



Additional Information for You

At www.AccessON.ca/compliance you'll find information and resources to help you understand how to comply with the regulation.

Please note: This document is for information purposes only. This is not legal advice and should be read together with the official language of the standard. To view the official wording of the regulation, go to www.e-laws.on.ca or contact ServiceOntario or Publications Ontario for a print copy.

For more information or to get this document in an alternate format, contact:

**Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
Contact Centre (ServiceOntario)**
Phone: 1-866-515-2025
TTY: 416-325-3408 / TTY Toll-free: 1-800-268-7095
Fax: 416-325-3407
Website: www.AccessON.ca

Access
ON
donne
accès

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Summary of Requirements

Access
ON
donne
accès

Breaking Barriers Together
www.AccessON.ca

customer service

What you need to know

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) came into force on January 1, 2008. If you are a provider of goods or services, and have one or more employees in Ontario, you will be required to comply with the regulation.

- If you are a public sector organization designated in the standard, you must comply by January 1, 2010.
- If you are a private business, non-profit organization, or any other service provider with at least one employee in Ontario, you must comply by January 1, 2012.

The regulation outlines some things you must do in order to ensure you are providing accessible customer service to people with various kinds of disabilities. The following is a summary of requirements:

1. Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities.
2. Set a policy on allowing people to use their own personal assistive devices to access your goods and use your services and about any other measures your organization offers (assistive devices, services, or methods) to enable them to access your goods and use your services.
3. Use reasonable efforts to ensure that your policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.
4. Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
5. Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who interact with the public or other third parties on your behalf on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
6. Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who are involved in developing your policies, practices and procedures on the provision of goods or services on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
7. Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in those areas of the premises you own or operate that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by another law. If a service animal is excluded by law, use other measures to provide services to the person with a disability.
8. Permit people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them while accessing goods or services in premises open to the public or third parties.
9. Where admission fees are charged, provide notice ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person of a person with a disability.
10. Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access or use your goods or services are temporarily disrupted.
11. Establish a process for people to provide feedback on how you provide goods or services to people with disabilities and how you will respond to any feedback and take action on any complaints. Make the information about your feedback process readily available to the public.

If you are a designated public sector organization or other provider with 20 or more employees, you must:

1. Document in writing all your policies, practices and procedures for providing accessible customer service and meet other document requirements set out in the standard.
2. Notify customers that documents required under the customer service standard are available upon request.
3. When giving documents required under the customer service standard to a person with a disability, provide the information in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Some small steps you can take immediately to improve accessibility include:

- treating all customers with dignity and respect
- asking 'How may I help you?'

Access
ON
donne
accès

Breaking Barriers Together

The University of Western Ontario is committed to increasing accessibility to our services for persons with disabilities who study, visit or work at Western. We can increase accessibility by proactively identifying and removing barriers so persons with disabilities can receive service in a respectful way.

All leaders, faculty, staff, volunteers, contractors and others who interact with, or provide service to members of the public are to ensure they meet the expectations of *Western's Guideline Regarding Accessible Goods and Services*, and the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.

At Western, members of the public include, but are not limited to, students, alumni, retirees, and visitors. More information can be found at www.accessibility.uwo.ca

Senior Directors of Administration and Associate Vice-Presidents will identify the organizational units and leaders within a Faculty or Division that will need to complete an *Accessibility: Service Review and Planning Tool*. Through this process, leaders and colleagues will have an opportunity to review and adjust work practices, as needed, to meet the accessibility expectations. This process will begin in November 2009.

Instructions: Whether or not you are involved in completing a Service Review and Planning Tool, please read this summary and identify what you can do to make your services more accessible. **If you see practices that need to change, share your thoughts with your leader to ensure consistency across the unit.**

Tip: Focus on the questions in the right hand column – these are items for a unit or department to consider. Other aspects of the AODA requirements are addressed through Western's commitments described below.

