The University of Winnipeg
Accessibility Plan
Years Applicable: 2023-2024

Instituting the First, Second, and Third Standards Under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)

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Key Accessibility Contacts

Accessibility for Manitobans Act Steering Committee (AMASC) – s.belding@uwinnipeg.ca, (204) 988-7508 (Stacey Belding, Human Rights and Diversity Officer and AMASC Chair)

Human Rights and Diversity Office – hrdo@uwinnipeg.ca or (204) 988-7508

Accessibility Services – l.coombs@uwinnipeg.ca or (204) 786-9771

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services – t.rogowski@uwinnipeg.ca or (204) 786-9704

Employee Health and Wellness, Human Resources - li.harrison@uwinnipeg.ca or (204) 789-4230 (Employee Health and Wellness Specialist); s.delaney@uwinnipeg.ca or (204) 786-9060 (Employee Health and Wellness Assistant)

Please contact the Human Rights and Diversity Office if you require this document in a different format.

ACCESSIBILITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

The University of Winnipeg is firmly committed to providing an inclusive environment for its Community.

Our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion is woven through our [Strategic Directions](#) reflecting many of the principles of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act* (AMA). The University proactively works with its community to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to participation for all Manitobans to teach, research, and learn.

The UWinnipeg community itself is large, complex, and diverse. The term "University Community" is used to reflect the unique nature and context of our various relationships and interactions, and includes students, faculty, staff, board members, and others.

This Accessibility Plan is our statement of our commitment to compliance and provides a key building block toward the rolling out and implementation of the AMA and its five (5) Accessibility Standards.

THE ACCESSIBILITY FOR MANITOBANS ACT AND RELATED STANDARDS

In December 2013, the Manitoba Government passed *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act* ("the AMA") with the goal of making Manitoba fully accessible by 2023. The AMA sets out the process for compliance and achievement of accessibility for all Manitobans through the prevention and removal of barriers that adversely impact people with disabilities in regard to employment, accommodation, built environment, delivery and receipt of goods, services and information, and any prescribed activity or undertaking. It also mandates every public sector body (which is defined in the Regulations to include an educational institution such as The University of Winnipeg) to prepare an accessibility plan every two (2) years that addresses disability inclusion in the identification, prevention and removal of barriers to accessibility in policies, programs, practices and provision of services.

The AMA established the following five (5) Accessibility Standards:

1) Customer Service;

2) Employment;

3) Information and Communications;

4) Transportation; and

5) Accessible Built Environment.

As of the date of this Plan, Standards 1-3 are in force, with compliance with the Information and Communications Standard required by May 1, 2024.

Pursuant to the Customer Service Standard, all University of Winnipeg employees are required to take mandatory Customer Service Standard training when they join the University. The University also welcomes support people, service animals, and allows assistive devices, as well as works to ensure accessibility is maintained as intended. If accessible services or features are unavailable (i.e. an elevator is out of service), a Notice of Service Disruption is posted and communications are made via social media and/or the website. Feedback regarding accessibility is gathered using the Accessibility Survey on the Human Rights and Diversity Office website (https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect/ama/accessibility-survey.html), as well as from individual unit Self-Audits and conversations with staff/faculty and students disabled by barriers and those who provide services to them.

Pursuant to the Employment Standard, all employees involved hiring, training, managing, promoting, redeploying, and terminating employees, as well as those involved in developing and implementing employment policies and practices, are provided training about reasonable accommodation, including instruction about making employment opportunities accessible, how to interact and communicate with persons disabled by barriers (including those who use an assistive device, support person, or service animal), and a review of *The Human Rights Code*, the AMA, and the Employment Standard. All existing staff with the stated duties (including all regular faculty and managers) were trained in early 2021, and new staff are trained when they join the University.

To ensure the safety of our students, faculty, and staff with disabilities, in early 2020 the University created emergency response information to help those disabled by barriers stay safe during emergencies. The University also developed a process to create individual plans for those who require assistance during an emergency, and linked to information about the process (https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/emergency-guidelines/resources/employee-emergency-information.html) in several key locations on its website, as well as publicizing the information via its leadership and other communication channels. The Human Rights and Diversity Office (in conjunction with Human Resources) also completed a self-audit of employment practices in early 2021 to ensure full compliance with the Employment Standard and related best practices, including revising the Workplace Accommodation Policy and onboarding practices to more fully align with the Employment Standard.

The University has begun work to ensure compliance with the new Information and Communications (Third) Standard, including planning for an audit and/or internal review of its website, web applications, and library processes, and applying for grant funding and budget allocations to support this process along with any necessary remediation and implementation of best practices.

PART 1 – BASELINE REPORT

A. Overview of Accessibility at The University of Winnipeg

Being mindful of serving all members of our University community with dignity and respect, at the University of Winnipeg we view accessibility as a collaborative enterprise in which all units are involved in fostering a culture of inclusion for persons with disabilities. The first point of contact for faculty and all administrative staff requiring information and/or services pertaining to disability accommodation is Human Resources and its Employee Health and Wellness staff. For students, Accessibility Services (AS) and Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services (DHoHS) in the Accessibility Resource Centre (ARC) are available. These offices facilitate and promote the ongoing development of an accessible learning and working environment and provide students and staff with disabilities the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of campus life.

The Human Rights & Diversity Office (HRDO) also has a key role in reviewing institutional accessibility toward ensuring AMA compliance and ensuring that every member of the University Community has the right to participate, learn and work in an inclusive and respectful working and learning environment that is free from discrimination and harassment.

