# AODA – Multi Year Accessibility Plan 2013-2014 Update

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) came into effect in Ontario in 2005. The AODA applies to both the public and private sectors and its goal is to ensure that all Ontarians with disabilities have full access to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, building structures and premises by January 1, 2025. This goal is being achieved through the development, implementation and enforcement of provincially-set accessibility standards.

Trent University is committed to a learning and working environment which provides opportunities for development and growth for its community members. In keeping with this mission, Trent embraces the “Environmental Model of Disability” as operationalized in the World Health Organization’s definition of disability. In this model, disability is viewed as a consequence of barriers created by design flaws in the built and human environments. It is these design flaws which prevent people with disabilities from full participation in a community. Trent University is committed to breaking down the barriers which prevent the full inclusion of all of its community members in its living and learning environment.

## Trent University

One of Canada’s top universities, Trent University is renowned for striking a unique balance between outstanding teaching and leading-edge research. The university is consistently recognized (nationally) for faculty who maintain a high level of innovative research activity and a deep commitment to the individual student. Distinguished by excellence in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and increasingly popular professional and graduate programs, Trent is dedicated to providing its students with an exceptional world view, producing graduates who are ready to succeed and make a difference in the world. Trent’s Peterborough campus boasts award-winning architecture in a breathtaking natural setting on the banks of the Otonabee River. Together with its satellite campus in Durham, Trent draws excellent students from throughout Canada the world.

The Office of Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility reported on December 22nd, 2013 to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) that Trent University was in compliance as of January 1, 2014. The Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility (CHREA), as it is now referred to, is required to file its next compliance report with the ADO in December 2015.

A number of provisions under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) came into effect on January 1, 2014, and CHREA staff worked with the Accessibility Subcommittee and key stakeholders throughout 2013-14 to meet and when possible exceed the requirements.

This report serves as the annual update to our Multi-year Accessibility Plan and is formatted using the same headings as the Accessibility Plan for ease of reference. This report also offers a look at 2015 compliance requirements as well as accessibility-related projects that go beyond legislative compliance.

# Section 1

## Part I: General Standards

### Annual Status Report

Review of the Multi-year Accessibility Plan and corresponding annual status report was completed for 2012-13 in January 2014. This review was completed in our office (formerly OHREA) by former Coordinator Robyne Hanley. The 2012-13 report highlighted Trent’s compliance with requirements that came into effect on January 1, 2013. As well, ongoing accessibility-related projects, for example, those related to Customer Service Standard training were also highlighted in the report.

### Training

Organizations are required to train employees on the requirements in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) as well as the Ontario Human Rights Code (the Code). A number of Trent’s trainings and workshops highlight relevant portions of the AODA standards and also the Code. CHREA anticipates launching a unique training module which is geared to these training requirements by then end of the 2015 academic year (mid-April).

## Part II: Information & Communication Standards

Feedback Mechanism

The IASR required Trent to expand the present Customer Service Feedback process to include the new requirements. The CHREA website was updated accordingly.

### Websites

The Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) required that websites and web content comply with WCAG 2.0 Level A. Guidelines by January 1, 2014. Trent’s websites and content in both Peterborough and Oshawa are now in compliance with this requirement. This aspect of compliance was met through extensive collaboration with various departments and included an emphasis on educating staff, faculty and others in the Trent Community who may have been/continue to be involved in webpage creation and management. One part of this training involved a two (2) day workshop hosted by an external accessibility consulting company with expertise in web accessibility design and standards. This event was attended by key Trent stakeholders from various departments including the Information Technology Department, Marketing and Communications, Student Accessibility Services and the Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility. Another key element of this web accessibility training was the development and dissemination of a document on creation and maintenance of Trent’s web pages which was primarily the work of Katriona Dean in the Marketing and Communications Department. This document is available on the Marketing and Communications Intranet.

## Part III: Employment

CHREA, the Human Resource Department, the Office of Research and the Deans’ office worked together to meet requirements under the Employment Standard (Reg. 191/11, s. 22-32) which came into effect January 1, 2014.

### Accommodation Policy for Employees

In May 2014, the Human Resource Department released a new Accommodation Policy for Employees with Disabilities. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear statement of the university’s obligation to offer disability-related accommodation to employees. The policy also aims to provide guidance on processes related to transitional or modified work as well as temporary and permanent accommodations (Accommodation Policy for Employees with Disabilities, 2014).