Topic	AODA Requirement (Req.) and Western's Commitment	Implementing AODA Requirements (Tips and Questions for leaders and work groups)
<p>1. Communication Expectations</p> <p>General Principles of Accessible Service</p>	<p>Req: Communicate in a manner that takes into account a person's disability. This includes, but is not limited to, print, verbal, and interpersonal communication used in delivering service.</p> <p>Req: Use reasonable efforts to ensure all service policies, work practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dignity (person is able to maintain his or her self-respect and respect of others) • Independence (person is able to do things on her own without unnecessary help) • Integration (person is able to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as others) • Equal Opportunity (person has the same opportunity as others to benefit from the way you provide goods or services) 	<p>Tip: Refer to the Western brochure, <i>Tips for Providing Accessible Service</i>, available at www.accessibility.uwo.ca</p> <p>Q. What are the points of contact where a person (student, alumni, visitor, retiree) receives service (e.g. at a counter, in a lab or classroom, at an event, over the phone, via email)?</p> <p>Q. At these contact points, what barriers to service might persons with disabilities encounter? What changes would improve accessibility?</p>
<p>2. Assistive Devices</p>	<p>Req: Set a policy on allowing persons with disabilities to use their own assistive devices.</p> <p>At Western, this requirement is addressed in Western's Guideline Regarding Accessible Goods and Services - <i>persons with disabilities are welcome to use their assistive devices.</i></p> <p>Req: If your services offer assistive devices (such as special equipment or software), document and communicate what is available. Ensure those providing service know what the devices are, how they work, or whom to contact about operating them.</p>	<p>Q. If your services provide assistive devices or have special measures in place to assist persons with disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are the devices and special measures documented and communicated widely through signage, website or other means? • are those who provide service trained in how to use the devices?
<p>3. Service Animals</p>	<p>Req: Allow service animals onto your premises except where prohibited by law (e.g. health and safety reasons). Offer an alternative method of assistance if the service animal is prohibited.</p> <p>At Western, this requirement is addressed in Western's Guideline Regarding Accessible Goods and Services - <i>persons with disabilities are welcome to use a service animal except where prohibited by law.</i></p>	<p>Q: Are there any areas in your unit where a service animal would be prohibited by law?</p> <p>If yes, please work with the person to find an alternative method of assistance to allow the person to receive service.</p>
<p>4. Support Persons</p>	<p>Req: Allow persons with disabilities to be accompanied by a support person.</p> <p>At Western, this requirement is addressed in Western's Guideline Regarding Accessible Goods and Services - <i>support persons are welcome to assist persons with disabilities provided that the interaction does not compromise academic integrity by removing or otherwise undermining essential requirements of courses or academic programs.</i></p> <p>Req: Where admission fees are charged for a support person, provide notice ahead of time of the amount.</p>	<p>Tip: Contact Western's Services for Students with Disabilities for questions about the appropriate role for support persons in student academic work.</p> <p>Q. Do you charge admission fees for support persons? (When possible, please waive fees for support persons to attend services, events, etc.)</p> <p>Q. If you charge an admission fee, is the fee communicated widely in advance through advertisements, website, brochure or other public methods?</p>

