



# Accessible service ... accessible Brock

Guidelines for providing  
accessible service at  
Brock University

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This booklet provides guidelines for providing accessible service to persons with disabilities at Brock and is prepared as a general learning resource to meet the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. Specific requirements for Brock can be found in the companion documents at [brocku.ca/accessibility/accessible-service](http://brocku.ca/accessibility/accessible-service)

## Accessible service ... accessible Brock

Brock University is a place where people care about people. All people. We're a diverse and inclusive community.



This includes being an accessible university to persons with disabilities who study, work at or visit our campus. Removing barriers to accessibility is not only the right thing to do — we believe it's the smart thing to do. When we make Brock accessible to persons with disabilities, everyone benefits.

And this is why we're committed to ensuring that we meet or exceed provincial accessibility standards, including providing accessible service.

To find out more about Brock and accessibility, log on to [brocku.ca/accessibility](http://brocku.ca/accessibility)

## Provincial accessibility standards

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is provincial legislation created with the intent of achieving accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities by 2025, in five areas:

- customer service
- information and communication
- employment
- built environment
- transportation



The first standard, the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) is law and establishes specific accessible service practices for all Ontario organizations, including universities.



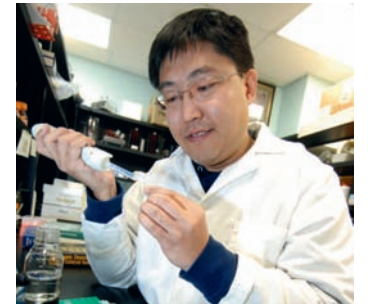
The following is a summary of the key requirements:

- Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to persons with disabilities consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity.
- Have a policy on allowing persons with disabilities to use assistive devices.
- Communicate in a way that takes into account a person's disability.
- Allow persons with disabilities who are accompanied by their service animal in areas that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by law.
- Permit persons with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them. Where an admission fee is charged, provide advance notice about the amount, if any, that must be paid for the support person.
- Provide notice when facilities or services that persons with disabilities commonly use are unavailable.
- Train anyone who interacts with the public, and those who develop and approve policies, practices and procedures on topics outlined in the standards.
- Establish a feedback process so the public may comment on the provision of goods or service to persons with disabilities. Specify actions to be taken if a complaint is received.
- Maintain written records of the policies, practices and procedures and provide them in an accessible format if requested.



## Defining 'disability'

Disability is not a common experience and there are varying degrees of disability. Some of us live with permanent disabilities while some of us may experience disabilities that are temporary, such as recovering from an injury or surgery, or coping mentally and emotionally with life's

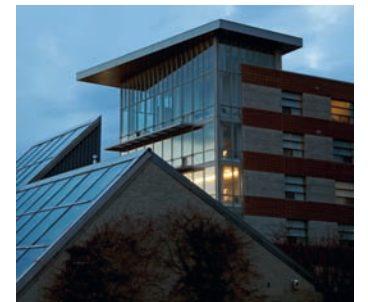


periodic setbacks. Some disabilities may be visible, some are not.

About 1.85 million people in Ontario have disabilities; that's 15.5 per cent of the population.

Disability as defined by the AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code means:

- 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 co-ordination, 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.
- A condition of mental impairment or a development disability.
- A learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.
- A mental disorder.
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.





## Accessible service: what is it?

Accessible service is about how we provide our University goods or services to persons with disabilities.

At Brock, our commitment to accessible service is outlined in our guiding policy: Provision of University Goods or Services to Persons with Disabilities.

Those who provide service to others at Brock are asked to keep the following four principles of accessible service in mind when interacting with persons with disabilities:

**Dignity:** a person maintains his or her self-respect and the respect of others.

**Independence:** a person is able to do things on his or her own without unnecessary help.

**Integration:** a person is able to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same way as others.

**Equal opportunity:** a person has the same opportunity to benefit from goods and services as anyone else.



## How can I provide accessible service?

At first we may be unsure of how to interact with persons with disabilities. A good place to start is to keep in mind these tips:

- Ask “May I help you”?
- Avoid making assumptions about a person’s disability or intelligence.
- Speak directly to the person, not the companion, support person or interpreter.
- Speak in a normal tone and volume without sounding impatient.
- If you don’t understand a person, don’t pretend. Ask the person to repeat himself or herself or use an alternative method of communication.

