



**DATE:** October 3, 2014

**SUBJECT:** McMaster Accessibility Council - Fifth Annual Report

**TO:** Patrick Deane, President  
David Wilkinson, Provost and Vice President (Academic)  
Roger Couldrey, Vice-President (Administration)

**FROM:** Anne Pottier, Associate University Librarian, Library Services and  
Chair of McMaster Accessibility Council (MAC)

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Please find enclosed, for your review, the fifth annual report from the McMaster Accessibility Council (MAC).

The Council is required to submit an annual report to the President through the Provost & Vice-President (Academic) and the Vice-President (Administration). This report summarizes the activities of the Council in its fifth year of operation.

Any questions or concerns regarding the enclosed report may be directed to me.

## Executive Summary

This Fifth Annual Report of the McMaster Accessibility Council (MAC) highlights the achievements of MAC to date and sets a course for continued accessibility accomplishments in the year ahead.

This past year, Patty Solomon, the McMaster Accessibility Council Chair, stepped down and Anne Pottier from the University Library has been appointed its new Chair.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) under the *Act* came into force on July 1, 2011. McMaster was able to meet the initial compliance date of January 2012 for certain specified initiatives. The IASR mandates a number of specific training programs be provided to McMaster employees. Over the past year we saw the continuation of the training required under the Customer Service Standard of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). Additionally, members of the Council have been assessing a number of options for a comprehensive training program for the McMaster community. As of August 2014, approximately 21,134 members of the McMaster community, including faculty, staff, students employed by the University, and external contractors, have completed the mandatory training.

The IASR also addresses accessibility in the context of Employment, Information & Communications, Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces. The rolling compliance dates attached to the various elements of this standard provided MAC with an opportunity to strategize for the effective implementation of the compliance requirements. The AODA standards have allowed the University, through MAC's leadership, to demonstrate its commitment to accessibility and promote McMaster as a truly inclusive and diverse community.

For detailed information of our achievements over the last five years please see the previous MAC Annual Reports, which can be found at

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/accessibility>

## 1. Introduction & Background

- 1.1 Disability awareness and accessibility continue to be important priorities at McMaster University. This priority commitment is underpinned by McMaster’s strategic development plan, which identifies the goal of “building an inclusive community with a shared purpose” as one of its strategic priorities. Furthermore, accessibility initiatives at both theoretical and practical levels throughout the University will support and enhance the identified areas of Student Experience, Community Engagement and Research, as articulated in President Patrick Deane’s “Forward With Integrity” guidance document.
- 1.2 In 2001, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (ODA) was enacted and the University responded by forming the McMaster University Committee for Disability Access (MUCDA). This Committee was established to better understand disability and accommodation issues at the University and to comply with the legislation through the development of an annual Accessibility Plan.
- 1.3 In 2005, the provincial government enacted the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (AODA). The goal of this Act is to make Ontario fully accessible to persons with disabilities by 2025. Businesses and organizations that provide goods and services to people in Ontario are required to meet standards in five important areas:
- Customer service (compliance in January 2010)
  - Information and communication
  - Employment
  - Transportation
  - Built environment

## 2. **About the McMaster Accessibility Council (MAC)**

- 2.1 When the AODA was enacted, members of MUCDA recognized that as an advisory committee they would not be able to sufficiently ensure University-wide compliance with the new legislation. Consequently, MUCDA was disbanded and the McMaster Accessibility Council (MAC) was formed in the summer of 2009. The intention of MAC was to serve as a longstanding Council, with the goal of leading the University through each of the five AODA standards to achieve compliance by 2025. The Council is comprised of senior members of the University Administration, including Assistant Vice-Presidents and senior directors from a cross section of the University. (Refer to Appendix A for the MAC Terms of Reference, including a full member listing)
- 2.2 The MAC Terms of Reference state that the purpose of the Council is to provide “a mechanism for planning, reviewing and evaluating the implementation of the AODA Accessibility Standards within the University” and that the Council shall report to the President via the Provost in the form of an annual report.
- 2.3 The Council serves as the governing body for accessibility issues on campus, and works in collaboration with several departments and advisory groups supporting accessibility initiatives; including the President’s Advisory Council on Building an Inclusive Community (PACBIC) and its working groups. The advisory function of MUCDA was assumed by PACBIC’s Access & Accommodation working group. (Refer to *Appendix B* for the Access & Accommodation Working Group Terms of Reference.)
- 2.4 Since its inception in 2009, MAC has worked towards the implementation of AODA legislative and regulatory requirements. Initial accomplishments have included the development of a University accessibility policy and implementation of the AODA Customer Service Standard. The Council worked
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in cooperation with external and internal partners, including the Council of Ontario Universities, University Technology Services (UTS), the Office of Human Rights & Equity Services, Human Resources Services and Student Accessibility Services (formerly the Centre for Student Development).

