# **AODA Multi-Year Accessibility Plan: 2021 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 and maintain compliance.

The report is divided into sections based on relevant requirements of the AODAIASR, which are being highlighted because there are current or upcoming actions pertaining to these sections’ requirements.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Trent is required to review its Multi-Year Accessibility Plan in 2022 as per Section 4 of the AODA IASR legislation, which requires review every five years. The plan will be reviewed in consultation with persons with disabilities as required.Trent’s Presidential Advisory Council on Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility (PACHREA), including its Accessibility Subcommittee will be consulted, as will additional stakeholder groups as appropriate.

AODA Compliance Report

Under AODA 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, 2021. The report was filed on December 10, 2021. Trent reported full compliance with requirements as outlined in the report.

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 2021, initial progress was made in moving these training records, as part of mandatory AODA training, to Trent’s Human Resources Information System (HRIS). The HRIS will primarily house current employee training records.

IASR Section 14 – Accessible Websites and Web Content

As of January 1, 2021, Trent was required to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 level AA criteria with exceptions to specific WCAG criteria related to live captioning and descriptive video. Trent has (and will continue to) implement practices to comply with WCAG criteria level A and AA, which include:

* Use of SiteImprove, web governance software, to monitor accessibility of websites.
* Continued training for web content contributors on creating and maintaining accessible web content and documents.
* In 2021, the Communications Department worked extensively to address WCAG level AA issues related to the Drupal template and;
* The Communications Department continues to address accessibility impacts of third-party widgets.

IASR Section 15 – Educational and Training Resources and Materials

Trent’s many departments and staff continued to work collaboratively in 2021, in light of shifting requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic, to provide academic environments that were safe and met student learning needs. Trent’s Information Technology and Student Accessibility Services Departments worked to develop a comprehensive captioning strategy aimed at promoting universal access, as many courses continued to be offered with online options. Specifically, Zoom, which was available with integrated (automated) captioning through the menu settings in Trent Zoom accounts, became a default feature in January 2021 for all trentu.ca account holders.

IASR Section 16 – Training for Educators

Trent continues to offer training for educators related to classroom accessibility and meeting students’ needs. This training resides on Blackboard and completion of training is tracked, as required by AODA legislation. In 2021, initial progress was made in moving these training records, as part of mandatory AODA training, to Trent’s HRIS, which will primarily house current employee training records.

IASR Section 80.1 – 80.44 Design of Public Spaces Standard

Facilities Management (FM) employs Project Managers with expertise on the Ontario Building Code requirements including those related to accessibility. When applicable, as determined by Project Managers, Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility (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 to create inclusive and welcoming spaces for students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

In 2021, with the anticipation of a return to campus (post-pandemic), CHREA was consulted on three requests that went to Trent’s Space Committee. CHREA’s Accessibility Advisor provided accessibility-related input and, where appropriate, suggested further consultation with the FM department and/or with best practice guides such as Clearing Our Path, a document developed by the CNIB.

### IASR Section 80.45 – 80.51 - Customer Service Standard Training

Trent continues to offer training on the Customer Service Standard. In 2021, initial progress was made in moving these training records, as part of mandatory AODA training, to Trent’s HRIS, which will primarily house current employee training records.

## Consultation on New Standard

### AODA Education Standard Initial Recommendations

In 2021, the AODA Standards Development Committee released initial post-secondary recommendations, as part of the AODA Education Standard. These recommendations were released as part of the required consultation period, which closed on November 1, 2021. Trent faculty and staff members reviewed these recommendations, and provided input, primarily via their professional groups/associations such as the Council of Ontario Universities’ Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) as well as the Inter-University Disability Issues Association (IDIA).

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