### Notification of Accommodation Availability - Recruitment

The Human Resource Department has implemented a number of language amendments to documents utilized in the recruitment processes by adding a statement to notify those involved in these processes that disability-related accommodations are available, upon request.

These statements notify:

* Internal and external applicants/job seekers via statement placed on job postings.
* External applicants via statement placed on employment application form.
* Applicants invited to participate in selection process via statement within telephone invitation and in follow-up interview.
* Successful applicants via a statement placed in letters of appointment.

Sample:

“Job Posting

Trent University is actively committed to creating a diverse and inclusive campus community and encourages applications from all qualified candidates. Trent University offers accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes. If you require accommodation during the recruitment process or require an accessible version of a document/publication, please contact [humanresources@trentu.ca](mailto:humanresources@trentu.ca).”

The Dean’s Office has a similar statement related to accommodations in the recruitment process.

Sample:

“Job Posting

Trent University is actively committed to creating a diverse and inclusive campus community and encourages applications from qualified candidates. Trent University offers accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes. If you require accommodation during the recruitment process or require an accessible version of a document/publication, please contact [chair@trentu.ca](mailto:chair@trentu.ca).”

### Notification of Accommodation Availability – Current Employees

In the previous year, notification of the availability of disability-related accommodations for current employees has focused on conveying this information through dissemination of the new Accommodation Policy for Employees with Disabilities. In total, three (3) workshops on this topic were conducted by Human Resources including training specific to managers and staff, as well as training which occurred at the departmental level. Additional workshops are planned as part of this year’s staff development events. Current employees are also informed of availability of accommodations directly through supervisors and unions. The aforementioned policy is also posted on Trent’s website.

### Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

This requirement relates to information that an employee needs to perform job duties and to any other information that is generally available to employees in the workplace. Trent University has used mechanisms and strategies similar to those mentioned above as a means of informing employees that accessible formats are available. Requests for accessible formats and communication supports can be received via one’s supervisor, directly through contact with Human Resources or through utilizing the accessible formats request form on the Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility webpage [Human Rights, Equity, and Accessibility Website](http://www.trentu.ca/ohrea).

### Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

The need for employees with disabilities to have documented individual accommodation plans, which include accommodations to be provided, needs related to accessible formats, communication supports and individualized emergency plans is highlighted in the legislation. The Accommodation Policy for Employees with Disabilities outlines processes for the establishment of accommodation plans. Development of a template for accommodation plans, as outlined in the Multi-year Accessibility Plan, were dismissed based on evidence that such a template was too simplistic and would not allow for meeting all of the variable of people with various disabilities. Individual accommodation plans are currently developed jointly with input from the employee, supervisor and human resources, as well as union or workplace representatives, at the discretion of the employee.

### Return to Work Process

This requirement states a need for employers to develop return to work processes, which includes steps that employers will take to facilitate return to work when an employee has been off work for disability-related reasons and requires an accommodation upon return. This requirement includes the need to utilize the individual accommodation plan. Once again, Trent’s return to work processes are included in the Accommodation Policy for Employees with Disabilities.

### Performance Management

Performance management requirements relate to ensuring that the employer takes into account an employee’s accessibility needs and individualized accommodation plan when conducting performance management activities. Human Resources has undertaken a process by which establishment or re-evaluation of an employee’s need for accommodation is reviewed at the time of performance review.

### Redeployment

A checklist for departing employees helps to ensure that any relevant redeployment takes into account the employees’ accommodation needs.

# Section 2

## Ongoing and Looking Forward

### On-going Customer Service Training Requirement

The AODA Customer Service Standard (CSS) requires on-going training for new staff, faculty and student employees. The CHREA continues to offer training in multi-modalities to meet our legislative compliance. All new hires are informed of the CSS training requirement through Human Resources, Risk Management, new employee e-mail check list, and via New Staff Orientation.

In-person sessions are offered through the Human Resource Staff Development Schedule. Sessions are also offered upon request for departmental groups.

E-learning sessions are offered through BLACKBOARD

2013-2014 Participants:

AODA CSS Student Employees and Leaders: 132 completed

AODA CUPE CCS Training: 110 completed

### Accessibility Awareness Training for Educators

As of January 1, 2013, Trent was required to provide its educators with accessibility awareness training so that they may create inclusive classroom environments and increased learning opportunities for students with disabilities. This training is offered on an ongoing basis through BlackBoard.

