

Accessible Customer Service

Category: Operations & Governance

Approval: PVP

Responsibility: Director, Human Rights, Equity & Accessibility

Date initially approved (in principle): March 2010, Date of last revision / final approval: April 3, 2012

Definitions:

Accessibility: The degree to which people with disabilities can access a device, service or environment without barriers. Accessibility is also a process – it is the proactive identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities.

Disability:

- a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a development disability;
- c) a learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) a mental disorder; or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Personal Assistive Device: Any device that is used, designed, made or adapted to assist a person with a disability in performing a particular task such as moving, communicating, reading or lifting. Personal assistive devices cover a broad range of products including wheelchairs, power chairs, walkers, white canes, active listening devices, microphones, oxygen tanks, computers (including laptops), smartphones, and global positioning systems.

Service Animal: Any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability (e.g. a “guide dog” as defined in the Blind Persons’ Rights Act); or where the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability.

Support Person: An individual who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist him or her with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or with access to goods or services.

Purpose/Reason for Policy:

To provide educational and administrative services in a learning, working, and living environment that is accessible to all people who engage in university functions; and to incorporate the principles of

independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity in all aspects of the University's provision of goods and services.

Scope of this Policy:

This policy applies to all staff (including student employees), faculty, student leaders, contractors and volunteers ("service providers") who provide goods or services to any person on campus or in university-related activities.

Policy Statement:

Trent University's mission includes encouraging and celebrating excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, research and student development as well as promoting a culture which engages all members of the Trent community, favours dialogue and collegiality, and nurtures a sense of belonging.

In fulfilling our mission, the University strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. The University is committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing people with disabilities to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as others benefit. This includes the provision of integrated services unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from goods or services.

The University is committed to meeting its obligations pursuant to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and all of the regulatory standards in effect, including the Customer Service Standard.

The University will carry out its functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

Communication

The University is committed to communicating with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. The University will provide training and information to employees who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

Personal Assistive Devices and Other Measures

The University is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services we provide. The University will ensure that service-providers are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by people with disabilities while accessing our goods and services.

The University will also ensure that designated staff are familiar with the assistive devices/services available at the University for people with disabilities.

A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device. Exceptions may occur where the University determines that the device may pose a health and safety risk. In such a situation, the University may offer other reasonable measures to assist the person with a disability to assist him or her in obtaining, using and benefiting from the University's goods and services. There are circumstances under which assistive devices may be made available by the University (e.g. loans to students from the Disability Services Office).

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

Service Animals

The University is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal to all areas on campus except where excluded by law for reasons of health or safety (e.g. food preparation areas). The University will ensure that service-providers are trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

In the event that the presence of a service animal restricts the ability of another person to access an area (e.g. severe allergy) the University will consult with the people involved and devise an accommodation plan that enables all individuals access to goods and services accordingly.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that a service animal is cared for and supervised. The animal must be under the person's full control as appropriate to the disability.

Support Persons

The University is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. If a person with a disability requires a support person, the support person will be granted access to all venues, including but not limited to, classrooms, athletics, public events, and residence. The support person will not be charged fees to access these venues with the exception of being required to pay tuition if the support person wishes to obtain academic credit for participation in classes attended in the role of a support person.

The University may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on university premises if accompaniment is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with the disability or the health and safety of others.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions

Notice of temporary disruptions of University facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities will be provided as far in advance, or as soon as possible, as is reasonable in the circumstances, and will include:

- The reason for the disruption;
- The anticipated duration of the disruption; and
- Information identifying alternative facilities or services as may be available.

Disruption notice(s) will be placed in relevant conspicuous location(s) on the university premises and, where appropriate, will be posted to the University's Service Disruption webpage.

Training

It is the responsibility of the University to deliver training about Accessible Customer Service to all staff, faculty, student leaders, contractors and volunteers and to provide information about this policy. Specifically, training is provided to every person who deals with members of the public and individuals who develop policies, practices and procedures concerning the provision of goods and services to the public.

Training will include a review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard, and will include instruction in the following:

- a) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- b) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person;
- c) How to use equipment or devices available on the University's premises or otherwise provided by the provider that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability;
- d) What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the University's goods or services;

It is the responsibility of individuals in the above groups to affirm and promote Accessible Customer Service by engaging in training appropriate to their role and actively identify and work to remove barriers to accessibility.

New staff and faculty will undertake training as part of their orientation. On-going training will be provided in connection with any changes to the Policy.

The Office of Human Rights, Equity & Accessibility will maintain records of training and will periodically follow up with units to ensure that training requirements have been met.

Availability of Documents

This policy will be made available to all members of the University community on the Trent University portal and will be visible to all campus visitors on the Trent University website.

The University will prepare one or more documents describing the following and provide same on request to any person:

- The University's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities;
- The University's policies, procedures and practices governing the use of service animals and support people;
- The steps the University will take to provide notice of the temporary disruption of University facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities;
- The University's policy on providing Accessible Customer Service training; and
- The University's feedback process on the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.

Format of Documents

If the University is asked to provide the documents above to a person with a disability, the University will do so in a timely manner and the document will be provided in a format that takes into account a person's disability.

Feedback Process

The University is committed to providing high quality goods and services to all members of the public it serves. Feedback is welcomed as it may identify areas that require changes and encourage continuous service improvements.

The University will create and maintain a readily available feedback process so that members of the public are able to comment on the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities.

The feedback process will allow for comments to be communicated in various formats including in person, by telephone, and in writing by mail or email. Where possible feedback will be addressed immediately and otherwise will be responded to as appropriate within a reasonable timeframe. Where appropriate, the University will take feedback received into consideration as part of the policy review process.

Modifications to This or Other Policies

The Accessible Customer Service Policy is subject to on-going review (next review date below). No change will be made to the Policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

Any policy of the University that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

On-Going Compliance Monitoring and Reporting

The University's Accessibility Subcommittee will provide an annual report on the implementation of this policy to the Presidential Advisory Committee on Human Rights, Equity & Accessibility (PACHREA).

Questions about This Policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to people with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood please contact the Coordinator, Office of Human Rights, Equity & Accessibility.

Contact Officer:

Coordinator, Office of Human Rights, Equity & Accessibility

Date for Next Review:

March 2014

Related Policies, Procedures & Guidelines

- a) Policy on Persons with Disabilities
- b) Accommodation for Students with Disabilities
- c) Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities

Policies Superseded by This Policy:

- a) None