Accessible Teaching and Learning

ACCESSIBLE TEACHING AND LEARNING

POST-SECONDARY ACCESSIBILITY WORKING GROUP

CONTENTS

WELCOME

Creating inclusive academic environments is a shared responsibility. Leadership, faculty, staff, and students all have a role to play in ensuring that students with permanent, temporary, or episodic disabilities have equitable opportunities to learn and participate in campus life, both in-person and online. We need to foster inclusive, equity-centred learning environments that celebrate, recognize, adapt to, and accommodate diverse learning needs.

As a community, we are committed to providing students with opportunities to develop and sustain self-reliance and tap into their strengths. Ensuring that the built environment, learning materials, and educational approaches are designed for universal access benefits everyone. Post-secondary institutions in Nova Scotia value students with disabilities as integral contributors to **accessibility** and partners in learning.

This guide provides:

- An overview of Nova Scotia's accessibility laws
- An overview of **disability** and accessibility
- A short introduction to Universal Design for Learning (UDL) with links to additional resources
- Strategies for teaching students with disabilities and/or

who face **barriers**

- A review of our roles and responsibilities as members of campus communities

In addition to text, there are embedded links to engaging learning assets, including:

- Videos
- Infographics
- Checklists and downloads

The guide and learning assets are offered as touchstones, not a set of prescriptive steps you must follow. The materials aim to inspire and invite you to learn more and take action to create accessible learning environments. You don't need to change everything at once! You'll try some things, learn from them, and continue to integrate different approaches. A few iterative, meaningful changes can make a big difference.

Please use this material to learn, adapt, and grow your professional practice. Share it with colleagues and work together to make Nova Scotia campuses inclusive for all community members.

Acknowledgements

The Post-Secondary Accessibility Working Group gratefully

acknowledges the faculty, staff, and students who contributed their time, energy, and expertise to the creation of this guide.

The Post-Secondary Accessibility Working Group recognizes the support of the Province of Nova Scotia. We are pleased to work in partnership with the **Accessibility Directorate** to develop these resources for Nova Scotia's post-secondary sector.

This work advances commitments in Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Accessibility Framework.

This document is also available on the Atlantic OER site.

Accessibility features of the Web version of this resource

- All images and infographics have **Alt text**.
- All videos have closed captions and **American Sign Language** (ASL) interpretation. Thank you to the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) for filming and coordinating ASL interpretation and hosting the videos.
- WC3 web standards have been applied.

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Student Voice

Student voice is integrated through short videos and personas. We thank all students for contributing to this project.

These three videos share the stories of three students, including the barriers they face, and what helps make teaching

and learning more accessible. When you click on each video, it will open in a new tab.

Tomi (6:12)

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Dawson (3:54)

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Michelle (6:53)

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Reflect:

- What key messages will you take away from these videos?
- What supports or enablers helped to make learning environments more accessible and inclusive?

1.

ACCESSIBILITY ON CAMPUS: OUR LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Every student in Nova Scotia has the right to equitable access to education. The students you encounter may face systemic inequities and multiple forms of discrimination. Some of these barriers may be obvious to you, and some may not. Understanding your students' lived experiences as persons with disabilities is a first step in responding to their individual needs as learners. It is part of our responsibility as educators.

Any student accepted to our institution has met academic entrance requirements. We must make education accessible while respecting the academic integrity of each course and program. This is a matter of **equity**.

What is the law when it comes to accessibility in Nova Scotia?

The Nova Scotia Human

Rights Act

The [Nova Scotia Human Rights Act](#) is the law in Nova Scotia that defines discrimination and is administered by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. It prohibits discrimination against a range of individuals, including persons with disabilities.

- [La version française](#)

The Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia

In 2017, Nova Scotia passed the *Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia*. The aim of the [*Accessibility Act*](#) is to make Nova Scotia accessible by 2030. It recognizes accessibility as a human right, and includes six accessibility standards that are currently under development. It also requires universities and NSCC to develop and implement accessibility plans and have accessibility advisory committees. Nova Scotia is the third province to enact accessibility legislation, after Ontario in 2005 and Manitoba in 2013. More recently, the Governments of Canada, British Columbia, and Newfoundland and Labrador have also passed accessibility legislation.

The Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Accessibility Framework

Equitable practices are the foundation for academic excellence in Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions. [Nova Scotia's Post-Secondary Accessibility Framework](#) was developed by the Post-Secondary Accessibility Working Group and published in 2020 by the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP) and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC). The purpose of the Framework is to establish a shared vision and commitments for accessibility in Nova Scotia's post-secondary sector, and to inform the development of institutional accessibility plans.

> Access to education is a human right, and Nova Scotia's post-secondary sector is committed to ensuring access for persons with disabilities and others who experience barriers to accessibility, such as those who identify as **Deaf**, or **neurodivergent**. Accessibility is a collaborative practice, requiring participation from all stakeholders – departments, faculty, staff, students, and partners. It requires understanding the barriers persons with disabilities face accessing education and committing to prevent and remove them through the proactive design and revision of programs, policies, practices, services, and infrastructure.
>
> *[...]*
>
> Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act recognizes accessibility

as a human right and has a goal of an [accessible province by 2030](#). Under the Act, Nova Scotia's universities and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) were prescribed as public sector bodies, effective April 1, 2020. This means they must develop multi-year accessibility plans, establish accessibility advisory committees, and comply with accessibility standards when they are developed. The aim is to remove barriers for persons with disabilities in accessing post-secondary education in Nova Scotia and working at our post-secondary institutions.[1]

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1. Post-Secondary Accessibility Framework section is copied from: Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents and Nova Scotia Community College. (2020). *Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Accessibility Framework.* https://www.nscc.ca/docs/about-nscc/nova-scotia-post-secondary-accessibility-framework.pdf

2.

UNDERSTANDING DISABILITIES

What are disabilities? (3:16)

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Student Voice

These three videos share the stories of three students, including the barriers they face, and what helps make teaching and learning more accessible. When you click on each video, it will open in a new tab.

Mikey (5:00)

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Zia (3:04)

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Bree (7:04)

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Reflect:

- What key messages will you take away from these videos?
- What supports or enablers helped to make learning environments more accessible and inclusive?

According to the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability by Statistics Canada, Nova Scotia has a higher percentage of citizens with disabilities than any other province in Canada. 30% of Nova Scotians 15 and older have at least one disability. 21% of youth aged 15 to 24 have at least one disability.

30% of Nova Scotians 15 years and older have at least one disability

The Canadian Average is: 22.3%.

