



The University of Western Ontario's  
**Accessibility Plan**

September 2004 to August 2005

Prepared in accordance with the *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001*

30 September 2004

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The University of Western Ontario's Annual Accessibility Plan  
September 30, 2004

## Introduction

In December 2001, Ontario passed the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (the "Act"). The purpose of the Act is to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province. To this end, the Act mandates that every university, including The University of Western Ontario ("Western"), prepare an annual accessibility plan.

This is the second such plan to be prepared on behalf of Western.

## Objectives

The purpose of an accessibility plan is to document barriers to accessibility that have been removed to date and identify those barriers that will be removed in the coming year. A plan must also identify how the barriers will be removed and present a plan for identifying and removing barriers in the future, and preventing the development of new barriers. Plans must be made public and accessible to allow for input from the broader community.

The purpose of this plan is to update the original report, prepared in September 2003, and available at [http://www.uwo.ca/equity/WODAC/WODAC\\_index.html](http://www.uwo.ca/equity/WODAC/WODAC_index.html).

## Western's Commitment to Accessibility Planning

As is stated in *Making Choices*, the University's current Strategic Plan,

Western is also committed to increasing its representation of First Nations, visible minorities and persons with disabilities. In the current environment, excellence requires that Western be an attractive destination for the full diversity of young faculty, including those from all the groups identified under the Employment Equity Act and the Federal Contractors Program, to which the University is a signatory.

With regard to its administrative staff, Western also establishes the following commitment in *Making Choices*: to "Ensure that our hiring is supportive of applicants from diverse backgrounds, including the designated groups identified under the Employment Equity Act and the Federal Contractors Program".

The University of Western Ontario has been committed to accessibility planning for some time now and has recommitted itself to such planning under the Act. With the formation of Western's Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee ("WODAC"), Western has committed itself to meeting its obligations under the Act, as well as to achieving the following goals:

- The continual improvement of access to University premises, facilities and services for all persons with disabilities;
- The participation of persons with disabilities in the development and review of its annual access plans; and
- The provision of quality services to persons with disabilities.

## Barrier-Removal Initiatives in 2003-2004

### **1. Physical and Architectural Barriers**

During the past year, the student-funded Accessibility Development Committee ("ADC") continued its work to address barriers on campus that have been identified by undergraduate students. While these barriers have been identified by students and addressed with funds provided by students, there is a beneficial impact for all members of the community. These improvements include:

- Enhanced campus transportation with Voyager Transportation Service.
- Automatic door opener for University Community Centre entrance near the Spoke patio.
- Equipment for the main station Western Road Exam Facility to be used by Services for Students with Disabilities.
- Five (5) computer workstations equipped with all software for examination accommodations for Services for Students with Disabilities.
- Replacement stair lift platform at Althouse College.
- Nine (9) ergonomic chairs for the Western Road Exam Facility to be used by Services for Students with Disabilities.

The Department of Physical Plant, which plays a large role in addressing physical barriers identified on campus, has also displayed a strong commitment to addressing physical barriers that are brought to its attention and to maintaining accessibility-related improvements such as door openers. In addition to addressing issues as they arise, Physical Plant continues to make available the amount of \$50,000.00 per year in its budget to direct toward projects to increase accessibility on campus. It should be noted as well that additional sums are committed by other departments on campus, and that making accessibility an integral part of all budgeting processes is to be encouraged.

Initiatives from Physical Plant this year included:

- The south entrance to University College was made accessible by installing a ramp inside and outside the building, and by installing a power operated door at that location.
- Access to the Music Library was greatly improved by the addition of a door operator on the entrance to the library, with hold open devices on the corridor doors leading from the elevator to the library. In addition, the elevator was renovated to enable barrier free access and usage.
- Extensive renovations were conducted on the “concrete beach” in front of The University Community Centre which have greatly improved the accessibility of that heavily used portion of the campus.

