



Ontario
College of
Teachers

Ordre des enseignantes
et des enseignants
de l'Ontario

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

In Accordance with the Regulation 191/11,
Integrated Accessibility Standards



This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan renews the College's commitment to not only meeting the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) but also to becoming an organization that is accessible by design. It reviews past achievements, updates ongoing activities, and outlines future initiatives to enhance our accessibility efforts.

Table of contents

Message from the Registrar and CEO	1
Introduction	2
<i>The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act</i>	2
Regulation 191/11, <i>Integrated Accessibility Standards</i>	2
Multi-Year Accessibility Plan	2
Accessibility Reports	2
Our Commitment	3
Regulatory Requirements	3
Customer Services	3
Information and Communications	5
Employment	6
Design of Public Spaces	8
Accessibility beyond AODA	9
Questions about this Multi-year Accessibility Plan?	10

Message from the Registrar and CEO

At the Ontario College of Teachers, our approach to continuous accessibility improvement is deeply rooted in our broader commitment to values of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The College's mandate is to serve the public interest by regulating the teaching profession to protect students. We understand that accessible learning spaces are supportive learning spaces. While learning spaces are outside of our mandate and the scope of this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, embedding these values in everything we do demonstrates our ongoing commitment to inclusion and accessibility for all, fostering an environment where everyone can thrive.

As highlighted in this document, our work towards accessibility has been ongoing for more than a decade and is integrated into the College's Strategic Plan. Moving forward, the same commitment will continue to guide the College's activities from 2024 to 2028.

Over the years, the College has carefully implemented a comprehensive accessibility plan. A notable and recent example is the development of a new website, which is set to launch by the end of 2025 and will be designed to evolve with emerging accessibility guidelines. This initiative highlights our dedication to ensuring that all web content and services adhere to the highest standards of accessibility, creating an inclusive digital environment that benefits all users by providing 24/7 access to our services from anywhere in the world.

With this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, we reaffirm our dedication to eliminating barriers and promoting accessibility by design. As we move forward, we will continue to seek feedback and refine our practices, aspiring to lead in accessibility while driving continuous improvement.

Linda Lacroix, OCT/EAO
Registrar and CEO

Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005 (AODA) became law in Ontario in June 2005. Its purpose is to make Ontario barrier-free by 2025 by developing, implementing and enforcing standards for accessibility related to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation, buildings, structures and premises.

The organizations subject to the AODA include “any agency, board, commission, authority, corporation or other entity established under an Act”. As a result, the AODA and its subsequent Regulation 191/11, *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR) apply to the Ontario College of Teachers (the “College”).

Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards

Under the Act’s *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*, the government identified five areas to develop accessibility standards. These five areas are:

1. Customer Service
2. Employment
3. Transportation (not applicable to the College)
4. Information and Communications
5. Design of Public Spaces (refers to access to, from and within buildings, and outdoor street spaces such as pedestrian access routes and signal systems).

The standards set out in this regulation are not a replacement or a substitution for the requirements established under the *Human Rights Code*.

Under the IASR, the College is required to establish, implement, maintain and document a *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* (MYAP), which outlines the College’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its obligations under the regulation.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

This *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* outlines the policies and actions the College has in place or will implement, and reflects a commitment to ensure that everyone, regardless of whether their disability is apparent or not, is treated with courtesy and respect when they interact with the organization. This plan is made available on the College’s website, staff intranet, and in accessible formats upon request.

Recognizing that accessibility standards and best practices are constantly evolving, the College will periodically review this plan to ensure its ongoing relevance. In doing so, it will identify areas for improvement and address gaps or emerging needs related to accessibility.

Accessibility Reports

In accordance with the AODA, the College submits accessibility reports every three years. These reports outline the College’s compliance with the relevant accessibility standards in the Act and its regulations.

Our Commitment

The College is committed to the inclusion of persons with disabilities and supports the Ontario government's goal of a barrier-free province. The commitment to accessibility is further reflected in the College's Strategic Plan for 2024-2028, demonstrating a proactive approach to embedding accessibility into day-to-day operations.

The College remains fully compliant with Regulation 191/11, *Integrated Accessibility Standards*, as established under the AODA. As a regulatory body, the College is devoted to providing high-quality service to its members, employees, and the public, ensuring that everyone is treated with courtesy and respect.

In all interactions with persons with disabilities, College employees engage with members, colleagues, and the public in a manner that acknowledges the nature of each individual's disability, respecting their desire for independence, dignity, and equal opportunity.

