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**McMaster Accessibility Advisory Council**

**September 2023 – August 2024 Accessibility Activity Report**

**MEMO**

**DATE:** October 21, 2024­­­­

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

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

 Dr. Susan Tighe, Provost and Vice President (Academic)

 Saher Fazilat, Vice-President (Operations and Finance)

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Please find enclosed, for your review, the fourteenth (14th) annual accessibility activity report from the [McMaster Accessibility Advisory Council](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/legislation/mcmaster-accessibility-council/) covering the period September 1, 2023 to August 31, 2024.

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.

Strengthening compliance and strategic activities, including submitting the 2023 AODA Compliance Report and launching the renewed McMaster Accessibility Policy, have highlighted the period. These activities have led to greater collaborations across campus for AODA implementation, established stronger guidance and governance, and identified continuous opportunities for improving accessibility and disability inclusion at McMaster.

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

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# Part 1: McMaster Accessibility Advisory Council Updates

Since September 2023, the [McMaster Accessibility Advisory Council (MAAC)](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/legislation/mcmaster-accessibility-council/) has undergone changes within its membership and leadership. In June 2024, Anne Pottier stepped down as Chair after chairing the MAAC for over a decade, welcoming new leadership through Dr. Barrington Walker, Vice-Provost of Equity and Inclusion, and Professor of History. Additionally, the MAAC welcomed 4 new members, Omar Ahmed, Associate Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer, Dr. Steve Hranilovic, Dean, Graduate Studies, Ehab Kamarah, Vice-President and Chief Facilities Officer, and Lenore Lukasik-Foss, Director Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office.

Throughout this reporting period, the MAAC has held four (4) virtual committee meetings (2023: September and November; 2024: March and April). The Committee has been actively overseeing a wide variety of programmatic and compliance-driven initiatives, which are outlined in the report below.

# Part 2: 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.

Across McMaster, there continues to be demand and need for support with institutional strategic planning, project management and analysis, broad educational development and programming, disability community development and facilitated access, and individual or unit-level consultations. AccessMac has strategically collaborated with campus partners this year to respond to this demand and identify proactive activities to address accessibility and disability inclusion concerns.

**Capacity and Resources:** In this period, with the continued leadership and support from Dr. Susan Tighe, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), AccessMac was able to thrive with the additional resources provided to the Equity & Inclusion Office including:

* + The leadership of Dr. Barrington Walker, Vice Provost, Equity & who took on the role of MAAC’s Chair in June 2024
	+ The ongoing guidance and support from Anne Pottier, former MAAC Chair, Director, Technology Support & Operations, University Library, which concluded in June 2024.
	+ The full-time position of AccessMac’s Project Coordinator was essential in reaching AccessMac’s training and engagement goals for the year. AccessMac is exceptionally grateful also to have this position renewed for another year.
	+ Through the funding of the [Accessibility in Teaching and Learning (ATL) Roadmap Project](https://provost.mcmaster.ca/teaching-learning/strategy/implementation-plan/) is funded by the [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) and sponsored by Vice-Provost, Teaching & Learning Dr. Kim Dej. (2023-2025), important space was created to conduct critical analysis of McMaster’s readiness to implement the forthcoming AODA Postsecondary Education Standards. AccessMac has been able to work closely with the Accessibility and AODA Consultant of the STEER/R Project, Kate Brown, to identify opportunities for early adoption of the forthcoming standards. For example, during the drafting of the Accessibility Policy, and in the updating and roll-out of mandatory AODA and Humans Rights training videos.

### Consultations

Throughout this period, the AccessMac Program provided over 276 consultations ranging from referrals, resource sharing, and document reviews to policy and guidance document reviews. Some of the themes identified across consultations include digital accessibility, the built environment, employment accommodations, parking accommodations, and accessibility during protests on campus.