NS	NB	PE	YK	MB	BC	SK	ON	NL	CA	AB	NT	NU	QC
30.4	26.7	26	25.2	24.8	24.7	24.3	24.1	23.6	22.3	21.7	20	18.2	16.1

This represents 229,430 people in Nova Scotia.
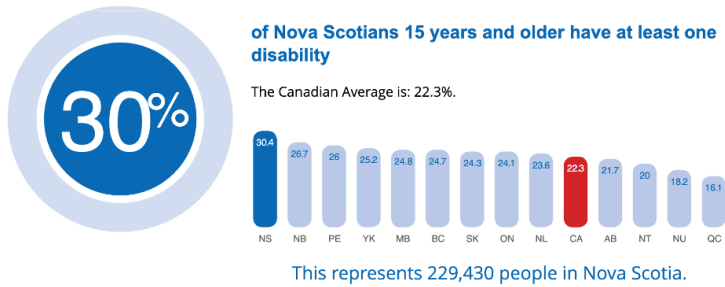
Image source: Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate
Disabilities can be:

- Physical (such as disabilities related to mobility)
- Cognitive
- Sensory (such as hearing or visual)
- Learning
- Intellectual
- Developmental
- Neurological (such as autism or ADHD)
- Mental health related
- Pain related
- Related to chronic health problems

There are many different ways to look at and understand people's experiences of disability. This list is a starting point.

Disability is vastly diverse, and each person experiences their disability differently.

- The **medical model of disability** says people are disabled by their impairments or differences. This is an outdated approach, yet it continues to influence how people with disabilities are stereotyped and defined by a condition or by their limitations.
- The **social model of disability** says people are disabled by the way society, systems, and the built environment are set up.
- In this document, we use the term "persons with disabilities". Some people with disabilities might prefer the term "disabled people" or use the terms interchangeably.

Scott Jones, disability and queer advocate, shares what this looks and feels like to him

Scott Jones (1:16)

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More about disability

- **The word "disability" is very broad.** It includes persons with a range of disabilities, as well as those who experience barriers to accessibility. People can experience accessibility barriers without having a diagnosed disability. The language we use to talk about disability is imperfect and is always changing. Some people identify differently or prefer different words.

- **Not everyone who experiences accessibility barriers identifies as having a disability.** This might include Deaf students or students who are neurodivergent (e.g., autistic students or students with ADHD).

- **A disability can be permanent, temporary, or episodic.** A temporary disability could relate to an injury or bereavement, for example, and an episodic disability could relate to a flareup of a chronic health condition like MS or a bout of depression triggered by situational stress. Many people have more than one disability

- **Disabilities can be visible or invisible.** A person with a visible disability might use crutches, have a service dog, or wear a hearing aid. An invisible disability, sometimes called a **hidden disability**, is not obvious. Some examples include depression, learning disabilities, bipolar disorder, or chronic illness. Disabilities like autism, ADHD, or brain injury might be "invisible" at

first but become more visible over time.

- **Ableism and audism** include the practices, attitudes, systems, and structures in a society that privilege people who are considered typical or "normal" — and stigmatize, devalue, or limit the participation, **inclusion**, and potential of people with disabilities, people who are Deaf or having hearing loss, and neurodivergent people. Ableism and audism can be subtle or obvious, unintentional or intentional, and are often the norm in our society and systems. They rest on the assumption that these persons need to be "fixed" in order to be included or considered successful.[1]

- **Accessibility** is designing intentionally so persons with disabilities can access, use, and enjoy opportunities, services, devices, physical environments, and information. Accessibility requires conscious planning and effort to make sure something is barrier-free — accessible — to persons with disabilities. Accessibility benefits all of us by making things more usable and practical for everyone, including older people and families with small children.

Barriers to accessibility:

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1. Education Standard Development Committee, a committee of the Accessibility Advisory Board)

Student Voice

These videos share the stories of three students, including the barriers they face, and what helps make teaching and learning more accessible. When you click on each video, it will open in a new tab.

Jenny (2:24)

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Charlie (6:25)

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cbua.pressbooks.pub/
accessibleteaching/?p=37#oembed-7

Denise (8:13)

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://caul-cbua.pressbooks.pub/accessibleteaching/?p=37#oembed-8

Carrie Ann (4:47)

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Reflect:

- What key messages will you take away from these videos?
- What supports or enablers helped to make learning environments more accessible and inclusive?

Barriers are anything that prevents a person with a disability from participating fully in school, work, or society. There are many types of barriers. When a disability interacts with a barrier, it can hinder a person's full and effective participation in education, work, recreation, and social life.

- **Attitudinal barriers:** How we think about and interact with persons with disabilities. These barriers are based on our beliefs, knowledge, experience and education. For example, assuming that someone who has difficulty speaking also has an intellectual disability, or not interacting socially with someone who has a disability because you feel uncomfortable.
- **Physical or architectural barriers:** Design elements of a building, such as stairs, doorways, signage, hallway width, and room layout, as well as obstructions and ways

of storing items that are needed for work or learning. They also include barriers in outdoor spaces like parks and sidewalks, and how a space is maintained, like snow removal.

- **Information or communication barriers:** How information is communicated and received and could include small print size, not facing the person when speaking, and not providing information in a variety of formats (written, audio, and video, for example).

- **Systemic or organizational barriers:** Patterns of behaviour, policies, or practices built into the structure of an organization, that create or perpetuate disadvantage for persons with disabilities. For example, requiring a full course load for eligibility for residences, scholarships, and honours listings.

- **Technology barriers:** Technology, or the lack of it, can prevent people from accessing information and communication. Common devices like computers, phones, and other tools can all present barriers if they are not set up or designed with accessibility in mind.

- **Time, energy, and resource barriers:** Needing more time and money to do the same things as a person without a disability. Assistive devices, medications, medical supplies, technology, and physical and psychological therapies are expensive. People with disabilities also often need more time: Time to complete tasks, time to recover between activities, time to rest, and

time to take care of their mental and physical health.

List of barriers adapted from [Council of Ontario Universities Understanding Barriers to Accessibility.](#)

3.

INCLUSION FOR ALL: UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is about changing the design of course content and the learning environment — NOT changing the learner.

UDL improves and optimizes teaching and learning and helps give ALL students an equal opportunity to succeed. UDL is an evidence-based educational framework based on research in the learning sciences.

UDL is broadly focused on reducing barriers to learning — for everyone! — by making sure that instructional materials (texts, images, audio) and classroom environments, support services, and activities are accessible to as many learners, instructors, and staff as possible.

For example, using video with captions helps people with hearing loss as well as students who speak English as an additional language or have difficulty with auditory processing. It can also help reinforce students' understanding.

The three central principles of UDL are:

1. Provide multiple means of engagement. Develop learning options to produce and sustain interest.
2. Provide multiple means of representation. Provide content in multiple ways.
3. Provide multiple means of action and expression. Offer options that allow students to fully demonstrate knowledge.

CAST 's UDL Guidelines are a tool used in the implementation of UDL in classrooms and learning environments.

