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**McMaster Accessibility Advisory Council**

**January 2022 – August 2023 Accessibility Activity Report**

**MEMO**

**DATE:** October 10, 2023­­­­

**SUBJECT:** McMaster Accessibility Advisory Council – Annual Accessibility Activity Report

**TO:** Dr. David Farrar, President and Vice-Chancellor

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Saher Fazilat, Vice-President (Operations and Finance)

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Please find enclosed, for your review, the thirteenth (13th) annual accessibility activity report from the [McMaster Accessibility Advisory Council](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/legislation/mcmaster-accessibility-council/) covering the period January 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023.

The McMaster Accessibility Advisory Council, supported by the Equity & Inclusion Office AccessMac Program, is dedicated to advancing equity and inclusion for the diversity of persons with disabilities in our university community. The Council is responsible for ensuring the University’s adherence to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

While it is encouraging that McMaster was found to be compliant across most measures in the last compliance reporting cycle to the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility, there is still much work ahead to ensure the University meets updated compliance benchmarks set for 2025.

Over the last few years, efforts have been made to highlight the work done to shift culture and to establish strategic plans and frameworks related to accessibility, so specific compliance activities have not been the focus. Similar to the previous year, work since the start of 2022 continued to promote compliance focus activities for certain levels of the university (senior leaders and directors), while we continued with culture shifting activities for managers, employees, students, and community members. Progress also began to develop a 2nd AODA Compliance Survey that has now been disseminated in 2023 across all major areas of the University to inform the 2023 reporting to the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility.

The report is broken down into summarized sections of compliance-related activities that have taken place over the last year, with links and contacts for more information.

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# Part 1: McMaster Accessibility Advisory Council Updates

Since the start of 2022, the McMaster Accessibility Council (MAC) has undergone some changes including adopting a new name, now known as the [McMaster Accessibility Advisory Council (MAAC).](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/legislation/mcmaster-accessibility-council/)

Throughout this reporting period the MAAC has held five (5) virtual committee meetings (2022: July, October, December; 2023: April and June). The Committee has been actively overseeing a wide variety of programmatic and compliance driven initiatives which are outlined in the report below.

# Part II: AccessMac Accessibility Program Updates

## Executive Summary

The [Accessibility Program](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/legislation/#tab-content-about-program) (AccessMac) within the Equity & Inclusion Office (EIO) has existed for over a decade. Its mandate is to form deliberate and strategic partnerships with faculty, staff, and students to create and maintain a culture of accessibility and disability inclusion on campus, to act as subject matter experts and provide consultation to the McMaster Accessibility Advisory Council (MAAC), and to coordinate compliance obligations under the [*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11) *(AODA 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11)* on behalf of the University.

The need for accessibility and awareness of the AODA and disability inclusion has climbed drastically over the past few years across McMaster campuses. Similar to previous years, the AccessMac Program has experienced substantial and unsustainable growth since the beginning of 2022. This growth and added pressure on the AccessMac Program has not gone unrecognized, as it was highlighted within the [External Review of the Equity & Inclusion Office (2022](https://provost.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2023/02/2022-EIO-Review-Report_w-Cover-Note.pdf)). Across McMaster, there continues to be an increase in demand and need for support with institutional strategic planning, project management and analysis, broad educational development and programming, disability community development and facilitated access, as well as individual or unit-level consultations.

The Accessibility Program has reported an increase of 47% annually (from 2021 to 2023 stats) in accessibility and disability inclusion-related consultations as well as disability support related consultations for McMaster community members. Between the period January 1, 2022 and August 31, 2023, the AccessMac and EIO responded to 526 consultation requests related to accessibility and disability inclusion (145 between January and August 2022, and 381 between September 2022 and August 2023). Additionally, since 2020 there has been 14,706 persons who have participated in AccessMac educational training and engagement events - a 36% increase compared to the previous three years (2017 to 2019).