Finally, a person with a disability is a person first and foremost and disability is a normal part of the human experience. Using “person first”

language puts the focus on the person, not the disability, and avoids negative or judgmental terms (see Words with Dignity).

## Interacting and communicating with persons with various types of disabilities

### Persons who have learning disabilities

Learning disabilities can cause communication difficulties for a person and can interfere with how a person interprets, retains or takes in information.





A learning disability may affect language-based learning, mathematics and/or writing and fine motor skills.

### Some helpful tips

- Speak normally, clearly and directly to the person.
- Provide information in a way that works best for the person.
- Take time, be patient and be willing to explain something again.
- Provide extra time to complete a task.

### Persons with mental health disabilities

Mental health disabilities are often invisible and can cause changes in how a person thinks, his or her emotional state and may make it difficult for that person to work.

### Some helpful tips

- Treat the person with the same respect you have for everyone else.
- Ask the best way you can help.
- Be patient and calm if you think the person may need additional help.
- Learn about the resources available on campus or in the community to assist persons with mental health disabilities.

The Student Development Centre ([brocku.ca/sdc](http://brocku.ca/sdc)) encompasses a host of services, including personal counselling, Services for Students with disABILITIES and is also home to a nationally recognized students-at-risk program. Information on health management and accommodations for employees with a temporary or permanent disability is available through the Office of Human Resources and Environment Health and Safety ([brocku/hr-ehs](http://brocku/hr-ehs))



### Persons with physical disabilities

When you think of a person with a physical disability, you may think of the image of a person using a wheelchair. However, there are many types and degrees of physical disability that cause difficulty with moving, standing or sitting.



### Some helpful tips

- Speak directly to the person, not to the accompanying support person.
- Ask before you help.
- Remember “assistive devices” tips.
- Sit down beside the person to maintain eye contact and reduce neck strain.
- Remove obstacles and rearrange furniture for clear passage.

### Persons with hearing loss

Persons who have hearing loss may be persons who are deaf, oral deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. There are many degrees of hearing loss and some persons may use assistive devices to communicate.

### Some helpful tips

- Attract the person’s attention before speaking, such as discreetly waving your hand or tapping the shoulder.
- Reduce background noise and ensure appropriate lighting.
- Keep your face visible and look and speak clearly and directly to the person, not his or her interpreter.
- Offer to use pen and paper if needed.

### Persons with vision loss

Vision loss reduces a person’s ability to see. However, few persons are totally blind and many experience varying degrees of vision loss.





### Some helpful tips

- Don't assume the person can't see you.
- Identify yourself and speak directly to the person; don't touch the person.
- Ask the person the preferred format to receive information.
- Offer your elbow to guide and identify landmarks.

- Give clear, precise directions.
- Advise the person that you are about to leave.

### Persons who are deafblind

Persons who are deafblind cannot see or hear to some extent and may use different ways to communicate, including an intervenor. An intervenor enables a person who is deafblind to communicate with and receive information from the world around them.

### Some helpful tips

- The person may explain how to communicate by giving you a note or assistance card.
- Speak directly to the person, not the intervenor.
- Suddenly touching a person who is deafblind can be alarming.



### Persons with speech or language disabilities

Persons with speech or language disabilities have problems communicating, with verbal expression, or understanding written or spoken language.



### Some helpful tips

- Don't assume that because a person has one disability, he or she has another.
- Be patient. Don't interrupt or finish a person's sentence.
- Say: "I don't understand. Could you repeat the question?"
- Use questions that can be answered "yes" or "no."
- Some persons may use assistive devices to communicate.

### Persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities

Intellectual or developmental disabilities may impede a person's ability to learn, communicate, do everyday activities and live independently.

### Some useful tips

- Treat the person with the same respect you have for everyone else.
- Speak in short sentences using plain language.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Check your communication. Ask: "Do you understand this?"





### Persons with other disabilities

Persons living with chronic health conditions may have difficulty standing or sitting, have diet restrictions or have difficulties doing other things. Keep accessibility considerations in mind in order to include persons who may have other disabilities.

## Interacting with a person who uses an assistive device, service animal or support person

How should I interact with a person who uses an assistive device, service animal or support person?