The benefits of UDL

Though students with identified disabilities and learning differences might feel the benefits of universal design most, UDL works for both learners and educators.

- UDL reduces the need for, and time required to implement individual accommodations.
- UDL supports a diverse range of students with concrete strategies to improve learning.
- UDL gives students more options and opportunities to show their knowledge.
- UDL helps students become more self-aware and knowledgeable.
- UDL helps maintain high academic rigor and

expectations.

UDL is essential for some and helpful for all

The students you encounter face many systemic, structural, and institutional inequities. UDL anticipates learner variability and accessibility. Traditional educational settings usually privilege certain types of learners: able-bodied, neurotypical, fluent in the language of instruction, good at learning course content by reading textbooks or listening to lectures, and good at test-taking.

UDL principles allow educators to meet diverse student needs, including:

- flexible ways for students to access material and demonstrate their learning
- flexible options to make learning relevant to all students
- flexible learning environments and spaces that leverage the strengths of individuals
- multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement that tap into learners' unique abilities, strengths, and interests

The goal of UDL is to support students to become "expert

learners" who are purposeful and motivated, resourceful, and knowledgeable, strategic and goal driven.

How do I apply UDL?

1. Offer multiple ways to engage:

- Give students choices and independence.
- Make sure learning is relevant and has context.
- Build in collaboration and communication.
- Encourage students to trust themselves and reflect on their learning.

1. Offer multiple ways to represent and present content:

- Use a variety of media.
- Let students choose how content is displayed.
- Give clear instructions and answer questions.
- Contextualize new concepts.

1. Offer multiple ways to act and express:

- Use a range of communication tools and media.
- Help students plan and set goals.
- Carefully organize course content and workload.

How do I apply UDL?

A collaborative project of the Post-Secondary Accessibility Working Group

Offer multiple ways to engage
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Offer multiple ways act & express
- Use a range of communication tools & media.
- Help students plan and set goals.
- Carefully organize course content and workload.

Adapted from: Kearney, D. B. (n.d.). *Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA).* Retrieved from Open Library Pressbooks: Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA), Shared under Creative Commons License.

Is UDL going to make my teaching completely

inclusive and accessible?

No! UDL alone will not make your courses completely inclusive and accessible, but it does offer a clear, useful, and evidence-based framework for making your teaching more effective for more students. Integrating UDL with other equity-centred practices, like individual academic accommodations and culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP), will build a foundation for belonging for all students.

LEARN MORE:

Complete the *[Universal Design for Learning Module of the Transforming Practice: Learning Equity, Learning Excellence Curriculum](#)*. This free professional development opportunity for faculty and student services professionals in higher education in Nova Scotia. This open courseware consists of 10 self-paced modules that provide the tools and resources needed to foster inclusive, equity-centred learning environments that celebrate, recognize, adapt to, and accommodate diverse learning needs.

The [Ontario Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) resource](#) references Ontario legislation, but is broadly applicable. This open courseware aims to provide educators with an introduction to UDL, considerations for equity,

diversity and inclusion in educational settings, and Indigenous pedagogies and their relationship to UDL.

IDEA includes the following six learning modules:

1. Introduction and Overview of UDL
2. UDL in Post-Secondary and Technology-Enabled Learning Environments
3. Legislative Requirements under the AODA and OHRC
4. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)
5. Indigenous Pedagogies and the Benefits for All Learners in Ontario
6. UDL for AODA, EDI and Indigenous Pedagogies in Post-Secondary Learning Environments

View CAST's UDL Guidelines

4.

CAMPUS ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES AND YOU

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Accessibility is everyone's responsibility, and we all need to participate in making our campuses accessible — online and in person.

Accessibility services

All institutions have an accessibility services office or staff responsible for accessibility. Accessibility services can have different names at different institutions, but their role is the same: to promote and facilitate student access, inclusion, and

accommodation support. Accessibility services professionals work collaboratively with students, faculty, and staff to create an inclusive educational environment.

Accessibility centres

Accessibility centres are physical spaces that offer services for students with disabilities, and support faculty and staff to develop their knowledge and skills related to disa[bility and accessibility, as well as ways to put accommodations in place so all students can equitably participate. Most larger universities and colleges have accessibility centres, but some smaller schools may not, or may offer accessibility help in other ways.

Teaching and learning centres

Most institutions have services that support faculty development, including growing your professional practice around UDL and accessibility. Teaching and Learning Centres can support you to design, deliver, and evaluate accessible teaching strategies and learning resources, and often offer UDL training, design and development templates, and review or evaluation resources.

The role of accessibility

services

A key role of accessibility services is identifying and putting in place accommodations for students who need them.

Academic accommodations:

- change *how* a student learns material and meets outcomes, not *what* material the student is learning or which outcomes or competencies they're meeting.
- might influence or change how the student is assessed. These adjustments could be in the instructional method, environment, materials, or assessment strategy.

The purpose of accessibility services is to create equitable access for students with disabilities to the full post-secondary experience both inside and outside the classroom, both on campus and online.

Accessibility professionals do this by offering a range of services. Generally, accessibility services can support students by:

- Identifying barriers individual students are facing and addressing them
- Providing one-on-one advising to facilitate access to academic courses and programs, facilities, services, and

activities
- Setting up academic accommodations and working with professors
- Assisting students with applying for funding for services and equipment
- Helping them access **assistive technology** to read textbooks, write papers, and study
- Connecting them with tutoring or note-taking services
- Ensuring physical access to buildings, classrooms, learning spaces, and equipment
- Advocating on behalf of and alongside them throughout their academic program, and supporting self-advocacy
- Connecting them with on- and off-campus resources to enhance their success

Accessibility services also supports campus leadership, staff, and faculty members to design for and promote equitable access to academic success and campus life for all students.

Accessibility Services

can help students by identifying barriers individual students are facing and addressing them.

Connecting to Resources

Connecting students with on- and off-campus resources to enhance their success.

Advising

Providing one-on-one advising to facilitate access to academic courses and programs, facilities, services, and activities.

Accommodations

Setting up academic accommodations and working with faculty.

Funding

Assisting students with applying for funding for services and equipment.

Assistive Technology

Helping students access assistive technology to read textbooks, write papers, and study.

Access

Ensuring physical access to buildings, classrooms, learning spaces, and equipment.