Topic	AODA Requirement (Req.) and Western's Commitment	Implementing AODA Requirements (Tips and Questions for leaders and work groups)
5. Disruptions in Service	<p>Req: Provide notice when there is a temporary disruption in services usually used by persons with disabilities to access goods and services. Notices must indicate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the reason for the disruption 2) the expected duration 3) a description of alternate facilities or services, if available. <p>At Western, the Accessibility at Western website will post disruptions related to physical facilities (e.g. elevators, buildings), ITS web and data services, and Campus Recreation.</p> <p>Physical Plant staff or contractors are to post Service Interruption signage on facilities they maintain or service.</p>	<p>Q. How can your unit communicate local disruptions in your services (e.g. cancelled classes, closures for department meetings)?</p> <p>Tip: Use options like an email to participants, a posting on a department website, and signage to communicate your local disruptions. Please indicate the reason for the disruption, the expected duration, and alternate facilities or services, if available.</p> <p>Q. Which methods will you use to direct people to the Accessibility at Western website to find general service disruptions (e.g. through your websites, course outlines, face-to-face, as needed, etc.)?</p> <p>Tip: A department can request that a disruption notice be posted on the Accessibility at Western website using the web form provided. Make this request when it necessary to inform the general public of a disruption.</p>
6. Feedback Process	<p>Req: Establish a feedback process regarding accessibility and communicate the process to the public. Allow persons to provide feedback through a variety of methods (e.g. in person, by telephone, in writing, by email, or other electronic means).</p> <p>At Western, feedback should be directed to Accessibility at Western, accessibility@uwo.ca 519-661-2111 x85562. The feedback will be forwarded to the appropriate individual or area for follow-up.</p>	<p>Q. Which methods will you use to direct people to the Accessibility at Western feedback process (e.g. through your websites, course outlines, face-to-face, as needed, etc.)?</p> <p>Tip: Units/departments are encouraged to continue to receive direct comment or feedback as they would for any aspect of their service. If the matter is not resolved, the Accessibility at Western feedback process is available.</p>
7. Learning	<p>Req: Training about accessible goods and services must be provided to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) faculty, staff members, contractors, volunteers and others who interact with members of the public and (b) every person involved in the development of policies, practices, and procedures regarding the provision of goods and services. <p>Req: Training is to occur on an ongoing basis in connection with changes made to relevant policies, practices and procedures.</p> <p>Req: Training is to be provided to each person as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned applicable duties.</p> <p>At Western, leaders are to support and ensure the above learning takes place. All members of the Western community are to ensure they receive the appropriate AODA training.</p>	<p>Q. Who needs to receive training in your unit – now; and as new members join?</p> <p>Tip: Training options include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) In-person learning sessions (sponsored by Human Resources). 2) On-line training available at www.accessibility.uwo.ca (starting Dec. 2009). 3) Train-the-trainer (where unit leaders deliver training). 4) Review AODA learning resources with outside contractors who interact with the public. Resources include: <i>Tips for Providing Accessible Service</i> and <i>Accessible Service: Summary of Requirements</i>. See www.accessibility.uwo.ca <p>Note: please consult Learning and Development Services for Options 3 and 4 - topics are specified by the AODA Accessibility Standards.</p>
8. Records of Training	<p>Req: Records of training are required.</p> <p>At Western, Human Resource Services will keep records of training for those attending HR-sponsored learning sessions, or completing on-line learning via the Accessibility at Western website. For training done within a unit (e.g. through staff meetings or other means) leaders are to keep records, including the person's first name, last name, employee ID number, and date of training. Use an Excel file so information can later be merged into Western Human Resource records.</p>	<p>Q. Is training taking place within your Unit or Division (e.g. through staff meetings or other means)?</p> <p>Q. If yes, is this training being tracked as required?</p>
9. Documentation	<p>Req: Document policies, practices, and procedures for providing accessible service. Notify the public that the documents are available upon request, in an accessible format.</p> <p>At Western, Guidelines for Accessible Goods and Services, Accessibility at Western Policy, and Accessibility Feedback Process can be found at www.accessibility.uwo.ca</p>	<p>Q. Does your unit/department have any specific work practices or procedures for providing accessible services?</p> <p>Q. If yes, are these documented and, have you notified the public through your website, brochure or other public methods that the documents are available upon request?</p>

Physical Disabilities

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities. Some people may use assistive devices. Others may have conditions such as arthritis, or heart or lung conditions and may have difficulty with moving, standing, or sitting for long periods.

- Ask before providing help. Persons with physical disabilities often have their own way of doing things.
- If the person uses a wheelchair or scooter, sit down beside him/her, to enable eye contact and reduce neck strain for longer interactions.
- Offer preferential seating.
- If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair, avoid leaving the person in an awkward position, such as facing a wall.

