

2015-2016 Annual Accessibility Report

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was passed into law in 2005. The purpose of the AODA is to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities on or before January 1, 2025 through the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards.

As of July 1 2016, the Customer Service Standard has been incorporated into the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The AODA and its standards apply to Brock University; compliance with AODA regulations is a shared responsibility of all Brock academic and administrative areas. The regulations now in enacted are:

- Ontario Regulation 191/11- Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (“IASR”),which includes standards in the areas of information and communications, employment, transportation, the design of public spaces and customer service.
- Ontario Regulation 368/13 - Amendment to Building Code Accessibility Requirements

Brock University filed an Accessibility Compliance Report with the Accessibility Directorate in December 2015 - reporting on the ongoing requirements of the IASR requirements to the end of 2015. The next report is due on or before December 1, 2017.

Implementation

As required under the IASR, Brock University prepared a multi-year accessibility plan in 2013 that outlines the University’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, S.O. 2005, c.11 and the IASR. The following status report prepared by the University Accessibility (AODA) Coordinator outlines our progress to implement the 2013 multi-year accessibility plan that include accomplishments of this past year.

Questions about this report may be directed to Christopher Lytle, University Accessibility (AODA) Coordinator, within the Office of Human Rights and Equity at clytle@brocku.ca or 905-688-5550, extension 5454.

In 2015 an internal audit of systems that operate with the mandate of providing accessibility was conducted throughout the university. This audit helped guide the university to make improvements in the way that it provides services and training. Below are the highlights of activities that have occurred during the year.

AODA and Human Rights Training

The systems that are used by Brock University have changed with regards to how people are trained and how they use that training in every day interactions. As we move forward towards an inclusive environment for people to learn work and lead, there was a need for a more responsive training platform that could be deployed to the numerous staff and faculty that are employed at the University. Using the university SAKAI Learning Management System (LMS) as a platform, the department engaged with the Ontario Human Rights Commission to utilize their training called “Working Together: the AODA and the Code” to act as an umbrella module under which specific training on the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation and the AODA Training for Educators are housed.

This training is offered in tandem with the Mandatory Customer Service Training. Also, in person or one- on-one training and relevant information is offered upon request. These three modules will continue to assist the University in framing how the AODA is a component of Human Rights mechanisms. Further it illustrates to the learner how to use a human rights lens when interacting with, receiving or dealing requests for accommodation from people with disabilities. The training is unique because it starts a discussion that will assist the University in moving towards a rights based model of disability.

Training for Educators

The AODA for Educators module is a continuation of the training that is already being offered through the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation. The AODA for Educators Module is meant to provide an overview of how look at disability issues and inclusion through a Human Rights Lens. The removal of systemic barriers is a key and to do this it was felt that, by employing Human Rights as the theme, it would make it easier to see just how important accessibility is.

Feedback

Feedback continues to be a critical feature as this provides us with an ear piece that links into the areas where the University can improve systems that are not serving people with disabilities to the highest standard. Brock University continues to ensure that feedback processes are accessible for anyone who uses them. The university has begun to use thematic insights received through the feedback process to analyze root causes of systemic barriers. By receiving feedback in an appropriate way, Brock University can be certain that it is providing appropriate and timely customer service and ensure that systemic measures are taken to remove embedded barriers.

Accessible formats and Communication Supports

Brock University uses a joint structure of departments to ensure that accommodation requests are met in a timely manner. Depending on whether it is a student, employee or visitor, one can now find information regarding accessible formats and communication supports and contacts

at www.brocku.ca/accessibility .

Accessible Web Content

In 2015, several initiatives were started to ensure that web accessibility is a key priority. A web prompt has been developed to act as an education tool for people that upload content to the website with regards to WCAG2.0 level A and AA as well as containing copyright information. A web accessibility checker has been installed on the SAKAI learning management system to act as an automatic reference for AA Level accessibility and the entire website has begun its migration to Wordpress with a template framework that will ensure the highest level of accessibility.

As a result, staff who have ability to publish web content are continuously being trained by Marketing and Communications regarding the provision of accessible content.

Design of Public Spaces

Brock University is proud to add the [Marilyn. I Walker School for Fine and Performing Arts](#) to the expanding campus. Located in down town St. Catharines, it utilized the Facility Accessibility Design Standards, or [FADS](#) document to serve as guideline for accessibility, the end result of which is a fully accessible newly designed building for students to learn and engage in.

Human Rights Focus

In 2016 Brock, the Office of Human Rights and Equity in conjunction with Student Accessibility Services created the annual award for Accessibility and Inclusion that is given to a community member that shows leadership in the area of accessibility, advocacy, and Human Rights for people with Disabilities.

This award is given on December 3rd of each year to recognize the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities and the significant contribution that people with disabilities make in our community.

Development of a National Law

In 2016, Brock University was invited to attend a consultation regarding the development of a National Disability Act. Specifically, the Government of Canada wanted to know what sorts of concepts were utilized to ensure access while looking at the design of public space and infrastructure. Brock University was able to discuss the development of an inclusive culture as well as deliver the current edition of Facility Accessibility Design Standards Manual to the Hon. Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Accessibility and Sport as a best practice.

Sincerely

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