### **3. Appointment of New MAC Chair**

3.1 The McMaster Accessibility Council experienced a number of changes to its membership. Patty Solomon, Associate Dean & Director of Rehabilitation Sciences, stepped down as MAC Chair in February 2014. MAC would like to thank Patty for her service and work towards an accessible McMaster campus and our efforts towards compliance with the AODA.

3.2 Anne Pottier, Associate University Librarian, Library Services was appointed Chair of MAC as of June 2014. Anne comes with a breadth of knowledge and commitment to accessibility issues on campus as well as institutional knowledge. MAC would like to welcome Anne in her new role and looks forward to working with her in the coming years. To view the list of members of MAC, please refer to our Terms of Reference, (Appendix A).

### **4. McMaster Accessibility Policy and Website**

4.1 In 2010 McMaster University established a University Accessibility Policy as mandated by the AODA Customer Service Standards. The Accessibility policy confirms McMaster's commitment to creating a fully accessible environment and establishes protocols and guidelines on the use of service animals, support persons, notices of service disruptions as well as the use of assistive devices etc. To review the University Policy on Accessibility please see Appendix C of this report.

4.2 In 2012 McMaster University received a Notice of File Review from the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) (at the time, a department of the

Ministry of Community and Social Services). The Notice required McMaster to demonstrate how it had been complying with the AODA legislation. MAC's Chair, on behalf of the University, submitted the University's Response to the Notice of File Review to the ADO on November 9th, 2012. The Directorate was satisfied with the University's submission but indicated that there was scope for improvement and made the following recommendations, that:

1. McMaster amend its accessibility policy to specifically identify who is to be trained, the content of the training and when training is to be provided as required by the Customer Service Standard, Ontario Regulation 429/07.
  2. McMaster add a reference regarding the availability of information/documentation in accessible formats on its website similar to the message posted on the Emergency Guidebook site.
- 4.3 The amendment suggested in point 1 has been drafted and will be considered for approval by MAC during its first meeting of the 2014/2015 year. As of the writing of this report, the MAC website ([mcmaster.ca/accessibility](http://mcmaster.ca/accessibility)) has been updated to reflect this information and content on the website is available in alternate/accessible formats upon request, as recommended in point 2.
- 4.4 The University continues to identify and promote best practices for providing notice of service disruptions across campus. Departments such as Facility Services have incorporated social media tools, such as Twitter, as one mechanism to inform the McMaster campus of service disruptions. The University Library posts Service Disruption Notices related to their buildings and services, in addition to tweeting about major disruptions. Campus users are encouraged to subscribe to the feed associated with these notices. Ongoing training of notice of disruption policies and effective mechanism of communicating the notice on a regular basis is recommended for all managers and supervisors on campus who provide services to the general McMaster community.

- 4.5 An official McMaster University accessibility website, dedicated entirely to accessibility issues on campus, was first launched in late 2009 to provide the campus community and members of the public with information about the AODA. This site (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/accessibility/>) serves as the central access portal for the online Customer Service training as well as the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and the MAC Annual Reports.
- 4.6 The accessibility website was transformed into a “one-stop-shop” for all information on services and resources relating to accessibility by the Community of Practice (CoP) on accessibility at McMaster. This group is a community of individuals committed to advancing accessibility and effecting change in order to create accessible environments for learning, working and being.
- 4.7 The overall objective of the centralized website is to harmonize the numerous initiatives, resources and programs on accessibility at McMaster.
- 4.8 The website is a model of both accessible content and form. Integrating website accessibility standards into the site provides a working, live example of the features and functionality of what a fully accessible website should look like. The website meets the objectives of the legislative requirements under the Information & Communications part of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.
- 4.9 The Accessibility website was launched during McMaster’s first annual commemoration of the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013. It has also been showcased at the McMaster Accessibility Symposium (January 2014) The Community of Practice is currently working with the Office of Public Relations to develop a communications plan to promote all that the website has to offer as well as to increase the profile of accessibility on campus more generally. The CoP will utilize the feedback

function of the website as well as web analytics to evaluate the effectiveness and usability of the site.

