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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 ma

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

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

The University of Winnipeg   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

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

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

instructions, and links to the 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 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.

suppliers are required to comply with the   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

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:

More online courses should be offered, especially during COVID to protect those who are immune-compromised

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

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

Alternative formats and accommodations will continue to be provided as needed, while working towards further implementation of universal design principles

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 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

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
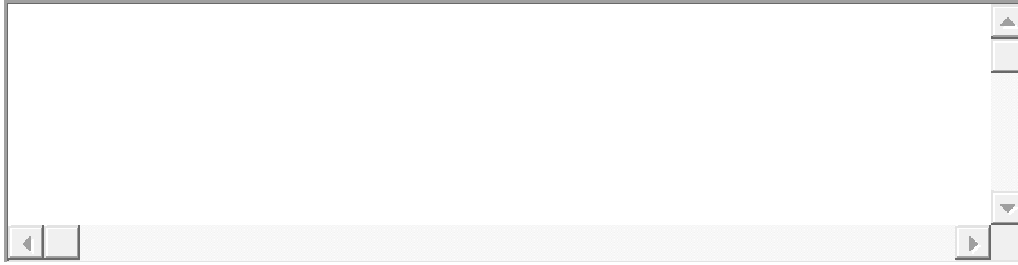
Action	

Maintain the feedback processes in place, in order to

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

[ ]

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.
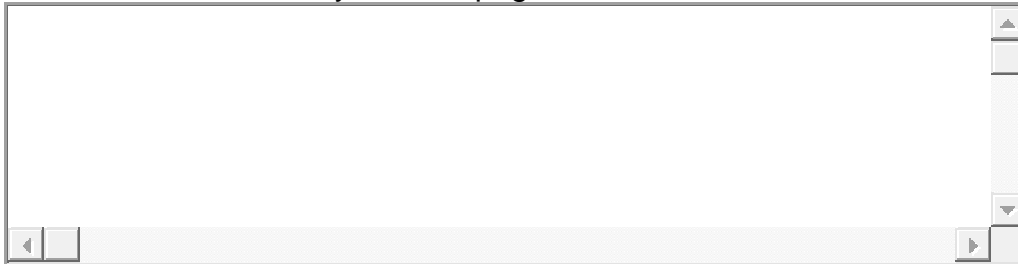
I am aware of physical or architectural barriers at the University of Winnipeg:
○ No ○ Yes

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:

[ ]

[text input box]

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:

[text input box]

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 Withe