### Use of assistive devices

Assistive devices are devices and technologies that increase mobility, hearing, vision and communication capacities of persons with disabilities.

Some examples: wheelchairs, canes, portable magnifiers, assistive listening devices (FM systems), screen-reading software or note-taking devices.

### How should I interact with a person who uses an assistive device?

Remember, an assistive device is an extension of a person's personal space — don't lean or reach over a person with a disability or the device. Touch only if asked to and don't move the device out of a person's reach.

Does your area provide assistive devices? Familiarize yourself with them and let people know:



- The assistive devices that are available and to whom (including restrictions).
- The person to be contacted about using them.
- Other services or means available.

### Use of service animals

Service animals are trained specifically to

perform various tasks to assist a person with a disability and include guide dogs, a hearing or signal animal, a mobility assistance animal, a seizure response animal or a therapeutic assistance animal.

### How do I know if a person is using a service animal?

Often it's apparent. For example, a guide dog wears an identifiable harness. If it's not apparent, the person may possess documentation for confirmation.

### Where are service animals permitted on campus?

A service animal may go with a person with a disability anywhere people generally have access on campus, unless excluded by law, such as for health and safety reasons.

### Some useful tips

- Do not touch, feed or speak to the service animal. They're working.
- Avoid deliberately startling the animal.
- The owner is responsible for the care, control and supervision of the animal.



## Use of support persons

A support person may be hired or chosen to assist a person with a disability with individual communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs. The support person can be a personal support worker, volunteer, friend or family member. Support persons may offer physical assistance (transferring someone from a wheelchair), personal care (aiding someone to dress), interpretation (provide American Sign Language interpretation), note taking or other services.



## Where are support persons permitted on campus?

A person with a disability accompanied by a support person may go together anywhere people generally have access on campus.

## What is our policy on charging fees for support persons?

When you host an event, meeting, conference or other activity where admission or participant fees are charged, you must post advance notice of the amount payable, if any, for the support person.

Consider waiving the fee for support persons. Doing so would enhance accessibility to your campus service for persons with disabilities.

## Some useful tips

- Speak directly to the person, not the support person.
- Ask if you are not sure who the support person is.
- Obtain consent from the person with a disability if confidential information is to be shared with the support person present.



## Additional tips

Additional tips and resources on providing accessible service are provided in the following section.

## How to interact with persons with disabilities over the phone



The best way to provide accessible service is to simply ask: “May I help you?”

## Some useful tips

- Speak directly and clearly.
- Be patient. Give the person time to explain.
- If you don’t understand, don’t pretend. Ask again.
- If person is using an interpreter or TTY line (A TTY is a "TeleTYpewriter" - a device where communication is typed rather than spoken), speak normally to the person.
- Still having difficulty? Make arrangements to call back and speak with the support person.

**What should I do if I see a person with a disability having difficulty accessing our campus goods or services? What if I see something that may interfere with accessibility?**

If you’re unsure, the best place to start is with the person. Have a positive, flexible and willing attitude and ask: “May I help you?”

If you see a facility or service that is not working, notify the department or area [brocku.ca/accessibility/notice-of-temporary-disruption](https://brocku.ca/accessibility/notice-of-temporary-disruption) provides links to departments or areas providing notice of temporary disruptions affecting the broader Brock community or general public.





## Words with Dignity

The following terms are suggested to describe people with disabilities

Instead of...	Use...
Disabled, handicapped, crippled	Person with a disability, People with disabilities
Crippled by, afflicted with, suffering from, deformed	Person who has...Or, person with
Lame	Person who has a mobility impairment
Confined, bound, restricted to a wheelchair	Person who uses a wheelchair
Deaf and dumb, deaf mute, hearing impaired	Person who is...deaf; hard of hearing
Retarded, mentally retarded	Person with an intellectual disability
Spastic (as a noun)	Person with cerebral palsy
Physically Challenged disability	Person with a physical disability
Mental patient, mentally ill, mental, insane	Person who has...a mental illness; schizophrenia
Learning disabled, learning difficulty	Person with a learning disability
Visually impaired (as a collective noun), blind	People who have a visual impairment
Disabled sport disabilities	Sport for athletes with disabilities
Disabled community	Disability community

Remember, appropriate terminology changes with the times... if in doubt, ask.