Advocacy

Advocating on behalf of and alongside students throughout their academic program, and supporting self-advocacy.
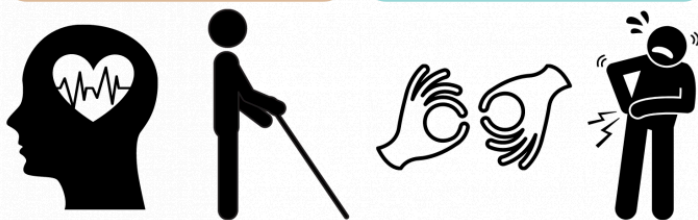
A collaborative project of the Post-Secondary Accessibility Working Group

Accessibility services can support faculty, instructors, and staff in the following ways:

- Providing information, resources, and support for integrating academic accommodations for students
- Liaising with students about their needs and accommodations
- Offering learning opportunities for faculty and instructors who want to develop their practice
- Helping faculty and instructors connect their students to accessibility supports while respecting privacy and confidentiality
- Answering questions and facilitating improved accessibility for all students

Accommodations are tailored to individual students, but integrating accessibility into the design and delivery of courses can benefit all students in the classroom. For example, providing all learning materials in both print and audio formats to everyone gives students multiple ways to access the information. This is an example of Universal Design for Learning, or UDL.

Accessibility Supports for Faculty

Accessibility services supports campus leadership, staff, and faculty members to design for and promote equitable access to academic success and campus life for all students.

Resources and support.

- Providing information, resources, and support for integrating academic accommodations for students.

Liaising with students.

- Liaising with students about their needs and accommodations.

Learning opportunities.

- Offering learning opportunities for faculty who want to develop their practice

Confidentiality.

- Helping faculty and instructors connect their students to accessibility supports while respecting privacy and confidentiality

Answering questions.

- Answering questions and facilitating improved accessibility for all students

A collaborative project of the Post-Secondary Accessibility Working Group

Our roles and responsibilities

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We all have roles and responsibilities when it comes to disabilities on campus. As a campus community, we value the diversity disability brings. Students are partners and experts in their own learning. When students identify barriers, it's an opportunity to learn: about differences, needs, and teaching approaches.

We all have roles to play in making and keeping our schools — and all aspects of learning — accessible. We also have responsibilities, to ourselves and others.

It's important for students with disabilities, campus leadership, faculty members, and staff to understand what they can do to eliminate barriers and improve inclusion and belonging for everyone.

Students with disabilities have the right to:

- Belong and feel like valued members of the campus

community.

- Equitable access to learning, physical spaces and equipment, services, programs, activities, and campus life — both in person and online.
- Instruction, learning materials, academic experiences, assessments, and supports appropriate to their specific needs.
- Confidentiality and privacy.

Students with disabilities can:

- Identify and communicate regularly with accessibility services about their specific needs, and provide information and documentation.
- Expect equitable access to campus life, learning, and academic achievement, and advocate for themselves or with the help of accessibility services.
- Understand and work within their institution's policies, or advocate for a change in policy.
- Talk with their professors about their learning needs, if they choose to.

Faculty members and instructors can:

- Learn about accessibility from students with disabilities.
- Adapt their teaching style to be more accessible to more students.

- Decide on course content, outcomes, and required competencies.
- Set high academic requirements for their courses.
- Consult and learn from accessibility services about accommodations and UDL options.
- Ask that any recording of classes is solely for students' academic use.

Faculty members and instructors have the responsibility to:

- View students with disabilities as being as valuable and capable as any other student.
- Work with students and accessibility services to put accommodations in place and integrate UDL to make learning more accessible to everyone.
- Understand and work within their institution's policies.
- Ensure course design, content, materials, instruction, labs, and field trips are accessible to all students.
- Maintain students' dignity and privacy, and follow confidentiality rules.

Accessibility services can:

- Help individual students identify, evaluate, and re-evaluate their strengths and needs; share learning strategies and skills; and update supports.
- Review students' documentation and let them know

when updates are needed.

- Help implement accommodations and design changes that reduce barriers to learning.

Accessibility services has the responsibility to:

- Help maintain a safe environment free of discrimination, disturbance, intrusion, or harassment for all students.
- Provide expertise and resources to professors and faculty members.
- Educate the campus community about accessibility and what they can do to make campus inclusive for everyone.

What's the difference between a UDL approach and an accommodation approach?

Integrating UDL into teaching lays the groundwork for all students to succeed. A UDL approach may eliminate the need for some academic accommodations, but there will always be students who need accommodations to meet their specific needs.

- UDL builds courses and classrooms to be accessible to

the broadest range of abilities.

- Accommodations are alternative ways for individual students to access coursework, participate, meet outcomes, and demonstrate competencies.

Many students will need and benefit from BOTH approaches. In practice, courses and classrooms are most inclusive, effective, and welcoming when a combination of UDL and individual accommodations is used.

How do we determine who is eligible for accommodations?

Accessibility services professionals help students access accommodations by:

- Reviewing recommendations from a qualified assessing professional;
- Using functional evaluations and screening tools and referring students for further professional evaluation;
- Talking with students about their experiences, skills, and needs;
- Evaluating the specifics of a student's program and courses; and
- Understanding the institutional context.

Including an accessibility statement in your course outline or syllabus

What is an accessibility statement?

An accessibility statement tells your students what they can expect in your course and classroom in terms of accessibility. It's a written commitment to your students that you take accessibility seriously and value their contributions to an accessible environment. This statement can be included in your course outline or syllabus, and it's also a great idea to read it out loud and discuss it with the class.

Your institution has an accessibility statement, and it's a good idea for you to have one, too!

Who are you doing this for?

Your accessibility statement is for students who have disabilities or who might have problems accessing your resources for whatever reason. While it's great to talk about your professional commitment to accessibility, **your accessibility statement is first and foremost a helpful resource for students with disabilities**. When you create

your accessibility statement, always centre who will be accessing the statement and why.

What can you consider for your accessibility statement?

1. Use clear and simple language. Avoid jargon and technical terms.
2. State your institution's appreciation for learner variability.
3. Include information about accessibility services on campus and how to access them.
4. Let students know the different ways they can reach and communicate with you. Make sure there are options suitable for students who have visual, hearing, or mobility impairments.
5. Tell students how they can personalize their experience of the course, including information about:

    - any platforms or resources you're using, and their built-in accessibility features.
    - different browser settings that enhance accessibility
    - links to each available file format your resources come in
    - assistive technologies

6. Outline specific accessibility features of your course and

how to use them, like online textbooks or videos with closed captioning.

7. Be transparent and open about accessibility barriers and describe what is being done to address them and how long it will take. Provide temporary workarounds.

8. Include information about who is responsible for the accessibility of the course content and their contact information so people can submit suggestions or complaints related to accessibility.

9. Refer students to your school's accessibility policy, any guidelines you are following; any federal or provincial legislation you are conforming to, and any user testing you performed.

10. Include pictures of faculty and staff members involved in the course, or link to resources that show visuals of the faculty, staff, office, or classroom if possible.

(Adapted from BCcampus Open Education Accessibility Toolkit, shared under Creative Commons License.)

Sample accessibility statement

Below is a sample accessibility statement from Dalhousie University for use by faculty.