The AMA Steering Committee serves as the forum for supporting the consultative process, and discussing, proposing, and reviewing strategies, with the principal objective of supporting and assisting the University community on the scope and impact of the AMA. The AMA Steering Committee has the responsibility to bring institutional awareness of the AMA and Accessibility Standards by way of appropriate plain language education and information, to meet quarterly, and to develop and implement the Accessibility Plan, among other duties. In 2022, the AMASC was reinvigorated and is currently working to ensure full compliance with the Plan and the new Information and Communications Standard.

B. Process for Developing our Accessibility Plan Updates

The most recent Accessibility Plan update was made following a Unit Self-Audit Process completed in the fall of 2022 where departments identified accessibility barriers and plans to address them, as well as unit successes and progress since the last Accessibility Plan.

In addition, the Accessibility Survey on the Human Rights and Diversity Office website (https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect/ama/accessibility-survey.html) was widely promoted to faculty/staff and students, and in response to which 77 survey responses were received. The barriers identified in the survey were shared with the responsible departments, and analyzed to identify areas for needed improvements and additional training.

The University of Winnipeg Students' Association (UWSA) also conducted the More Than a Door Survey from November 9 - December 21, 2020 asking students about accessibility on campus. The survey findings were shared with the University and were reviewed in the development of this Accessibility Plan.

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act Steering Committee and Human Rights and Diversity Office was also involved in the review of the survey feedback and development of the Accessibility Plan, following any needed consultations with individual units.

C. Accessibility Achievements

The following list provides just a few examples of accessibility initiatives undertaken by the University of Winnipeg from 2020-2022 which tell of its strong commitment to removing barriers and toward creating an institutional culture that values inclusion and accessibility.

1) Institutional Achievements
- Emergency response information and an individualized plan process was created in early 2020 to ensure the safety of all community members in the event of an emergency, including both staff and students.
- The University's Workplace Accommodation Policy and human resources processes were reviewed and updated where needed to ensure full alignment with the AMA Employment Standard.
- The Accessibility Survey designed to collect information about barriers was updated in 2020 and re-promoted to gather feedback for the development of the updated Accessibility Plan and to improve accessibility on campus.
- In addition to existing mandatory AMA Customer Service and Employment Standard training, in 2020-2022 the Human Rights and Diversity Office provided live training to faculty and staff regarding the Duty to Accommodate Students, and arranged for training by the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities and the Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba, in addition to other training about respectful workplace/human rights including reasonable accommodation principles.
- In conjunction with the University of Winnipeg Students Association (UWSA), the Human Rights and Diversity Office provided a Duty to Accommodate session to UW students to ensure they are aware of their right to reasonable accommodation.
- Training regarding employment equity, unconscious bias, and human rights was provided to faculty/staff involved in performance review and hiring processes throughout 2020-2022, and ongoing, including hiring committees for faculty and Executive/Senior Leadership positions. Faculty hiring processes are also guided by an Employment

Equity Consultant trained by the Human Rights & Diversity Office and Human Resources. Similar training was also provided to individual units and various University committees.

- During the COVID pandemic, most instruction and University activities were moved online and a vaccination/mask mandate was implemented to protect the health of the University and broader community, in particular those who were more vulnerable to serious outcomes. Exceptions to the mandate or other reasonable accommodations were provided to those with valid medical (and religious) exemptions.

- Led by the interim Vice President Academic, work continued on a comprehensive mental health strategy to prioritize support for the well-being of students and staff, in addition to implementing portions of the strategy including offering tele-health options for physician visits and online counseling via the Manitoba Blue Cross Employee and Family Assistance Program. Wellness Centre counselling for students was also moved online during the COVID pandemic to ensure continuity of service during this challenging time. Mental health supports continue to be a priority for the University.

- The Employment Equity Advisory Committee was reinvigorated and work began on a formal Employment Equity strategy to increase representation and remove barriers for staff members from equity-deserving groups, including persons with disabilities. A formal Employment Equity Plan is expected to be completed over the next couple of years.

- The University continued its work as a member of a cohort of 17 post-secondary institutions working with the three Federal research granting agencies to co-develop the [Dimensions recognition program](#) to provide public recognition for post-secondary institutions committed to achieving increased equity, diversity and inclusion. The University is in the process of applying for Dimensions recognition.

- The University's Human Rights and Diversity Officer continued as a member of the Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Network (MBAAN).

- The University's Human Rights and Diversity Officer served as a member of the Manitoba Hub EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Course for Manitoba post-secondary faculty, which is in the process of being launched for early 2023.

Action Items from Previous Accessibility Plan – the vast majority of actions outlined in the previous Plan have been taken, including communicating with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability and any specific needs; using another communication medium (email, etc.) if telephone communication is not suitable or available; and providing administrative, financial, and other documents in an alternate format upon request.

Training was provided to all University of Winnipeg employees about how to communicate with persons with various types of disabilities; providing individual emergency plans as needed to students and staff upon request, and providing resources and training to faculty

and staff regarding the duty to accommodate students, including making education more accessible to students with learning and other disabilities.

In addition, the action items related to service animals and support persons have also been taken, including welcoming persons who are accompanied by a service animal on campus (and registering them with Accessibility Services, Campus Housing, and/or Human Resources, as applicable); ensuring alternate accommodations are made available if the service animal is excluded by law; not requiring support persons to pay tuition or other fees; and providing information to faculty regarding welcoming service animals in the classroom.

More information about these actions is outlined in the Unit Successes noted below.

2) Selected Unit Successes in 2020-2022

Athletics
- Accessible seating courtside has been created for those with mobility challenges.