E-Learning Accessibility Awareness Training: 324 completed to date

### Continued Services:

Accessible Customer Service Record Keeping

Accessibility Customer Service Policy review

Feedback Mechanisms

## Design of Public Spaces (formerly Built Environment)

### Accessibility Audit

The CHREA worked with the Vice President’s Office of Administration to secure funds for an additional component of the Accessibility Audit (2012) to be conducted. The firm AccessAbility Advantage completed a document that prioritizes the recommendations over a 5 year plan and includes a costing matrix. This project was completed in February 2014.

### Accessible Routes Project

The CHREA worked with our Physical Resource Department in developing new signage that identifies ‘Accessible Routes’. This signage was first installed fall 2013. The signs identify accessible entrances and routes into and between buildings on the Symons campus. The next phase of the project took place in the winter of 2014 and involved installation of 30 legend signs across campus to highlight accessible routes. The accessible entrance sign portion of the project was expanded to the Traill campus in fall 2014.



Figure One: Accessible Route Sign

### Accessibility Renovations

1. Wenjack

The Physical Resources Department worked during the summer and fall of 2014 on coordinating renovations to Wenajck Theatre which were aimed at improving accessibility and complying with Ontario Building Code (OBC) requirements. These renovations were quite extensive and included upgrades to the theatre itself, such as the addition of acessible power operated doors, alterations to the back of the theatre to allow space for four (4) wheelchairs, addition of tactile surfacing to stair at stage and stage istself (as per Code) and installation of a chair lift to improve access to the stage. Renovations also occurred to the accessible washroom adjacent to Wenajck, which brought it up to new Code standards and also included changes to signage in order to denote its status as a gender inclusive washroom space.

1. Registrar’s Office

A number of accessibility-related renovations were made to the Registrar’s Office in Blackburn Hall.

## 2015 Requirements

### 2015 AODA Compliance Packages

The Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility has introduced a new initiative in which CHREA prepares packages to be sent to departments who are impacted by upcoming AODA requirements. These “compliance packages” consist of information regarding what a specific department can do to help Trent comply with upcoming or current AODA requirements. These packages also contain information on partnering with other relevant university departments and seeking additional support through CHREA and external resources. The survey which recipient departments are asked to complete will assist CHREA in tracking what steps have been taken to comply with specific requirements and/or related best practices. These packages were rolled out as a trial in the fall of 2014 in order to receive stakeholder feedback and subsequent packages were sent to relevant departments in early January 2015 regarding the current requirements.

### Information and Communication Standard of the IASR

As of January 1, 2015 the following standards came into effect:

1. Section 12: Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

This requirement compels the university to provide accessible formats and communication supports, upon request. There is also the requirement to notify the public of the availability of such formats and supports. Trent is well on its way to meeting this requirement as previous work has been done to notify members of the Trent community and the public that accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request. For example, on the bottom of many of Trent’s webpages and other public documents there is a statement regarding the availability of accessible formats. Also, CHREA developed and supported a sign campaign and the development of an electronic form field for people to make requests. Accessible format requests can be made to CHREA in a number of ways including through the use of the online Accessible Format Request Form which is available on CHREA’s website at [Human Rights, Equity, and Accessibility Website](http://www.trentu.ca/ohrea).

1. Section 17: Producers of Educational or Training Material

This requirement means that producers of educational and training material, including universities and university presses, must supply this material in accessible formats upon request. In 2015, this requirement applies only to textbooks and in coming years expands to include other types of educational materials. Also, if the producer is unable to supply the requested material in accessible format the university must be notified and it is the responsibility of the university to supply comparable educational materials. Several university departments including, but not limited to, Student Accessibility Services (SAS), Print Shop and Bookstore are working together to ensure students’ requests for accessible formats are met in a timely manner. Many textbooks are now available in digital format through the Bookstore’s Brytewave program.

1. Section 18: Libraries of Educational and Training Institutions

This requirement compels libraries of educational institutions to supply educational materials in accessible formats upon request. In 2015, this requirement applies only to print-based material, but will be expanded in 2020 to include other types of materials such as digital media files. The library has completed much work on this project and is currently in compliance with this requirement. Bata and Oshawa libraries are currently part of the Ontario Council of University Libraries Accessible Content E-portal (ACE) which allows partner universities to provide registered students access to an ever-increasing repository of accessible format texts. The success of ACE at Trent is attributable to the dedication of library staff and departmental collaboration between the libraries and SAS.

# Section 3

## Fostering a Culture of Inclusivity and Beyond Compliance

The mission of Trent University affirms its commitment to an inclusive intellectual and social community that values the contributions and collaboration of all its members. To promote such a culture, Trent has taken the lead on important initiatives to make education accessible to people with disabilities and to foster their active participation in the life of the university.