Additionally, based on the 2023 AODA compliance reporting and internal data collection, AccessMac identified a few critical priority areas requiring in-depth consultation (long-term) and adjustments to bring the University further in line with the AODA. These in-depth consultations included:

* Advancing individualized emergency response processes in partnership with University Health and Safety, Employee Health and Well-being, and Faculty of Health Sciences, Safety Office. A streamlined approach and process have been developed to ensure persons requiring support in an emergency is documented, which is a requirement under the Employment Standard of the AODA, but also a critical life saving precautionary practice.
* Improving inclusive procurement processes in partnership with Strategic Procurement. This work is on-going, with initial areas for improvement identified, including tracking AODA service providers, and accessible purchasing patterns.
* Ensuring accessibility and disability inclusions are embedded within the renewed [McMaster institutional brand guidelines](https://brand.mcmaster.ca/) in partnership with Communications, Marketing & Public Affairs.
* Consultations on the new McMaster Facility Accessibility Design Standards, led by Facility Services and the Barrier Free Standards Committee.
* Website accessibility compliance with the goal to reach full web accessibility by December 2024 in partnership with University Technology Services.
* Assessments and roadmap for the forthcoming AODA Postsecondary Education Standards in partnership with the Office of the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning.
* Accessibility reviews and consults of spaces, including laboratories, and the community garden.
* Review of accessibility at McMaster’s convocation in partnership with the Office of the Registrar.

These in-depth consultations significantly add quality value and contribute to making McMaster’s structural processes and spaces more accessible and inclusive.

### Training and Engagement

**Training and Engagement Achievements:** With AccessMac’s full-time Project Coordinator in place, AccessMac was able to offer both synchronous and asynchronous trainings. This resulted in 3,244 participants attending in-person training workshops (e.g. Welcome Week, Accessibility 101), engagement events (17 in total), and attending committee and network meetings (38+ meetings); in total, 2,200 participants attended more than the previous year. Additionally, through asynchronous delivery, 6,064 individuals were trained (488 more than the previous year), this includes 3,915 individuals who completed the mandatory AODA and Human Rights Code training. Please refer to Appendix A for further information on training and engagement numbers. The following are the top training topics covered during this period:

1. AODA and Human Rights Code
2. Digital and Web Accessibility
3. Tailored training – Accessibility and Disability Inclusion 101
4. Accessible Education / Accessibility in Teaching and Learning
5. Accessible Sessions - Fostering a Community of Belonging

**New and Updated Training Content:** To ensure AccessMac’s accessibility and disability inclusion trainings remain current, a full review was done of all asynchronous and synchronous training materials which AccessMac administers. Most notable is updating the AODA and Human Rights Code training, all Welcome Week and Community Advisor training materials, and creating new tailored training content for Faculties who request a training workshop. Updates include content related to the renewed Accessibility Policy, updated information on best practices and legislation, and a deeper focus on intersectionality. Additionally, AccessMac has partnered with Human Resources to shift the course “Creating Disability Inclusive Work Culture through Accommodations and Accessibility Approaches” to an online format, which will strengthen the course’s contribution to the Inclusive Excellence Leadership Program.

# Part 3: Accessibility Policy Review and Redevelopment

## Executive **Summary**

**Updating McMaster’s Accessibility Policy:** During this period, to stay current with the AODA’s Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR), as required by the AODA, the [McMaster University Accessibility Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/accessibility-policy/) was formally reviewed and approved by the Senate and Board of Governors by June 2024. This Policy is the first to be available online through the Secretariat’s website in a more accessible HTML format.

The review and revision process was overseen by a committee of individuals, including the Equity and Inclusion Office’s Accessibility Program Manager, the Senior Director of Human Rights & Accessibility, and the Chair of the McMaster Accessibility Advisory Council (MAAC).

