# **AODA Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019 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. This report details the strategies and steps taken to bring Trent into compliance.

The 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 its most recent compliance report by December 31, 2019. The report was filed on December 10, 2019. The next report will be due in 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 2019, the primary training methodology was online modules offered through Qualtrics.

IASR Section 14 – Accessible Websites and Web Content

In its 2019 compliance report sent to the ADO, Trent indicated that the main university website was upwards of 99% compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level A, as required by the AODA. Trent also indicated, however, that a number of peripheral university websites did not meet compliance requirements and final steps were being taken to bring these sites into compliance. Trent continues to work toward 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 steps were taken towards compliance in 2019, which led to significant improvements in website accessibility and related compliance; these strategies have also been implemented with a goal of meeting upcoming web requirements of 2021. These initiatives included:

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* Trent completed the migration of active websites to the new Drupal content management system, which uses a single template and modern web frameworks to maximize accessibility compliance.
* In 2019, the SiteImprove accessibility score on the Trent site (out of 100) had been increased from 69.8 to 87.8. For reference, the industry benchmark for SiteImprove higher education sites is 67.1.
* 57 distinct accessibility issues have been resolved.
* In 2019, the SiteImprove tool was rolled out to an additional 50 users who maintain content on the Trent website. 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.
* The Marketing and Communications Department employed a student, part of whose role was to regularly monitor SiteImprove reports, work with content contributors to understand their reports and reinforce training, and resolve issues that emerge.
* Training on creating accessible web content and documents continued.This included conducting departmental consultation, virtual and in-person drop-in hours, and professional development workshops for faculty and staff members.

IASR Section 18 – Libraries of Educational and Training Institutions

In 2019, librarians from Trent’s two libraries continued to work toward meeting compliance requirements for January 1, 2020, which pertained to providing, upon request, conversion-ready or accessible formats of digital and multimedia resources.

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 2019, accessibility was addressed in a number of areas such as through updated room and wayfinding signage in Otonabee and Lady Eaton Colleges. Also, accessibility-related requirements were met when creating additional parking spaces on campus.

Section 80.49 – Customer Service Standard Training

We continue to offer training on the Customer Service Standard in person at the beginning of each semester as part of the Human Resources Staff Development Schedule. Training is also offered throughout the year on Blackboard.

The introduction of the Mobility Access Program by the Trent Central Students Association (TCSA) allows community members to borrow accessibility aids/devices for use on campus. CHREA worked with the TCSA to develop an addendum to the Customer Service Standard Training, which detailed means of safely assisting customers who use the available equipment.

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