

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act

Information & Communications

Module 1

UW HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIVERSITY OFFICE

Stacey Belding, B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.

Wil Hedges, B.A., B.Th., J.D.



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Agenda

Content covered in *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)* Information and Communications training modules:

- Disability Awareness
- AMA and Human Rights Code
- Accessibility at the University of Winnipeg
- How to identify, prevent, and remove barriers to accessible communication
- How to provide information through a communication support or accessible format
- Next steps



Disclaimer

- This training resource is not legal advice; if you require assistance in understanding *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)*, please contact the Human Rights and Diversity Office or consult with legal counsel.
- This resource has been created to assist in understanding the AMA and its compliance requirements.
- This information does not replace content in the official version of the AMA.
- If there is any conflict between this resource and the AMA, the AMA is the final authority.



Disability Awareness



How Disability Touches Our Lives

- How does disability show up in your life?
- What does disability mean to you?



Definition of Disability

Not specifically defined in the AMA; in general, a disability is a condition that limits a person's daily activities.

Persons with disabilities may have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their participation on an equal basis with others.

A disability, the aging process, an injury, or other life events might temporarily or permanently affect mobility, dexterity (use of hands), vision, hearing, communication, understanding (cognition), or mental health.



Visible and Invisible Disabilities

Some disabilities are visible

- If using a wheelchair or assistive devices

Some disabilities or conditions are not always visible

- Parkinson's disease
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Vision impairment

Some disabilities or conditions are not visible

- Deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing
- Fibromyalgia, arthritis, heart conditions
- Communication and speech impairments
- Mental health conditions (for example, anxiety, depression, PTSD)
- Learning or developmental disabilities
- Autism, neurodivergence



Views and Models of Disabilities

- **Medical** model
 - A **person with a disability** “owns” the disability – it’s their individual problem
- **Social** model
 - A **disabled person** is a person disabled “by external barriers” – society, architecture, attitudes – things that can be changed, improved, or removed



What is a Barrier?

A barrier is anything – visible or invisible – that keeps someone with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability.



Types of Barriers

Attitude

- The way people think or behave

Architectural or structural

- Design elements, natural elements

Information and communication

- Ways for receiving or conveying information

Technology

- Inadequate or inappropriate general or assistive technologies

Systemic

- An organization's policies, procedures, and practices



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Module 2

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AMA Accessibility Standards & The Human Rights Code



Purpose and Goal of the AMA

Purpose: To identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility in five key areas of daily living:

- Customer service
- Employment
- Information and communications
- Built environment
- Transportation

Goal: To make significant progress towards achieving accessibility in Manitoba by 2023



Principles Behind the AMA (1-4)

- **Equal rights:** Activities reflect the equality rights of all Canadians, including persons disabled by barriers, as enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and stipulated in *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*.
- **Educating into compliance:** Activities strongly emphasize using education to help organizations achieve and return to compliance.
- **Respectful and strong relationships:** Activities build and sustain respectful and strong relationships within and across sectors.
- **Evidence-based:** Activities are based on sound and objective information and evidence.



Principles Behind the AMA (5-8)

- **Targeted and outcomes-based:** Activities are focused on outcomes that have the most positive impact on accessibility and make the most effective use of resources.
- **Accountability:** Activities align with the Manitoba government's mandate, values and laws.
- **Transparency:** While respecting privacy, information provided about compliance activities is clear, accessible, and timely.
- **Fairness, consistency and impartiality:** Activities are carried out in reasonable, professional, unbiased and unprejudiced ways to ensure fair, consistent and impartial decisions and actions.



Other Key AMA Requirements

Every two years, a public sector body must prepare an accessibility plan that addresses the identification, prevention and removal of barriers that disable people in the policies, programs, practices and services of the public sector body.

Regulations are passed under the AMA to ensure accessibility in a variety of areas. As of the date of this recording, the Customer Service, Employment, Accessible Information & Communication, and Transportation Standard are in effect. The Design of Outdoor Public Spaces is in development and will be the last standard.