Hearing Loss

There are different types of hearing loss. Commonly used terms are hard of hearing, deafened, deaf and Deaf. Persons who are deafened or hard of hearing may use devices such as hearing aids, cochlear implants, or FM systems; they may rely on lip reading. A person with little or no functional hearing may use sign language.

- Ensure you have his/her attention before speaking. Discreetly wave your hand or gently tap the shoulder if needed.
- Reduce background noise.
- Keep your face visible to enable lip reading. If the person is using an interpreter, speak directly to the person; not the interpreter.
- Speak clearly, pacing your speech

and pauses normally. Don't shout or over-pronounce your words.

- Offer to communicate in writing (pen and paper) as needed.

Vision Loss

Few people with vision loss are totally blind. Some have limited vision, such as the loss of side, peripheral, or central vision.

- Don't assume the person cannot see you.
- To get the person's attention, address him/her directly; say your name; do not touch the person.
- Ask the person in which format she would like to receive information.
- When providing printed information, offer to read, summarize or describe it.
- Don't be afraid to use words such as "see", "read" or "look".
- When offering to guide someone, hold out your elbow. Give clear, precise directions.

Deafblind

People who are deafblind have a combination of vision and hearing loss. Many persons who are deafblind will be accompanied by an intervenor, a person who helps with communicating. Many different ways may be used to communicate, including sign language, tactile sign language, Braille, speech and lip reading.

- Ask the person what will help the two of you to communicate.
- Many people will explain what to do, perhaps giving you an assistance card or note.
- Suddenly touching a person

who is deafblind can be alarming and should only be done in emergencies.

Speech or Language Disabilities

Some persons have problems expressing themselves, or understanding written or spoken language.

- Don't assume that a person who has difficulty speaking also has an intellectual or developmental disability.
- Allow the person to complete what he is saying without interruptions.
- If you don't understand, ask the person to repeat the information.
- Ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'.
- If the person uses a communication board, symbols or cards, follow her lead.

Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

Intellectual or developmental disabilities such as Down Syndrome can limit a person's ability to learn, communicate, and live independently.

- As much as possible, treat persons with an intellectual or developmental disability like anyone else. They will appreciate respectful treatment.
- Speak slowly and use plain language.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Ask, "Do you understand this?" to check your communication.

Tips for Providing Accessible Service

"How may I help you?"

ACCESSIBILITY

The University of Western Ontario

Western's Commitment: Providing the best experience for persons with disabilities

The University of Western Ontario is committed to increasing the accessibility for persons with disabilities who study, visit or work at Western. We can increase accessibility by proactively identifying and removing barriers so persons with disabilities can receive service in a respectful way.