## **5. Implementation of Customer Service Standard and Components of the Integrated Accessibility Standards**

- 5.1 MAC has overseen the implementation of the Customer Service Standard and components of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) at McMaster University. The IASR, which addresses the areas of information and communication, employment, transportation and the design of public space became law on July 1, 2011. The various provisions of the IASR have rolling compliance dates. The accessibility website ([mcmaster.ca/accessibility](http://mcmaster.ca/accessibility)) outlines the requirements under the Customer Service standard and the IASR, provides general accessibility information, and serves as a portal to the online Customer Service Standard Training.
- 5.2 On February 8, 2010, the University implemented mandatory AODA training on the Customer Service Standard through an online training module developed by the Council of Ontario Universities. The AODA requires employers to track employee participation in the training in order to demonstrate compliance. As of August 2014, over 21,134 employees, volunteers, graduate students employed by the University and other members who serve the public on behalf of the University have been trained on the basic principles of accessible customer service.
- 5.3 Other types of accessibility training are prescribed by the IASR, such as training on the IASR standards in general and how it relates to employees' work responsibilities, the Human Rights Code and the AODA, as well as disability awareness for educators etc. These training programs are a key component to ensuring that McMaster facilitates an accessible campus. Members of the McMaster Accessibility Council are reviewing ways of delivering a comprehensive training program. This program will incorporate

existing resources made available by the Council of Ontario Universities as well as partnering with other Ontario universities and McMaster community members to develop wide reaching accessibility training.

- 5.4 In terms of the training and tracking of the IASR, MAC will consider how it will provide its various training programs to meet the diverse needs of its employees. One consideration may be to have an array of training options and resources available online and in-person for employees to choose from that may be relevant to their specific job responsibilities. This will allow managers and employees to work together to determine which training are most appreciate to them and their job responsibilities.
- 5.5 An important consideration is the issue of training fatigue. The issue of accessibility is wide-reaching and relevant to all levels of the university and thus, it is recommended that significant attention be given to modes of delivery, content and time constraints.
- 5.6 The IASR calls for universities and colleges to provide training to its instructors on accessible course delivery and instructional design. The Council of Ontario Universities, in partnership with York University, University of Toronto and Guelph University has developed the *Educators' Accessible Resource Kit*. (<http://cou.on.ca/policy-advocacy/accessibility/educators--accessibility-resource-kit/educators--accessibility-resource-kit-backgrounder>) McMaster is currently in compliance with the established January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 deadline. However, MAC has proposed to the University's Provost that a 12 month contract position be created to develop training curriculum geared towards faculty members. This position would be housed with the McMaster Institute for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching & Learning (MIETL). Key to this position is increasing faculty buy-in and knowledge of disability and universal instructional design.

- 5.7 In terms of the accessible websites aspect of the Information and Communication Standards of the IASR, McMaster University is a decentralized institution, with numerous websites and webpages under its umbrella. This poses a challenge when trying to ensure that all of the University's webpages and content are compliant with the WCAG 2.0 standard as outlined in the Standards. MAC has proposed in a submission to the University's Provost that it fund a 12 month Web Accessibility Consultant contract position to determine the current assets and needs of the university's web developers and web content creators in order to construct a training program and act as a resource in this time of change. MAC has also requested funds for a web auditing tool available to all employees of McMaster to support this work.
- 5.8 In terms of the Employment Standards of the IASR, Human Resources Services has taken the lead in ensuring that McMaster University's HR policies are in compliance with the standards. In accordance with the AODA IASR, Employment Standards, Human Resources has been in the process of reviewing McMaster's employment policies with an eye to the AODA standards. McMaster has been in compliance with much of the legislation since January, 2012. One notable activity of the 2013/2014 year is that as of January 1, 2014, Human Resources implemented the inclusion of a statement of accommodation to McMaster email signatures and have encouraged its use by staff and faculty. The Workplace Accommodation Policy is also currently under review and is slated to be submitted for approval by the Board of Governors by end of year 2014.
- 5.9 For more information on McMaster's compliance status with IASR Employment Standards please refer to our Multi-year Accessibility Plan located on our website: [mcmaster.ca/accessibility](http://mcmaster.ca/accessibility).
- 5.10 The IASR also mandates that all public sector institutions incorporate accessibility features in procuring goods, services or facilities as it states:

“s. 5(1) Public sector organizations shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so”.

“s. 5(2) If a designated public sector organization determines that it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring good, services or facilities, it shall provide, upon request, an explanation”.

- 5.11 McMaster University is in compliance with this component of the IASR. Specifically, Strategic Procurement Services has incorporated an accessibility statement to its procurement template of purchases of \$100,000 or greater, although accessibility considerations may also be extended to the procurement of goods, services and facilities under \$100,000 at a later date.