The redrafting process included an extensive consultative component with the University’s community, including but not limited to the McMaster Accessibility Advisory Council (MAAC), responsible central units (University Libraries, Facilities, Strategic Procurement, Parking, Human Resources, Student Accessibility Services, and the Equity and Inclusion Office), University-wide staff/ faculty/ student consultations, employee groups, Employee Accessibility Network, Black, Indigenous and Racialized Staff Employee Resource Group, the Human Rights and Dispute Resolution Program, the Senior Advisor for Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism in Student Affairs, Office of the Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning, Joint Indigenous-Administrative Consultation Group, and the President/Vice-Presidents, Joint Committee and Provost Council. Their rigorous input and feedback have resulted in a more robust, comprehensive, and inclusive Accessibility Policy.

From this extensive review and consultation process, a revitalized and significantly improved McMaster Accessibility Policy (2024) was developed. The Policy now has embedded all five (5) of the AODA’s IASR (customer service; information and communication; employment; transportation; and design of public spaces), unlike the previous 2010 version, which only included the AODA’s customer service standards in detail. For example, a dedicated section related to the AODA responsibilities of individual supervisors and Human Resources centrally is included in response to the employment standard. Another example is that in response to the information and communication standard, a specific section was included outlining the University’s responsibility to have all websites and web content conform with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0).

Also, the Policy offers a roadmap for how legislation can be operationalized within the University, strategically depicting its centralized and distributed responsibilities. This has been achieved by naming central units and individual roles at the University tasked with upholding the Policy and having a dedicated AODA compliance responsibility. Concrete resources and links to leading practices have been included throughout to support the policy's implementation and operationalization.

It is important to note that the Policy was drafted using a critical disability justice lens, shifting its approach, definitions, and language towards a more progressive framework that is more collective, socio-cultural, and human rights-based. The Policy also weaves in important perspectives, including intersectionality and anti-ableism.

For clarity, the Policy is not an accommodation policy; rather, it is designed to complement existing accommodation policies at the University (for example, the Policy on Workplace Accommodations, 2015, and the Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities Policy, 2020) by going beyond individual accommodations to focus on systemic accessibility and inclusion. Furthermore, the Policy aims to align with the *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*, and the University’s *Discrimination and Harassment Policy (2022),* offering a more compliance-driven approach to accessibility and disability inclusion at McMaster.

## Next Steps

In late 2024 and early 2025, the updated Accessibility Policy will be rolled out to the McMaster community. A training video is currently being finalized which will be incorporated into McMaster’s mandatory AODA training course. Additionally, to provide accountability with key consulted groups, webinar information sessions will be held with all groups that provided feedback and comments during the Policy’s re-drafting.

# Part 4: 2023 AODA Compliance Reporting

## 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. All major departments from across the University responded to the survey, providing status updates on implementing and compliance with current AODA regulations.

The data analysis from the environmental scan resulted in the following major actions:

1. The University responded “Yes” to all relevant AODA compliance report questions, except for the question related to website accessibility under Section 14 of Information and Communication Standard. A formal workplan and agreement was made with the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility to achieve website accessibility by December 2024.
2. The data collected and analyzed from the Environmental Scan helped to identify additional minor gaps in accessibility and areas needing small improvements, which resulted in rigorous follow-up with relevant University partners and departments to come into compliance, along with the creation of new resources ([available on the resource page of the Accessibility Hub).](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/digital-accessibility/)
3. Analysis also identified areas of change, progress and improvement since the 2021 bench-mark survey, including central processes established, distributed take up across units, and accessibility policies and practices developed.
4. While the University is compliant with the AODA’s emergency response planning and information requirements under the Employment Standard, Human Resources and the Equity and Inclusion Office identified an opportunity to improve the University’s [Individualized Emergency Response Procedures](https://hr.mcmaster.ca/employees/health_safety_well-being/our-safety/), which was completed in 2024.
5. Renewed awareness, communication, cross-institutional confidence for understanding and implementing the AODA requirements at McMaster.

All data from this Environmental Scan informed the completion of the 2023 AODA Accessibility Compliance Report, which was submitted to the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility on December 15, 2023. The completion of the report was possible through the collaboration of the MAAC Chair, the Office of the Vice-President of Operations and Finance, and the Equity and Inclusion Office.