The Barrier Free Access and Safety Committee (the “BFASC”) continues to be involved in the review of plans for all new buildings and all major renovations to existing buildings on campus to ensure that barriers are addressed at the planning and design stage, and that no new barriers are created. Accessibility standards set by the University often go beyond the standards found in the Ontario *Building Code* (which are acknowledged as a base only) and it is an expectation that contractors bidding on and completing work at the University will meet these higher standards. It should also be noted that Physical Plant regularly engages the services of **Designable** Environments (Consultants in Accessibility and Future Care Planning) to review these projects. Work done by the BFASC in the past year included reviews of the following projects:

- Medical Science Building renovation, including the new Clinical Skills Learning Centre.
- South Valley Building design.
- Modular Animal Care Facility design.
- Western Road Residence design.

Further design initiatives:

- Both the Talbot Music Library and the Taylor Library sought the input of the Rehabilitation Specialist (Ergonomist) in the redesign of work areas to proactively address accessibility and work process issues.

One of the major commitments in last year’s report was to begin to conduct a campus accessibility audit to create an authoritative list of physical barriers that currently exist across campus. This is a significant undertaking on a campus the size of Western. To date, 31 buildings have been assessed using the University Campus Accessibility Measure. A preliminary report has been completed, summarizing findings for Chemistry, Biological and Geological Sciences, Stevenson-Lawson, University College and Western Science Centre buildings. This report includes specific recommendations. The goal at present is to have a final report, based on the data gathered over the past two summers, completed

by September 2005. There are some key, global recommendations which can be made at this point, and which are outlined below in the section on barriers to be addressed in the upcoming year. A copy of the report on the status of the project is included in the Appendix.

## **2. Information and Communications Barriers**

Initiatives to remove information and communication barriers across campus in the past year include:

- An up-to-date Campus Accessibility Map was completed and is now available on the web at:  
[http://129.100.117.28/ppd\\_fe/uwomaps/Accessibility\\_Plan.pdf](http://129.100.117.28/ppd_fe/uwomaps/Accessibility_Plan.pdf)
- The Employment Equity Guide for Appointments Committees and Promotion and/or Tenure Committees (prepared jointly by the University and the Faculty Association) was updated.
- A draft guideline on the Duty to Accommodate was prepared with the assistance and input of a number of individuals on campus. The guideline is designed to be of assistance to staff and faculty on campus, and will hopefully be approved process this fall so that it may be made available campus wide.
- A presentation in March 2004 entitled “Are you Accessible?” which was sponsored jointly by the Teaching Support Centre and the Instructional Technology Resource Centre.
- A Transitional Accommodation Program was formalized and implemented and is now available for faculty and staff on the revised Rehabilitation Services website, or through Rehabilitation Services.

## **3. Attitudinal Barriers**

As stated in the previous report, this type of barrier is the most difficult of the barriers to identify and address. Western is fortunate to have a large number of interested and concerned individuals in its community who regularly take on the task of educating others about the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in our community, both formally in the work that they do and informally.

Although identified in last year’s report, and initially planned for October 2003, the Barrier Busters Forum was not held as planned. The Forum is being proposed for the 2004-2005 academic year and is discussed further below.

Some initiatives completed in the past year to move forward in addressing these barriers include:

- Western's employment equity survey was made available on-line for the first time in late 2003. A communications campaign surrounding the new version of the survey was conducted around the theme of promoting diversity at Western, and identified the positive aspects of hiring and promoting from the four designated groups, which include persons with disabilities.
- The definition of "disability" contained in previous surveys was broadened to mirror the definition contained in the *Employment Equity Act*. This definition change was highlighted in communications to the Western community.
- Training was provided to all Physical Plant supervisors regarding the accommodation of employees.
- On September 11, 2004, The Michael Lewis Memorial Symposium "Still Waiting: A Forum for Moving Ahead" was held at King's University College. The Forum was put on by The Ontarians With Disabilities Act (ODA) Committee, London Area and brought together speakers from across the City of London, the Province and the University.
- The Teaching Support Centre's Fall Perspectives on Teaching included a presentation entitled "Accessibility @ Western: An Introduction to Assistive Technologies", which provided a practical overview of some of the types of Assistive Technologies currently used by Western students who have disabilities.

#### **4. Technological Barriers**

Efforts to remove technological barriers on campus are on-going. Various departments continue to take steps to acquire adaptive technology on an as-needed basis. Support for these initiatives is given to departments and individual employees by Rehabilitation Services.