## **6. Additional MAC Activities**

- 6.1 Perhaps the largest success of the McMaster Accessibility Council has been the significant increase in awareness of accessibility throughout the campus. In its first five years of operation, MAC helped spread the importance of, and organizational commitment to, accessibility wherever possible. For instance, various campus partners have worked together to host Disability Awareness and Mental Health Awareness initiatives, as well as ensuring that all events that occur on campus take into account accessibility considerations. MAC continues to ensure that accessibility considerations are implemented throughout the McMaster community, from day-to-day operations, to the classroom and the community at large. The following are some of the ways we are doing this work:
- 6.2 In April of 2012, Facility Services engaged in an audit of the McMaster campus to assess its level of accessibility. The scope of the audit was limited to a review of the existing conditions of the campus entrances, interior corridors, public washrooms, fire alarm systems, elevating devices, and drinking fountains based on current Building Code requirements or best practices. The results of this audit have helped to guide Facility Services and MAC in

establishing priorities for deferred maintenance and capital funding investments in order to provide an accessible campus and comply with the AODA.

6.3 Subsequent to this work, Facility Services created the Barrier-Removal Action Plan (BRAP) – now called the Campus Accessibility Action Plan (CAAP), a multi-year plan to address barriers in the McMaster physical space. The CAAP is a five-year outlook that will be submitted directly to the VP Administration, rather than making an annual request as had been done in the past. In support of these initiatives MAC requested funds from the University’s budget committee towards the implementation of the Plan. The Budget Committee’s approval of \$334, 200 for accessibility-related capital projects will be allocated to accessibility priorities identified by MAC. Academic buildings have been prioritized by allocating \$334,000 each year over five years.

6.4 In the 2013/2014 year, Facility Services has completed or is slated to complete the following projects:

No	Description	Status or expected date of completion
1	Campus Store Renovations – Barrier Free Ramp (P157)	Sep 2014
2	DSB – Door operator buttons	Sept./14
3	Tandem Accelerator Door operators	Sept./14
4	GSB – Door operators	Sept./14
5	Gilmour Hall – Accessible Washrooms	Aug./14
6	University Hall – Potable water	July/14

7	Gilmour Hall – Potable water	July/14
8	IAHS – Barrier Free Washroom upgrades	Awaiting permit Expected completion Dec./14
9	Soft costs	Sept./14

6.5 Other capital projects to ensure McMaster campus is physically accessible are; University’s Libraries created two gender-neutral accessible washrooms on the lower level of Thode Library and Mills Library installed door operators on two washrooms, incorporated a quiet study area and a Graduate Study Room on the 4th floor.

6.6 McMaster University Libraries are a participant organization in the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) *Accessible Content E-Portal Pilot Project* (ACE). The ACE Pilot Project was a one-year collaborative endeavor involving a number of volunteer OCUL member libraries. There are two related components to the project:

1. The development of a secure, easy to use web application for the discovery and downloading of digital materials in accessible formats.
2. The development of the *Accessibility Information Toolkit for Libraries*, offering librarians and library administrators critical resources with respect to the procurement and distribution of accessible content.

This initiative moved from a pilot project into production as of September 2014.

6.7 A new project, AERO (*Alternative Education Resources Ontario*), has recently been created to supplement the texts in alternate format being provided through ACE for students with perceptual disabilities. AERO focuses on supplemental readings, not required textbooks, used for both classwork and research purposes. This project is run by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. More information on this pilot project can be

found at <http://www.accessiblecampus.ca/get-involved/aero/>.

6.8 Finally, ROAM, or *the Report on Accessible Media* is a research study on accessible media delivery at Ontario universities. Commissioned by the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL), the study will identify a range of service options available to Ontario's university libraries to ensure fair and equitable access to video collections held at university libraries across the province. The MAC Chair is acting as the Chair or the ROAM Steering Committee. The study's report is expected to be published by the end of 2014. The final report will include recommendations, best practices, suggested workflows and a directory of services associated with the production of accessible media. More information can be found at <http://www.ocul.on.ca/node/3132>.