- All AMA Standards have training as well as policy and practice requirements
- For example, both the UW Workplace Accommodation and Accessibility Policies were updated and we created an Individualized Emergency Plan process in compliance with these Standards



AMA Information & Communication Standard - 1

Requirements of this Standard focus on the following areas:

1. Accessible web content, including compliance with WCAG 2.1 Level AA
2. The duty to provide notice that information, educational, and library materials are available through communication supports and alternative formats
3. Responding to requests for accessible information and communication supports in a consultative and timely manner, at no additional cost
4. Accepting and responding to feedback about accessible information and communication
5. Training for educators and staff who communicate to the public, among others
6. Policy documentation about the training
7. Specific requirements for educational institutions and libraries including providing accessible educational and library materials



AMA Information & Communication Standard - 2

Web Content

All organizations must ensure that their internet and intranet websites meet or exceed globally followed World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA if the following applies:

- the web content is published on or after this standard comes into force
- the web content is required to access an organization's goods and services

Web Applications

If an organization is launching or significantly refreshing a web application (software run on a web server, not mobile apps), it must meet WCAG 2.1 level AA standards, at minimum.



AMA Information & Communication Standard - 3

Exceptions to web requirements:

1. it is not technically feasible to meet the required level.
2. the technology required to publish the web content or application is not readily available.
3. meeting the required level would result in demonstrable undue hardship to the organization.
4. the organization does not have direct control over the web content or web application.
5. the web content or web application relates to product labels or other product information.



AMA Information & Communication Standard - 4

Requests for, and Notification of, Accessible Information

Organizations must:

- notify and inform the public and employees that they can request information through a communication support or accessible format. This includes requests related to emergency procedures and public safety.
 - *Can add to website, email signature, pamphlets, signage, etc.*
- ask what is needed; consult with the person making the request to identify a support or format that removes the barrier and provide it in a timely manner
- not charge the person making a request more than what would be charged to someone who did not make a request



AMA Information & Communication Standard – 5

An educational institution must also take appropriate measures to inform employees, students, applicants/prospective applicants, and parents/guardians of students/applicants, that **educational materials** are available through a communication support or accessible format on request. No additional cost or fee is chargeable.

If the educational material cannot reasonably be provided through a communication support or accessible format, comparable resource must be provided (same information as the original educational material through an accessible support or format).

Educational materials = textbooks; supplementary learning resources (reference books, workbooks, and educational kits); student records; information regarding class, lesson, workshop, or programs including: descriptions, availability, scheduling, and requirements

There are no exceptions to these requirements.



AMA Information & Communication Standard – 6

Organizations must have a **process to receive and respond to feedback** (including complaints) about accessible information and communication.

- the process must be appropriate to the circumstances and suitable for people with disabilities.
 - organizations must document resulting actions and make that documentation available in the appropriate format, on request.
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- *Consider feedback options for your area*
 - *The HRDO accepts, responds to, and tracks feedback via its [online](#) form, or via telephone to (204) 988-7508, email to hrdo@uwinnipeg.ca, or in person or Zoom/Teams meeting*



AMA Information & Communication Standard – 7

All organizations in Manitoba are required to provide **training** on the Standard to employees, agents or volunteers with the following duties:

- persons who communicate directly with the public or another Manitoba organization on behalf of the organization
- persons who maintain or develop the organization's web content
- persons who purchase or procure information technology or communication tools
- persons who develop or implement the organization's measures, policies and practices on accessible communication
- persons who are educators within an educational institution

○ *In addition to your own staff, ask volunteers and agents to complete training*



AMA Information & Communication Standard – 8

Training content must include:

- how to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessible communication
- how to provide information through a communication support or an accessible format
- a review of The Human Rights Code, The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and this standard

An organization must provide training to a person as soon as reasonably possible after that person is assigned the applicable duties. Also, ongoing training needs to be provided whenever an organization updates or changes its accessible communication policies, measures or practices.



The Human Rights Code (Manitoba)

- In addition to the AMA, the Human Rights Code also addresses disability rights.
- The Code states that people with disabilities must be free from discrimination where they work, live, and receive services, and their needs must be accommodated.
- The Human Rights Code has primacy and the AMA must follow the Code to help provide equal rights. The Code is broader than the AMA, covering all businesses and organizations, regardless of organization size or type.
- The Human Rights Code offers protection of rights, equal opportunity, and freedom from discrimination. It states that employers and other service providers must provide accommodations to people with disabilities, to the point of undue hardship.
- In addition, a person cannot be treated negatively because of a disability, i.e. disability cannot be a factor in employee or student discipline. Harassment based on disability is also prohibited.