This demand for increased accessibility consultations, support, and training has most likely been stimulated by the following:

1. The overall rise in awareness of accessibility and disability inclusion across the province and locally, including the need for AODA implementation and reporting.
2. The increased focus on community-engaged and educationally focused strategies to underpin program operations and approach.
3. The shift back to “in-person” classes and work following COVID-19 restrictions. This means more persons on campus trying to navigate accommodations and experiencing accessibility barriers, especially in physical spaces. We also know that persons with disabilities were negatively impacted by the restrictions and health conditions experienced during COVID-19[[1]](#footnote-2).
4. An increase of persons with disabilities or those requiring accommodations on campus, for example, as outlined in the [2023 Review of Student Accessibility Services](https://provost.mcmaster.ca/office-of-the-provost-2/external-reviews/) – Report of the Review Committee, from 2020/21 to 2021/2022 academic years, the overall demand for student accommodations raised by 25%; that’s an additional 848 students registered with Student Accessibility Services.
5. Web accessibility legislation requirements that came into effect in 2021, now being implemented across websites and digital spaces at McMaster through the Web Accessibility Roadmap, for McMaster to become AODA web accessibility compliant. During this reporting period there were over 90 web or digital accessibility consultations responded to by AccessMac or colleagues working on accessibility in University Technology Services (UTS).

Also driving demand for accessibility awareness and consultations has been the forthcoming AODA Postsecondary Education Standards. In response to these new, upcoming standards the Accessibility in Teaching and Learning STEER/R grant project was launched. A new [Strategic Excellence and Equity in Recruitment and Retention (STEER/R) Program](https://provost.mcmaster.ca/office-of-the-provost-2/steer-r-program/#accordion-Teaching-and-Learning-Accessibility-Roadmap-2) grant was awarded to the Office of Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning (OVPTL), in partnership with the EIO, MAAC, and additional campus partners, for a two-year project. The central project goal is to develop a five-year Teaching and Learning Accessibility Roadmap underpinned by the early adoption of [AODA Postsecondary Education Standard Recommendations](https://www.ontario.ca/page/development-proposed-postsecondary-education-standards-final-recommendations-report-2022) to best serve students with disabilities and foster an accessible teaching and learning experience. The project will provide an opportunity to explore McMaster’s readiness to adopt the forthcoming Postsecondary Education Standards, and to gain a better understanding of McMaster’s current infrastructure supporting various components of accessibility across the campus. Also, it aims to provide space to better understand and define what academic accessibility really means and could look like for current and future intersectional McMaster community members with disabilities. To lead and coordinate this STEER/R program, Kate Brown, Manager of the Accessibility Program, has shifted into a two-year secondment under the Office of the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning, supervised by Dr. Kim Dej.

In 2023, with the continued leadership and support from Dr. Susan Tighe, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), additional resources in the Equity & Inclusion Office have allowed the capacity of the AccessMac Program to grow by receiving on-going guidance and support from Anne Pottier, Director, Technology Support & Operations, University Library, welcoming Dr. Barrington Walker, Vice Provost, Equity & Inclusion in May 2023, who is identifying and achieving institution-wide, equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility priorities and goals, and creating a full-time Accessibility Project Coordinator position. This one-year role will provide critical support to ensure there is capacity to deliver and meet the growing demand of AccessMac’s training, consultation, and community engagement offerings. This position was filled by Nusrat Mir in May 2023. Although this new position is welcomed, there remains significant pressure on the AccessMac Program to meet all programming needs and sufficiently respond to all accessibility requests and compliance requirements at McMaster. Furthermore, as the Project Coordinator position is limited to one (1) year, it remains difficult to sustain programming and plan without secure program capacity.