## 7 **Upcoming Initiatives**

- 7.1 As the McMaster Accessibility Council enters its sixth year of operation, it will continue the implementation of the Customer Service, and Integrated Accessibility Standards of the AODA. Plans are also underway to review the University's information and communication protocols and assess the level of accessibility with a goal of making proactive change.
- 7.2 In order to meet the policy development requirements of the IASR, MAC will ensure that the existing *Accessibility Policy*, which was originally developed to address the Customer Service standard, is revised as necessary to meet the requirements of the IASR.
- 7.3 With multiple accessibility initiatives in need of compliance over the next year, MAC will continue to use the *Implementation Guidelines* as a work plan to set the course defining, refining and implementing accessibility initiatives to meet and exceed AODA compliance.
- 7.4 Apart from the accessibility initiatives prescribed by legislation, MAC will continue in its oversight function to determine priorities for accessibility-related capital projects.

## 8 **Conclusion**

- 8.1 In its fifth year of operation, the McMaster Accessibility Council continued to build on its success of the previous four years regarding the promotion of customer service training and on-time or early compliance with many of the components of the Employment and Information and Communication aspects of the IASR.

- 8.2 As MAC looks to further its commitment to enhancing accessibility across the University in the 2014-2015 academic year, it will continue to develop and employ proactive strategies to meet AODA compliance as well as to foster a spirit of accessibility that extends beyond legislative requirements. To this end, the budgeted accessibility audit will initiate the process for maintaining and expanding accessibility at McMaster. In addition, MAC will oversee a multi-stakeholder approach to implement training on accessibility awareness related to accessible program or course delivery and instruction.
- 8.3 Following the 2011 endorsement from MAC of a full-time Accessibility Specialist position housed in the Office of Human Rights & Equity Services (HRES), the Accessibility Program has been developed as a core function within HRES. The Accessibility Program is engaged in awareness-raising, training, the provision of resources, and the development of best practices to alleviate accessibility barriers across the University.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Accessibility Program, referred to as MACcessibility, was formally launched in the summer of 2012, and several outreach initiatives have been scheduled to introduce MACcessibility to the campus community.

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## **Appendix A - McMaster Accessibility Council Terms of Reference**



### **McMASTER UNIVERSITY McMASTER ACCESSIBILITY COUNCIL TERMS OF REFERENCE**

McMaster Accessibility Council and its Members are responsible for ensuring the University's adherence to AODA Accessibility Standards. The Council provides a mechanism for planning, reviewing and evaluating the implementation of the AODA Accessibility Standards within the University.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. To guide the development of plans for the implementation of the AODA Accessibility Standards at the University.
2. To receive plans and reports related to the implementation of AODA Accessibility Standards from the appropriate University personnel and committees.
3. To make recommendations to the University regarding policies and institutional changes required to ensure adherence to the AODA Accessibility Standards.
4. To monitor progress of AODA Accessibility Standards implementation across the University.
5. To oversee the filing of the required accessibility reports to the Ontario government regarding the University's compliance with AODA.

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Council will report to the President through the Provost & Vice-President (Academic) and the Vice-President (Administration). The Council will prepare an annual report of its activities. The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every five years.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership of the Council will be reviewed periodically to ensure that all areas of the University are appropriately represented. Membership on the Council is made up of senior officers of the University who are accountable for decisions made at the Council. From time to time, members of the Council may send a delegate if they are unable to attend a meeting.

## **Quorum**

Three senior officers (or designates who have been given authority) are required to vote on a motion to bind the University. In addition, where there is a vote binding another department, the Council member of that particular department must be present at the meeting.

The committee will be chaired by a member of McMaster's faculty staff, appointed for a three year by the President, upon the recommendation of the Provost & Vice-President (Academic) and the Vice-President (Administration).

## **Members**

Assistant Vice-President (Facilities)

Assistant Vice-President (Teaching & Learning)

Chief Human Resources Officer

- Director, HR Employee Services and Support (HR designate)

Chief Information Officer

- Manager, Client Services (UTS designate)

Director, Human Rights & Equity Services

Associate Vice-President (Academic)

Associate Vice-President (Students & Learning) and Dean of Students

## **Consultants**

Manager, Employee Health Services

Human Rights Officer, HRES

Accessibility Specialist, HRES  
Manager, Student Accessibility Services

## **MEETINGS**

A schedule of meetings will be developed based on an annual planning cycle of issues/topics for the agenda.

Approved March 29, 2012  
Revised April 21, 2014

## **Appendix B - Access & Accommodation Working Group Terms of Reference**

### **PACBIC Access & Accommodation Working Group Terms of Reference Revised January 2012**

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#### **A. Background and Context of Accessibility at McMaster**

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2001 S.O. 2001, c.32 (ODA) and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005 S.O. 2005, c.11 (AODA) promote the full participation of persons with disabilities in the province of Ontario. McMaster University is equally committed to this vision, taking active steps to respond to the needs of the University, local, provincial and national communities. In facilitation of its commitment, the University created the McMaster University Committee on Disability and Access (MUCDA) to assist the University in its mission, and to also promote full participation of persons with disabilities in the life of the campus community. In 2009 MUCDA was replaced by the Access & Accommodation Working Group of the President's Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community (PACBIC).

