Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-2023 Progress Report

Mohawk College

Publication Date

October 2022

Public Communication of the Accessibility Plans and Annual Reports

Mohawk's Accessibility Plans are available:

- Online at the Accessibility website at [accessibility plans and policies](#)

- By telephoning Accessibility at 905-575-1212 ext. 4768.

- By sending an email request to accessibility@mohawkcollege.ca

- By mailing a written request to:

Equity Diversity and Inclusion Office
Mohawk College
Fennel Campus- Wing F-Room 114
135 Fennel Ave W.
Hamilton, ON L9C 0E5

- In alternate formats as requested.

Accessibility Feedback

Mohawk College recognizes that feedback is critical to the process of identifying and removing barriers to participation and improving delivery of our services to persons with disabilities. The [Accessibility Feedback and Complaint Online Form](#) can be used to submit feedback about accessibility to Accessibility Services.

Feedback may also be given by emailing Accessibility at Accessibility@mohawkcollege.ca and by telephone at 905-575-1212 ext. 4717.

Completed [Accessibility Feedback and Complaint Online Form](#) can be saved and emailed to accessibility@mohawkcollege.ca

Completed [Accessibility Feedback and Complaint Online Form](#) can also be printed and mailed to:

Mohawk College
RE: Manager AODA & EDI Initiatives
135 Fennell Ave W. Hamilton, ON L9C 0E5

This document is available in alternate formats upon request. Please contact us at 905-575-1212 ext. 4768 or by email at Accessibility@mohawkcollege.ca

Mohawk College Multi Year Accessibility Plan 2021 Progress Report

Coronavirus COVID-19

A key highlight of this year includes providing a greater level of flexibility by offering courses in hybrid formats, which is a combination of in-person and virtual, across most programs. Many student services and supports will also continue to be available both in-person and virtually.

The continuation of remote learning and working have exacerbated many accessibility challenges for persons with disabilities such as captioning videos for student learning, virtual events, document and website accessibility. These challenges and resulting solutions will continue to shape accessibility at Mohawk College for the future.

Section One: Introduction

Background

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 ("AODA"), Mohawk's College is considered a large designated public sector organization. As such, the college is required to establish, implement, maintain, and document a multi- year accessibility plan. That document constitutes [2019-2021 Multi Year Accessibility Plan](#).

AODA legislation also requires public sector organizations to prepare an Annual Report relative to the multi-year accessibility plan. This Report documents the planning and implementation activities undertaken by Mohawk College as part of the multi-year Plan.

Leadership Commitment

Mohawk College is committed to ensure access to education and reduce barriers for all by expanding access for persons with disabilities among other underrepresented groups. This commitment is formulated as an aspiration in the college's strategic plan [Mohawk College Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025 (PDF)](#).

Accessibility planning provides the college with the opportunity to take a comprehensive look at its services, policies, procedures, practices, and programs to determine which aspects of its operations require action to eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities and advance accessibility. In order to support progress and meaningful implementation of the Plan, the college deployed these principles in accessibility planning:

- Mandatory accessibility training is offered for all staff, faculty, and students acting on behalf of the college.

- Engaged and aware employees incorporate accessibility into daily practices and are encouraged to use accessibility mindset when preparing policy and procedural documents or developing programs and services.

- Accountability is demonstrated through the Plan, made publicly available and in alternative formats upon request.

- All Departments are asked to provide input into the Plan.

Mohawk College Strategic Framework for Accessibility

In recognition of Mohawk's commitment to accessibility and to ensure the thoughts and opinions of persons with disabilities are heard as college plans for an increasingly accessible and inclusive environment, both physical and learning, the college consults following (sub)committees.

1. AODA Steering Committee

The AODA Steering Committee is comprised of senior administrators, who support and move forward the recommendations of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, approve plans, reports, projects and the budget of the committee. The Steering Committee monitors the risks, quality and timeliness of Advisory Group activities and establishes benchmarks.