Accessibility and Accommodations

The Advising and Access Services Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students who request accommodation as a result of a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (NS, NB, PEI, NFLD).

If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion, please contact the [Student Accessibility Centre](#).

Please note that our classroom may contain accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom, undisturbed, so that students who require their use will be able to fully participate.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality refers to our obligation to keep private information secret. In this case, it means we must not disclose private or personal information about our students, their disabilities, or diagnoses.

What does confidentiality mean in practice?

- Faculty may receive a request for accommodations without knowing the student's disability. Students may disclose their disability or not — it's up to them.
- Violation of confidentiality can have legal impacts on both the faculty member and the institution.

5.

ACCESS STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Each student is an individual, and some will need individual accommodations and considerations — even in a classroom where UDL is implemented. It's important to work with accessibility services and with the student to determine what *they* need at this specific time.

Students' needs can also change, depending on the course, their health, or even the time of year. Students can be experts on their own disabilities — remember that you might not know the whole story. Trust students to know what they need. Alternatively, some students need support to learn how to articulate their needs, based on their own experiences and documentation. The postsecondary environment is a great place for them practice self-advocacy skills.

Listen to and learn from your students. Be creative and flexible. Know that what works for one student with ADHD, for example, may not work for another. Some students live with more than one disability, and you may not even know

what disability a student has or even which students in your class need accommodations.

In the [2017 Canadian Survey on Disability](#) (CSD), Statistics Canada describes 10 disability types:

- Seeing
- Hearing
- Mobility
- Flexibility
- Dexterity
- Pain-related
- Learning
- Developmental
- Mental health-related
- Memory

No list can cover the many different experiences of disability, and no inventory of accommodations will cover every student need.

How is this section organized?

In this section, we use personas to introduce you to some barriers students with disabilities

experience in higher education. Each persona is based on actual students, but is not about one particular student.

First, strategies that support all students are listed. These strategies can make learning more accessible to students with a wide range of disabilities, as well as students who may not identify as having a disability but still benefit from increased access. Second, strategies that support students with some specific disabilities — including physical disabilities that limit mobility, as well as hearing and vision loss — are listed.

Persona: Bella

Bella is an 18-year-old woman in her first year at community college. She is very artistically talented and creates art using both traditional and digital tools. Bella was diagnosed as autistic at 16 and is still learning to advocate for herself. She needs more time to process information and contribute to a discussion, and does not make social connections easily. She lives at home with her parents.

Ability: Autistic with graphomotor processing learning

disability, which means taking notes from verbal lectures is very difficult.

Strengths: Strong visual and artistic skills, verbal and written communication skills, and the ability to focus intensely on topics and projects that interest her. Intermediate laptop and advanced tablet user.

Challenges: Executive functioning and organization; may have trouble following multi-step instructions, especially if they are delivered only verbally; note-taking; keeping up with and participating in class discussion; connecting with peers.

Attitude: Loves to learn, but has had negative experiences in school.

Assistive technology: Laptop for note-taking in class.

What helps:

- Having lecture notes provided online
- Providing information in multiple formats: Written and verbal
- Class discussions structured so each student has a chance to take part
- The option to work individually instead of in a group
- Detailed course outlines and assignment instructions

Persona: Bria
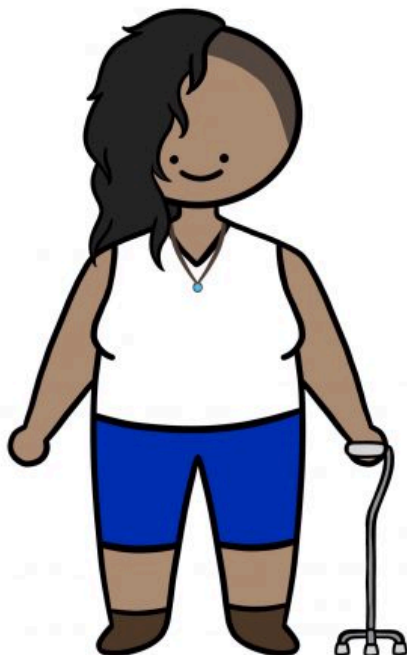
Bria is a 21-year-old queer student. She experiences chronic migraine, which causes her varying amounts of head pain everyday, along with brain fog and fatigue. She was diagnosed 5 years ago and symptoms are steadily worsening. She recently started using a cane to mitigate fatigue.

Strengths: Very motivated to succeed in school. Excellent communicator.**Ability**: Experiences chronic pain due to migraines.

Challenges: Can't always attend class due to chronic pain.

Environmental triggers such as bright lights and strong perfumes trigger her migraines. She uses a cane to mitigate fatigue, which makes her more visibly disabled.

Attitude: Strong advocate for herself; loves school and wants to succeed, but needs to balance pushing herself in the moment with longer-term impacts.

Assistive technology: N/A

What helps:

- Having a note-taker
- Online options and flexibility
- Fully physically accessible spaces free of obstructions
- Operating elevators that do not require a key or permission to use them
- Not having to explain her disability and her needs over and over
- Lowered lights, option to take breaks from class

Persona: Melanie

Melanie is 52, a mature student with two adult children. She's in her third year of an English degree. Melanie is creative, loves to write, and is hoping to write for magazines once she graduates. She's a part-time student and works 20 hours a week in a bank, so it's taking her several years to finish her degree. She lives in the suburbs and commutes 45 minutes to and from campus three times a week.

Ability: Bipolar 2 disorder, which in Melanie's case causes depression, anxiety, and fatigue; as well as ADHD.

Strengths: Knows her strengths and challenges, and perseveres when things are difficult. Very strong communication and social skills, and appears to have everything "under control".

Challenges: Struggles with class attendance and meeting deadlines; may need more time to complete tasks; distractible; reading can be difficult; needs to move around during class; feels left out and stigmatized by assumptions about mental illness, and tired of having to explain her challenges and justify her need for accommodations.

Attitude: Hardworking and serious about her studies, perfectionistic, and sometimes frustrated by her challenges.

Assistive technology: Laptop with screen reading technology

What helps:

- Flexibility about assignment deadlines
- Additional time for tests and exams
- Alternative assignment and assessment options
- Permission to record lectures
- Having lecture notes available online
- A quiet place in class or close by for doing in-class work
- Freedom to leave or move around the classroom
- Freedom to turn her camera off during online classes
- Not having to repeatedly explain her disability and accommodations

Creating accessible learning environments for students with many types of disabilities — and ALL students

- Be clear in your syllabus, with firm due dates and well-defined expectations.
- Provide digital course notes, slide decks, and other materials — before class if possible.
- Briefly review material from your previous class before starting new material.
- Review new learning objectives.
- Summarize important points at the end of class.
- Provide instructions and reminders in different formats: verbal, written, video, and audio.
- Be patient when you communicate. Listen and give students time to process and respond.
- Don't make assumptions about what people can or can't do.
- Speak directly to the person with a disability and not to their support person, companion, or interpreter.
- Be flexible and offer options for assignments and assessments. Allow students to use their strengths.
- Encourage students to create study groups and share class notes.
- Trust students to know when they need a break from class.