To fill the vacancy of Manager of the Accessibility Program, Paula Hearn was hired in July 2023. The Accessibility Program Manager will ensure the completion of the AODA reporting compliance by December 2023, and is overseeing the finalization of updating McMaster’s Accessibility Policy. Additionally, in fall 2022, the EIO restructured AccessMac to report to the Director of Human Rights & Dispute Resolution. In December 2022, the EIO welcomed Patricia Suleiman as the inaugural Director of Human Rights & Accessibility who will work closely and oversee the Accessibility Program, bridging linkages between accessibility and human rights complaints, concerns, interventions, and dispute resolutions related to disability.

# Part III: Accessibility Policy Review and Redevelopment

## Executive Summary

McMaster’s Accessibility Policy has undergone continued and extensive review and redevelopment during 2022 and 2023, resulting in an almost complete [DRAFT policy](https://mcmasteru365-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/coburnb_mcmaster_ca/EW4FXG-WsjlEjpoMTEqL6yIBRrPiWS_M1J1KUphKqx3Yyw?e=PgbSEr). During this period the EIO, AccessMac, in collaboration with the MAAC Chair have been facilitating a wide variety of consultative activities across the University, including the following:

1. Three constituency consultations: 1) students; 2) staff; and 3) faculty
2. Relevant office consultations and feedback from: 1) McMaster University Faculty Association; 2) Human Resources Services; and 3) Human Rights and Dispute Resolution in the Equity & Inclusion Office.
3. A comprehensive survey was launched to the McMaster community to provide feedback on the draft Accessibility Policy. The survey resulted in 2467 quantitative results, and 82 qualitative responses.

Feedback from these three feedback areas were collated into thematic sections for improvement. The chart below provides high-level feedback received, and the action taken to improve and adjust the policy.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Feedback Received** | **Response and Adjustments** |
| Include information on how to operationalize the policy | * Included links to resources that provide guidance and implementation support * Acknowledged this is a policy and not an operational guidance document |
| Make the Policy shorter, similar language, less jargon | * Adjusted text to be clearer, including plain language where possible * Reduced acronyms where possible * When launching policy, consider a plain text version, or online “hint tools” |
| Clearer definitions | * Updated and clarified definitions (e.g. disability, universal design, accessibility) * New definitions added (e.g. “culture of accessibility”) * Aligned definitions with definitions found in other university wide policies |
| Missing component on students | * Added a section on Student Accessibility Services (SAS) under the central unit responsibilities section |
| Clearer timelines, and reporting process | * Considering specific timelines for AODA training requirements * Included some minor updates on reporting / monitoring |
| Clarity on description of roles | * Aligning role definitions with central role descriptions. |
| Further consideration of intersectionalities within the policy | * Committed to hold an additional consultation with the Black, Indigenous and Racialized Staff Employee Resource Group (BIRS ERG) |
| Request to add additional details related to web accessibility, and procurement | * Both the web accessibility and procurement sections were updated for clarity and more details, and external links to resources added. |

## Next Steps

Based on the most recent feedback provided, a final round of consultations and review processes will be held in the last quarter of 2023. Consultations will be held with the Employee Accessibility Network, and the Black, Indigenous and Racialized Staff Employee Resource Group. Additionally, a request will be sent to relevant offices for final review including, Student Accessibility Services, Office of Legal Services, and Employee and Labour Relations to be reviewed by Union representatives. Feedback received from these final review activities will be incorporated into the final draft of the policy in coordination with the University’s Secretariat. Once the final draft is completed, the Policy will be submitted to the President’s and Vice Presidents Group, followed by the University Planning Committee, Senate, and finally the Board for approval. Once approved, the Equity & Inclusion Office in collaboration with MAAC will work on rolling-out awareness raising trainings and activities including updating the mandatory AODA training materials online.