Student Services
- In 2021, renovations were completed to create a more accessible entrance to the Student Services Centre.
- Following resumptions of mostly in-person classes, Student Services continues to offer choice to students in terms of the mode of service delivery. Students can choose to continue with virtual services if they prefer or if coming to campus is difficult for them due to their disability.

Research Office
- The Research Office added a Program Officer, EDI, Anti-Racism, & Decolonization and Research position to assist with promoting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and the other stated objectives at the University.

Accessibility Services
- In 2022, additional staff positions were added to the department to provide expertise in adaptive technology and assist with advising and testing, and thus enhance service delivery to students disabled by barriers.

Human Resources (HR)
- The Workplace Accommodation Policy and HR processes were reviewed and updated where required to fully align with the AMA Employment Standard.
- All new staff with supervisory or employment policy responsibilities (including all regular faculty) are required to take mandatory Employment Standard training.

- An additional staff member was added to the Employee Health and Wellness area responsible for employee medical accommodations to increase capacity and improve services.

Action items from the previous Accessibility Plan related to recruitment and disability accommodation of employees:

All of the actions have been taken including notifying employees and managers about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in recruitment process; informing job applicants during the recruitment process that accommodations are available upon request, should the applicant be selected for interview; consulting with the job applicant and providing accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs stemming from a disability(ies); and notifying successful applicants about all relevant University of Winnipeg policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

In addition, training for University of Winnipeg employees involved with hiring, promotion, supervision, termination, and employment policy development regarding accommodation and related requirements; and providing needed accommodations during communications and interactions with employees who self-identify as having a disability is also provided.

In collaboration with the Human Rights and Diversity Office, further developing a return to work process for employees and referencing same in the Workplace Accommodation Policy and related training, and which policy is available publicly on the University website; and emergency response information and individualized plans for staff requiring assistance in the event of an emergency is outlined on the website and during onboarding.

Human Rights and Diversity Office (HRDO)

- In 2021, a Human Rights and Conflict Management Advisor was added to the Human Rights and Diversity Office to increase capacity and support work on accessibility, employment equity, and EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) initiatives.
- Many Human Rights & Diversity Office (HRDO) educational sessions are now offered virtually as well as in person, and recordings of some of those sessions have been added to the website, with more live and recorded educational offerings underway.
- In 2021, an Instructor Resources section was added to the HRDO website, which includes links to AMA and other training, information on creating accessible documents and supporting students with learning and other disabilities, Zoom captioning

instructions, and links to the University's Accessibility Hub and other resources. More resources are continuously being added to these sections of the HRDO website.

Professional, Applied and Continuing Education (PACE)

- PACE executive and managers work closely with Human Resources (HR) to ensure that accessibility standards are being met regarding hiring, training, and onboarding, and ensures that HR is consulted if any accessibility requests are made.
- PACE recently undertook a $2M renovation of the ANX space used for PACE programming, and ensured that accessibility standards and considerations were taken into consideration and met.
- Whenever new construction, renovations, or furniture purchases are planned or implemented, PACE consults/works with the Facilities/Purchasing departments to ensure accessibility standards are being met.
- The PACE website adheres to WCAG 2.1 Level AA and is accessible to screen readers.
- In addition to referring students to Accessibility Services as needed, PACE also has the following process in place to ensure students are aware of these supports:

  - o Accessibility Services (AS) information is clearly shared in each full and part time program orientation, and the Advisor's Student Support and Academic Expectations Presentation has a specific slide dedicated to AS to ensure students have this information
  - o Advisors reiterate AS information at program check ins and their 1:1 meeting with students
  - o AS information is provided in Nexus, including a link to the AS information video
  - o Every PACE course outline contains a statement encouraging students to contact AS if needed
  - o The PACE website also has links to AS throughout so it is easily accessible.

Technology Sector (TSC) and The Centre for Academic Technology (CAT)

- All Nexus pages meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA requirements, and follow standard page design principles and simple heading structure across all tools to assist navigation. The learning suite includes features aimed at improving the usability of the system for those using assistive technologies.
- CAT-LMS works closely with Accessibility Services to find alternative solutions for alternative testing where needed.

- Web Advisor/Ellucian has adopted WCAG 2.1 Level AA standard and uses the industry accepted VPAT version 2.3 to document and communicate a products conformance with this standard.
- During the pandemic when most activities were moved to remote and support calls about Nexus significantly increased, to improve support services the department subscribed to 24x7x365 end user support provided by LMS product developers.
- TSC/CAT ensures that its procurement of external vendors takes accessibility into consideration.

Marketing & Communications

- A new web page on creating [Accessible Web Content](#) was added to the Cascade User Guide for individual departments updating their websites. Users are being advised about these instructions and they are also referred to during Cascade training.
- Individual departments are also being encouraged not to use images in place of text and to create webpages instead of PDFs whenever possible to improve accessibility.
- The website was redesigned and technological barriers were removed during that process including making the navigation easier to tab through, the addition of a grid layout to replace less accessible table layouts, and redesigning the search button to be more easily read. As part of the redesign process, the vendor was required to use accessible code and the website was tested for accessibility using WAVE and DUBBOT quality assurance tools to find and repair any accessibility issues found.
- Accessible campus wayfinding is ongoing, including COVID signage over the past year with entry points and new rules for entering.
- Assisted with the updating of Senate Curriculum Committee forms so they are clearer and easier to fill out, including consulting with Accessibility Services to ensure the forms were as accessible as possible.
- Implemented a new email tool so key messages are in HTML/text, and discontinued use of images in place of text.

