

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY AND MULTI-YEAR PLAN

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ACCESSIBILITY POLICY STATEMENT:

In accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 (IASR)*, Conestoga has developed this accessibility policy and multi-year plan to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to programs, services, and activities at the college. This policy and multi-year plan outlines the policies and actions that Conestoga will put and has put into place to comply with the requirements of the AODA and the IASR.

SCOPE:

This policy and multi-year plan applies to all Conestoga campuses, and to all members of the Conestoga College community, including employees, students, and guests.

DEFINITIONS:

Accessible Formats

Accessible formats are those that pose no obstacles to persons with disabilities.

AODA

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*

Assistive Technology/Devices

Devices that have been developed with features specifically helpful for people with disabilities.

Disability

As defined by the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, a disability is:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or

hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- a mental disorder, or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

IASR

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

Notice of Service Disruption

A notice of disruption is a notice containing the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration (including start date and time and estimated restore date and time), and a description of alternate facilities or services, if available.

Service Disruption

- A planned or unexpected interruption in facilities or services during normal hours which may affect access to facilities, programs, goods or services. This includes interrupted access to roadways, elevators, parking, programs, goods and services caused by construction, maintenance or repairs, electrical or IT shutdowns, service closure, washroom closure or hallway obstructions.
- A planned service disruption is a disruption known at least three days in advance, with an expected duration of three hours or more.
- An unplanned service disruption is an unexpected disruption without prior notification, with an expected duration of three hours or more.

POLICY ELABORATION:

Statement of Commitment:

Conestoga is dedicated to furthering an accessible environment of inclusion, dignity, independence and integration for people with disabilities, and strives to have that reflected in the development and implementation of its policies and practises. Conestoga will continue to meet the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the AODA and the IASR.

General Accessibility

- Conestoga shall complete and maintain this multi-year accessibility plan outlining the college's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under AODA and IASR.
- Conestoga provides annual status reports that are made available on the Conestoga website.

- Consideration for the individual and safety of all members of the Conestoga community will prevail. Employees will operate with flexibility on matters regarding accessibility.
- All students and employees with disabilities requiring accommodation will be accommodated in accordance with Conestoga policy.

Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services, or Facilities

- Conestoga incorporates accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so. If Conestoga determines that it is not practicable to do so, the college shall provide, on request, an explanation.
- **Implementation timeframe:** January 1, 2013 and ongoing as applicable.

Self Service Kiosks

- Conestoga will incorporate accessibility features when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.
- Employees will be trained to assist individuals with accessibility features on all self-service kiosks.
- **Implementation timeframe:** January 1, 2013 and ongoing as applicable.

Training

- Conestoga will ensure that training is provided on the requirements of the accessibility standards and the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities to:
 - All employees and volunteers,
 - All persons who participate in developing the organization's policies, and
 - All other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of Conestoga.
- The training provided will be appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers and other persons, and will be undertaken as soon as practicable. Conestoga will provide training in respect of any changes to this accessibility policy on an ongoing basis.
- Conestoga will keep a record of training provided, including the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided.
- **Implementation timeframe:** January 1, 2014 and ongoing as applicable.

Information and Communication Standards

Feedback

- Conestoga encourages and welcomes feedback from the public regarding the manner in which the college provides goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities.
- Conestoga will identify all existing feedback processes and accessibility barriers pertaining to these processes including to the feedback process itself.
- Conestoga will ensure processes are accessible by making available the accessibility feedback process to customers, employees and third parties requesting accessible formats of the feedback process.

- General, non-urgent feedback can be provided via feedback survey, available on the Conestoga website and in hard copy form at all campuses. The questionnaire is available on the Conestoga website: <https://www.conestogac.on.ca/feedback/accessibility-at-conestoga>.
- Clients in need of assistance may request assistance from employees in Accessibility Services, the Registrar's Office and the Administration offices at each campus location, as well as the Conestoga Students Inc. office and the Conestoga Student Residence. The employee assisting will input answers into the website survey on the client's behalf.
- Survey results are accessed and reviewed on a weekly basis by the office of the Manager, Accessible Learning Services or designate, who will respond accordingly dependent on the type of feedback submitted. Feedback that is recommending improvements will be considered for inclusion in the annual plan and/or for possible implementation, dependent upon the nature of the information submitted.
- Issues that require immediate attention should be reported to the campus administrator or Security Services at 519-748-5220, ext. 3357. In the event that an issue requires immediate resolution, the information will be forwarded to the appropriate department for resolution.
- Conestoga customers and clients can also provide feedback in person, by mail, by phone, by fax or by e-mail to:

Accessible Learning Front Desk
 Doon Campus
 299 Doon Valley Drive, Kitchener, ON N2G 4M4
 Telephone: 519-748-5220, ext. 3232
 Facsimile: 519-748-3507
 E-mail: accessibility@conestogac.on.ca

- The Manager, Accessible Learning Services will track and monitor feedback, ensure a timely response is provided, and make known the supports that are available to facilitate the submission of feedback.
- Conestoga will commit to responding to feedback as soon as practicable.
- **Implementation timeframe:** January 1, 2014 and ongoing as applicable.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

- Upon request and within reason, Conestoga provides or arranges for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities, in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.
- Conestoga will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.
 - Requests around accessing accessible formats for academic purposes are managed through the Accessible Learning office.

- Provision of material in accessible formats will be in compliance with copyright legislation and such materials are intended only for the use of the person who requires and has requested them.
- Conestoga will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports on its website.
- Conestoga will provide publicly available information at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.
- **Implementation timeframe:** January 1, 2015 and ongoing as applicable.

Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information

- Emergency procedures, plans or public safety information made available to the public will also be provided in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request.
- **Implementation timeframe:** January 1, 2012 and ongoing as applicable.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

- Information made available by Conestoga through the Conestoga website is in compliance with WCAG 2.0, Level A.
- **By January 1, 2021**, Conestoga will ensure that its website and web content conforms with WCAG 2.0, Level AA.
- **Implementation timeframe:** WCAG 2.0, Level A by January 1, 2014 and WCAG 2.0, Level AA by January 1, 2021.

Educational and Training Resources and Materials

- Conestoga, if notification of need is given:
 - Provides educational or training resources or materials in an accessible format that takes into account the accessibility needs of an individual's disability. The material will be provided by:
 - Procuring through purchase or obtaining by other means an accessible or conversion-ready electronic format of educational or training resources or materials where available, or
 - Arranging for the provision of a comparable resource in an accessible or conversion-ready electronic format, if educational or training materials cannot be procured, obtained by other means or converted into an accessible format.
 - Provides student records and information on program requirements, availability and descriptions in an accessible format to persons with disabilities.
- **Implementation timeframe:** January 1, 2013 and ongoing as applicable.

Training to Educators

- Conestoga will provide educators with accessibility awareness training related to accessible program or course delivery and instruction.

- Conestoga will keep a record of the training provided under this section, including the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided.
- **Implementation timeframe:** January 1, 2013 and ongoing as applicable.

Producers of Educational or Training Material

- When Conestoga is a producer of educational or training textbooks, the college will make accessible or conversion-ready versions of the texts available upon request.
- **By January 1, 2020**, when Conestoga is a producer of print-based educational or training supplementary learning resources, the college will make accessible or conversion-ready versions of the texts available upon request.
- **Implementation timeframe:** textbooks by January 1, 2015 and print-based supplementary learning resources by January 1, 2020.

Libraries of Educational and Training Institutions

- Conestoga Library Services will provide, procure, or acquire by other means an accessible or conversion ready format of print resources or materials for a person with a disability, upon request.
 - Special collections, archival materials, rare books and donations are exempt.
- **By January 1, 2020**, Conestoga Library Services will provide, procure, or acquire by other means an accessible or conversion ready format of digital or multimedia resources or materials for a person with a disability, upon request.
 - Special collections, archival materials, rare books and donations are exempt.
- **Implementation timeframe:** print-based resources or materials by January 1, 2015 and in respect of digital or multimedia resources by January 1, 2020.

Transportation

- Conestoga will arrange for accessible transportation upon request, if and when transportation services are to be provided by the college.
- **Implementation timeframe:** January 1, 2013 and ongoing as applicable.