Excerpt from: Radical Recovery: An Academic Plan for Trent University (2012-2015)

### Recommendation 6: Affirm and ensure a culture of inclusivity

The Committee recommends a renewed affirmation in our marketing and practices of Trent's long-standing commitment to inclusivity, tolerance, and openness to diversity in all of its forms. We envisage a proactive approach rather than merely adhering to the letter of the law (i.e., the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act [AODA]). This would involve not only accommodating students with physical or learning challenges, but articulating clearly that Trent welcomes diversity in all of its many hues: in sexual orientations, social class, creed, ethnicity, and so on. Trent will be clear in its creation of a culture of openness by educating ourselves about innovative pedagogies, exploring the use of technologies in teaching to "invisible learning challenges" and so on. This would necessarily involve cooperation and collegial collaboration between faculty members and the Disability Services Office.

### Learning Innovations Grant

As in prior years, four Learning Innovation Grants (LIG) were awarded to faculty through a competition process facilitated by CHREA and the Instructional Development Centre (IDC) Advisory Board. The 2013–2014 disbursements of the Learning Innovation Grant provided $16,000 to the four projects. This funding opportunity was being offered to assist faculty members who wished to evaluate their current pedagogical practices and revamp course design and delivery to increase learner accessibility and engagement.

The following projects received funding in the 2013–2014 allocation:

### Bill Atkinson (Physics and Astronomy):

$4,000 to develop an online course module that introduces students to computers as a tool for exploring important physical systems that cannot be understood using traditional paper and pen approaches. The online course will walk students through the basic programming concepts. The modules will consist of a series of short lessons, followed by simple problems that the students will be required to solve before moving onto the next lesson. At the end of the online course, students will be comfortable with the simple technical aspects of programming required for the Computational Physics course. The online course will be developed independent of Computational Physics so that students may revisit the lessons throughout their undergraduate careers, as the need arises.

Kateryna Keefer (Psychology) and Sarah Keefer (English Literature):

$4,000 to conduct a program-evaluation study of collaborative enquiry-based learning activities in ENGL 3100Y and PSYC 2300H. At the end of term, students will be invited to complete an opinion survey about their experiences with the enquiry-based learning exercises and their perceived benefits and drawbacks, alongside measures of academic self-efficacy, critical thinking dispositions, learning style preferences, and prior academic experiences. In addition, students’ inquiry notes and peer reviews will be analysed for key themes and skills, to create a dynamic map of students’ learning progress over time.

Medhi Sharifi (Environmental and Resource Studies):

$4,000 to implement the creation of three virtual laboratories used as direct support for the teaching material in lectures for the Introduction to Sustainable Agriculture course. In addition to the added virtual labs to the course, a mini-poster session will be designed to showcase what students have learned and the dynamics of sustainable agriculture.

### **Andrew Vreugdenhil (Chemistry):**

$4,000 to develop, implement and evaluate an open inquiry laboratory experiment in introductory chemistry. Students will be surveyed for their experiences around learning outcomes for the open inquiry laboratory experiment and the results will be contrasted with student experiences in the regular academic semester where a traditional expository has been used.

### The MV1

Trent’s commitment to accessibility has been demonstrated with the successful addition of the first ever MV-1 campus shuttle - Canada's First Accessible Vehicle.  Our MV-1 is an accessible transportation solution that is providing a direct service that addresses the physical accessibility barriers present on and between Peterborough campuses.

The MV-1 Shuttle has been in full operation since October 2013. During this period the MV-1 has served as a key means of transportation for many students with both permanent and temporary disabilities as well as staff and visitors who have been on campus for conferences and events. The MV-1 has participated in a number of community events including the 2013 Peterborough and Oshawa Santa Claus Parades and the 2013 Easter Seals Telethon.

Since the beginning of the 2014-15 academic year, use of the MV-1 has dramatically increased and on any given day the vehicle makes eight (8) to twelve (12) shuttle trips between buildings on Symons Campus and between Symons and Traill Campuses and the Water Street student housing.

### Valuing Diversity and Inclusivity Presentations:

The Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility hosted several information sessions through various partnerships at Trent. The CHREA worked with our Human Resource Department, IMPACT, and the Student Support Certificate to facilitate sessions on the topic of Human Rights, valuing diversity and best practices for inclusivity.

For additional information or if you require an accessible version of this report

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