## Next Steps

In the coming period, work will continue to address areas needing additional compliance improvements. By December 31, 2024, the University’s institutional websites will be fully compliant. In the winter and spring of 2025, a new Environmental Scan will be launched in preparation for completing the 2025 AODA compliance report.

# Part 5: Web Accessibility

## Executive **Summary**

**Web accessibility compliance:** The University continues to work towards web accessibility in line with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) by implementing the McMaster Web Accessibility Compliance Workplan 2023-2024. Progress in this area includes establishing governance around web accessibility (including an Advisory Group, and Steering Committee, of which Dr. Barrington Walker, Chair of MAAC, is a member), new support resources for administrators, mass communication with the community, and holding 52 consultations and training sessions with website administrators. An initial deadline to reach web accessibility compliance was set for December 31, 2023. It was anticipated that this first 2023 deadline would not be achieved due to the complex nature of our large institution, which is also highly decentralized. McMaster reported non-compliance on the AODA Section 14 website and web content accessibility within its 2023 AODA Accessibility Compliance Report to the Ministry. Following a dialogue with the Ministry first in March 2023, and a follow-up meeting in November 2023, an agreement was reached for McMaster to have an extension to reach web accessibility compliance by December 31, 2024. McMaster’s institutional websites are being prioritized for website accessibility.

The Equity and Inclusion Office and University Technology Services are working closely with other relevant campus partners to ensure the University meets its web accessibility obligations under the AODA by the end of 2024.

## Next Steps

McMaster will work the rest of 2024 to come into Web Accessibility AODA compliance by December 31, 2024, which will be guided by the Ministry-approved Web Accessibility Compliance Workplan and the previous [Web Accessibility Roadmap](https://mcmasteru365.sharepoint.com/sites/McMasterAffiliteAODACompliance/SitePages/Web-Accessibility-Hub%281%29.aspx). Key deliverables have been identified to ensure clear communication and accountability. Some of the remaining deliverables to be achieved include a PDF document remediation campaign, the creation of an advanced website inventory system, and continued training and consultations.

# Part 6: Accessibility in Teaching and Learning Roadmap Project

## Executive **Summary**

[The Accessibility in Teaching and Learning (ATL) Roadmap Project](https://provost.mcmaster.ca/teaching-learning/strategy/implementation-plan/) is funded by the [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) and sponsored by Vice-Provost, Teaching & Learning Dr. Kim Dej. Spanning from March 2023 to August 2025, this project seeks to better understand McMaster’s current infrastructure for accessibility and its preparedness to adopt the forthcoming [AODA Postsecondary Education (PSE) Standards](https://www.ontario.ca/page/development-proposed-postsecondary-education-standards-final-recommendations-report-2022). The data collected will be used to develop a 5-year roadmap for early adoption of the AODA PSE standards at McMaster. Project activities also provide space to analyze and define academic accessibility and envision a more supportive learning environment for diverse current and future McMaster community members with disabilities.

### Engaging Stakeholders and Collecting Data

**Key Informant Interviews with Staff and Senior Leaders (September 2023 – July 2024):** 45 interviews with 55 participants from all faculties and 10 central units have provided key context for the status of support for accessibility in teaching and learning across campus. Presently, these interviews are being analyzed to identify gaps in supports and areas for increased efficiency. This data aims to provide evidence for all forthcoming recommendations.

**Journey and Process Mapping Sessions (December 2023 – July 2024):** Over 130 staff and educators participated in journey mapping sessions led by the ATL project team, in partnership with SAS/SSC and MI, outlining how they interact with accommodations and accessibility processes. Two open sessions, faculty-specific sessions in Health Sciences, Engineering, and Humanities, and three effort/impact sessions led by expert consultant Anil Gupta have been summarized into metanarratives to be shared back to stakeholders.

