# **AODA Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2017 Update**

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## 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. Strategies and steps to bring Trent into compliance are reviewed in this report as well as measures to promote compliance with upcoming and ongoing requirements.

This report is divided into sections, based on relevant requirements of the AODAIASR, which are being highlighted because there is current or upcoming action 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 a compliance report by December 31, 2017. The report was filed on December 1, 2017.

IASR Section 4 - AODA Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

As per Section 4 of the IASR, Trent is required to have a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, which is revised every five years and is available to the public. In 2016, the Presidential Advisory Council on Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility’s (PACHREA) Accessibility Subcommittee formed a working group to advise on and develop a revised plan. The plan was completed and posted to the CHREA website in early 2017. The plan provides updated information on Trent’s compliance status with requirements of the AODA and offers strategies for both meeting outstanding requirements and ensuring ongoing compliance.

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 2017, this training took the primary form of online modules offered through Qualtrics. Training was offered in person as part of the orientation program for graduate teaching assistants.

**IASR Section 14 – Accessible Websites and Web Content**

Trent currently does not meet web accessibility requirements, which state that all new web content must meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A standards. Trent does have a plan in place in order to meet compliance requirements, as outlined in the 2017-2022 AODAMulti-Year Accessibility Plan. In 2017, several important steps were taken towards compliance. These steps included the following:

* Purchase of Siteimprove software (a website governance program) to help identify web accessibility issues and monitor ongoing compliance. The software also includes an e-learning component on Basic Digital Web Accessibility that will be rolled out to web content contributors to increase awareness and understanding of general accessibility principles including understanding disabilities, international guidelines, legal implications, and assistive technologies.
* Implemented fixes for 18 issues identified during 2016 audit of web accessibility conducted by third party experts CanAdapt.
* Completed the migration of 59 department websites to new Drupal content management system (CMS) which features a design aimed to remediate accessibility issues with the previous website design.
* Marketing and Communications informed department website content contributors of their AODA responsibilities and provided training web content accessibility as their sites were migrated to new CMS.
* New Digital Marketing Manager completed certificate course on Digital Accessibility as a Business Practice from Ryerson University to improve knowledge and better support this function at the university.
* The Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility (CHREA) provided training to departmental staff and other content contributors in departments that had migrated to Drupal on accessible document creation. This included training on PDF documents, Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint files. CHREA is working on initiatives to bring the training and support online in interactive virtual environments.

In the coming year, CHREA and Marketing and Communications will work with senior administration on implementation of a strategic communications plan to promote awareness of the importance of website accessibility as well as the “how to” of meeting technical requirements. Training on creating accessible web content and documents will continue. Monitoring of website compliance will be enhanced as the Site Improve software is rolled out.

IASR Section 18 – Libraries of Educational and Training Institutions

Librarians from Trent’s two libraries are working diligently on meeting compliance requirements for 2020 which pertain to providing, upon request, conversion-ready or accessible formats of digital and multimedia resources. Staff from CHREA and the libraries met in October 2017 to discuss compliance. The Trent librarians reported that external collaboration continues as they are actively involved with the Ontario Council of University Libraries on initiatives aimed at preparing the sector for compliance in 2020.

IASR Section 80.1 – 80.44 Design of Public Spaces Standard

In the 2017 compliance report that was sent to the ADO, Trent reported non-compliance with the requirement, IASR Section 80.17, accessible public outdoor eating areas because the eating area developed outside of Otonabee College in summer 2016 did not meet requirements. Facilities Management has developed a plan to resolve this issue in summer 2018 through use of funds from the Facilities Renewal Fund 2018/19.

In November of 2017, in consultation with Facilities Management, staff from CHREA updated the AODA Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to include a procedural statement on addressing emergency and preventative maintenance of elements contained within the Design of Public Spaces Standard. This procedural statement is a required component of Trent’s AODAMulti-Year Accessibility Plan, as per IASR Section 80.44.

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.

Section 80.49 – Customer Service Standard Training

In November 2017, CHREA, in collaboration with Trent Online, launched a new Customer Service Standard Training module. This module is an adaptation of the AccessForward training provided by the Government of Ontario in partnership with Learnography. Modules can be customized by organizations and incorporated into their learning management systems. Thus, the training module can be accessed through Blackboard for those with a Trent ID. Those without Trent credentials, such as volunteers, can access the standard AccessForward Training and provide proof of completion to CHREA. This update to the training was necessary in order to incorporate changes that were part of the AODA Customer Service Standard legislative revisions of 2016.

Training on the Customer Service Standard continues to be offered in person at the beginning of each semester as part of the Human Resources Staff Development Schedule and has also been offered as part of the suite of training for graduate teaching assistants.

## Contact

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