At an administrative level, issues of accessibility are considered by the McMaster Accessibility Council (MAC), which is responsible for ensuring that the University meets its compliance obligations under accessibility-related legislation.

At an operational level, the Accessibility Program located with the office of Human Rights & Equity Services, functions to address accessibility challenges through the implementation of initiatives and identification of resources to realize the University's commitment to accessibility.

At the collaborative campus community level, the Community of Practice (CoP) on Accessibility aims to share experiences and strategies with respect to the promotion of accessibility throughout the University.

The Access & Accommodation Working Group has a formal direct reporting relationship with PACBIC, and it seeks to cultivate and sustain informal collaborative and information-sharing relationships with other entities across the University that are committed to enhancing inclusion and diversity and the elimination barriers.

#### **B. Mandate**

Consistent with the mandate of PACBIC, to provide a forum for discussion, reflection and learning on issues of inclusion, the Access & Accommodation Working Group,

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strives to raise awareness, identify issues and propose strategies that enhance inclusion through the promotion of accessibility and accommodation of the various constituent members of the campus community.

The Access & Accommodation Working Group endeavours to identify and recommend to the University the prevention and removal of the various barriers that persons with disabilities encounter on the main campus and other McMaster sites as well as through programs, policies, practices, and services provided by the University.

Recognizing that issues of accessibility and disability may overlap with other human rights issues, the Access & Accommodation Working Group strives to take a broad-based holistic approach to considerations of accessibility. To facilitate this approach, the Working Group shall develop in consultation with stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, recommendations to continuously improve upon the conditions of access at the University. This shall be achieved in accordance with the standards outlined in the AODA.

### C. **Function**

- 1) Identify the barriers to inclusion for persons with disabilities in the University community;
- 2) Determine actions that will decrease barriers and increase inclusion and participation of students, staff and faculty with disabilities;
- 3) Report and make recommendations to PACBIC;
- 4) Assess progress and implementation of recommendations;
- 5) Establish and maintain lines of communication and collaboration between MAC, CoP and other accessibility-focused entities across campus.

### D. **Working Group**

The committee shall consist of a cross-section of members of the three main campus constituencies, namely, students, faculty, and staff as well as representatives from the various student, employee and faculty groups. Membership is open to individuals from any sector of the University. Whenever possible, term of office should be 3 years, recognizing that students and temporary employees may serve shorter periods of membership. Members may serve multiple three-year terms. Membership recruitment is conducted on an ongoing basis.

The working group shall include a Convener, a Resource (from the Human Rights & Equity Services Office), as well as a roster of Accessibility Consultants, who have direct responsibility for accessibility and disability-related issues at the University. The Committee structure and terms of office shall be reviewed annually to ensure full representation from persons with disabilities and University departments.

E. **Operations**

1. The Working Group will, normally, meet monthly between September and June each year;
2. The Working Group shall keep and circulate minutes to group members;
3. The Working Group will report to PACBIC at the PACBIC general meetings;
4. Quorum for meetings will be five individuals
5. Any formal decisions made by the Working Group shall be arrived at through consensus.

**Appendix C – University Policy on Accessibility**



**Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**

Complete Policy Title: <b>McMaster University Policy on Accessibility -</b>	Policy Number (if applicable):
Approved by: <b>Board of Governors</b>	Date of Most Recent Approval: <b>January 20<sup>th</sup> 2010</b>
Date of Original Approval: <b>March 4<sup>th</sup> 2010</b>	Supersedes/Amends Policy dated: -
Responsible Executive: <b>Human Rights &amp; Equity Services Services</b>	Enquiries: <b>Human Rights &amp; Equity</b>

***DISCLAIMER:*** *If there is a Discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held by the policy owner, the written copy prevails.*

**STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT:**

1. McMaster University is committed to accessibility as expressed in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (hereinafter referred to as the AODA), which places a legal obligation on organizations to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025.
2. McMaster University is committed to fostering, creating and maintaining a barrier-free environment for all individuals providing equal rights and opportunities, including:
  - a. promoting a respectful attitude for persons with disabilities;
  - b. promoting awareness of the needs and abilities of persons with disabilities;
  - c. informing the University community about the services available to persons with disabilities and seeking to ensure that such services are delivered in ways that promote equity; and
  - d. providing support services, subject to certain limitations.