# Part IV: 2023 AODA Compliance Environmental Scan Survey

## Executive Summary

In preparation for the province’s December 31, 2023, biennial AODA compliance reporting, the McMaster Accessibility Advisory Council in coordination with the AccessMac Program launched the 2nd AODA Compliance Environmental Scan Survey in March 2023. This AODA Environmental Scan Survey sought to address the following:

1. Facilitating the completion of the biennial 2023 Provincial Compliance Report with participation from all members of the MAAC.
2. Identify areas of change and improvement since the 2021 bench-mark survey, including central processes established, distributed take up across units, and accessibility policies and practices developed.
3. Communication to ensure staff are aware of and able to support the implementation of accessibility and accommodation policies at McMaster, in adherence with *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* provincial legislation. This included providing resources and guidance, for example, reminders that all staff are required to take McMaster’s central [AODA and Human Rights Code](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/training/aoda-and-human-rights-code-training/) training; informing new employees about accessibility and accommodation supports; accessible health and safety procedures; and awareness of policies and guidelines.
4. Through survey analysis, identifying areas requiring attention while informing McMaster’s evolving Accessibility Policy, the accompanying multi-year accessibility strategy, and future iterations of the AODA Environmental Scan.
5. The self-reporting data activity is increasing cross-institutional confidence when preparing and submitting the 2023 biennial report.

The survey results are currently being collated and analyzed. All major departments from across the University have responded to the survey, providing status updates on implementing and compliance with current AODA regulations. Although data has not been fully analyzed at this time, some emerging themes are similar to those from the 2021 survey, including: lack of knowledge and/or confusion regarding AODA legislation compliance requirements; and in some spots respondents appear to comply, however they did not respond “Yes”. Where respondents have indicated “No” to compliance, or demonstrated confusion, follow-up dialogues are being organized to bring clarity and identify pathways for coming into compliance in these areas by the end of 2023. The data will be used to complete the AODA reporting template to the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility by December 2023.

### Next Steps

A full data analysis of the survey results is underway. The MAAC Chair and Accessibility Program Manager will follow-up with relevant unit leaders to clarify responses that appeared incomplete or where “No” was indicated, in order to establish a workplan to come into compliance if not already. The AODA Scorecard will be reviewed for usefulness in documenting internal levels of compliance across units indicated through this year’s Environmental Scan. By December 31, 2023, the MAAC Chair and Accessibility Program Manager will complete the AODA compliance reporting template and submit McMaster’s compliance report to the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. Beyond the reporting, the survey results will be used by MAAC and the Accessibility Program to consider future strategic planning.

# Part V – Web Accessibility

## Executive Summary

**Web accessibility compliance:** Following McMaster University’s senior leadership endorsement for an institution wide AODA Web Accessibility Compliance Roadmap in 2021, the [Roadmap](https://mcmasteru365.sharepoint.com/sites/McMasterAffiliteAODACompliance/SitePages/Web-Accessibility-Hub(1).aspx) has successfully advanced over the [2022 period](https://mcmasteru365.sharepoint.com/sites/McMasterAffiliteAODACompliance/SitePages/AODA-Web-Accessibility-Roadmap,-Phase-2.aspx) with the first AODA Website Audit and Reporting Project.

In early 2023, McMaster was officially flagged by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility for being non-compliant with the Web Accessibility Standard Reg. 191/11 s. 14 (4) under the AODA, which was transparently reported in the 2021 compliance report. A Web Accessibility Compliance Workplan was created by members of the MAAC, coordinated by the EIO and AVP / CTO Office and University Technology Services (UTS), to guide the work towards compliance in 2023 and 2024. Efforts to come into compliance, currently being undertaken by UTS Web Accessibility Specialist, Clark Cipryk, in partnership with the EIO and other MAAC members, include manual testing audits and remediation to the MacSites template, education across campus, sharing knowledge on current web management processes and reviewing where improvements can be made campus wide. A driving force behind these changes has been the work of [McMaster’s growing AODA Web Accessibility Roadmap Team](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3aHym30FN16ql2Y_OB65fBwSFb9JDZTNHTfcAKlOkixC01%40thread.tacv2/conversations?groupId=22adf34d-c960-49ed-9b7f-7e49409b0870&tenantId=44376307-b429-42ad-8c25-28cd496f4772), and the continued roll out of McMaster’s Web Accessibility Roadmap.