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Module 3

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Accessibility at The University of Winnipeg



Statement of Commitment to Accessibility

The University of Winnipeg is committed to creating an inclusive environment for all members of its community. We are committed to identifying, removing, and preventing accessibility barriers to help ensure full participation in society. As we continue to work towards meeting or exceeding our requirements under the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, we welcome ongoing feedback. Our goal is to provide equal access to our services and facilities to offer dignity and independence for all.



Accessibility Policy

The University of Winnipeg maintains an Accessibility Policy to guide accessible procedures at the University.

The current Accessibility Policy is available to the public and can be found at <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/policies/docs/policies/accessibility-policy.pdf>.



Assistive Devices

- The University of Winnipeg is committed to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use, or benefit from University of Winnipeg's goods and services.
- If a patron, student, or employee experiences a barrier when attempting to use their assistive device to access your area, be sure to work with the individual to provide alternate access to our services, wherever possible.



Support Persons

- The University of Winnipeg is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.
- At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person while on University of Winnipeg premises, and no fees are chargeable to a support person.
- When communicating with a patron, student, or employee accompanied by a support person, communicate directly with the patron, student, or employee unless requested to do otherwise.



Service Animals

- Service animals are welcome on campus. Students with service animals are encouraged to register with Accessibility Services, and staff should register with Human Resources.
- It is important that the owner or a support person is in care and control of the service animal at all times. If any issues arise, communicate with the service animal owner directly. Be familiar with the [UWinnipeg Service Animals on Campus Policy](#) and [Procedures](#).
- Water can be provided to service animals in most areas of the Library and other campus spaces.
- If requested, employees should assist in providing more direct access to a relief area for service animals where possible (for example, in the Library, use the 5th floor service elevator to access the ground floor directly).



Notification of Disruption of Accessible Services

- The University of Winnipeg provides notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in accessible services or facilities usually used by persons with disabilities.
- Posted notices must include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternate facilities or services, if available.
- Notice should be posted at the location of the disruption (for example, unavailable elevator or accessible washroom), at the front entrance of the facility (main entrance, Library entrance), and where appropriate for the disruption.
- For lengthy and planned disruptions, the University of Winnipeg will post a notice on its website. Library-specific disruptions will be posted on the Library main page and Accessibility page. Other areas should note disruptions on their page(s).
- A Notice of Disruption form is included in the resources accompanying this training



Hosting Accessible Events

The University of Winnipeg must make every effort to ensure public events are accessible.

- Promote events in a variety of ways in accessible formats.
- Host events in accessible spaces.
- Inform the public how and when to request individual accommodations or ask about accessibility supports (for example, ASL translators, live captions, and that we welcome accompaniment by a support person or service animal).
 - ASL interpreters for events can be arranged by filling out the following form: [ASL Booking Form | Accessibility Services](#)
 - Other communication supports are available from off-campus service providers, some options for which are listed in the materials accompanying this training



AMA and Accessibility Training

- AMA and accessibility training are provided to all employees.
- General and role-specific accessibility training are provided within 30 days of beginning duties in a new role.
- Refresher accessibility training is also provided by way of open sessions, upon request, when AMA or related legislation changes, and when accessibility policies change.



Public Spaces and Barrier-Free Access

Each employee is responsible for doing their best to ensure barrier-free access to their area

- Provide clear and safe access for mobility devices throughout your physical spaces.
- Keep aisles, study rooms, meeting rooms, and waiting areas clear of clutter.
- Ensure that placement of standing signage is not a tripping or access hazard.
- Watch for temporary barriers (for example, recycling debris, delivery boxes, library carts) that may be blocking accessible features (for example, automatic door openers, accessible washrooms, entrances and exits, access to librarians or service request areas).
- Keep entranceways clear of snow, ice, debris, and hazards (inform Facilities if you have any concerns).



Accessibility Feedback

All employees are encouraged to invite and welcome feedback about our services, facilities, and accessibility supports.

If a patron, student, or employee identifies a barrier, offers feedback, complains about services or facilities, or has a suggestion or question about accessibility barriers, be sure to welcome their feedback and suggest various ways they can provide their feedback to staff, particularly if they request follow-up or a response.