Regulatory Requirements

Customer Services

The College is committed to ensuring that its customer service policies, practices and procedures respect the dignity and independence of all persons with disabilities. This commitment is so integral to our work that it is embedded in our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan as one of the key enablers, called "responsive client service for all stakeholders." Enablers represent the functions, values, and behaviours that will drive the achievement of the Strategic Plan's goals.

The College has developed and implemented policies governing its provision of services and facilities to persons with disabilities, including:

Use of Service Animals and Supports Persons

The College welcomes individuals using guide dogs or service animals in all public locations of the College. Support persons are also permitted to accompany individuals who require assistance.

The College accommodates reasonable requests to provide support persons during interactions, such as arranging for a sign language interpreter at a College-sponsored event or hearing. Additionally, employees are trained to interact appropriately with individuals who are accompanied by service animals or support persons, ensuring a respectful and accommodating environment.

Feedback

The College's processes for receiving and responding to feedback about its goods or services are accessible to persons with disabilities, incorporating provisions for accessible formats and communication support.

When the College responds to feedback received, the written response is developed in a format accessible to persons with disabilities. Staff responsible for preparing these responses

are trained in the formatting of accessible documents. For verbal responses to feedback, staff in the service centre are trained to provide services that comply with the AODA customer service accessibility standards for persons with disabilities.

When an accessible format is requested for a feedback response, College staff consult with the recipient to ensure the format is appropriate. Information about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports is displayed on the College's website and in the reception area. The College also offers accessible features and services, including accessible counters, and reception area features such as available seating and adequate clearance for mobility aids. Staff are trained to deliver services in accordance with the AODA customer service accessibility standards.

Acknowledgement of feedback is provided within five business days, and a full response within 15 business days. If a full response cannot be provided within 15 business days, an interim acknowledgement is sent, indicating when a full reply can be expected. The College keeps a record of any concerns related to its accessibility policies, processes, or practices, and reviews these records annually to ensure ongoing compliance with customer service regulations.

Training

The College provides training on the requirements of the accessibility standards in the IASR and on the *Human Rights Code* as it relates to people with disabilities. This training is extended to employees and individuals who provide goods, services, or facilities on behalf of the organization.

The training covers several key topics, including an overview of the purpose of the AODA and IASR requirements. It addresses how to interact and communicate effectively with individuals who have various types of disabilities, how to assist those who use assistive devices or

require the help of service animals or support persons, and the proper use of equipment or devices provided by the College to aid in service delivery. Training also covers appropriate actions to take if a person with a disability encounters difficulty accessing the College's goods or services.

Training is provided on an ongoing basis as deemed necessary or in connection with changes in College policies, practices, and procedures, and it is delivered in a way that best aligns with the duties of employees, consultants, and other individuals.

Self-Service Kiosks

The College considers accessibility for persons with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks to ensure that all users can access services effectively.

The following actions help the College meet both accessibility and customer service standards when implementing self-service kiosks:

- College staff involved in decision-making related to self-service kiosks are knowledgeable of the AODA requirements.
- Software used in the self-service kiosks is compliant with the AODA requirements by offering accessibility options such as larger font and visuals.

Information and Communications

The College is committed to meeting the information and communication needs of people with disabilities in several key areas.

Accessible Emergency Information

The College provides employees with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request. This includes prepared emergency procedures, plans or public safety information.

To ensure emergency information is readily available to everyone at the College, emergency information and procedures have been posted on emergency exit doorways on all floors, including those accessible to the public. Additionally, this information is available on the College's staff intranet and in accessible formats upon request.

The College's Health and Safety Policy for employees, which is also available on the intranet, adheres to legislated best practices and protocols prescribed by federal, provincial, and municipal laws, as well as with the safe work practices and protocols set forth by the College.

Accessible Website and Web Content

The College's internet websites and web content conform with AODA compliance criteria. Initially aiming for Level A compliance, the College has shifted focus to achieve Level AA compliance, in line with updated requirements and enhanced accessibility goals.

In alignment with the College's commitment to accessibility, the College is working on the development of a new public website, set to be operational by late 2025. This site will be built with robust web accessibility standards, including AODA compliance criteria as a foundational baseline.

Upgrading the website will enhance user experience with a modern design and improved functionality. The upgrade process will include assessment and remediation of non-compliant and out of date content, ensuring alignment with current AODA standards, increased reliability, and a more robust platform for managing content.