Faculty of Education

- The Faculty of Education is working towards all documentation being available electronically via email or its website. In the meantime, alternative formats are available upon request.
- Information sessions were offered via Zoom during the pandemic, and are available to view upon request from potential or existing students.

- Academic advisors provide various meeting options to students including over the phone, in person, over email, or Zoom, and parents/guardians are able to join meetings to provide extra support where needed.
- Department faculty and staff are encouraged to complete their Mental Health First Aid training.
- Feedback regarding any accessibility barriers is now sent to the Manager of Office, Programs and Projects to follow up on.
- Multiple placements for students who require accommodation for practicum placements are offered, and plans are underway to expand those efforts into Northern Communities and rural Manitoba.
- The Faculty of Education is currently working on plans to ensure that all documents contain information about how to request alternate formats, adding closed captioning to all recorded sessions, considering how to better support Accessibility Services (AS) registered students during their studies and appeals processes, creating alternative formats for all educational materials, adding braille to signage outside individual offices, including an active offer of accommodation when booking appointments, reviewing the admissions criteria and application to ensure they are equitable, hiring additional note takers as needed, collaborating with AS to outline a clear process for students and faculty to follow after the accommodation letter is sent to instructors, refresh of AMA training for staff/faculty, and considering methods for course delivery including for those who cannot access campus in person.

Library
- Two workstations are reserved as accessible with an additional quick access station near the Circulation Desk, and other stations have standard Microsoft Windows accessibility features enabled.
- A training video on the use of JAWS screen reader software has been prepared for and promoted to Library staff.
- Library staff were offered a "Neurodiversity in the Library: Building Better for Staff and Students" webinar.
- Plans are currently underway for renovating the facility which include shorter book stacks, greater accessibility to washrooms, and access to Mezzanine levels.
- Closed captioning is available on the Library's YouTube videos.
- Weekly in-person reference assistance made available at the Accessibility Centre.
- Hiring processes include an active offer for alternative formats and other accommodations as needed.
- In addition to its Print Pick-up service, a "Scan on Demand" service is available.

- Added library research guides highlighting accessibility features of Library's databases: https://libguides.uwinnipeg.ca/eResource_Accessibiliity.
- Library leadership/staff are considering acquiring additional Text-to-Speech software.
- Library no longer charges late fees on borrowed materials

Facilities

Facilities continued to work on implementation of a 10-year capital renewal plan which prioritizes addressing accessibility deficiencies in each building. Activities included:

- Installing 35 automatic door operators
- Traditional red 'Exit' signs on campus are being replaced across campus; new ones will now show a pictogram of a person leaving through a door
- Installing lever handles on a number of doors to replace round knobs
- Adding accessible lockers
- Installing tactile and contrast strips on staircases
- Constructing three new accessible washrooms
- Adding a bathroom lift
- Adding new signage on campus
- Adding more acoustical tiles in classrooms

Facilities also worked with the University of Winnipeg Students Association (UWSA) during its More than a Door Campaign to assess and prioritize the implementation of new automatic door openers. The survey results were assessed and installation of new door openers was prioritized in accordance with identified needs. A map of the new door openers was also created and posted on the UWSA website.

Facilities has also applied for government grant funding to help fund the addition of more automatic door openers.

Financial Services – Purchasing

Each of the Request for Proposal (RFP) documents contains an Accessibility for Manitobans Act statement indicating that the purchaser (University) is committed to the highest possible standards for accessibility and that the supplier(s) must be capable to recommend and deliver accessible and inclusive services consistent with The Human Rights Code and The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its regulations. In addition,

suppliers are required to comply with the University's accessibility standards, policies, practices, and procedures with respect to their deliverables.

Action Items from the previous Accessibility Plan in relation to procurement:

With the new wording incorporated into the RFP documents, accessibility is required from external partners when procuring or acquiring goods and services.

D. Accessibility Barriers

The accessibility barriers identified in the Accessibility Survey, Unit Self-Audits, and More than a Door Survey have been reviewed and plans to address those barriers are underway and set out below, along with a summary of the identified barriers.

1. **Attitudinal Barriers** - includes stereotypes and assumptions which may often be the biggest barrier. These barriers may be based on stereotypes or assumptions that limit opportunities to people with disabilities. An example would be speaking to a support person who is accompanying a person with a disability, instead of communicating with the person with a disability directly. The following are some Attitudinal Barriers that have been identified:

   - Some faculty and staff lack understanding of neurodiversity, mental health conditions, and other invisible disabilities, as well as related services such as Accessibility Services.
   - Due to stigma and experiences of marginalization, some students and faculty/staff are not comfortable sharing mental health (and other) conditions or accessing related supports.
   - Some respondents expressed concern with rollback of COVID measures, due to increased vulnerabilities from other medical conditions.

   Progress update: All staff members are required to complete online Accessibility for Manitobans Act training and other reasonable accommodation training is offered on an ongoing basis. The University will continue to expand upon training offered to its community to help reduce stigma and ensure there is a better understanding of disabilities, particularly invisible disabilities and the processes for accommodation at the University.

   More specifically, the Human Rights and Diversity Office and Accessibility Services will be working together on more detailed training and/or information for faculty about student accommodations. Additional detailed training about the Duty to Accommodate is also

being developed jointly by the Human Rights and Diversity Office and Human Resources, and will be offered to managers and others.

Other information and awareness efforts will continue to be made to address attitudinal barriers. For example, a recorded Duty to Reasonably Accommodate training session is being uploaded to the intranet and live sessions will continued to be offered on an ongoing basis. Training from other sources such as disability associations and other experts will also continue to be offered and added to the Human Rights and Diversity Office website. These training sessions are promoted via the University's communication channels and leadership.