As mentioned earlier in this module, feedback can be provided via the HRDO [online](#) form, by telephone to (204) 988-7508, by email to hrdo@uwinnipeg.ca, or by arranging an in-person or Zoom/Teams or telephone meeting.

Each area should consider implementing its own feedback process including inviting, collecting, and tracking feedback and responses to the feedback.



Multi-year Accessibility Plan

Multi-year Accessibility Plans are public documents, required by the AMA, that describe organizational accessibility goals and measures that UWinnipeg will take to identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers.

UWinnipeg management needs to ensure that both AMA compliance and organizational accessibility goals are included in Multi-year Accessibility Plan updates.

Action owners for specific unit accessibility goals and objectives need to be assigned and progress reviewed regularly (for example, at Accessibility for Manitobans Act Steering Committee meetings, or through written status updates).

Goals and objectives are expected to be reasonable and likely to be achieved. Resources for accomplishing goals need to be available. Roadblocks and barriers to success need to be addressed.



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Module 4

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Stacey Belding, B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.

Wil Hedges, B.A., B.Th., J.D.



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How to identify, prevent, and remove barriers to accessible communication

<https://accessiblecampus.ca/understanding-accessibility/what-are-the-barriers/>



Information and communication barriers

Information and communication barriers are one of the five barriers to accessibility. Other barriers include attitudinal, organizational/systemic, architectural/structural, and technological.

Information or communication barriers occur when sensory disabilities, such as hearing, seeing or learning disabilities, have not been considered. These barriers relate to both the sending and receiving of information.

In the next slide, we will talk about how to remove information and communication barriers.



Information and communication barrier removal

- Electronic documents can be made accessible by following the tips in the documents accompanying this training. We also recommend using the Accessibility Checker feature of Word and/or Make Accessible feature of Adobe pdf.
- Instead of language that is complex and full of jargon, use plain language where possible
- Use sans serifs fonts in larger sizes (i.e. 14 point Arial) to enhance readability
- Use Adobe Express (<https://www.adobe.com/express/feature/video/add-caption>) to add captions to your videos for free
- Ensure that handouts or course materials are available in electronic versions as well as hard copies
- Provide more than one means of contact or access to information. For example, provide phone, in person, Zoom/Teams, and hybrid options for meetings.



How to provide information through a communication support or accessible format



Alternate or Accessible Formats

Examples of Alternate or Accessible Formats include:

- large print using sans serif fonts
- electronic or digital documents which are formatted to be accessible for use with a screen reader (see for example <https://abilitynet.org.uk/factsheets/creating-accessible-documents-0> or the resources listed at <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect/instructor-resources.html>)
- braille
- plain language documents
- text transcripts of visual and audio information, such as video transcripts (see <https://www.capcut.com/tools/video-to-text> for free transcription options)
- American Sign Language (ASL) and/or close captioned interpreted documents and videos



Communication Supports

Examples of communication supports include:

- sign language interpretation (ASL)
- video relay service (VRS)
- Deaf-Blind Accessibility Interpreters
- video captioning or audio description
- notetaking
- reading the written information aloud to the person directly

ASL interpreters for events can be arranged by filling out the following form: [ASL Booking Form | Accessibility Services](#) and other communication supports are available from off-campus service providers, some options for which are listed in the materials accompanying this training



Remember

The Accessible Formats and Communication Supports outlined are examples of commonly used format and supports.

The AMA Information and Communication Standard requires us to ask the person making the request what their specific needs are and to consult with them to identify a support or format that removes the barrier, and to provide it in a timely manner at no additional charge.



Information and communication barriers

In the next training, we will be discussing further how to prevent and remove barriers to accessible communication in your area, as well as the available accessibility features of your area. We will also talk about management responsibilities, and best practices for inclusion.

Please consider the following questions and come to the live training with your answers:

- What barriers to communication exist in your area? How could they be removed?
- What are the accessibility features in your area?

Please also take time to review the written materials accompanying this module.



Thank you!

If you have any questions or feedback about this training, please to reach out to us:

Stacey Belding, Human Rights & Diversity Officer

s.belding@uwinnipeg.ca

204.988.7508

Wil Hedges, Human Rights & Conflict Management Advisor

w.hedges@uwinnipeg.ca

431.668.5354