- Help identify tutors and/or note takers.
- Reserve seating at the front of the room or close to the door.
- Allow audio recorders and note-taking on a laptop.
- Lean towards flexibility for absences and late or forgotten assignments.
- Familiarize yourself with and deploy adaptive technologies.
- Talk with the student about their learning needs, strategies for success, alternatives to course assignments, and methods of evaluation.

For tests, exams, and assessments

- Point out the important sections in course plans, textbooks, and readings.
- Provide sample tests and exams.
- Offer additional time.
- Allow computers, calculators, dictionaries, and spell-check.
- Offer alternatives to traditional methods of evaluation.
- Provide a quiet space or distraction-reduced environment.
- Allow memory aids for formulas or definitions.
- Consider minimal deductions for spelling and grammar mistakes, and give partial marks for demonstrating understanding without a correct answer.

- Allow students to eat, drink, and attend to physical needs.
- Ensure all tests are fully accessible, including graphic content.
- Offer alternatives for students to demonstrate their competencies, such as an oral presentation instead of a written assignment or timed test.
- Allow text-to-speech or speech-to-text software
- Offer large print or electronic format or coloured paper
- Include scribes (French and English)
- Talk with the student about their learning needs, strategies for success, alternatives to course assignments, and methods of evaluation.

# Creating accessible learning environments for students with specific types of disabilities

These strategies are grouped by disability type, but many will improve access for a range of students. For example: Students who have auditory processing difficulties or speak English as an additional language will also benefit from closed captioning or subtitles.

Persona: Jack
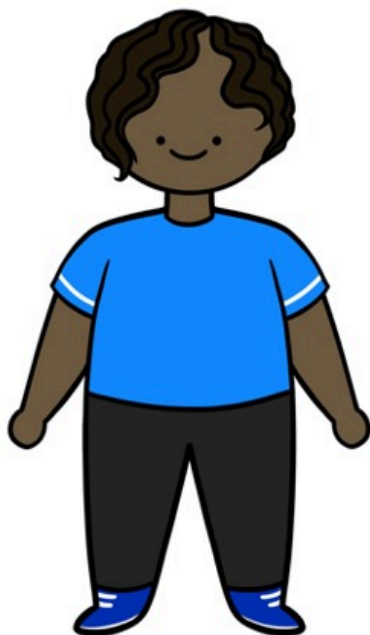
Jack is a 24-year-old in their third year of a business degree. They are entrepreneurial and interested in starting their own human resource consulting business after graduation. They enjoy participating in business case competitions with a team of students. Jack has hearing loss and wears hearing aids. They live in residence.

Ability: Has hearing loss and lives with depression and anxiety. Can speak both English and ASL, read lips, and

requires ASL interpretation in class and in large-group situations like presentations.

Strengths: Excellent organizational, presentation, and group work skills. Advanced technology user.

Challenges: Hearing verbal information, especially in a large group or when there is ambient noise; and participating in group work or discussion if proper interpretation and technology is not available.

Attitude: Strong self-advocate; supports other students with disability advocacy; strong academic student.

Assistive technology: Laptop for note-taking in class; closed captioning.

What helps:

- Having lecture notes provided online, and all instructions in written form
- Instructor facing the class when speaking
- Instructor using a microphone and speakers in class
- Providing slide decks with ASL interpretation
- Ensuring ASL interpretation is available when possible, and that the other members of the class understand the etiquette of interpretation.

Creating accessible learning environments for students who are Deaf or have hearing loss

- Provide visuals like tables, images, and graphs, and use slide decks and videos with captions.
- Turn off unused equipment to eliminate background noise.
- Speak at a regular pace, facing the class, as clearly and distinctly as possible.
- Mark students' written work based on quality of content, not grammatical error rate.
- Find a quiet place to talk with students.
- Do not put your hands, glasses, or other objects like pens or pencils in front of your face when speaking.
- Repeat questions and comments from the class before responding.
- Help identify note-takers.
- Communicate in writing with the student, and book an interpreter if needed.
- Talk with the student about their learning needs, strategies for success, alternatives to course assignments, and methods of evaluation.
- Turn on closed captions for any video content.

"When the student is accompanied by interpreters:

- Meet with both the student and the interpreter to discuss accommodations.
- Provide interpreters with brief course outlines.
- Allow interpreters to sit or stand near you so the student can watch you and "read your words" at the same time.
- Watch the student but listen to the interpreter when they are relaying what the student is saying. When you speak, look at and address the student, not the interpreter.
- Take short breaks in your speaking to allow the interpreter to catch up. Plan a 10-minute break for every 50 minutes of class presentation.
- Make sure there's enough light for the Deaf student to see the interpreter, and that they can see both the interpreter and any visual presentation simultaneously."[1]

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1. University of Ottawa Access Service & Student Academic Success Service. (n.d.). *Minimizing the impact of learning obstacles: A guide for professors.*

Persona: Abdullah

Abdullah is 22, pursuing a Bachelor of Education, and planning to teach elementary school. He has a busy social life on campus and is involved in student government. Abdullah uses a wheelchair due to an acquired spinal cord injury and lives in an apartment off-campus.

Ability: Paraplegic, and uses a manual wheelchair.

Strengths: Academically accomplished and is active in several extracurricular activities on campus, including

volunteering at the accessibility centre. Advanced technology user.

Challenges: Requires the built environment throughout campus to be accessible, including buildings, bathrooms, classrooms, equipment, materials, etc. Has to accommodate medical appointments, rest and recovery time from periodic medical procedures, and the high cost of medical supplies.

Attitude: Ambitious and serious student who is clear about what he needs.

Assistive technology: N/A

What helps:

- Fully accessible physical environments, including bathrooms
- Appropriate furnishings and room set-up
- Operating elevators that do not require a key or permission to use them
- Flexibility about assignment deadlines
- Freedom to leave the classroom or exam room as needed
- Field trips to accessible locations, with accessible transportation
- Inclusive language

Creating accessible learning environments for students with physical disabilities

- Ensure your classroom, laboratory, and equipment are physically accessible and be prepared to change locations if not.
- Ensure the furnishings are appropriate and do not obstruct mobility.
- Some students may not be able to raise a hand; make eye contact to include the student in classroom discussions.
- When talking for more than a few moments to a student who uses a wheelchair, sit down, kneel, or squat if you can.
- A person's assistive device — wheelchair, walker, etc. — is part of their personal space. Do not hang or lean on it, or push a wheelchair without asking.
- Plan field trips for accessible locations, with all students' needs in mind. Build in extra time for the activity and for transportation.
- Talk with the student about their learning needs, strategies for success, alternatives to course assignments, and methods of evaluation.