Design of Public Spaces

- Conestoga is committed to incorporating accessibility standards in the construction and renovation of new and existing public spaces in order to provide barrier free access to all spaces for employees, students and members of the community.
- Conestoga will ensure that it follows the existing requirements outlined in the Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment) under the IASR as applicable.
- Conestoga will provide maintenance and restoration of Conestoga owned public spaces by ensuring procedures are in place for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces and that procedures are in place for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements required under this section are not in working order.

- Public spaces at Conestoga include:
 - Outdoor paths of travel, like sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps and accessible pedestrian signals
 - Accessible off-street parking
 - Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas
- **Implementation timeframe:** January 1, 2016 and ongoing as applicable.

Customer Service

- Conestoga maintains customer service standards that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities, ensuring that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from goods, services or facilities.
- Conestoga ensures that the provision of goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities is integrated with the provision of goods, services or facilities to others, unless an alternative measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods, services or facilities.
- All Conestoga policies are available in accessible formats upon request.
- **Implementation timeframe:** effective immediately and ongoing as applicable.

Communication

- Conestoga is committed to communicating with people with disabilities in a manner that take into account the person's disability.
- **Implementation timeframe:** effective immediately and ongoing as applicable.

Assistive Devices

- If a person with a disability requires assistive devices to access programs, goods or services at Conestoga, they are allowed to use such devices. When available, Conestoga will provide assistive technology in order to allow people with disabilities to access college programs, goods and services while on the premises conducting college business.
- If a person with a disability requires the accompaniment of a guide dog or service animal to access programs, goods or services at Conestoga, they are permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him/her in accordance with Conestoga's Service Animal policy.
- **Implementation timeframe:** effective immediately and ongoing as applicable.

Disruption of Service

- Conestoga will provide a notice of service disruption when any facility, technology, or service that a person with a disability uses to access programs, goods, and services is affected by a disruption of service, or will be affected in the near future.
- Temporary disruptions in services and facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within Conestoga's control. Conestoga will provide prior notice of planned

disruptions. In the case of unplanned service disruptions, Conestoga will make reasonable effort to provide timely notice, recognizing that in some circumstances, such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice will not be possible.

- Where a temporary disruption does occur, Conestoga has implemented the following process:
 - The manager of the affected area will assess the nature of the temporary disruption, and consult with other departments as necessary (i.e., Accessible Learning Services, Facilities) to determine the impact upon accessibility.
 - The affected department will determine whether alternative services are viable in the circumstances.
 - The affected department will post signage onsite containing the reason, expected duration and information about alternatives, if available.
 - The affected department will provide the required information on the Disruption of Services Form for posting on the [Service Update Information](#) website.
 - The affected department will ensure that physical signs are removed when the disruption is resolved.
- General emergency closures do not require a disruption of service notice but will be posted to the Conestoga website.
- **Implementation timeframe:** effective immediately and ongoing as applicable.

Training for Staff

- Conestoga will provide training to all employee groups of the college, including administrators, faculty and support staff, volunteers, all those involved in developing customer service policies and procedures, and every person who provides goods, services or facilities on behalf of the college.
- Conestoga will keep records of the training provided, including dates training is provided, and number of persons trained.
- The training will be delivered in a variety of formats and will be provided on an ongoing basis for employees in order to stay current with changes in policies, practices and procedures. The training will include:
 - The purpose of the AODA and the requirements of the customer service standard.
 - How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
 - How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person.
 - How to use equipment or devices available on college premises or provided by the college that may help with the provision of goods, services or facilities to a person with a disability;
 - What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the college's programs, goods, services or facilities.

- **Implementation timeframe:** effective immediately and ongoing as applicable.

Policy Review

This accessibility policy and multi-year plan is a tool for Conestoga to communicate its accessibility initiatives internally and to the public. Conestoga will review and update this policy and plan at least once every five (5) years. The policy and plan is next scheduled to be reviewed no later than **January 1, 2024**.

Implementation Timeframe: By January 1, 2024 and ongoing.

REFERENCES:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Ontario Human Rights Code

Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities Policy
 Service Animal Policy and Procedure
 Student Accommodation Policy and Procedure

REVISION LOG:

7/15/2013	Policies and Procedure Committee
7/17/2013	Academic Coordinating Committee
12/11/2019	Academic Forum
1/13/2020	Academic Coordinating Committee