The University continues to offer reasonable accommodations for staff and students with increased vulnerability to COVID.

2. **Architectural and Physical** - these barriers exist when the environment presents challenges that make it difficult for some people to easily get into a location. Examples could include where a door knob cannot be turned by a person with limited mobility or strength, or where a hallway or door is too narrow to allow a person who uses a wheelchair to pass through safely. The following are some Architectural and Physical barriers that have been identified:

- Some areas of the University and events are difficult to access due to a lack of close elevator access, narrow hallways, or tight aisles
- Not all doors have automatic door openers
- Seating in certain locations should be more accessible
- More accessible washrooms are needed
- More campus signage would be helpful
- Bright lights and sounds on campus can be distracting or cause unease

Progress update: The Facilities department has prioritized correcting accessibility deficiencies in its 10 year capital renewal plan. The Planning Office will be creating a set of Accessibility Design Standards that will apply to all newly-constructed and/or renovated spaces. These requirements will be included in our Request for Proposals, tender documents, and construction contracts. Facilities has applied for additional grant funding to support physical accessibility such as automatic door openers and increased classroom accessibility. Additional automatic door openers and accessible washrooms have been constructed, with more being planned.

The lighting levels on campus are compared against Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) recommended lighting however individuals requiring an adjustment to individual offices or

selected areas for accommodation reasons can request consideration of same under the applicable accommodation policy.

The other barriers identified in the Accessibility Survey and otherwise are being analysed and will help inform priorities for future improvements.

3. **Informational & Communicational Barriers** – such barriers exist when information is offered in a form that works for some people, but not all. For example, print on documents or on websites may be too small for some people to read, and public address systems often alert only people who can hear. The following are some Informational and Communicational barriers that have been identified:

- Signage, campus maps, and some elevators lack braille
- Textbooks, course delivery, and course evaluation should be available in multiple formats, without a request for accommodation
- Sign up sheets outside classrooms should be lowered to accommodate students in wheelchairs
- Large amounts of digital communications can lead to information being missed
- Some emails with images don't have descriptions or the layout is difficult to read with a screen reader
- Some posters on campus don't have sufficiently large text
- Presenters don't always ensure that their PowerPoint presentations, projected demos, and other visual aids are accessible to those who are Blind or visually impaired, such as by describing their actions, slides, or providing alternative format materials
- Some Pdf documents used at the University are not accessible
- Some of the books and articles concerning disabilities in the Library catalogue may feature subject headings that don't always employ "person-first" terminology

Progress update: The volume of digital communication to staff and faculty has recently been reduced by Marketing and Communications and they no longer use images as text in emails.

Additional training on creating accessible documents and content was recently added to the Human Rights and Diversity Office (HRDO) website under Instructor Resources and is being promoted to faculty and staff. More training on Universal Design for Learning is also being added to the HRDO website.

Other feedback is being reviewed and addressed by responsible departments.

4. **Technology Barriers** - These barriers occur when technology, or the way it is used, is not accessible. Examples include websites that are not accessible to people with visual impairments that use screen reader software; or accepting only online registration forms for programs. The following are some Technology Barriers that have been identified:

- People with visual impairments can face challenges in accessing online information and email communications
- Technology should be better leveraged to provide greater accessibility to course materials and evaluation
- More attention and training needs to be focused on staff/faculty with disabilities
- Some presentations/videos are not captioned or are not compatible with screen readers
- Some classrooms have inadequate sound technology for those who are Deaf or hard of hearing
- Navigating University web applications can be challenging

Progress updates: The main University website complies with accessibility standards in WCAG 2.1 Level AA and reminders and training are provided to individual units to ensure uploaded content is accessible.

Additional training on creating accessible documents and content was recently added to the Human Rights and Diversity Office (HRDO) website under Instructor Resources and is being promoted to faculty and staff. More training on Universal Design for Learning is also being added to the HRDO website. In addition to current AMA Customer Service and Employment Standard and Duty to Accommodate training provided to faculty and staff, more detailed training for managers (and others) is being developed and expanded including adding more online training options.

More acoustical tiles have been added to classrooms and classroom accessibility is being assessed and prioritized by the Facilities department.

Other feedback is being reviewed and addressed by the responsible departments.

5. **Systemic Barriers** - Systemic barriers are usually created by policies and procedures. Often, a policy is applied to everyone equally but has a negative impact on individuals or groups of persons with disabilities (an example would be a policy which requires all students to complete exams in a specific time period, which would have a negative impact on students with learning disabilities). The following are some Systemic Barriers that have been identified:

- More online courses should be offered, especially during COVID to protect those who are immune-compromised
- Requirement to provide a medical note and fill out form(s) to obtain accommodations or in support of academic appeals can be a barrier
- Students with mental health challenges can find it especially difficult to navigate requirements and access supports/services
- Requiring cameras to be turned on during online courses is difficult for some students
- More education and information needs to be provided to the University community about available services, and accommodation processes and requirements

Progress update: The University will continue to offer online course options where feasible and accommodations are provided for those who are immune-compromised, including requiring mask use by others in the class (as well as encouraging the use of masks on campus).

Human Resources is reviewing its medical information requirements and considering whether adjustments should be made.

More resources and training are being planned for the University community about available accommodations and the accommodation processes, including collaborations between the Human Rights and Diversity Office and Accessibility Services (for students) and Human Resources (for staff/faculty).

Work on the University's Mental Health Strategy is continuing and feedback from the AMA survey has been provided to the Interim VP Academic for their consideration as part of the strategy.