Persona: Ify

Ify is a 30-year-old international grad student from Nigeria pursuing a law degree. She is independent, energetic, outspoken, and is well-known on campus as a disability activist. Ify is partially sighted and uses a white cane. She also has hearing loss and notes the difference between her visible and invisible disabilities and how others treat her as a result. She lives off campus.

Ability: Is partially sighted and has hearing loss.

Strengths: Excellent communicator with high emotional intelligence, a leader. Intermediate technology user.

Challenges: Can't read paper handouts or attendance lists; has difficult hearing in a large group or when there is ambient noise; navigating inaccessible buildings and infrastructure. Has experienced social stigma, bullying, and often feels unwelcome or like she "doesn't fit in" on campus.

Attitude: Strong advocate for herself and other students; loves school and wants to focus on learning, not fighting for accommodations and inclusion.

Assistive technology: Laptop; closed captioning; screen readers.

What helps:

- Good lighting in class
- Instructor facing the class when speaking, and verbally explaining any visual materials
- Instructor using a microphone and speakers in class
- Providing content in multiple formats: electronic, audio, large print, etc.
- Having a note-taker
- Fully physically accessible spaces free of obstructions
- Not having to explain her disability and her needs over and over

Creating accessible learning environments for students who are

blind or have vision loss

- Provide the course outline, reading list, slide decks, etc., digitally and in a format suitable for screen reading software.
- Provide print-only material in a screen reader-friendly format, or far enough in advance to ensure that transcription requirements (into audio-digital, enlarged format, or **Braille**) can be met in time.
- Explain verbally any graphs or charts used in class.
- Read aloud all material written on the board and explain what you're doing when you gesture or point things out.
- Use effective contrast for handouts printed on white paper.
- Provide clear and concise instructions, and repeat them regularly.
- Pair the student with a suitable sighted lab partner.
- Discuss lab safety with the student and with accessibility services.
- If the student reads Braille, have lab equipment tagged in Braille.
- Talk with the student about their learning needs, strategies for success, alternatives to course assignments, and methods of evaluation.

A word on service animals:

- Do not talk to, pet, feed, or offer treats to a service animal. Invite the student to explain the rules about their animal to the class, or offer to do it yourself.
- The owner is responsible for maintaining control over the animal at all times.
- Service animals are permitted in *all* areas on campus to which the public normally has access, with only a few exceptions, such as food prep areas or situations where another person has severe allergies.

6.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Why do so many students need more time?

Some reasons are physical: The student might have reduced dexterity or require more frequent breaks to attend to physical needs. Others who might need more processing or "think time" include students with learning disabilities like dyslexia or dysgraphia, as well as autistic students or those with ADHD. Still others might need more time to manage the stress and anxiety that can come with depression and other mental health diagnoses. It helps to remember that taking timed tests and exams is a skill in itself, and one that not everyone excels at. Many students will be able to demonstrate their competency more effectively with more time – good is more important than fast.

Q. Why would a successful student even need accommodations?

Just because a student is "successful" doesn't mean they don't need accommodations. It might mean they are working so hard to keep their grades up that everything else in their life is falling apart, or that they are doing well academically but

experiencing extreme anxiety or even trauma because they are masking a disability. You can't tell whether or not a student has a disability or needs accommodations just by seeing what's on the surface.

Q. How will I know when one of my students gets accommodations?

Accessibility services at your institution will let you know. Students must register with accessibility services to request and receive accommodations. Remember that you might not know what the student's disability is or even who they are (for example, note taking services).

Q. How can I help my students with disabilities succeed?

Using a UDL approach to designing and delivering your course, and to evaluating student success, is the first step. Accommodations are designed to provide access, and student success is a collaborative approach. While students are responsible for their own success, they work with accessibility services, and faculty and staff. Communicate with the student, respect privacy and confidentiality, and treat students with disabilities as you would any other student.

Q. How can I learn more about making my classes and materials more accessible?

See the Learn More section for resources to make your classes and materials more accessible.

Q. How do I know if an accommodation is reasonable?

The accommodations provided by accessibility services are

reasonable and appropriate, but some accommodation requests by students might not be. Accommodations in post-secondary education might also be quite different from those in high school. If you're not sure, ask accessibility services!

Q. Will accommodations impact academic rigor and course outcomes?

Accommodations give students with disabilities equitable access to learning and academic achievement — that's all. Students with disabilities are responsible for meeting course requirements and demonstrating competencies just as any other student would. Accommodations are NOT a "leg up", an unfair advantage, or a weakening of academic standards. Like a pair of glasses makes it possible to see, academic accommodations make it possible to learn and demonstrate that learning.

Q. What if accommodations impact academic freedom?

You don't have the academic freedom to deny a student's accessibility needs.

Q. One of my students needs a note-taker. Can I announce this in class and ask for volunteers?

DO NOT disclose the identity of the student who needs a note-taker. Make a general announcement asking for volunteer note-takers, and refer any volunteers to accessibility services. You can also personally approach students you think would be suitable. Consider asking the class to post their notes on the course website – everyone can take turns – giving everyone

access to the notes and allowing you to monitor how students are processing the course concepts. (UDL in action!)

7.

LEARN MORE

Accessible communication materials
    Digital content and media accessibility toolkit
    Digital content and media accessibility 2-page download
    Guide to planning accessible meetings and events
    Guide to planning accessible online meetings and events
    Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate
    Ontario Accessibility Resources Website
    Checklist for Accessibility

Organizations

ADHD and ADD – Nova Scotia Health
    Autism Nova Scotia
    Brain Injury Association of Nova Scotia
    Canadian Hearing Services
    Canadian Paraplegic Association (Nova Scotia)
    Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Nova Scotia
    Disability Rights Coalition of Nova Scotia
    Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia

LDANS – Learning Disabilities Association of Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia CNIB (Canadian National Institutes for the Blind)

Society of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Nova Scotians

Spinal Cord Injury Canada

8.

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APPENDIX- ACCESSIBILITY GLOSSARY

The terms in this glossary are from the [Prescribed Public Sector Body Toolkit](), the [Online Accessible Events Guide](), the [NS Post-Secondary Accessibility Framework](), and the [Education Standard Development Committee's definitions](). It is important to note that the Standard Development Committee (SDC) is not a government document – the SDC is a committee of the Accessibility Advisory Board.