In addition, however, several initiatives of the ADC in the past year addressed the following technological barriers for students on campus:

- Software upgrades in the Weldon Library Access Lab to Kurzweil 3000, Dragon Naturally Speaking and Zoom Text Xtra, together with 3 HP 8200 Scanners.
- Microsoft Office upgrades and 5 HP 8200 Scanners to be used in the Western Road Exam Facility by Services for Students with Disabilities.
- Software upgrades to Kurzweil 3000, Dragon Naturally Speaking and Microphone Plantronics DSP 500, together with 3 HP 8200 Scanners to be used in the LOTF Weldon Library Lab.
- Six (6) tape recorders, unidirectional microphones and microphone stands for tape recorded exams and a Braille clicker with multi-tape cases to be used by Services for Students with Disabilities.

- Eight (8) accessible laptops for the Western Road Exam Facility to be used by Services for Students with Disabilities.
- Sony Clie PEGNZ90 and Memory for the Student Development Centre to be used by Services for Students with Disabilities.
- HP Scanjet 7450 and Omnipage OCR production software for the Student Development Centre to be used by Services for Students with Disabilities.
- Inspiration Software for the Student Development Centre to be used by Services for Students with Disabilities.
- Plectalk Portable Recorder PTR1 for the Student Development Centre to be used by Services for Students with Disabilities.
- Platronics DSP-300 microphone for Weldon Library Room 102 to be used by Services for Students with Disabilities.

Information Technology Services (“ITS”), specifically through the Senate Subcommittee on Information Technology (“SUIT”), continues its efforts to ensure all Western’s official departmental websites meet barrier-free web accessibility standards, as set out by the World Wide Web Consortium’s Web Access Initiative (WAI).

## **5. Barriers Created by Policies or Practices**

With an organization the size of Western, there are a great number of policies and practices, both formal and informal, which require review. By promoting Western’s obligations pursuant to the Act, it is anticipated that many of these will be reviewed by the appropriate departments, and barriers will be identified and brought forward, either by those departments or by individuals impacted. Resources such as Staff Relations, Rehabilitation Services, Services for Students with Disabilities and Equity Services are available to receive concerns. These resources also continue to review policies and practices as part of their work on campus.

Some specific initiatives in the past year undertaken to address policy or practice barriers include:

- As mentioned above, a draft guideline on the Duty to Accommodate was prepared with the assistance and input of a number of individuals on campus. The guideline is designed to be of assistance to staff and faculty on campus, and will hopefully go through the approval process this fall so that it may be made available campus wide.



## Plan for Removal of Barriers in 2004-2005

What follows is a list of recommended actions to be undertaken in the upcoming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers at Western.

### **1. Physical and Architectural Barriers**

- Continue the work done by the BFASC to review all new projects and major renovations to ensure accessibility.
- Improve signage in the form of the International Symbol of Accessibility to mark all accessible entrances, elevators, washrooms and routes through buildings.
- Increase the number of unisex accessible washrooms in buildings on campus, adding two in the upcoming year.
- Increase the number of accessible entrances to buildings.
- Work with faculties and departments to remove clutter and obstacles when they render passageways narrower than the 1800 mm (approximately 6 feet) to enhance accessibility and safety.
- Continue to diligently maintain the condition of external routes (curb cuts, conditions of sidewalks and snow clearance) to facilitate safe access.
- Incorporate accessibility considerations in to the training and subsequent audits being undertaken by the President's Committee for the Safety of Women on Campus on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.
- Continue to address physical barriers as they are identified by members of the community.
- Continue to support the completion of the Campus Accessibility Audit and address barriers as they are identified.
- Consider expanding the Campus Accessibility Audit to include a hearing audit on campus.

### **2. Information and Communications Barriers**

- Once approved, make the guideline on the Duty to Accommodate widely available to staff and faculty.

- Improve the amount of information available on Western's website regarding accessibility issues on campus and make this information more visible to website users. In particular, move the new Campus Accessibility Map to a location on Western's website which enables it to be easily located and accessed by all users.
- Consider establishing a clearer contact or contacts for individuals who experience accessibility concerns at Western that will allow for a more coordinated response and centralized information gathering.