### Cultivating Community and Accessibility Culture

[**Student and Alumni Accessibility Council**](https://provost.mcmaster.ca/teaching-learning/strategy/implementation-plan/accessibility-consultants/staac-terms-of-reference-draft/) **(STAAC) (October 2023 – present):** To inform ATL Roadmap project work, a council of 20 students and alumni representing all faculties, all levels of undergraduate and graduate studies, and both full- and part-time enrollment was created. 49 applications were received in Year 1. This initiative was supported by the Student Success Center’s CAPS program and participants received a small stipend.

[**Accessible Education Fellows (AEF) Program**](https://provost.mcmaster.ca/teaching-learning/strategy/implementation-plan/call-for-accessible-education-fellows/) **(August 2023 – present):** The AEF program seeks to build a community of accessibility-informed educators interested in collaborating to develop research projects which implement promising accessibility practices, analyze their efficacy, and create new knowledge for dissemination to peers. In Year 1 of the program, 26 individuals from all faculties and 5 central units applied, and 20 completed the program. Feedback from participants in the STAAC and AEF has been largely positive, and demonstrates activities’ effectiveness at cultivating a culture of accessibility and disability inclusion in our teaching and learning community.

[**McMaster’s inaugural Accessible Education Journal**](https://provost.mcmaster.ca/teaching-learning/strategy/implementation-plan/accessibility-consultants/call-for-submissions-to-a-new-mcmaster-journal-on-accessible-education/) **(AEJ) (January 2024 – present):** The AEJ builds the capacity of McMaster students, staff, and faculty to engage with disabled people’s knowledge, disability studies theories, principles of accessible education, including universal design, anti-ableism, and disability justice. 26 proposals were submitted in the first Call for Submissions, and peer reviews are underway.

**Events during Teaching & Learning Month and National AccessAbility month:** Two events, “Critical Conversations in Accessibility in Teaching and Learning” (May 2024 - STEER/R Project Team) and “Why Disclosure Doesn’t Work,” (June 2024 - project team, PACBIC DIMAND, External Exppert Accessibility Researcher Mahadeo Sukhai) brought together over 150 participants from McMaster and other institutions to discuss challenges in university accommodations processes and methods to streamline inclusion of students with disabilities.

**Increasing Support for Accessible Education:** The project team secured a $60,000 grant from eCampus Ontario, which supported the creation of four resources for assistive technology lifecycling. It also enabled purchases of new assistive technology in Library Accessibility Services and Student Accessibility Services.

## Next Steps:

Over the coming academic year, the project team and key stakeholders will co-create a 5-year roadmap for early adoption of the AODA PSE Recommendations. Iterative feedback and consensus-building will be key priorities, supported by a second year of the STAAC and the publication of the inaugural edition of the Accessible Education Journal.

# Part 7: Campus Accessibility Action Plan Updates

## Executive **Summary**

**Campus Accessibility Action Plan (CAAP):** [CAAP](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/11/Campus-Accessibility-Plan-2018-2013-V5-20Apr2018.pdf) continued to be rolled out in the reporting period. The Campus Accessibility Action Plan funds for the 2023-24 financial year were mainly allocated for two items:

* The Campus Services Building (CSB) Accessibility Upgrades project
* The McMaster Barrier Free Design Standards (MacFADS) development

Campus Services Building Accessibility Upgrades project was in construction with substantial completion aimed for the end of October 2024. The total project is over $2M, with $1M from the Enabling Accessibility Fund grant. This project includes:

* Adding an elevator
* Creating an accessible entrance
* Barrier-free washrooms
* Barrier-free meeting room
* Ramp to make the ground floor accessible
* Adding additional barrier-free women’s washroom on the first floor

**McMaster Facility Accessibility Design Standards (MACFADS**): 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/), the consulting agency engaged in creating the Barrier Free Design Standards report. The MACFADS is very close to being finalized and adopted. It's currently at 99% draft, undergoing final consultations and a quality control process. The guidance document provides specific requirements and details on accessibility standards for the following:

* General design requirements
* Exterior and interior circulation
* Exterior and interior spaces
* Washrooms and sanitary facilities, and
* Student residences

Once completed, this will be an important guidance document for implementing accessibility within the university’s facilities across campus, setting new standards that work towards disability inclusion.

