# **AODA: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2016 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 maintaining 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 environment.

Trent University

One of Canada’s top universities, Trent University is renowned for striking a unique balance between outstanding teaching and leading edge research. The university is consistently recognized across Canada for faculty who maintain a high level of innovative research activity and a deep commitment to the individual student. Distinguished by excellence in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and increasingly popular professional and graduate programs, Trent is dedicated to providing its students with an exceptional world view, producing graduates who are ready to succeed and make a difference in the world. Trent’s Peterborough campus boasts award-winning architecture in a breathtaking natural setting on the banks of the Otonabee River. Together with its satellite campus in Durham, Trent draws excellent students from throughout Canada and the world.

## AODA Compliance

Trent University will be required to file its next compliance report with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) in December 2017.

This report serves as the annual update to our Multi-year Accessibility Plan. This report also offers information on upcoming compliance requirements and government supported standards, as well as accessibility-related projects that go beyond legislative compliance.

## Compliance Requirements in 2016

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario File Review

On January 7, 2016 Trent received written notification that the ADO had selected the University for an *AODA* file review. The ADO is the provincial body that oversees *AODA* compliance. The file review required Trent to respond to five specific questions related to compliance with aspects of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) such as providing evidence of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, provision of training related to the IASR and Human Rights Code and indication that public notification of accommodation in the recruitment process is provided, upon request. As well, Trent University was asked to provide evidence of meeting the requirement to provide notice of the availability of accessible formats as well as indicating the process for emergency response plans for employees with disabilities. The Institutional Accessibility Advisor in the Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility (CHREA) was responsible for coordinating the response with supervision from the CHREA Director and with approval from VP Finance and Administration.

Trent University received positive feedback on its file review including both recognition of the quality of the file review submission itself as well as on its compliance. One required improvement was requested by the Senior Compliance Analyst conducting the review and this was to add a statement in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan confirming that the university does/will update employees on changes to accessibility-related policies and procedures when they are made. Trent provided confirmation that this requirement is met, in terms of informing employees and a corresponding addition was made to the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The university received notification in February 2016 that the file review was closed.

Annual Status Report

Review of the Multi-year Accessibility Plan and corresponding annual status report was completed for 2016 in February 2017. This report highlighted compliance efforts related to standards that came into effect in 2016 as well as continuing requirements.

Creation of New Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Trent University’s first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was developed in 2012 and was in effect for a five-year period. T first plan expired at the end of 2016. CHREA staff worked with university departments and with a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Working Group and its parent committee the Presidential Advisory Council on Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility to create a new plan. This new plan took effect as of January 1, 2017 and will be in place until the end of 2022; it is viewed as a living document that provides strategic guidance on how the university will meet upcoming *AODA* requirements. The document has new, more accessible formats and is posted on the CHREA website.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

The Design of Public Spaces Standard came into effect for large designated public sector organizations such as Trent University on January 1, 2016. CHREA worked with the Facilities Management Department throughout 2015 and 2016 to establish processes that would ensure that projects involving the built environment and falling under the purview of the *AODA* would meet the compliance requirements.

Consultations and Upgrades to Physical Spaces

The Facilties Management Department committed a portion of the Facilties Renewal Fund for the purpose of accessibility upgrades to the built environment. To date this funding has been used to add automatic accessible door openers (and in one case alter a door) in two classrooms in the Science Complex, the accessible washroom in the Environmental Science building as well as the accessible washroom on the main level of Gzowski College. Remaining funds will be used for similar accessibility projects in 2017.

CHREA also conducted one consultation on physical space, aside from the Space Committee applications. This consultation occurred with Human Resources and was focused on providing feedback on installation of an accessible automatic door operator on the main HR entrance and alterations to space in the main office/front desk area such that space may be improved for persons using mobility devices.

Updated Customer Service Standard

On July 1, 2016 an updated *AODA* Customer Service Standard came into effect following review by the Provincal Standards Review Committee for Customer Service.

Key changes to the standard related to the conditions on which healthcare professionals can provide documentation for service animals and the criteria an organization can use when assessing the need for support persons.

In response to these revised requirements Trent University updated its Accessibility Policy as well as its in-person Customer Service Standard training. In meeting with accessibility counterparts through the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) the CHREA Accessibility Advisor has made an initial committment to join a COU-led initiative to update online Customer Service Standard Training of partner universities. This initative will commence in 2017 if funding is obtained.

## On-going Requirements

Customer Service Standard Training

The AODA Customer Service Standard (CSS) requires that all members of an organization must be trained. CHREA continues to offer training in multi-modalities to meet our legislative obligation. All newly hired employees are informed of the CSS training requirement through Human Resources, Risk Management, new employee e-mail check list, and via New Staff Orientation.

In-person sessions are offered through the Human Resource Staff Development Schedule. Sessions are also offered upon request for departmental groups.

