



THE ACCESSIBLE PATH TO LEADERSHIP: ACCESSIBILITY AT GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE

GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Status Report 2016

Why Accessibility Matters

As a college and public sector organization, George Brown College is committed to creating an accessible organization by removing and preventing barriers for people with disabilities. Members of the George Brown community make every effort to demonstrate leadership for accessibility throughout the college sector and Ontario. Our goal is to ensure accessibility for all of our employees, our students and our community members who access services, products, resources or any of the facilities operated by the College.

Where Are We Now: Implementing our Obligations under the AODA

Legislative Updates

Effective July 1, 2016, the Customer Service Standards (which came into effect on January 1, 2008), have been consolidated with the Integrated Accessibility Standards into one regulation, the *O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards* (under *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11*). In alignment with this legislative update, George Brown College is currently reviewing, updating and consolidating accessibility policies.

Multi-Year Plan

George Brown College continues to work in accordance with the multi-year plan developed to meet our organizational obligations under the AODA, *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11, s. 4 (1) (2))*. At George Brown College we are committed to making accessibility a reality throughout the organization and recognize that all employees of the college have a role in creating an accessible and inclusive college. As the AODA obligations are far-reaching with varying levels of responsibility across the college, our multi-year plan reflects a strategic approach to implementation that assigns leadership and responsibility to various groups to ensure our goals are met. The multi-year plan is a fluid document and framework that provides high level deliverables and activities to be met over the next five years, and is updated as progress continues at the college.

College Committees

The college continues its accessibility-related work within the parameters of the George Brown College AODA Committee, comprised of senior leaders representing all areas of the college who champion and are accountable for the successful implementation of the accessibility initiatives as they relate to the AODA Accessibility Standards, and the

AODA Coordinator who is accountable for the development and execution of an accessibility strategy and providing leadership and expertise.

Provincial Committees

George Brown College continues its representation on the following provincial committees:

- Human Resources Colleges Committee (HRCC) AODA Committee
- Heads of Library and Learning Resources (HLLR) AODA Committee for Ontario College Libraries

Annual Report

The college continues to support all previous and ongoing milestones and initiatives outlined in the college's multi-year plan. Each year a status report is prepared that outlines our achievements in meeting the current legislative requirement, recent activities identified within our multi-year plan and related accessibility initiatives.

AODA, Status Report 2016 Achievements

s. 22, 23, 24 Recruitment

- Applicants are notified about the availability of accommodation during the recruitment process
- Job applicants selected in hiring process are notified that accommodations are available upon request in relation to material or processes to be used.
- Consultation occurs with the applicant to arrange and provide the accommodation.

s. 25, 26, 28 Employee accommodation

- The college's *Workplace Accommodation Policy* was reviewed and updated 2014-01-02, and includes a written process for developing documented individual accommodation plans (IAP).
- Employees are informed of policies used to support employees with disabilities, including policies on providing job accommodation.
- The college's *Workplace Accommodation Policy* will undergo its mandatory review in 2017.

s. 29 Employees returning to work

- The college is currently modernizing and updating its return-to-work (RTW) policy, to better facilitate the RTW process.

s. 30, 31 Performance management, career development and redeployment

- The college takes into account disability and accommodation plans when using performance management, and when redeploying employees.

s. 12 Accessible formats and communication supports

- The college arranges for accessible formats and communication supports (upon request) in a timely manner at cost that is no more than regular charge to others).
- The college continues to meet its obligations with the following initiatives: College staff ASL-interpreter role (established 2009); TextNet, a computer-based TTY service, to all Deaf Staff (established 2009); UbiDuo technology to support communication for GBC Service Centers (established 2010); and the Captioned Media and eText Policy (established 2006).

s. 18 Educational libraries: print-based resources

- George Brown College Library implemented ACE, the [Accessible Content e-Portal](#), a process to provide, procure or acquire accessible or conversion-ready format of print-based resources (upon request). ACE provides alternate format texts of library materials to registered students, faculty and staff with a perceptual disability as defined in the Canadian Copyright Act.
- GBC continues its representation on the Heads of Library and Learning Resources (HLLR)'s AODA Committee for Ontario College Libraries whose mandate is to assist the college libraries in developing sectorial approaches that meet (and wherever possible exceed) the requirements of the obligations for educational libraries under the AODA.

Related Initiatives

In addition to meeting our obligations under the AODA, George Brown College is committed to pursuing other related initiatives that continue to prevent and remove barriers collegewide, including:

Information Technology Services (ITS)

- GBC ITS continues to enhance its accessible services with the installation of:
 - 10 podiums that are ADA compliant;
 - Hearing Assist technology installed in 9 classrooms; and
 - 280 new ADA compliant 8800 series office phones.