**Web accessibility training:** To strengthen training related to web accessibility, the Faculty of Science and the Equity & Inclusion Office have continued their partnership and development of the Accessible Digital Content Training Pressbook through the addition of [Web Content Accessibility 101,](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibledigitalcontenttraining/chapter/web-introduction/) authored by EIO Accessibility Projects Coordinator, Nusrat Mir. This training has been tailored to McMaster website environments, such as MacSites, and is intended to make accessibility accessible for all forms of web content managers.

## Next Steps

McMaster will work the rest of 2023 to 2024 to come into Web Accessibility AODA compliance, which will be guided by the Web Accessibility Compliance Workplan, and the previous [Roadmap](https://mcmasteru365.sharepoint.com/sites/McMasterAffiliteAODACompliance/SitePages/Web-Accessibility-Hub(1).aspx). Key deliverables have been identified to ensure clear communication and accountability. To support continued monitoring of web accessibility compliance, a campus wide web accessibility survey will be released in October 2023. The results of this survey will inform communication with the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility which will take place in November 2023, and AODA compliance reporting in December 2023.

# Part VI – Campus Accessibility Action Plan Updates

## Executive **Summary**

**Campus Accessibility Action Plan (CAAP):** [Phase 2](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/11/Campus-Accessibility-Plan-2018-2013-V5-20Apr2018.pdf) of CAAP continued to be rolled out in reporting period. Through the CAAP Phase 2 investments, the following CAAP projects were undertaken and completed between January 2022 and August 2023:

* Campus Services Building (CSB) Accessibility Upgrades Grant Application (Federally supported [Enabling Accessibility Fund](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/enabling-accessibility-fund.html)) - Project in tender now, with construction starting in November 2023.
* Accessibility audits were completed for the remainder of McMaster University owned buildings
* Water fountain / water refill audits and multi-year master plan for future installation. New fountains installed at Nuclear Research Building, Burke Sciences Building, Commons Building, MDCL, T34, 2 new outdoor units in Lot H and at the south end of the track behind Ivor Wynne Centre.
* Applied Dynamics Laboratory (ADL) - elevator installation
* General Science Building (GSB) - 3rd floor accessible washroom addition
* John Hodgins Engineering (JHE) - barrier free washrooms (south and north washrooms)
* Chester New Hall (CNH) - accessible washrooms B110 and B111 upgrades
* Chester New Hall (CNH) - barrier free washroom 506A modifications
* Hamilton Hall (HH) - accessible washrooms upgrades (all levels)
* Nuclear Research Building (NRB) - accessible washroom upgrades
* General Science Building (GSB) – modifications to accessible parking and new accessible sidewalk to the main entrance door
* Automated door operator in corridor to Smith Gym
* SAS (Student Accessibility Services) testing centre washroom – Automated Door Operator (ADO) installation
* Modifications to Mills Library – improvements to signage, barrier free washrooms, and stairs
* Spinal Cord Injury washroom accessibility upgrades.
* Upgrading all-genders washroom signage of all washrooms across campus to McMaster’s new Barrier Free standard.
* Feasibility study for adding an elevator to make the sub-basement level of Burke Science Building (BSB) accessible.
* Psychology Lecture Hall 155 – upgrades to the barrier free viewing area
* Museum of Art – accessible washroom upgrades
* IWC - Accessibility upgrades to the path of travel, office, etc.
* LSB Phase 1 renovation - completed major upgrades to washrooms, including adding barrier free washrooms

Campus Services Building Accessibility Upgrades will continue in 2023 and into 2024, the total project is approximately $2M, with $1M from the Enabling Accessibility Fund grant. A building permit has been applied for, with a target construction start of November 2023. This project includes:

* adding an elevator
* creating accessible entrance
* barrier free washrooms
* barrier free meeting room
* ramp to make the ground floor completely accessible
* adding additional women’s washroom on the first floor

**Barrier-Free Design Standards**: To support the continued strategic development of McMaster’s barrier-free design and accessibility improvements, a new project was adopted in late 2022 to establish clear barrier free standards. These standards will guide the University’s future growth, ensuring current and future facilities and campus spaces are fully accessible for all. McMaster’s Facility Services and Barrier Free Standard Committee have been working closely with [Level Playing Field](https://www.levelplayingfield.ca/) and [Intelligent Futures](https://www.intelligentfutures.ca/), the consulting agencies engaged to create the Barrier Free Design Standards report. Three phases have been identified to guide the development of these standards, Phase 1 was completed in summer 2023, following stakeholder engagement workshops and user experience interviews.

## Next Steps

McMaster’s Barrier Free Design Standards development is currently in Phase 2, with the target completion date of Spring 2024. Next steps include rolling out the McMaster Barrier-Free Design Standards [Survey](https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7524678/McMaster-BFDS-Survey). Additionally, in October 2023, the 60% draft will be presented to the campus community. Drop-in engagement sessions will take place to collect insights and feedback from the campus community, which will inform the final draft of the standards.

# Part VII – McMaster Accessibility Community Updates

The following section of this report will highlight key accessibility cultural and community development-related activities across the institution that have taken place between January 2022 and August 2023.

## McMaster’s Employee Accessibility Network

Established in 2017, the [Employee Accessibility Network (EAN)](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/services/employee-accessibility-network/) continued in this reporting period as a space for employees with disabilities at the University to connect, network, and collaborate.

Comprised of more than 120 list serve members and growing, the EAN continues to offer a lens of lived experience to institutional work carried out that may disproportionately impact employees with disabilities in the absence of consultation.

During this reporting period, six EAN meetings were held. The following topics were discussed during these meetings:

* Employment Equity Census Info Session
* Celebrating and Debriefing events from December 3rd – International Day of Persons with Disabilities
* Governance of Group - Continued Discussion with EIO / MAAC
* Consultation with Employment Equity RE: Disaggregated Data Census
* Peer Support

In this period, the Network members provided contributions to the revamping of the McMaster Accessibility Policy and remains a key constituency group to inform the Policy revision based on lived experiences at the University. To read more about the Network’s consultative and peer support work, please read the [Employment section](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/employment-2/) from this past year’s [Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Update 2021-202](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/part/2021-2022/)2.

## Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Update 2021-2022

The [2021 - 2022 Annual Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Update](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/part/2021-2022/) is now in its 5th year of publication, collecting and highlighting accessibility and disability-inclusion related projects, activities, networks, research, and scholarship generation carried out by McMaster students, staff, and faculty in any given year.

This year’s publication was released to mark celebration and raise awareness for [McMaster’s National Accessibility Week 202](https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/national-accessibility-week-2023/)3. Containing more than 55 submissions from across faculties, administrative units and student communities, the update report shines a light on the dynamic efforts of McMaster community members in driving accessibility and disability-centred scholarship, service, and advocacy-related work across the University. The publication continues to be shared in an accessible format, please access the following table of contents to learn more about collective work being carried out across the institution in different areas:

1. [Accessibility and Disability Inclusion in Research, Instruction, and Course-Level Enhancements](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/accessibility-and-disability-inclusion-in-research-instruction-and-course-level-enhancements/)
2. [Accessibility and Disability Inclusion in Instructional Support and Technology-Enabled Learning](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/accessibility-and-disability-inclusion-in-instructional-support-and-technology-enabled-learning/)
3. [Accessibility Policies, Plans, and Committees](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/policies-plans-and-committees-2/)
4. [Community Building and Engagement at McMaster](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/community-building-and-engagement-at-mcmaster-2/)
5. [Community Building and Engagement beyond McMaster](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/community-building-and-engagement-beyond-mcmaster-2/)
6. [Digital and Web Accessibility Initiatives](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/digital-web-accessibility-initiatives/)
7. [Employment Accessibility](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/employment-2/)
8. [Spaces and Environments](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/spaces-and-environments-built-and-virtual-2/)
9. [Student Initiatives and Advocacy](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/student-initiatives-2/)
10. [Student Support and Service Delivery Upgrades](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/student-support-and-service-delivery-upgrades-2/)