3. McMaster University recognizes that barriers to participation exist and that adjustments to policies and practices of the University are required. This is accomplished through the prevention, identification and removal of barriers within the University systems, structures and policies. It is understood that where this Policy refers to “barriers” it is referring to barriers such as a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, and information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, or a policy or practice.

4. The commitments in this Policy are intended to ensure that accessibility remains a priority in McMaster University’s decision-making process and will serve to assist in ensuring that decisions are improving accessibility and not inadvertently creating barriers.

### **PURPOSE & SCOPE:**

5. This Policy provides a framework within which accessibility plans and initiatives are to be created in order to move the University towards the goal of building an inclusive community with a shared purpose. It is also the purpose of this Policy to endeavour to provide the foundation to create an environment that provides the widest feasible scope of access, which is the right or opportunity to reach, use or participate in the University’s systems, facilities and services.

6. This Policy applies to:

- McMaster University students,
- McMaster University employees,
- Applicants for employment with McMaster University, who may require employment accommodation through the recruitment, assessment, selection, and hiring process,
- Visitors and volunteers, and
- Contractors and subcontractors engaged by McMaster University.

### **PRINCIPLES:**

7. In order to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, the principles of approach are:

- Dignity - service is provided in a way that allows the individual to maintain self-respect and the respect of other persons.
- Independence - when a person is able to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.
- Integration - service is provided in a way that allows the individual to benefit from equivalent services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other individuals, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable the individual to access goods or services.

- Equal Opportunity - service is provided to individuals in such a way that they have an opportunity to access goods or services equal to that given to others.
- Reasonable Efforts – taking approaches that meet the required needs of the individual.

## **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

8. The University will work to improve accessibility by developing an Accessibility Plan that conforms to this Policy. The University will also establish targets and goals related to improved accessibility and initiatives to achieve those targets. The University will monitor and report regularly on the implementation of the Accessibility Plan and the progress of achievement of specific goals and objectives.

9. The University will identify and implement training and education requirements or opportunities to increase the awareness of accessibility and remove attitudinal barriers.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

10. All members of the University community are responsible for adhering to and following the commitments set out in this Policy. The Office of Human Rights & Equity Services is the administrative unit responsible for the administration of this policy.

11. The University will monitor and evaluate accessibility initiatives and changes to applicable legislation and/or regulations. Changes to policies, plans and initiatives will be incorporated as required. The University will also report on performance in relation to established accessibility goals and targets.

12. The Policy will be communicated to the University community and the University will make the Policy publicly available on its website.

## **GUIDELINES:**

13. McMaster University provides Guidelines on specific accessibility considerations with respect to the application of this Policy. This guide will be updated as required by Human Rights & Equity Services, in consultation with the McMaster Accessibility Council.

1. Use of Assistive Devices Guideline

Personal assistive devices are often used by persons with disabilities to help them with daily living. They are usually devices that people bring with them to the University and may consist of any auxiliary aids such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and/or medical aids.

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, people may use their own personal assistive devices while accessing goods and services at McMaster University, subject to certain limitations.

Assistive devices may include but are not limited to:

- Manual and motorized wheelchairs, scooters, canes, crutches, walkers,
- hearing aids and personal TTYs
- magnifiers,
- oxygen tanks,
- computers and adaptive technology.

### **Principles:**

McMaster University is committed to enhancing the accessibility of its education delivery, websites, telecommunications and other infrastructure. As part of this commitment, the University will ensure that persons with disabilities are permitted to use their own assistive devices to access goods and services of the University, subject to reasonable limitations.

### **Protocol:**

Upon request, McMaster University will be prepared to assist, or arrange for assistance, while individuals are using goods or services of the University, subject to reasonable limitations.

### **Availability of Assistive Devices:**

The University provides measures to assist persons with disabilities to benefit from the equivalent level of service, in the same place and in a similar way, as other individuals. Where an assistive device or support does not exist on campus, the University will make reasonable efforts to ensure that appropriate devices or supports are made available, subject to reasonable limitations.

## 2. Guidelines for Service Animals & Support Persons

### **Purpose:**

Service animals and support persons required to assist a person with a disability will be present and welcome at campus locations except where excluded by law.

### **Definitions:**

**Service Animal:** Any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability. If they meet this definition, animals are considered service animals. A service animal is not a pet.

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that the person with a disability cannot perform for themselves.

For example, guide dogs used by some individuals who are blind, alerting persons with hearing impairments to sounds, pulling wheelchairs or carrying and picking up things for persons with mobility impairments, assisting persons with mobility impairments with balance.