2. AODA Advisory Committee (recruitment of new members beginning fall 2022)

The Accessibility Advisory Committee is a voluntary advisory body established to provide input to the AODA Steering Committee. The committee is comprised of representatives from the community and a variety of College departments and strives to represent a cross-section of our campuses. The Committee includes students, alumni, staff, faculty, community representatives and members of the disability community.

3. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Sub-Committee

Include input from Centre of teaching and Learning among other departments on embedding UDL in curriculum design and learning management systems.

4. AODA Audit Results Working Committee

AODA Audit Results Working Committee is comprised of various facilities staff and technical experts as required. The committee reviews the audit priorities, plans for implementation, discusses alternative approaches and brings new items not identified in the audit for consideration of implementation.

5. Accessibility Policies group

This group provides feedback on Accessibility policies, procedures, and guidelines.

Section Two: Status Update (2022/2023) - Meeting AODA Requirements

The following is a summary of actions taken to achieve compliance with 2022/2023 applicable requirements under the AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR 191/11).

Customer Service Standards

● Mohawk College welcomes and provides equitable access for persons with disabilities accompanied by a service animal to all college facilities. As a result animals on campus policy was drafted by a committee of campus stakeholders, reviewed and approved on November 2021 and is posted on Corporate Mohawk website(animals on campus policy).

● Improving communication for notification of service disruption is currently in the process. Notification of Service Disruption for Persons with Disabilities Procedure is drafted (revision) and campus stakeholder consultations are taking place before the policy is presented to the Policy Advisory Committee (Fall 2022).

Beside maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces, facilities and grounds at the college; the following facilities and services are subject to the revised Notification of Service Disruptions Procedure:

- • Accessible lift mechanisms
- • Accessible parking
- • Accessible pathways
- • Accessible ramped entrances
- • Accessible washrooms

- Adaptive computer and other technology
- Power door openers to public entrances
- Public Elevators

● Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Policy is in the process of revision to reflect new realities of Hybrid-Hyflex classrooms and social vs medical model of approaching disability along with revised accommodations review committee process. This revised draft will be submitted to the Policy Committee in the Fall 2022.

● Computerized Notetakers deployed to provide virtual accommodation support needed.

● Training delivered on accessible document creation and video tutorials deployed in order to support employees to address accessibility issues. The following courses were offered to the employees:

- Creating Accessible Word Documents
- Creating Accessible PowerPoint presentations
- Creating Accessible Word Documents: using Styles

● Recording policy was added as an addendum to the College's Intellectual Property-Digital/Audio Recording policy subsection in September 2021.

● Digital Policy and addendum reviewed and finalized in the Summer 2022.

● In September 2019, Accessible Learning Lab hours expanded to include One Card tap access for students until 10 pm Mon-Thursday thereby expanding the options of quiet spaces on campus where students can access computers and assistive technology.

● Accessible Learning Services continues to maintain a roster of ALS Interpreters certified by Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) each semester with updates in September 2020/January 2021. In September 2021 Access program area has retained an ASL Interpreter to provide student and staff support as required.

● Accessible Learning Services provided guidance and support to Attendant Care companies who required access to campus, access to washrooms, etc. Accessible Learning Services provided peer/student supports to supplement attendant care services such as assisting students to enter and exit the building and access accessible transportation to and from College.

● Continued consultation with college community to determine compatibility of software programs to enhance accessibility of kiosks. There are limitations in the software that is used within the kiosks. Ideal state would be to have a text reader within but the current system functionalities do not permit this. This issue is being addressed with college stakeholders to determine the solution.

● There are three kiosks at the Welcome Desk at FF; two standard height kiosks and one that is on the desk that can be raised or lowered as needed to ensure appropriate height for individuals using mobility aids/equipment.

● There is currently no audio component to the system for persons who are blind/low vision, however the kiosks are all placed in close proximity to service desk or welcome desk which allows staff to support students in obtaining a ticket if needed. The long-term solution is considered by college stakeholders.

● In order to ensure service counters' functionality for persons with no or low vision, and include usability features for persons who are deaf, deafened or hard-of-hearing, and those who have low dexterity, the counters were included in the Built Environment Audit and are being addressed on a priority basis with available funding each year.