To accomplish the web accessibility outcome, the College is implementing a comprehensive long-term plan that includes key initiatives such as:

- The integration of an accessibility overlay on the public website to help users with disabilities access and navigate the content effectively (launched in June 2024);
- Audits of the College's public website to continuously identify areas of improvement in accessibility, particularly for PDF content remediation;
- Utilization of advanced accessibility software tools to assess, evaluate, and monitor web content for compliance with AODA standards;
- Consultation of internal and external stakeholders to leverage their knowledge and user experience;
- Continuous engagement with both on-site contractors and external consultants;
- Ongoing training for College staff who develop and manage web content, focusing on creating accessible documents and effectively utilizing assistive technologies; and
- Periodic training sessions led by external experts to keep web design, development, and production staff updated with the latest web accessibility standards and techniques.

The College is dedicated to ongoing monitoring and development to ensure that the new public website not only adheres to AODA compliance criteria but also evolves with emerging

accessibility guidelines. This commitment includes enhancing the clarity of web content language and ensuring comprehensive accessibility of the website, and associated web-based applications. External experts will continue to play a critical role in assessing and verifying the overall accessibility of the College's digital resources, reinforcing the commitment to inclusivity and excellence.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

The College ensures that persons with disabilities are provided with accessible formats and communication support upon request.

The following ongoing actions are carefully executed to meet this regulatory requirement:

- Outlining the process for requesting an accessible format and/or communication support on the College's website.
- Consulting with the individual making the request to confirm the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.
- Providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner.
- Regularly updating the College Style Guide to reflect accessibility considerations and best practices, where applicable, in the development of College documents.
- Using and continually optimizing an internal checklist for the production of PDF files that are compliant with AODA standards.

Employment

The College is committed to fair and accessible employment practices for its employees, and its practices reflect accessible employment standards to meet Ontario's accessibility laws.

The College adopted two policies to identify, remove and prevent barriers and increase accessibility for persons with disabilities: the Accessibility Policy for Employment Standards (which includes the Individual Accommodation Plan) and the Return-to-Work Policy. Please note that internal policies are not available for external distribution.

Accessibility Policy for Employment Standards

During recruitment, assessment and selection processes, the College accommodates people with disabilities upon request.

Employment opportunities are posted both internally and externally to reflect the College's commitment to the AODA and the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities throughout the recruitment process.

When an applicant is selected to participate in an assessment or selection process, accommodations are offered upon request, ensuring that the materials and procedures used are adapted to meet the applicant's accessibility needs. The College consults with the applicant to provide or arrange for a suitable accommodation that aligns with their specific needs due to disability.

The signed employment agreement between a new employee and the College is updated to include the College's commitment to AODA principles and reference its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities. Additionally, the College's Employee Handbook, which is provided to all new employees and available on the intranet, is updated periodically to include accommodation policies for employees with disabilities.

Individual Accommodation Plans

The College has a written process in place to develop documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

The Individual Accommodation Plan Policy for developing these plans reflects a participatory process involving the employee requesting accommodation, College staff, and, when necessary, external medical evaluations. The policy includes details regarding the provision of required accessible formats and communication supports for information needed to perform the employee's job, as well as general information available to all employees in the workplace. It also includes individualized emergency response information when required, along with any other accommodations provided under the plan.

The College provides individualized emergency response information to employees who have a disability as required, and where the College is aware of the need for accommodation. This information may be shared with a person designated to provide assistance to the employee during an emergency situation.

Additionally, the College's Health and Emergency Planning Policy outlines alternative measures for employees with disabilities during emergency evacuations. The Individual Accommodation Plan Policy also specifies the steps taken to protect the employee's personal information and the frequency with which the accommodation plan will be reviewed.

Return-to-Work Policy

The College developed a written return-to-work process for employees who have been absent from work due to disability and require disability-related accommodation to return to work.

This Return-to-Work Policy outlines the necessary steps to facilitate the smooth return of employees who were absent because their disability required them to be away from work. It also includes the use of individual

accommodation plans to ensure that the employee's needs are appropriately met during the return-to-work process.

Performance Management

The College follows several steps to ensure the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are considered when using performance management, professional development and redeployment processes. The policies related to these areas are outlined in the Employee Handbook, which is available to all employees via the staff intranet and shared with new employees during their orientation. These policies have been updated to incorporate individual accommodation plans, where applicable.

In the performance management process, the College takes into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, including any documented accommodation plans. Additionally, when the College offers career development, advancement opportunities, job-shadowing, or redeployment/reassignment to employees with disabilities, their accessibility needs, along with any existing individual accommodation plans, are carefully considered.

Optimal Work Location Policy

On September 11, 2023, the College adopted an Optimal Work Location Policy to reflect the reduced frequency of staff presence in the building. This policy introduces new opportunities to update current office space through a phased reorganization planning process. These updates will be carried out by contractors selected through a rigorous competitive process, with a strong emphasis on adherence to AODA requirements.