Access by Design 2030 (2018)
The provincial strategy for implementing the Accessibility Act. Access by Design 2030 provides a roadmap for government, businesses, and communities to work together to eliminate barriers to accessibility and make Nova Scotia accessible by 2030. (novascotia.ca/accessibility/access-by-design/)

Also see the [Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan (2018-2021).]()

Accessibility
The prevention and removal of barriers (physical, attitudinal, technological, or system) to allow equitable

participation for persons with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility.

When our environments, services and products and policies are **proactively** designed and constructed so that people with a disability can fully and equally participate without experiencing barriers. Accessibility ensures people with disabilities are included in the same experiences, benefits, opportunities and choices in life.

Accessibility Act (2017)

The provincial law enacted to achieve accessibility by preventing and removing barriers for people with disabilities. The law defines the role and responsibilities of the Accessibility Directorate and the Accessibility Advisory Board, and addresses standards, compliance, and enforcement. Accessibility Act (nslegislature.ca)

Accessibility Advisory Committee

A volunteer committee established by a prescribed public sector body to advise on identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers that limit people with disabilities from accessing programs, services, initiatives, and facilities. The committee plays a pivotal role in helping the public sector body become accessible and comply with Nova

Scotia's Accessibility Act (2017). At least one-half of the members of the advisory committee must have a disability or represent an organization that represents people with disabilities.

Accessibility Advisory Board

A 12-member provincial board appointed by the provincial government to advise the Minister of Justice on accessibility and make recommendations on accessibility standards. The majority of board members are people with disabilities. [Accessibility Advisory Board – Government of Nova Scotia, Canada](#)

Accessible Customer Service

Ensuring all persons have the same opportunity to seek, obtain,

use or benefit from the service. Accessible services are easy for all people to use, interact with, and understand.

Accessibility Directorate

The provincial body that is responsible for implementing and administering the Accessibility Act, supporting accessibility initiatives and advancing broader disability-related issues. [Accessibility Directorate – Government of Nova Scotia, Canada](#)

Accessible Employer

Reducing and preventing barriers in hiring, retaining, career development and advancement for employees, and addressing employee needs with individualized, flexible accommodations.

Accessibility lead(s)

Staff appointed by a prescribed public sector body to support the work of the Accessibility Advisory Committee in developing and implementing the accessibility plan. The accessibility lead(s) also liaise with the public sector body's senior management and staff.

Accessibility Services

Programs, services, processes, and policies related to assistive technology, accessibility accommodations, assessment processes, communication services, transition planning, and others that ensure access to learning and learning communities.

Alternative (alt) Text

Alt text describes images and other graphics in documents or on websites. Blind or low-vision individuals use alt text to describe these images and to give context as to why the image is there. The alt text is picked up by their screen readers. Alt text descriptions should be short and include essential information that conveys what an image looks like and means.

American Sign Language (ASL)

American Sign Language (ASL) is a complete, complex, visual language. It uses hand movements as well as facial expressions and body movement to convey information. ASL is a language of access; it evolved out of a need for people with different hearing levels to access spoken communication and connect with fellow community members. ASL is not a universal language; each country has its own sign language, and regions have dialects, the same way many languages spoken all over the world do. ASL is used predominantly in the United States and Canada, and, like any language, has its own unique rules of grammar and syntax.

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology is any device, software, service, or product

system, including service animals, that reduces individual barriers to accessing and engaging in all aspects of a learning community including social, emotional, academic, and daily living activities and experiences.

Barrier

Something that makes it harder for some people to participate. Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act defines a barrier as "anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice."

Braille

Braille is a tactile system of raised dots used by many people who are blind or partially sighted. Each raised dot arrangement represents a letter or word combination that is read by touch.

CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation)

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is a type of captioning that provides simultaneous (real-time) speech-to-text translation. It is often used by people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. To produce CART captioning, a certified CART stenographer listens to speech at an event, and types a shorthand of what is being said into a stenotype machine. This machine converts the shorthand back into full words, and displays the text on a screen. If an event is in-person, the text can be displayed on a large screen. If the event is online, it can be embedded into the online meeting software,

or a link can be provided to a website where participants can view the text. The CART stenographer can either be onsite, or at a remote location connected to the meeting audio via online meeting software or a room's telephone/audio system.

Deaf

A sociological term referring to those individuals who are medically deaf or hard of hearing who identify with and participate in the culture, society, and language of Deaf people, which is based on Sign language[1].

Disability

As defined in Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act: "a physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society."

Equitable/equity

A commitment to fairness. Equitable access is different from equal access. Equality means everybody is treated the same; equity means everybody is treated fairly, based on their needs and abilities.

Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan

A multi-year plan setting specific priorities and commitments for achieving accessibility within the Government of Nova Scotia. The first plan was published in 2018 and covers the

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1. Canadian Association of the Deaf

years 2018-2021. [Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan (2018–2021) – Government of Nova Scotia, Canada](#)

Large Print

Printed material in a font size of 14 points or greater is considered large print. Using an 18-point, sans serif font, such as Arial, Helvetica, Verdana, Futura, Univers, or Franklin Gothic, is considered best practice.

Plain language

Clear, conversational communication that makes sense to the intended audience. The goal of plain language is to communicate so clearly that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use the information [Home – Plain Language Association International (PLAIN) (plainlanguagenetwork.org)](#).

Prescribed

Means "prescribed in the Accessibility Act General Regulations." The Accessibility Act enables the government to use the regulations to identify which organizations must comply with certain requirements. These requirements include forming an Accessibility Advisory Committee and developing an accessibility plan within one
year. The use of the word "prescribed" in legislation is intended to give wide authority for regulations to be made that set down a specific rule or direction.

RHF / RHFAC

[Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification](#).

First Voice

First voice perspectives generally refer to the knowledge generated by persons
with disabilities and others who experience barriers to accessibility that emerges from lived experience, community connections, knowledge traditions, and scholarly activities that are typically under-valued and under-represented.

Inclusion

The process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for
individuals or groups of individuals who are disadvantaged or under-represented, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights. This creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, fights exclusion and marginalization and offers the opportunity of upward mobility and results in increased social cohesion.[2]

Meaningful access

When referring to the built environment, meaningful access is the intent to meet the needs of all users of a site (a building or outdoor space) regardless of their ability. It means that not only individual features of a site, such as an entrance or washroom, must be accessible, but the entire experience throughout.

Neurodivergent

Neurodivergent means having a brain that functions in

2. Nova Scotia Community College Educational Equity Policy

ways that diverge significantly from the dominant societal standards of "normal". It recognizes diverse neurologies and ways of being, as variation of human experience, rather than deficiency in need of remediation or cure. It includes those who identify with autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, Tourette's syndrome, and dyslexia, to name a few.[3]

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3. Scorgie, K. & Forlin, C. (2019). Promoting Social Inclusion: Co-Creating Environments that Foster Equity and Belonging. P. 153.