Information and communication standard

Accessible communication and information is crucial aspect of building an accessible organization.

● The emergency evacuation plan for persons with disabilities is under review and multiple stakeholders consulted including Health and Safety, Security and Facilities.

● The need for evacuation equipment for upper levels of facilities was reviewed and Facilities department is considering various options. Currently Fire Department is used to assist in evacuation.

● Areas of refuge across campus identified and will be incorporated into Fire Plans and Procedures.

● Two-way communication systems exist throughout college and near refuge areas. The addition of new locations for two-way communication will be considered in future renovation plans throughout the college.

- Various locations for alarm/emergency communication signage that is accessible, including Braille signage; are identified through the AODA Audit for improvement - to be done on priority basis and as funds are available.

- AODA compliant exterior emergency telephones at the Stoney Creek Campus installed with accessible height and path to be maintained.

- Fennell exterior emergency telephone system installed with accessible path and height to be maintained.

- Thorough annual inspections, as well as weekly testing of the emergency system, are conducted, including strobes and emergency lighting.

191/11, section 14 – Websites conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

Website Editor Training

- Launched new Content Management System: Drupal, equipped with the Web Accessibility Initiative, which enhances websites' accessibility for people with disabilities.

- The training on how to build a webform using the Drupal Content Management System with increased accessibility features was offered to employees with site editor status. (over 400 staff trained since 2016). External Tutorial and resource website established with over 50 tutorials (text and video). (web-marketing.mohawkcollege.ca)

- All web training covers accessibility guidelines (WCAG 2.0 Level AA and AAA principles). Employees receive credit through HR's platform for completing the training.
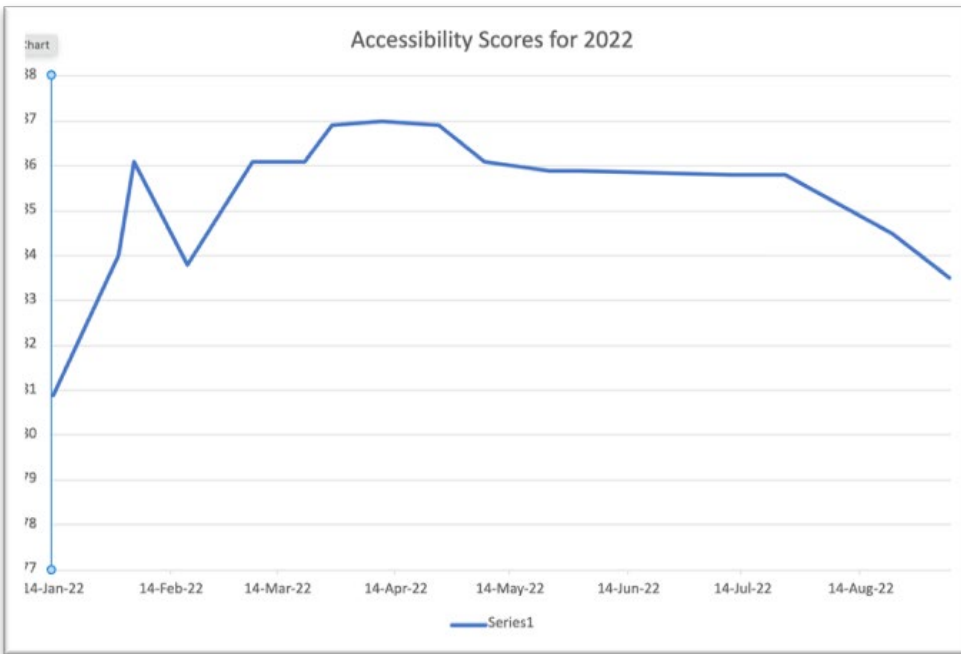
Website Accessibility score

Figure 1: Website Accessibility Scores for 2022

- The SiteImprove continues to raise awareness of website accessibility. Mohawk's Siteimprove Accessibility score varies between a low and high 80s out of 100 as seen in the Fig.1 above. 112 reports issued bi-weekly highlighting issues editors can resolve on their own.