**Support Person:** Any person who provides assistance to a person with a disability.

### **Principles:**

McMaster shall not prohibit the use of a service animal by a person with a disability in the conduct of regular business or activities except where excluded by law, these include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Locations that would be deemed as a health and safety risk (e.g. operating rooms, nuclear reactor) and,
- Location where an education placement is performed and the owner/lessor of such locations has a policy or practice governing service animals or support persons contrary to McMaster's Policy.

### **Protocol:**

Within the parameters of the Principles noted above, the service animal or support person must be permitted to accompany the individual with a disability to all areas of the University where members of the public (as applicable) are normally allowed to go. An individual with a service animal may not be segregated from other individuals.

If goods, services or facilities are defined as off-limits to service animals or support

persons, the University will make every effort to provide alternate ways for persons with disabilities to access such goods, services and facilities.

To find out if a specific area is off-limits to service animals or support persons contact the designated department head.

The University will provide notice in advance about whether an admission fee will be charged for support persons, if applicable.

In order to respect employees or students whose health may be impacted by the presence of service animals at McMaster, these individuals may request reasonable accommodation suitable to their health needs.

### 3. Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Service

#### **Purpose:**

The University will provide notice to members of the public when there is a temporary disruption of facilities or services (planned or unexpected) that are usually used by persons with disabilities at the University.

#### **Scope:**

Service disruptions shall include information related to facilities (e.g. elevators, building ramps, accessible washrooms) or goods/services (e.g. events, lectures, amplification systems, TTY services).

Disruptions to all services, such as during a power outage or during a labour dispute, do not require this special notice. For information on large-scale business disruptions, please reference the University's Business Continuity Plan.

For information relating to University closure due to inclement weather please reference the University's Storm Policy.

#### **Protocol:**

Where a service disruption is unavoidable the University shall:

- Post a notice at the location, for example if an elevator disruption then a notice will be posted at the site on all floors,
- Provide advance notice, where possible, to all building occupants and/or affected participants using email distribution lists, website, internal electronic signage

All service disruption notices shall include:

- Name of the service/event impacted
- expected duration of disruption,
- any alternate means of accessing the facility or service,
- who to contact for assistance, and
- any other relevant information for accessing the facility or service

In such cases, the person may be offered the following as a means of accessing the facility, event or service, such as:

- the goods and service delivery agent may provide the goods or service directly to the person with a disability at an alternate place and time, as deemed appropriate; or
- any other assistive measures available and deemed appropriate to deliver goods and services.

Individuals can be added to building email distribution lists via the Department of Facility Services, <http://ppims.services.mcmaster.ca/pplant/alerts.html>

#### 4. Guideline for Providing Feedback & Complaints

##### **Purpose:**

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, McMaster University is required to establish a mechanism for receiving and responding to feedback from persons with disabilities about accessibility in relation to the way the University provides its services to them.

##### **Protocol:**

Complaints involving accessibility issues may follow the Anti-Discrimination Policy, which contains provisions for managing complaints alleging discrimination related to disability.

Where persons with disabilities have concerns or feedback regarding the services provided by the University they may bring such feedback forward to the following individuals/areas:

##### *Students:*

- Their Faculty office,
- Residence manager, if applicable or,
- Centre for Student Development, <http://csd.mcmaster.ca>

##### *Employees:*

- Their supervisor,
- Human Resources Services, [www.workingatmcmaster.ca](http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca) and/or union/employee association, if applicable

##### *For both students and employees:*

Human Rights & Equity Services  
McMaster University, 1280 Main St. W.  
MUSC Room 212  
Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4M4  
Phone: 905-525-9140, ext. 27581  
Email: [hres@mcmaster.ca](mailto:hres@mcmaster.ca)

Ombuds Office  
McMaster University, 1280 Main St. W.  
MUSC Room 210  
Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4M4  
Phone: 905-525-9140 ext. 24151  
Email: [ombuds@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ombuds@mcmaster.ca)

Any feedback provided by an individual must be addressed in a timely manner. All responses must be provided to the originator in a format, which meets their needs.

Other applicable legislation and McMaster University policies include:

- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario R.S.O. 1990,
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA),
- Personal Information Protection & Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA),
- Employment Accommodation Policy
- McMaster Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities
- McMaster University Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Employment Equity Statement
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- McMaster University Risk Management Manual, RMM#1002 Return to Work Program July 2009, and
- McMaster University Risk Management Manual, RMM#111 Contracting Work Safety Program / Due Diligence Program January 2009