Universal Design for Learning

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an approach to designing curriculum and student services in a way that lessens barriers to participation, reducing the need for individualized arrangements, and increasing inclusion, engagement, and success for all students.
- A George Brown College delegation representing a diverse cross-section of college divisions attended the “Universal Design for Learning: Canadian Perspectives - Sowing the Seeds, Facilitating the Change, Nurturing the Growth” conference at McGill University (May, 2015).
- Following the conference a college-wide UDL committee was formed to discuss and develop initiatives and efforts for UDL support and implementation at the college.
- George Brown College hosted a college-wide UDL conference, attended by 160 participants (May, 2016).
- UDL is included as a priority in the Academic Plan 2016.
- GBC is currently developing next steps and gathering information for a baseline audit to determine how we are designing for access and inclusion, including: program review, policy compliance, best practices, service audits and UDL train the trainer modules.

eTextbook Initiative

- As part of the college’s Digital Learning Initiative (DLI), the eLearning and Teaching Innovation (eLTI) team has been working with programs across the college to implement an eTextbook initiative in which the cost of the textbook is included in the course material fees.
- These eTexts support increased access for students who can interact with the text in their preferred manner: digital, print or audio and offer accessibility features such as: text to speech functionality, adjustable font sizes, and user navigation controls.
- Launched in 2015 with one text, there are now 5 courses using 8 different texts along with their associated enhanced websites and the initiative continues to gain popularity with new requests for 9 courses received (to date) for the 2017-18 school year.
- The eText initiative is consistent with the College’s focus on the 3 pillars of sustainable practices: Environmental Sustainability, Social Sustainability and Economic Sustainability.

Accessible Document Training

- In 2016, 24 training sessions were offered on GBC’s PD Place, with a total of 65 attendees.

- Training sessions include an introduction to accessibility, how it relates to electronic documents, and covers an overview of accessible document requirements and types of impairments.
- Sessions also include: a comprehensive list of accessibility issues, detailed descriptions for each issue, example documents for each issue, and exercises to train attendees how to fix the accessibility issues.
- Additional presentations were also provided to divisional teams as part of their team meetings, including the Centre for Hospitality & Culinary Arts (60+ staff and faculty), School of Fashion (20+ staff and faculty), School of Dental Health (25+ staff and faculty).
- Sessions are also provided with staff and faculty via Skype video on an ad hoc basis in which the Web Publishing Team share their screen and show them how to fix any accessibility issue they may be experiencing with their documents.
- Tutorial videos were created for remediating PDFs, and are posted on [GBC's Accessible Information and Communication](#) website.
- An Accessible Documents handout checklist was created.
- One-on-one training sessions were provided to designers on how to create accessible InDesign files, with interest shown for a potential presentation to GBC design students.
- GBC's AODA Coordinator and GBC's Assistant Web Master co-presented a session entitled "Redefining Ideas into Initiatives: How to Adopt an Accessible Documents Strategy" at the Guelph Accessibility Conference (2015).

Library

- Information regarding CELA, the Centre for Equitable Library Access added to the GBC Library website: [George Brown College Library - CELA](#)

Facilities Upgrades and Installations

- GBC Facilities continues to enhance its offerings with the following upgrades and installations:

Waterfront Campus

- In partnership with Bell and Rogers, installed a cell phone repeater system that enhances cell phone coverage in the building. This is seen as a benefit in the event of an emergency.
- Improved lighting in corridor in concourse, adjusted to be independent of Fifthlight control system which eliminates dark areas in case of light system failure.
- Adjusted lighting in 3rd floor change rooms to be independent of Fifthlight control system which eliminates dark areas in case of light system failure.

- New installation of panic button in the shipping/receiving office as enhanced security feature.
- As a security enhancement mirrors in women's shower eliminate the need to dress in common washroom.

Moving Forward

George Brown College is committed to formalizing its obligations under s. 22, 23, 24 Recruitment; s. 25, 26, 28 Employee accommodation; s. 29 Employees returning to work; s. 30, 31 Performance management, career development and redeployment by developing standardized procedures and toolkits to better guide employees and management throughout these processes.

George Brown College is committed to continuing to meet the forthcoming AODA IASR obligations of 2020 and 2021, including:

s.18 Educational libraries: to provide, procure or acquire accessible or conversion-ready format of digital based resources (upon request). (Special collections and archival material are exempted).

- The college library's Captioned Media policy (Reviewed and Approved: Board of Governors Dec 13, 2006) ensures that our obligations for multimedia are met.
- The GBC library continues its work towards meeting obligations for other resources such as library databases and electronic resources.
 - The Library eResources Accessibility Project (LEAP) is an HLLR-directed initiative currently in development to assist Ontario college libraries in upholding accessibility best practices and becoming compliant with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) January 1, 2020 deadline for ensuring the accessibility of electronic resources (IASR, 2011, s. 18(3)).
- GBC maintains its representation on the HLLR-AODA Committee for the Ontario College Libraries as Chair.
- A GBC representative also advises on accessibility standards in the development of the [Learning Portal](#) - a project which aims to provide easy and equitable access to open learning resources and services to Ontario's online college students and to offer a consistent, province-wide academic support platform for faculty to use for course and assignment design.

s. 14 All Internet websites and web content (2021) must comply with WCAG 2.0 Level AA (excludes live captioning, audio description).