- Most major issues resolved or no longer applicable

- Website accessibility refresher, offered bi-annually.

- With new projects, accessibility review is built into the development cycle.

- Full audit of accessibility web pages is completed with list of Mohawk owned resources to replace external resource pages.

- Challenges:

  Continuous attention needed.

  Websites are constantly changing and accessibility is affected by technical development, web editor's skill, interest level and available time to edit.

Document Accessibility

- Continued assurance that all video graphics and text are compliant with AODA standards, and that audio includes closed captioning.

- Marketing continues to ensure that all videos shared publicly are captioned accurately. (without relying on automatic/AI captions through YouTube or other platforms.)

- Writing Style Guide updated and available on MyMohawk webpage

- Remediating all documents created by Marketing before they are posted to the website. Guidelines and recommendations shared with Design team to improve accessibility of the original document.

- Reviewing documents created outside Marketing and providing feedback for improved accessibility and/or remediating.

- Actively remediating all documents on Mohawk websites that have been flagged (Siteimprove) for remediation.

- Formal proof-reading step in welcome workflows to catch spelling and grammar errors and improve readability.

Document Accessibility Training

- Creating Accessible Word Documents course stats:

  Spring 2022: 3 sessions, 41 attendees, additional sessions for EDI and MCE Teams

  Fall 2022: 3 sessions scheduled

- Accessible Word Documents: Using Styles course stats:

  Spring 2022:2 sessions, 19 attendees

  Fall 2022: 4 sessions scheduled

- Creating Accessible PowerPoint Presentations course stats:

  Spring 2022: 3 sessions, 42 Attendees

  Fall 2022: 3 sessions scheduled

New Document Accessibility tools
(to pilot for the first year, larger rollout if useful)

- axesWord

  improves conversion from Word to PDF

  This in addition to remediation training will allow "super users" to create their own fully compliant PDFs.

- axesPDF

  Speeds PDF remediation by combining testing and remediation tools.

- MadeToTag

  Improves conversion from InDesign to PDF

  License purchased for each graphic designer.

- Site map for proposed Accessibility website is developed and is in the process of being reviewed before submitted for final approval in the Winter 2022.

Captioning

- Videos are being captioned in-house (non-academic content)

- Adobe Premiere Pro is being used for:

  Creating/cleanup of transcript

  Converting to captions

  Finessing timings and line breaks

  Exporting with burned-in captions

- All social media videos are captioned

- New Captioning Policy is drafted and college stakeholders are consulted before presenting to the Policy Committee in the Fall 2022.

Coming soon

Training

- PDF remediation training for 1-on-1 or small group of "super users".

- Review feedback from employees (via surveys) to improve and enhance training.

Manager's Roundtable Presentations

- Starting this fall, bi-annual presentations about overall website accessibility and how managers and their teams can/should be using Siteimprove reports to address issues on their pages and sites.

Resources

- Mohawk-branded tip sheets and videos on library resources web page available now.

- Development and launch of WordPress website that will house documentation and web tutorials for editors, and information and resources for employees (password protected site).

New MyMohawk platform

- Marketing and IT are preparing for a new platform; RFP process coming soon. Accessibility and usability are built into the requirements and will be a focus throughout the implementation.

Ongoing commitment to accessibility

The Goal is 100% compliance with legislation

Ongoing efforts to help us achieve this goal include:

- Enhance understanding of accessibility guidelines and best practices (WCAG 2.0 AA standards)

- Support website editors to ensure they receive required training, resources and time/attention

- Continue to train staff in creating accessible documents

- Ongoing communication about processes and requirements

- Building accessibility consideration into timelines

  E.g., documents, forms, websites, language/content

191/11 Section 15 - Educational and training resources and materials, etc.

● In September 2020 alternative format request website (https://www.mohawkcollege.ca/form/request-alternate-format) revised to allow easier access to alternate format requests and provide information on who to contact if further follow up needed.

● Original source files for the accessibility tip sheets are updated to Office 2019 (they were Office 2016), after which they were to Mohawk-branded.

