# **AODA Multi-Year Accessibility Plan: 2020 Update**

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Contents

[**AODA Multi-Year Accessibility Plan: 2020 Update** 1](#_Toc58245601)

[Introduction 2](#_Toc58245602)

[Compliance Requirements 3](#_Toc58245603)

[Annual Status Report 3](#_Toc58245604)

[AODA Compliance Report 3](#_Toc58245605)

[IASR Section 7 – Training 3](#_Toc58245606)

[IASR Section 14 – Accessible Websites and Web Content 3](#_Toc58245607)

[IASR Section 15 – Educational and Training Resources and Materials 4](#_Toc58245608)

[IASR Section 16 – Training for Educators 4](#_Toc58245609)

[IASR Section 18 – Libraries of Educational and Training Institutions 4](#_Toc58245610)

[IASR Section 27 –Workplace Emergency Response Information 5](#_Toc58245611)

[IASR Section 80.1 – 80.44 Design of Public Spaces Standard 5](#_Toc58245612)

[IASR Section 80.49 – Customer Service Standard Training 5](#_Toc58245613)

[Contact 6](#_Toc58245614)

## Introduction

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 that 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 environments.

## Compliance Requirements

Annual Status Report

This report serves as the annual update to Trent’s AODA Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, as required under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Section 4. This report details the strategies and steps taken to bring Trent into and maintain compliance.

The report is divided into sections based on relevant requirements of the AODAIASR, which are being highlighted because there are current or upcoming actions pertaining to these sections’ requirements.

AODA Compliance Report

Under the legislation, public sector organizations must report to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) every two years. Trent was required to file its most recent compliance report by December 31, 2019. The report was filed on December 10, 2019. Progress was made on web accessibility compliance and the report was refiled with the ADO. The next report will be due in December 2021.

IASR Section 7 – Training

Trent continues to offer training on the IASR and Ontario Human Rights Code as required by this section of the legislation. In 2020, the online module was converted to Blackboard (LMS). This change provides continuity across AODA training modules at Trent, as they are now all available through Blackboard.

IASR Section 14 – Accessible Websites and Web Content

In the spring of 2020, Trent reported compliance with web accessibility requirements, which state that all new web content must meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A standards. As per the plan outlined in the 2017-2022 AODAMulti-Year Accessibility Plan, several important initiatives were undertaken which led to Trent’s ability to report website accessibility compliance. These initiatives included:

* Trent mitigated identified AA issues with its website template.
* Trent completed the migration of active websites to the Drupal content management system, which uses a single template and modern web frameworks to maximize accessibility compliance.
* A new, accessible template was introduced for the myCommunity website.
* In 2020, the SiteImprove accessibility score on the Trent site (out of 100) was increased from 83.9 to 95.8. For reference, the industry benchmark for SiteImprove education sites is 70.0. SiteImprove is the accessibility monitoring tool used by the University.
* In 2020, the SiteImprove tool was rolled out to an additional 40 users who maintain content on the Trent website for a total of 109 users. Users were provided training and are emailed a monthly report that identifies issues to be resolved on their pages.
* A new Accessibility Checker plugin was implemented in the content management system used to create and update web pages that will provide an extra preventative layer of issue identification and resolution at the time of content creation.
* A license for Otter.ai was acquired to assist with the creation of transcripts for video content.
* The Marketing and Communications Department employed a student full-time in the summer and part-time during the school term, whose role was to regularly monitor SiteImprove reports, work with content contributors to understand their reports and reinforce training, and resolve issues that emerged.
* Training on creating accessible web content and documents is ongoing. This included conducting departmental consultation, virtual and in-person drop-in hours (in-person drop-in hours ceased because of the pandemic), and professional development workshops for faculty and staff members.

IASR Section 15 – Educational and Training Resources and Materials

Trent’s Information Technology and Student Accessibility Services Departments worked to develop a comprehensive captioning strategy aimed at promoting universal access and addressing student needs as the COVID-19 pandemic led to moving more courses online. Three types of captioning were made available as of fall 2020; automated “AI” captioning was made available through the streaming platform provider (YUJA) for recorded content and human captioning was also made available through YUJA upon notification of student academic accommodation. Live real-time captioning was available during live Zoom sessions as part of students’ academic accommodations. Zoom then became available with integrated (automated) captioning available through the menu settings in Trent Zoom accounts. As of January 2021, this feature was enabled by default for all authenticated @trentu.ca email accounts.

IASR Section 16 – Training for Educators

Trent continues to offer training for educators related to classroom accessibility and meeting students’ needs. This training resides on Blackboard and completion of training is tracked, as required by the AODA legislation.

IASR Section 18 – Libraries of Educational and Training Institutions

Trent’s two libraries met compliance requirements for January 1, 2020, which pertained to providing, upon request, conversion-ready or accessible formats of digital and multimedia resources. The Library implemented **Omni** a new academic search tool in December 2019. The Omni search tool provides quick and easy access to all types of library resources including print and digital resources. During Covid-19 restrictions to the physical collections, material could be selected and picked up at the Library service desk. Omni is a collaborative project involving 14 Ontario university libraries; searches can be limited to what is available through the Trent Library, or broaden it out to material held at other libraries. Automated forms are integrated to request material from other libraries using interlibrary loans.

IASR Section 27 –Workplace Emergency Response Information

CHREA worked with Trent’s pandemic planning group to communicate and support the implementation of Individual Emergency Response Plans(IERPs), as part of the Trent Forward plans, which promoted safe return to campus during the COVID-19 pandemic.

IASR Section 80.1 – 80.44 Design of Public Spaces Standard

Facilities Management employs Project Managers with expertise on the Ontario Building Code requirements including those related to accessibility. When applicable, as determined by Project Managers, CHREA staff are consulted on aspects of accessibility, such as those contained in the AODA or those that may go beyond compliance requirements to include best practices. These processes and partnerships help to ensure that compliance requirements are met and, where possible, exceeded in order to create inclusive and welcoming spaces for students, faculty, staff and visitors. In 2020, accessibility was addressed in a number of areas such as through updated room and wayfinding signage in the Science Complex and Lady Eaton College on Symons Campus. Accessibility was a key consideration in the new student residence on the Durham campus. Accessible doors were also added to locations in the existing Durham campus building.

IASR Section 80.49 – Customer Service Standard Training

Trent continues to offer training on the Customer Service Standard. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all training was moved online through modules or videoconference workshops as of March 2020.

## Contact

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