PART 2 – ACCESSIBILITY PLAN (updated)

A. Statement of Commitment

The University of Winnipeg's approach to accessibility is premised on collective responsibility where all members of our community play a role in fostering a barrier-free and welcoming working and learning environment. We believe that our collective commitment to accessibility planning provides the best opportunities and outcomes toward mainstreaming a culture of accessibility. Consistent with our Strategic Directions goals of access, academic excellence and student, staff and faculty recruitment and retention, we are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all members of our community, with equal access and participation

for everyone. We are committed to identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to full participation in society that may be experienced by persons with disabilities, so as to maintain their dignity and independence.

B. Policies

- Respectful Working and Learning Environment Policy
- Workplace Accommodation Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Service Animals on Campus Policy
- Employment Equity and Diversity Policy
- Privacy Policy
- University Records Policy
- Access to University Buildings and Property Policy
- Parking Policy

C. Actions

The actions in our Accessibility Plan apply to our wider community which includes faculty, staff, volunteers, independent contractors, students, and other community members who access our services or use our facilities. The members of our community share in the responsibility for complying with and toward demonstrating behaviours that are consistent with the Standards under the AMA and goals of our Accessibility Plan. In addition, faculty and administrative heads upon consulting and collaborating where necessary with Accessibility Services, Human Resources, and/or the Human Rights and Diversity Office are responsible for providing support, guidance, and encouraging staff education and supporting our institution's compliance with the legislation. The AMA Steering Committee will retain a leading role in reviewing the process and deadlines, as the other standards under the AMA are rolled out.

In recognizing the needs of persons with disabilities, the University of Winnipeg remains committed to excellence when fostering an inclusive accessible environment when serving all members of our community. In compliance with the Standards and in response to identified barriers we will implement the following action steps to improve accessibility on campus:

1) Communication

Action	Expected Outcome

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All new staff and faculty will continue to be provided mandatory Customer Service Standard training when they join the University, and all staff and faculty will be reminded to refresh their training on a regular basis	Allowing persons with disabilities to clearly communicate their needs and receive appropriate services
Other accessibility training provided by the University will reinforce best practices for accessible communication, the duty to provide reasonable accommodation during communications (and otherwise), and promote the use of Universal Design for Learning	Ensuring the success and inclusion of all students and staff, including those disabled by barriers
Alternative formats and accommodations will continue to be provided as needed, while working towards further implementation of universal design principles	Serve as a model of accessibility for other institutions
Conduct a website, web application, and library accessibility audit and/or internal review to identify any deficiencies or opportunities to improve, and take steps to remedy or improve as needed, and continue to monitor and correct any deficiencies as they arise	Compliance with the Information and Communications Standard

2) Recruitment Processes

Action	**Expected Outcome**
Continue to make an active offer of accommodation during recruitment processes, and provide any needed accommodations	Accessible and equitable recruitment processes
Continue to train managers and those involved with recruitment processes on the AMA Employment Standard and Unconscious Bias/Equitable Hiring Processes	Job applicants and employees are provided with any necessary accommodation, in compliance with The Human Rights Code and The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and Regulations
Provide additional detailed training for managers (and others) about accommodation obligations and processes for employees and their managers	

Continue to ensure all new employees are provided with information about the availability of reasonable accommodation and related processes	

3) Assistive Devices

Action	Expected Outcome
Continue to ensure that University of Winnipeg staff are adequately trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by persons using our goods or accessing our services Continue to ensure that certain designated staff are familiar with the following assistive devices/services available on our premises for persons with disabilities: • TTY • Telephone relay services • FM systems • CCTV • Digital recorders • Scanners • Assistive technology and software • Alternate format production • Academic accommodations for persons with disabilities • Accessible pedestrian routes inside and outside buildings • Multiple format campus accessibility maps showing accessible entry points, washrooms facilities and meeting more	All persons using assistive devices or requiring a support person or service animal are able to fully and consistently access goods/services in a respectful way More consistent application on benefits of using technologies toward improved accessibility of good and services for persons with disabilities

4) Procurement of Goods & Services

Action	Expected Outcome
Continue to encourage accessibility criteria when procuring or acquiring goods and services from external partners Continue to promote accessibility considerations when acquiring or purchasing good and services with RFPs including discussing with persons with disabilities, if relevant to the procurement process	Ensuring good and services procured from others are accessible

5) Disability Accommodation

Action	Expected Outcome
Continue to provide, and expand upon where possible, reasonable accommodations for students, staff, faculty, and community members Promote the use of Universal Design and Universal Design for Learning by providing more training and investing in improvements to create more accessible physical, learning, and working spaces Continue to provide and expand upon training for faculty, managers, staff, and students to help decrease stigma, improve knowledge of accessibility needs, obligations, and rights, and available accessibility supports on campus Review admissions criteria, applications, course delivery methods, and accommodation processes, and establish more accessible processes, etc. as needed Continue to review and update University forms to improve accessibility	Improving accessibility and inclusion of all members of the campus community Serve as a model of accessibility for other institutions Improving transparency regarding responses to accessibility barriers

Continue to gather feedback about accessibility barriers by promoting the Accessibility Survey, and track and report (subject to any confidentiality obligations) responses to feedback or requests

Welcome and respond promptly, using a format that meets the individual's communication needs, to feedback we receive on the accessibility of our goods and services.