## Next Steps

McMaster’s Facilities Accessibility Design Standards will be finalized in the coming period, including an accompanying policy. Once completed the new standards will be launched and communicated to the community through communication updates, website content, information sessions and trainings.

# Part 8: McMaster Accessibility Community Updates

## Executive **Summary**

The following section of this report will highlight key accessibility cultural and community development-related activities across the institution that have taken place between September 2023 and August 2024.

### McMaster’s Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Committees

**McMaster’s Employee Accessibility Network:** Establishedin 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 135 list serve members and growing, the EAN continues offering a lens of lived experience to institutional work that may disproportionately impact employees with disabilities in the absence of consultation.

During this reporting period, six (6) EAN meetings were held. The following topics were discussed during these meetings:

* Peer Support, including various challenges experienced by employees with disabilities
* Celebrating December 3rd – International Day of Persons with Disabilities
* Accessibility Policy
* Consultation with University Health and Safety on the updated Individualized Emergency Response Plan Process
* Consultation and Information session with McMaster’s Barrier Free Standards Committee on the new McMaster Facilities Accessibility Design Standards
* Consultation on the new McMaster community garden
* Group Work planning for the coming year

**Other Committees and Groups:** During this period, accessibility-related committees and groups on campus remained active, including over 40+ meetings of the following groups:

* + McMaster Community of Practice
	+ Web Accessibility Advisory, and Steering Committee
	+ Disability, Inclusion, Madness, Accessibility, NeuroDiversity (DIMAND)
	+ McMaster Accessibility Advisory Council (MAAC)
	+ Employee Accessibility Network (EAN)

Strong partnerships and connections remain with student-based groups on campus, including Maccess, McMaster’s Student Union group, and the Faculty of Engineering’s Engineers with Disabilities group. Additionally, McMaster staff remain connected to many different external community groups, such as, allyHamilton, the Hamilton Disability Employment Network, and the Ontario Network of Accessibility Practitioners (ONAP). Accessibility cannot be done in isolation, and ensuring all of these networks and committees remain active is an essential component of continuously progressing accessibility and disability inclusion on campus.

### Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Update 2023-2024

The [2022 - 2023 Annual Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Update](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/part/2022-2023-accessibility-and-disability-inclusion-update/) is now in its 6th 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.

Containing 56 submissions from across faculties, administrative units and student communities, the 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/part/2022-2023-accessibility-and-disability-inclusion-update/)
2. [Accessibility and Disability Inclusion in Institutional Support and Technology- Enabled Learning](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/accessibility-and-disability-inclusion-in-instructional-support-and-technology-enabled-learning-2/)
3. [Accessibility Policies, Plans, and Committees](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/accessibility-policies-plans-and-committees/)
4. [Community Building and Engagement at McMaster](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/community-building-and-engagement-at-mcmaster-3/)
5. [Community Building and Engagement Beyond McMaster](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/community-building-and-engagement-beyond-mcmaster/)
6. [Digital and / or Web Accessibility Initiatives](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/digital-and-or-web-accessibility-initiatives/)
7. [Employment Accessibility](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/employment-accessibility/)
8. [Spaces and Environments](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/spaces-and-environments/)
9. [Student Initiatives and Advocacy](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/student-initiatives-and-advocacy/)
10. [Student Support and Service Delivery Upgrades](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/chapter/student-support-and-service-delivery-upgrades/)

### National Accessibility Week

To recognize National Accessibility Week, AccessMac developed a statement to mark the occasion which was published through the [Daily News](https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/national-accessibility-week-2024/). Additionally, the annual publication of the [Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Update, 2022-2023](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/accessibilityupdate/) was launched.