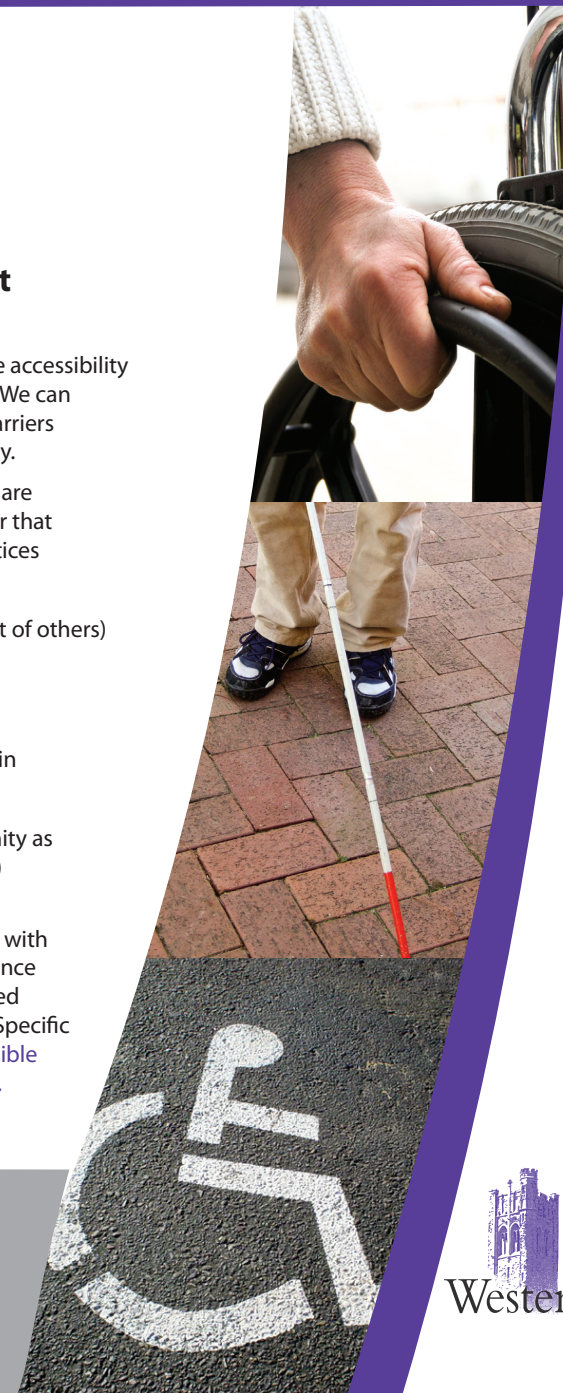
Those who interact with, or provide service to others at Western are asked to communicate with persons with disabilities in a manner that takes the person's disability into account, and to align their practices with four principles of accessible service as much as possible:

- **Dignity** (person is able to maintain his self-respect and respect of others)
- **Independence** (person is able to do things on her own without unnecessary help)
- **Integration** (person is able to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as others)
- **Equal Opportunity** (person is able to have the same opportunity as others to benefit from the way you provide goods or services)

This document provides tips for interacting and communicating with persons with disabilities. The information is prepared in accordance with The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, developed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. Specific requirements can be found in the companion document, [Accessible Service: Summary of Requirements](#) at www.accessibility.uwo.ca.

The University of
Western Ontario

The goal of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) (2005) is to make Ontario accessible by 2025 through the development of accessibility standards. The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation, 429/07) is now law. Other standards currently in development are Information and Communications, Built Environment, Employment, and Transportation.



“How may I help you?”

General Tips for Providing Accessible Service

Keep this Overall Service PACTT:

Pay calm, individual attention to the other person

- Avoid making assumptions about a person's capabilities.
- Adjust posture/sit down as needed for face-to-face service.

Ask “How May I help?”

- Usually, a person with a disability knows what works best for him/ her.
- Before ending your interaction, ask “Does that help you with your need?”

Communicate clearly and patiently to ensure shared understanding

- Allow the person to finish what he is saying without interrupting.
- Provide one piece of information at a time; repeat or rephrase as necessary.
- If you don't understand what's being said, don't pretend, ask again.
- As needed, ask if another method of communicating would be easier—e.g. always have a pen and paper available.

Treat the other person with respect

- Focus on the person as a unique individual.
- Pay attention to her dignity, independence, sense of integration and equality.

Try to see the world in terms of accessibility

- Take into account the ways persons with disabilities experience your services.
- Know the location of nearby ramps, elevators, automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.

Terminology

- Use “disability,” not “handicapped” or “impaired.”
- Say “person with a learning disability” rather than “learning disabled.” Put the person first.

Telephone

- Concentrate on what's being said, not how the person's voice sounds.
- Address the person with a disability directly, even if the person is using an interpreter over the phone.
- If communication is very difficult, make arrangements to call a support person.

Physical Space

- Ensure the area is well-lit so faces are visible for lip-reading.
- Clear aisles, remove obstacles.
- Keep furniture layout the same over time, if possible.
- Reduce background noise.

Alternate Formats

Using alternate formats means making information available in ways other than the original format. Some persons may be able to access information through their own computer software (e.g. translate into audio or enlarged text).