6) Administrative and Financial Transactions

Action	Expected Outcome
Continue accessible website features and use PDFs for attached documents Continue to provide administrative and financial documents in other alternate formats upon request	Consistent practice in ensuring accessible operations in administrative and financial transactions

7) Technological

Action	Expected Outcome
Conduct a website, web application, and library accessibility audit and/or internal review to identify any deficiencies or opportunities to improve, and take steps to remedy or improve as needed, and monitor compliance and correct deficiencies on an ongoing basis	Equitable access to learning and working opportunities Compliance with the AMA Information and Communications Standard

Action	Expected Outcome
Ensure website and web application compliance with the Information and Communications Standard, and monitor compliance and correct deficiencies on an ongoing basis Invest in and leverage technology to promote accessibility such as providing online training, information, and course options, captioning, and assistive devices/disability supports Technology Sector/Centre for Academic Technology will continue to provide support to the University community accessing University systems	Serve as a model of accessibility for other institutions

8) Training

Action	Expected Outcome
Continue to ensure that accessibility awareness training is provided to employees following commencement of their duties, and ensure that ongoing training is provided as policies, procedures and practices change, including AMA Customer Service Standard (all employees) and AMA Employment Standard (faculty and managers). Continue to provide and expand upon other accessibility training including: ▪ Duty to accommodate students, including those with learning and other invisible disabilities ▪ General respectful working and learning environment obligations, including human rights principles ▪ Unconscious bias/equitable hiring training to reduce the impact of bias during the hiring process and employment, and awards processes ▪ Employment equity initiatives and best practices	Improving accessibility and inclusion of all members of the campus community Ensuring that students and staff are provided with reasonable accommodation during their studies and related activities Increase awareness about disabilities, decrease stigma, and promote the use of best practices Serve as a model of accessibility for other institutions

Action	
▪ More detailed training for manager(s) and others about accommodation obligations and processes for employees ▪ More detailed training and/or resources for faculty about accommodations for students and Universal Design for Learning ▪ More training about mental health supports ▪ Include information about intersectionality in training ▪ Include Indigenous perspectives in training ▪ Continue to provide training and resources from other accessibility experts, and expand upon same Regularly promote the available training and resources to the University community	

9) Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

Action	Expected Outcome
Continue to welcome persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal or support person on campus Continue to ensure that other measures are made available to enable persons with disabilities the same opportunities, if the service animal is excluded by law Continue to ensure that support persons are not required to pay tuition or incidental fees for courses, unless the support person is also taking the course for credit Continue to provide information to faculty regarding welcoming service animals in classrooms	Improved and consistent practice and access for persons with disabilities requiring the assistance of service animals or service persons

10) Physical Accessibility

Action	Expected Outcome
Continue to prioritize accessibility in capital improvements, including by adding more door operators, accessible washrooms, better signage, classroom accessibility features, and other accessibility features Creation of a set of Accessibility Design Standards that will apply to all newly-constructed and/or renovated spaces, and including these requirements in our Request for Proposals, tender documents, and construction contracts. Continue to apply for other sources of funding to support accessibility improvements.	Improved physical access to campus spaces by all persons Improved learning and working experience on campus

11) Notice of Planned or Unplanned Disruption

Action	Expected Outcome
Continue to provide notice of planned or unplanned disruption of services to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any that may be available, as soon as reasonably possible or in advance (See: **Appendix A** – Notice of Service Disruption Form)	Clear and consistent process for communicating notification on service disruptions(s) More accessible campus for those disabled by physical barriers

12) Feedback process

Action	Expected Outcome

Maintain the feedback processes in place, in order to identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements, including the online feedback form *(See: **Appendix B**)* which is available electronically or in an alternate format, if requested, or via members of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act Steering Committee or Human Rights and Diversity Office (https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect/ama/membership.html; https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect/), and promote those processes Allow for feedback to be provided in person, by telephone, in writing, by e-mail or any other method, and address feedback promptly Welcome and respond promptly, using a format that meets the individual's communication needs, to feedback we receive on the accessibility of our goods and services Track responses to feedback	Robust feedback process for dealing with queries and complaints on institutional accessibility issues Improving transparency regarding responses to accessibility barriers

APPENDIX A

Notice of Service Disruption

Duration of Disruption:

Commencing: _____

Ending:_____

Nature of Service Disruption:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Alternative Services:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Additional Information or Assistance:

Contact person: _____

Location: _____ **Email:** _____

Telephone: _____ **TTY:** _____

This notice is posted in compliance with the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act* **(Regulation 171/2015)**

Date Posted: _____

We apologize for any inconvenience caused by this disruption.

APPENDIX B: ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY

Background Information

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, which became law in Manitoba in December 2013, applies to all public organizations that provide goods and services, including the University of Winnipeg. The goal of the Act is to make Manitoba more accessible for people disabled by barriers by 2020. Each organization is required to create a plan to identify, prevent and remove barriers that limit full participation in society's activities by people with disabilities.

This survey collects feedback on five specific types of barriers that could be faced by individuals; for each question, a definition of the barrier is provided.

By participating in this survey, you will assist the University to create an Accessibility Plan that will include strategies designed to remove barriers that people with disabilities may encounter when they are accessing goods and services from the University. Please review the types of barriers from the list below before responding to the survey questions.

We welcome replies to the survey from all members of the University of Winnipeg Community. If for any reason, you should require the survey in an alternate format (hard copy, PDF version etc.), please feel free to email Hema Krueger Vyas: h.kruegervyas@uwinnipeg.ca or telephone 204-789-4288.

You can also provide your feedback via email, mail, telephone, in person, or by any other method accessible to you. The Human Rights and Diversity Office can be contacted at (204) 988-7508 or hrdo@uwinnipeg.ca. Written comments can be mailed to the HRDO, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 2E9, or dropped off to the HRDO by appointment. All information provided will be kept confidential.