The updated office space aspires to exceed AODA stipulations, presenting an exemplary model of an inclusive physical workspace that incorporates universal design principles to create an environment that is navigable and usable by all individuals, regardless of ability. The updated working environment will also

accommodate individuals with mobility impairments by providing fully accessible restrooms outfitted with grab bars and hands-free faucets, and support individuals with sensory sensitivities by including quiet spaces to minimize noise disruption.

All updated workspaces will be designed to be accessible to individuals with disabilities. Should additional accommodation be required by any employee, the College remains committed to facilitating this process. To ensure clarity and accessibility for all employees, the College's Accessibility Policy for Employment Standards outlines the requirements for informing employees of the policies used to support those with disabilities, including provisions for job accommodations that address an employee's accessibility needs. This information is provided to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment and is updated for all employees whenever there are changes to existing policies regarding job accommodations.

Design of Public Spaces

The College will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces.

Public spaces applicable to the College include outdoor paths of travel, such as sidewalks, ramps, and curb ramps designed for pedestrian use and not covered under Regulation 350/06 made under the Building Code Act. Service-related elements, including service counters and waiting areas, are also part of these spaces. Any contract for the construction or redevelopment of outdoor paths of travel or service-related elements is required to reflect the requirements of the IASR.

The College has put the following procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to its accessible service-related elements:

- The service counters and waiting areas at the College's offices on 101 Bloor Street West are accessible to individuals using mobility aids/devices;
- The service counters at the Margaret Wilson Library are accessible to members and employees with disabilities; and
- In the event of a temporary service disruption, the public will be notified via the College's website and signs at the College's office.

Accessibility beyond AODA

As we approach the milestone of 2025, marking Ontario's commitment to becoming barrier-free, we recognize that our commitment to accessibility does not end here. At the Ontario College of Teachers, accessibility is a core value that underpins all our actions and decisions. Our leadership in this area goes beyond merely meeting legal obligations; it is a reflection of our deep-rooted commitment to inclusion, equity, and respect for every individual. While we have made significant strides in aligning with AODA requirements, our dedication to accessibility remains a continuous priority. This commitment is embedded within our Strategic Plan and EDI strategy, ensuring that our efforts to remove barriers and foster an inclusive environment will continue to evolve and strengthen in the years to come.

In keeping with this commitment, we have outlined further plans to enhance accessibility within the College.

Public website audit

Following the launch of our new website in late 2025, we are committed to conducting another audit to ensure that all accessibility recommendations have been implemented. This review will help us verify that the new public website has achieved Level AA compliance with AODA, affirming our commitment to continuous improvement and ensuring that our website is accessible to all users.

Designing accessible spaces

In alignment with the Optimal Work Location Policy, the College will audit the construction plans for future office renovations. By addressing accessibility requirements at this early stage, we can ensure compliance with AODA while avoiding costly changes later in the construction phase. This proactive approach will save both time and resources, while fostering a more inclusive and accessible workspace for all employees and visitors.

Consultations

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we will conduct external consultations for feedback on the accessibility of the website. This valuable feedback will guide us in identifying potential barriers and areas for enhancement, enabling us to create a user experience that is accessible, inclusive, and responsive to all.

We will also consult internally to assess the accessibility of our website. Internal input will be instrumental in creating an inclusive digital environment that supports the work of all employees.

Furthermore, we will continuously monitor and assess our practices to ensure that our services, communications, and facilities remain accessible to all. Our approach to accessibility will be guided by the principle of being 'accessible by design,' ensuring that accessibility is consistently considered from the outset. Through these efforts, we are not only maintaining our current standards but actively seeking to elevate our accessibility initiatives to new levels.

Questions about this Multi-year Accessibility Plan?

Questions regarding this plan can be directed to the College's Client Services Unit:

Email

info@oct.ca

Telephone

416.961.8800

Toll-free (Canada and U.S.A)

1.888.534.2222

Fax

416.961.8822

Mailing Address

101 Bloor Street West
Toronto ON M5S 0A1

Our accessibility plan is publicly posted at oct-oeo.ca/accessibility_policies.



**Ontario
College of
Teachers**

Ontario's Teaching Regulator

For additional information:
Ontario College of Teachers
101 Bloor St. West
Toronto ON M5S 0A1

Telephone: 416.961.8800

Fax: 416.961.8822

Toll-Free (Canada and U.S.A.):
1.833.966.5588

Email: info@oct.ca

oct.ca

Cette publication est également disponible en français sous le titre
Plan d'accessibilité pluri-annuel.

2024 edition