in use, participation and presentation.             | Use verbal, text, images, audio; use discussion or problem-solving exercises; post exercises and quizzes online.   |
| 3. Be straightforward and consistent.                                      | Use headings consistently; develop concept maps for complex topics, use plain language.  |
| 4. Be explicitly presented and readily perceived.                          | Ensure PowerPoint materials are easy to read; provide outlines and summaries; consider room conditions.  |
| 5. Provide a supportive learning environment.                              | Expect students to have varying levels of skills; offer collaborative learning opportunities; review drafts of assignments.                                |
| 6. Minimize unnecessary physical effort or requirements.                   | Minimize clicking, scrolling, etc. on websites; consider lighting, physical space; have students work in pairs; provide remote access to reading material. |
| 7. Ensure learning spaces fit students' needs and instructional materials. | Match exercises to course technology; provide videotapes for review; ensure space accommodates mobility and communication needs.                           |

# Resources on Accessible Education

- Universal Instructional Design in Postsecondary Settings: An Implementation Guide <http://www.mohawkcollege.ca/Assets/StudentDev/disability/UID+Manual.pdf>
- Ryerson Learning and Teaching Office <http://www.ryerson.ca/lt/resources/instructionaldesign/>
- University of Guelph Teaching Support Services <http://www.tss.uoguelph.ca/uid/>
- National Centre on Universal Design for Learning : UDL Guidelines (US source) <http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines>
- Center for Applied Special Technology (US source) <http://www.cast.org/index.html> ; <http://www.cast.org/learningtools/index.html>

## Videos

- Universal Design for Learning by Rachel Odland <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Boeyn8frkiY&feature=fvwrel>
- Best Practices Through Universal Design for Learning (Colorado State University) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7eUf\\_7dZVM&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7eUf_7dZVM&feature=related)

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