● Scripts based on the accessibility tip sheets are in the process of being drafted which Marketing will then make into Mohawk-branded videos, to replace the currently linked ones from other institutions. The first ones are expected to be ready for Fall AODA meetings.

● In September 2021, the Accommodate data management system provided the ability to embed the link to the emergency procedures for persons with disabilities into the accommodation statement making it easier for teaching faculty and students to review these procedures.

● Universal Design for Learning (UDL): Multiple efforts throughout the college focus on the implementation of UDL:

UDL content is provided in the CTL Bulletin, is embedded into the Program Review process, is included in the learning management system and via asynchronous UDL tools and resources

Mohawk College was a co-lead on the UDL for IDEA VLS project. The project was completed in 2022 and is in the process of being developed for use at Mohawk College.

UDL education is provided to Mohawk College educators in a wide variety of ways including, but not limited to:

- Modules in TFS
- Modules in CEDP
- Curriculum in Course Re/Design workshops
- Curriculum for curriculum design, development and delivery PD offerings
- Embedded resources in the CTL Course Master Template (UDL)
- Asynchronous implementation initiatives and resources on the Mohawk College's UDL webpages
- The UDL Course Assessment

- The role of the Professor, Teaching & Learning Consultant – UDL is in the Centre for Teaching & Learning. This role, in collaboration with staff and faculty in CTL, determines the strategic direction for UDL implementation in Mohawk College's academic spaces. The Teaching & Learning Consultant – UDL provides curriculum and resources for CTL professional development (PD) offerings, including CEDP and Teaching for Success (TFS).

- UDL is deeply rooted into all CTL professional development (PD) offerings. UDL was an integral part of the CEDP VLS project (completed in 2022) to not only provide UDL education to CEDP participants, but also model the principles of UDL throughout the program. Teaching for Success (TFS) was revamped (completed April 2022) to embed updated UDL content and implementation initiatives, highlight the CTL Course Master Template (UDL), and model UDL use in online teaching and learning environment.

- CTL embeds UDL into the curriculum design and development processes through individual faculty consultation, a variety of PD offerings and as part of the program review process. CTL had developed, and supports the use of, the CTL Course Master Template (UDL) for Mohawk College course development. This template embeds UDL in the structural development of a course in MyCanvas

- CTL also has a UDL representative on the EDI Academic Committee to support the use of UDL to reach the College's EDI Action Plan targets.

191/11 Section 18 - Libraries of educational and training institutions

Upon request, Mohawk Libraries continue to source accessible versions of print resources. Mohawk Library has an ongoing subscription to the Access Content ePortal (or ACE). ACE contains alternative formats of print book collections from participating Ontario colleges and universities. This service is available to Mohawk students and faculty that identify with having a print disability. Users can browse or search the Library's collection of accessible material by logging into ACE with an assigned User or Admin Token which can be obtained by contacting the Accessible Learning Services department. If Mohawk Library has a physical item that is not available in an accessible format, the library than works with ACE to enable access to and alternate version.

- Ongoing updates to library resources (tip sheets and videos) to reflect latest version of Office and Mohawk branding; tip sheets are fully accessible and videos are captioned.

- LinkedIn Learning modules are captioned and include a transcript

- Live captions are enabled during accessible document training, and accessible documentation is provided in advance.

- Third-party providers to supply accessible files (financial reports, for instance) when needed to make remediation and accessibility preparation that much easier.

- Library personnel continue to partner with internal departments in initiatives to assure a steady pool of closed-captioners. The Mohawk Library team has bolstered and enhanced service points that ensure usability and equity of access. With this, library has recently relaunched Library@MyCanvas module to ensure that all content aligns with universal design and AODA standards. Staff training on this topic has been acquired through internal and external professional development.

- Mohawk Library has continued partnership with Accessible Learning Services as well as continued a dialogue with other college stakeholders. Service and access to resources is a collaborative process whereby the aim is to ensure that barriers are removed to student learning. With a focus on hybrid learning, Mohawk Library only acquires educational videos that align with AODA standards.

Design of Public Spaces and the Built Environment

- Purchase of additional ceiling lifts for each accessible washroom is reviewed and so that each area of the campus has the equipment required to meet the needs of students who require use of a lifts. Current fixed ceiling lifts are in E002 and E102. There is foyer lift in A021.