## National Accessibility Week

Two National Accessibility Weeks were celebrated between January 2022 and August 2023:

* May 30 to June 3, 2022: [McMaster’s National Accessibility Week 2022](https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/naaw-2022/)
* May 28 to June 3, 2023: [McMaster’s National Accessibility Week 202](https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/national-accessibility-week-2023/)3

During the most recent celebrations in 2023, eight events were held and promoted, spanning topics of employers on accessibility in the workplace; network of support for clients who self-identify with disabilities, community resource partners, employers, and accessible business owners; teaching and learning to embed disability justice; discussion on accessibility policy, featuring top institutions, public administration leaders, and civil society advocates; web and digital accessibility, accessible facilitation; and much more.

Additionally, the [Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Update 2021-2022](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/part/2021-2022/) was released in Pressbook format.

## December 3rd: International Day of Persons with Disabilities Programming 2022

The AccessMac Program (EIO) in collaboration with university partners to deliver nine events over the course of 2 weeks to commemorate and celebrate December 3rd: International Day or Persons with Disabilities 2022, including:

1. **Week One (1) of Events (November 29th to December 2nd):** 
   * Hosted two workshops on digital accessibility and social media accessibility;
   * Held an Employee Accessibility Network meeting celebrating and debriefing events, and
   * A panel discussion on assistive technologies (AT) & their impacts on those who use them, businesses, the university, & broader society.
2. **Week Two (2) of Events (December 5th to December 9th):** 
   * Hosted five workshops on digital accessibility, including using accessibility principles from McMaster’s FLEX Forward Accessible Education resource with the MacPherson Institute to create accessible teaching and learning content, activities and Avenue course shells.

These [events](https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/mcmaster-celebrates-international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities/#:~:text=McMaster%20celebrates%20International%20Day%20of%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities,-December%203%2C%202021&text=December%203rd%20is%20the%20International,in%20all%20spheres%20of%20society.) were well attended with 75 persons attending the workshops, and 22 persons attending the EAN meeting. These events were a moment for the McMaster community to reflect on the experiences of persons with disabilities, and to consider ways forward to create a more inclusive and accessible McMaster.

# Part VIII - Moving Forward

The coming year will focus heavily on both compliance and strategic planning based on the various data collection and consultation that took place in this reporting period. Anticipated highlights include finalizing and seeking approval for the McMaster Accessibility Policy, which will be followed by a widespread promotion and awareness campaign.

Additionally, McMaster will submit the 2023 AODA compliance report in December 2023. Strategizing ways to ensure compliance and implementation of the AODA across the University will be central to the coming year’s accessibility initiatives. A key thematic topic will be web and digital accessibility to ensure the University comes into full AODA web accessibility compliance by the end of 2024. Additionally, consideration will also be put on how McMaster can go above and beyond the basic AODA standards to realize fully accessible and disability inclusive campuses, research and academic spaces.

Furthermore, the future of accessibility at McMaster will continue to be shaped based on the forthcoming AODA Post-Secondary Education Standard legislation. This will include preparing across campus, while ensuring there is adequate resources and cross-campus coordination to meet the demands of these new standards.

We thank those that have worked tirelessly over the years to support disability inclusion. We continue to be committed to leading the University’s accessibility initiatives in 2023 and 2024, and are encouraged by the forward moving progress McMaster is making in creating a more inclusive and accessible University.

1. Example reference to impacts of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities: <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/disability_rights_during_the_pandemic_report_web_pdf_1.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)