Attitudinal Barriers

Attitudinal barriers are often based on stereotypes or assumptions that limit opportunities or offend the dignity of people with disabilities. An example would be speaking to a support person who is accompanying a person with a disability, instead of communicating with the person directly.
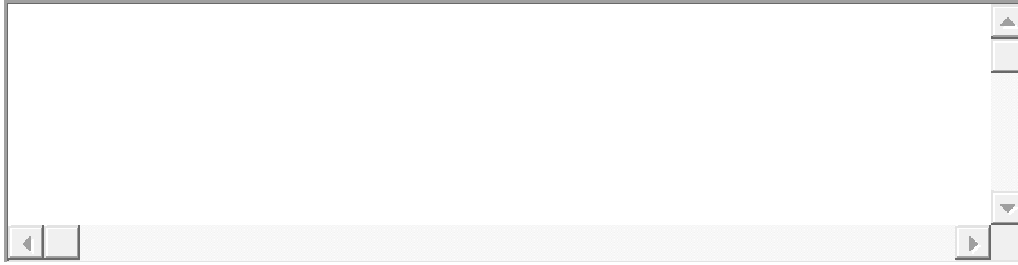
I am aware of attitudinal barriers at the University of Winnipeg:
○ No ○ Yes

I have experienced attitudinal barriers at the University of Winnipeg:
○ No ○ Yes

I have additional comments or suggestions to share regarding attitudinal barriers at the University of Winnipeg. Please comment below:

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Architectural and Physical Barriers

Physical barriers prevent people from accessing your services. Examples would be a classroom in which spaces between tables are too narrow for a student in a wheelchair to navigate easily or inaccessible washrooms.
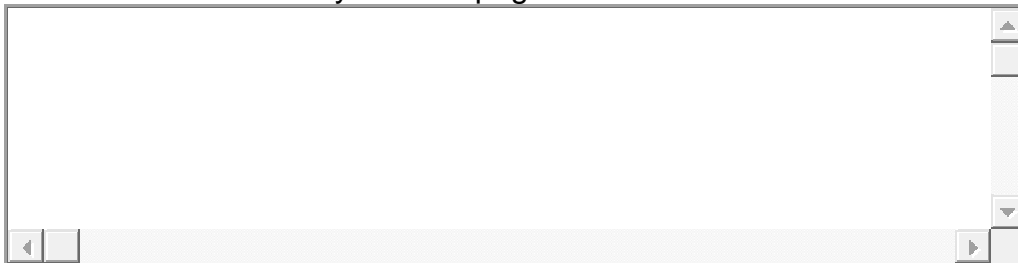
I am aware of physical or architectural barriers at the University of Winnipeg:
○ No ○ Yes

I have experienced architectural and physical barriers at the University of Winnipeg:
○ No ○ Yes

I have additional comments or suggestions to share regarding architectural and physical barriers at the University of Winnipeg. Please comment below:

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Informational and Communications Barriers

These are barriers that prevent people from understanding or accessing information. An example would be a sign providing directions in a building that would not be accessible to members of the public with visual impairments.

I am aware of information and/or communications barriers at the University of Winnipeg:
○ No ○ Yes

I have experienced informational and communications barriers at the University of Winnipeg:
○ No ○ Yes

I have additional comments or suggestions to share regarding informational and communications related barriers at the University of Winnipeg. Please comment below:

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Technology Barriers

These often relate to information and communication. An example would be a website or a course presentation that cannot be used by people who are blind and use a screen reader

I am aware of technological barriers to services that impact people with disabilities at the University of Winnipeg: ○ No ○ Yes

I have experienced technological barriers at the University of Winnipeg:
○ No ○ Yes

I have additional comments or suggestions to share regarding technological related barriers at the University of Winnipeg. Please comment below:
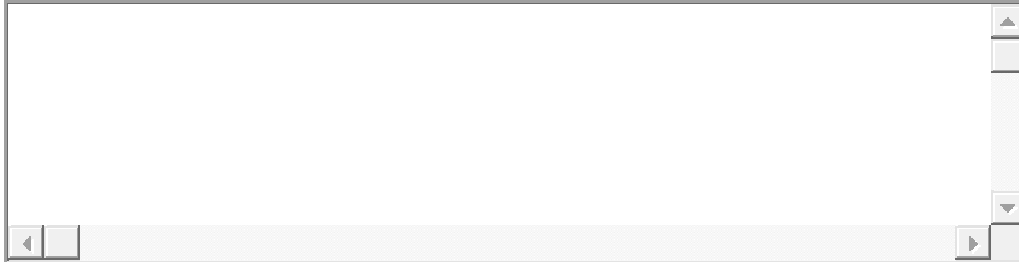
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Systemic Barriers

Systemic barriers are usually created by policies and procedures. Often, a policy is applied to everyone equally but has a negative impact on individuals or groups of persons with disabilities. An example would be a policy which requires all students to complete exams in a specific time period, which may have a negative impact on some students with learning disabilities.

I am aware of policies that create systemic barriers to full access by people with disabilities to goods and services at the University of Winnipeg:
○ No ○ Yes

I have experienced systemic barriers at the University of Winnipeg due to policies or procedures:
○ No ○ Yes

I have additional comments or suggestions to share regarding systemic barriers at the University of Winnipeg. Please comment below:

Optional Demographic Information

I am a... ○ Student ○ Faculty Member ○ Staff Member

Spam Protection. Please answer this question:
4, 5, 6, 7: the 3rd number is?