### December 3rd: International Day of Persons with Disabilities Programming 2023

To celebrate this milestone day, AccessMac Program (EIO) hosted five (5) community events, in addition to supporting and promoting other engagement activities held by our community partners. AccessMac’s events include:

1. Navigating Accessibility Services Post-Pandemic at McMaster
2. Disability Discussion: Celebrating Disability Pride
3. McMaster Museum of Art’s Accessibility Guided Tour and Art Workshop
4. Digital Accessibility in 2023, and
5. Employee Accessibility Network Meeting.

In total, 45 participants joined these events, which is in addition to reaching many more individuals through the publication in the [Daily News article](https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/three-weeks-of-programming-mark-international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities-at-mcmaster/#:~:text=Skip%20to%20content-,Three%20weeks%20of%20programming%20mark%20International%20Day%20of%20Persons%20with,advocate%20for%20accessibility%20and%20equity.) marking the occasion.

# Part 9: Moving Forward

The focus for the coming year will centre around compliance-based activities and strategic planning. Some of the highlights for the 2024-2025 year include:

* + **Website Accessibility:** Achieving website accessibility compliance for the University’s institutional websites and reporting accordingly to the government before the December 31, 2024, compliance deadline, which is mandated by the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility.
	+ **2025 Compliance Reporting:** Launching the 2025 AODA compliance Environmental Scan across the University to capture data that will inform the December 2025 AODA compliance report, which will be submitted to the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility.
	+ **Accessibility Plan:** Preparing a new Accessibility Plan as a succession to the 2012- 2015 Accessibility Plan.
	+ **Accessibility Policy Dissemination:** Roll-out of the newly approved Accessibility Policy, including information webinars and training. Also, an operational guidance document for the Accessibility Policy will be started.
	+ **Completion of the Accessibility in Teaching and Learning Roadmap Project:** By the end of the project, a blueprint for implementing the anticipated 2025 [AODA Postsecondary Education (PSE) Standards](https://www.ontario.ca/page/development-proposed-postsecondary-education-standards-final-recommendations-report-2022) for McMaster will be produced. Strategic planning for implementing these new standards will be an important focus in 2025.
	+ **MacFADS:** Launch of the McMaster Facility Accessibility Design Standards to the community.
	+ **Compliance and Consultations:** Continued consultations and reviews within priority areas across the University requiring specific accessibility and disability inclusion improvements.
	+ **Training:** Mandatory, tailored, and on-demand training related to disability inclusion and accessibility across the University’s faculties and central units.
	+ **Collaboration and Engagement:** Continued collaboration and engagement through McMaster’s diverse accessibility committees and networks.

We thank those who have worked tirelessly over the years to support disability inclusion. We continue to be committed to leading the University’s accessibility initiatives in 2024 and 2025 and are encouraged by the progress McMaster is making in creating a more inclusive and accessible University.

# Appendix A: AccessMac Training and Engagement Data

The following is a list of types of training and engagement activities and the total number of participants involved.

1. **Synchronous (In-person) Trainings, Workshops, and Committee Meetings**

In-Person Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Training and Education Sessions: **949**

Accessibility Committee and Network Meetings (38 in total): **554**

Welcome Week Training (August 2024): **1,111**

Community Advisory Training (August 2024): **142**

Community Engagement Events and other Workshops (17 in total): **488**

***Total Persons Trained and Engaged Synchronously****:* ***3244***

1. **Asynchronous (Online, Self-Paced) Training**

AODA and Human Rights: **Total is 3915 (1764 employees completed, and 2151 students completed)**

Flex Forward Training: **Total is 194 (92 employees completed, and 102 students completed)**

TA Training - Accessibility and Disability Inclusion: **402**

Welcome Week and CA Online Training Component: **1,253**

MSU Executives and Volunteer Training: **300**

***Total Persons Trained and Engaged Asynchronously****:* ***6064***