- Municipal and University Facility Accessibility Design Standards were reviewed in order to adopt Standard to serve as reference for College construction projects. Mohawk College is in the process of developing its own Facility Accessibility Design Standards.

- Built Environmental Standard Audit draft complete - reviewing and setting priorities. Identified minimum $3.5m in upgrades required to meet AODA compliance

Employment Standard

● Human Resources Department provides ongoing access to accessible document production resources and just-in-time support for employees. HR department works with Marketing to provide training on creating accessible word and PP documents among other accessible document formats. HR department maintains courses available to support employees learning about accessible document production through LinkedIn Learning and other eLearning training on WAM site including training and resources related to Creating Accessible Word Documents, Creating Accessible PDF's, Creating Accessible PowerPoint Presentations and Advanced Accessible PDF's. All of these courses are available as asynchronous learning to compliment the live sessions conducted by Marketing. There is direct access to employee support on MyMohawk Under Professional Development (Under Questions related to PD events "if you require any of our materials in an accessible format", please contact us by email at professionaldevelopment@mohawkcollege.ca)

● Human Resources reviews all non-AODA related training modules to ensure availability in alternate formats as needed. Any new training that HR department creates provides alternative formats including the written word or transcripts. The registration includes the option to request any accommodations as part of training sessions. When working with training that comes from other areas of the college or is part of the Working at Mohawk System, mandatory intake form that asks about AODA compliance and requirement is provided. As the internal partners update any training on the site from previous years they will be asked to ensure they are AODA compliant.

● Flexible Work Arrangement Policy was revised on April 28, 2022 to accommodate employees with various needs including persons with disabilities.

● All members of hiring panels completed a bias-free training guide and ensured that bias-free hiring practices were undertaken when considering hiring applicants.

Section Three: Moving Forward to 2025

AODA Requirements

All new information that is uploaded to Mohawk College's websites, MUST conform to World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 at a Level AA (2021). As with all the preceding AODA requirements, failure to meet these requirements could lead to a noncompliance designation and result in financial implications for the College.

Expected Future AODA Standards

Education Standard

The provincial government has decided to develop two Education Standards: one for K-12 and a second for post-secondary.

The Standard Development Committee (SDC) has developed recommendations for a proposed accessibility standard to address barriers in publicly funded postsecondary education provided by colleges and universities, as required by Section 9 of the AODA. Government of Ontario has posted both the Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee's Final Recommendations Report and the Education Technical Sub-Committee's Transition Report online in March 2022. The government is now carefully reviewing recommendations and may accept them in full, in part, or with modification.

Health Care Standard

As part of Ontario's Accessibility Action Plan, the Government of Ontario has committed to identifying and addressing accessibility barriers in the health-care sector through the creation of a Health Care Standard. The SDC will develop a new accessible Health Care Standard as required by Section 9 of the AODA. The draft with final recommendations was released this year.

Accessible Canada Act

The Accessible Canada Act (long title: An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada) builds on the Canadian Human Rights Act, focusing on the prohibition of discrimination based on disability. This is a Canada wide accessibility act that applies to the federal public sector, Crown Corporations, and all federally regulated organizations. The federally regulated organizations include the following industries:

- railways, airplanes and inter-provincial buses
- banks, mining companies, railways, airlines, and trucking
- television and radio

Section Four: Conclusion

Creating an accessible institution requires collaborative work to remove barriers and create greater opportunities for all. As our current MYAP reached its end, we are excited to build on what we have learned over the past four years and to work to bring true and continued inclusion of persons with diverse abilities to the college. This mindfulness is critical in the current organizational Equity, Diversity and Inclusion focus.   An intersectional lens is needed to understand fully the interaction of different social identities. The accessibility principles of dignity, independence, equitable opportunity and integration are crucial to successful equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts. 2022 is already proving to be an exciting year, where we begin establishing our next MYAP 2023-2026, taking into consideration the anticipated requirements of the upcoming AODA Education Standard.