- Offer plain text electronic versions of notes, email attachments, brochures, presentation material. To do this, save files using the option with the .txt extension. Html, pdf, rtf versions are also generally accessible, but are more difficult to work with. Avoid scanned images.
 - Provide information in advance – this can be helpful for those with vision loss, hearing loss, or learning disabilities.
 - Identify text books as early as possible, to give the person with a disability time to have them produced in an alternate format such as Braille.
 - Design websites and web content in an accessible format. Use templates and best practices provided by Communications and Public Affairs. <http://communications.uwo.ca/comms/web.htm>
 - If you have questions related to web accessibility or how to make electronic information accessible, visit the website: <http://www.uwo.ca/IP/barrierfree> or email barrierfree@uwo.ca
- #### Event Hosting
- Add a standard line to invitations such as “Please contact (name) if you require information in an alternate format, or if any other arrangements can make

RESOURCES

- Advice regarding students: Services for Students with Disabilities: ssd@uwo.ca 519-661-2147 x82147
- Advice regarding staff and faculty: Rehabilitation Services: 519-661-2111 x85578
- Building and facility inquiries: Physical Plant: ppdhelp@uwo.ca 519 661-3304 x83304
- Accessibility Feedback: accessibility@uwo.ca 519 661-2111 x85562
- Advice regarding alternate formats: barrierfree@uwo.ca

this event accessible to you.”

- In the invitation, describe the location of ramps, automatic doors, elevators, etc.
- Include a link to the campus accessibility map <http://accessibility.uwo.ca/maps.htm>

Service Animals

Service animals include guide dogs, hearing alert animals, animals who help calm anxiety or alert their owner to oncoming seizures. The owner is responsible for the care and control of the animal.

- Allow service animals, except in areas where prohibited by law (e.g. health and safety reasons).
- Offer an alternative method of assistance if the animal is prohibited.
- Avoid touching a service animal – it is working and has to pay attention at all times.

Support Persons

A support person can be a personal support worker, a volunteer, a family member or friend of the person with the disability. They may offer physical assistance, personal care, interpretation, note taking or other services.

- Allow access to a support person, provided that the interaction does not compromise academic integrity.
- Ask if it is not clear who the support person is.
- Speak directly with the person with a disability, not the support person.
- Plan for support persons; reserve space for them and provide

both parties written materials.

- Waive admission fees for support persons when possible. If a fee is charged, provide notice of the amount ahead of time.

Assistive Devices

Examples: wheelchairs, canes, hearing aids, listening devices (FM systems), laptops with screen-reading software.

- The assistive device is an extension of the person's personal space – touch only if asked to, and don't move it out of the person's reach.
- If your area provides assistive devices such as special equipment or software, become familiar with what they are, how they work, or whom to contact about operating them.

How can I help someone who is having difficulty accessing my service?

- Ask the person how you may best help them.
- If you see that a service or facility isn't working, contact the unit responsible.
- Seek help from Western resources listed at the top of this brochure.
- Inform the person of the Accessibility at Western Feedback Process if the issue is unresolved.

Specific Tips for Interacting with Persons with Various Types of Disabilities

Learning Disabilities

Examples include dyslexia (problems

with reading and language-based learning); dyscalculia (problems with mathematics); and dysgraphia (problems with writing and fine motor skills). Having a learning disability does not mean a person is incapable of learning. Rather, it means they learn in a different way.

- Ask the person how he would like to receive information. For example, if you have written material, offer to read the information aloud.
- Be willing to explain something again – it may take a little longer for the person to process information.
- Give extra time to complete a task.

Mental Health Disabilities

Mental health disabilities can cause changes in a person's thinking, emotional state and behaviour and can disrupt the person's ability to work. These changes may also affect the way the person interacts with others. With most mental health problems, the symptoms are not static and can improve or worsen over time. These disabilities are often invisible.

- Ask the best way you can help.
- Be patient and respectful. A person with a mental health disability may have difficulty concentrating.
- If the person is in crisis, call Western's 911 Emergency Services for medical or other assistance, as needed.
- Ensure safety of all.