Accessibility Awareness Training for Educators

As of January 1, 2013, Trent was required to provide its educators with accessibility awareness training so that they may create inclusive classroom environments and increased learning opportunities for students with disabilities. This training is offered on an ongoing basis through Blackboard.

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation/Human Rights Code Training

In Fall 2015, CHREA launched the required IASR/Human Rights Code training, which is required under this section of the standard. This training is an ongoing requirement and as such training continues to be offered in multi-modalities included online through Qualtrics and by department-specific in-person training.

## Future AODA Requirements

Libraries: Digital and Multimedia Resources

In 2020, libraries of educational and training institutions are required to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of digital and multimedia resources, upon request to persons with disabilities. CHREA’s Institutional Accessibility Advisor met with the librarian’s committee in September of 2016 to provide an overview of requirements as well as potential strategies for meeting these requirements. CHREA and the library had continued communication in the fall to discuss best practices for meeting upcoming requirements. Collaborative work will continue as we move toward 2020.

Websites and Web Content

In 2021, designated public sector organizations such as Trent University will be required to ensure that all websites and web content complies with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level AA, for content posted after January 1, 2012. CHREA, in conjunction with relevant departments such as Marketing and Communications as well as with input from the Accessibility Subcommittee of PACHREA, has worked toward development of a strategy for addressing legacy content and documents on the website in preparation for the 2021 compliance requirements. CHREA anticipates having this strategy finalized and promulgated in 2017.

As part of the strategy to address legacy content on Trent University’s website, several university departments including the Secretariat and Marketing and Communications contributed funds to purchase Equidox software. This software converts PDFs to HTML and in 2017 will also contain functionality to convert PDFs to accessible PDFs in less time than many other document conversion programs.

In addition, a two-part training strategy on creation of accessible Microsoft Word, as well as PDF documents was launched in 2016. In May, six staff members from various university departments took part in a day of training related to the creation of accessible documents. This training was provided by an external organization with subject matter expertise. The intent of this training was to develop internal expertise and in addition to helping ensure that content created is accessible, it was anticipated that creating internal “experts” would allow for train-the-trainer approach where those trained could share knowledge with others at the university. As such one accessible document training workshop was hosted by CHREA in 2016 as part of the Human Resources Staff Development Schedule. This session was extremely well attended and more are planned for 2017.

Healthcare Standard

In February 2015, the Ontario Government announced support for an A*ODA* Healthcare Standard. Following pre-consultation periods conducted by the government in spring and fall 2016, a call was launched for member applications to a standards development committee. Although not directly related to the mandate of the university, this standard will likely have some implications, for example, for Trent University’s Student Wellness Centre.

Proposed Education Standard

In December 2016, the Premier of Ontario, Kathleen Wynne, stood in the legislature and pledged government support for the creation of an *AODA* Standard in education. If such a standard is developed and enacted, it could have significant implications for Trent University. No details on what an education standard would entail have been released.

## Fostering a Culture of Inclusivity Beyond Compliance

Accessible Mapping Project

In the summer of 2016 CHREA completed an extensive survey of accessible routes and features on Trent’s two Peterborough campuses; these surveyed features included accessible and gender inclusive washrooms, accessible parking spaces, as well as breastfeeding spaces. These features, as well as accessible routes, where added as a layer on to Trent University’s Google Maps. Extensive descriptions of routes and features along with accompanying photos where posted as a complete project on CHREA’s website. CHREA is in discussion with groups such as the Trent Central Students’ Association to have the information added as a link to their way finding web application.

The MV-1

Trent’s commitment to accessibility has been demonstrated with the successful addition of the first ever MV-1 campus shuttle - Canada's First Accessible Vehicle.  Our MV-1 is an accessible transportation solution that is providing a direct service that addresses the physical accessibility barriers present on and between Peterborough campuses.

The MV-1 Shuttle has been in full operation since October 2013. The spring/summer of 2015 brought about major changes for the MV-1 as its daily operations and scheduling were assumed by the Print Shop/Mail Room, and, in the fall of 2015, Walkhome began sharing the responsibility for MV-1 operations by having student staff facilitate evening rides as part of their service. Although the MV-1 is now a key part of the mail delivery service, accessibility remains a priority as indicated in the Memorandum of Agreement signed by CHREA and the Print Shop.

MV-1 rides can be booked online through the [MV-1 webpage](http://www.trentu.ca/mv1) (URL: www.trentu.ca/mv1) or by calling the Print Shop (705-748-1403).

Peterborough Accessibility Collaboration

CHREA’s Institutional Accessibility Advisor continued to participate in the Peterborough Accessibility Collaboration, which commenced in 2015. Partner organizations included the City of Peterborough, Fleming College and Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. In 2016, Peterborough Regional Health Centre joined the collaboration. This group met two times in 2016 to share best practice knowledge and resources while working toward a shared vision of raising awareness about accessibility issues in the Peterborough community.

## Contact Information

For additional information or if you require an accessible version of this report please contact:

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