### **3. Attitudinal Barriers**

- Improve understanding and awareness of mental health and mental illness across campus, especially among managers and supervisors, through further education and training initiatives.
- Present a "Barrier Busters Forum" on campus to bring together persons with disabilities from across the Western community, their supporters and administrators to discuss accessibility issues, highlight existing barriers and brainstorm ways to remove and prevent further barriers.
- Develop an employment equity guide for use by those responsible for staff hiring and promotion, which would include considerations for hiring and promoting persons with disabilities.
- Continue to develop and present various educational programs across campus.

### **4. Technological Barriers**

- Continue to respond on an as-needed basis to requests for adaptive technology to assist members of the community.
- Continue to monitor and ensure all official Western websites are accessible according to standards approved by ITS.
- Consider the purchase of additional assistive technology devices to be loaned out on a temporary basis through Services for Students with Disabilities.

## 5. Barriers Created by Policies or Practices

- Explore options and costs for accessible on-campus transportation in response to concerns and limitations raised by members of the community.
- Consider a review of the existing policy on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.

### Review and Monitoring Process

During the past year, Western's Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee continued to be in place, but did not meet on a monthly basis as proposed in last year's report. Also contained in last year's report was a recommendation by the Committee that its mandate be clearly established, which has not yet taken place.

One of the challenges faced by Western, and by other universities, in preparing an annual accessibility plan is the deadline mandated by the Act. Annual Accessibility Plans are to be made available to the public by September 30<sup>th</sup> each year. This does not fit with the fiscal year of universities and makes it difficult to commit to projects for the upcoming year. It is likely that this will be raised as an issue with the Accessibility Directorate in the near future. However, in an attempt to address this challenge, it is proposed that this plan be considered a work in progress that will continue to be updated as the year progresses.

Furthermore, it is apparent that work needs to be done to develop a clear review and monitoring process, and that the role of the Committee needs to be more clearly defined. There are a number of departments, groups and individuals on campus who share in the responsibilities outlined by the Act. A coordinated approach to identifying, removing and preventing barriers is preferable. It is proposed that in the upcoming year, the Committee discuss a more formalized annual review process which would include a clearer identification of accountabilities and timelines for work to be done.

## Appendix A

### Members of WODAC

The following members of the University community served as members of WODAC from September 2003 (or earlier) to the date of this report:

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Joan Aldis	King's University College	433-3491 x4316
Farid Arbi	Professional and Managerial Association	661-2111 x85735
Frances Bauer	Ombudsperson	661-3573
Brian Borowski	Information Technology Services	661-2111 x86033
Claire Callaghan	Western Libraries	661-2111 x84772
Francis Chan	Medicine & Dentistry	661-2111 x86803
William Cliff	Huron University College	438-7224 x294
Wendy Dickinson	Services for Students with Disabilities, SDC	661-3031 x88616
Veronika Elsie	HR, Staff Relations	661-3783 x85580
David Empey/Brenda Davis	Staff Association	661-2111 x83028
Flemming Galberg	Physical Plant and Capital Planning	661-2111 x88880
Gail Hutchinson	Student Development Centre	661-2111 x85946
Lisa Klinger	Occupational Therapy	661-2111 x88963
Ruta Lawrence	Housing and Ancillary Services	661-2111 x85978
Bruce Morgan	Brescia University College	432-8353 x28289
Adrienne Kennedy/Eric Johanssen	University Students' Council	661-3574 x83574
Merran Neville	Information Technology Services	661-3976 x83976
Jeff Preston/Kathryn Esaw	University Students' Council	
Valerie Smith	HR, Occupational Health and Safety	661-2111 x84742
Deborah Stuart	Services for Students with Disabilities, SDC	661-2147 x82147
Jennifer Schroeder	Equity Services	661-3334
Jane O'Brien (Chair)	Associate Vice-President (Human Resources) and for much of the year Acting Vice-President (Administration)	661-4261

## **Appendix B**

### **Report on the Status of The Evaluation of Physical Accessibility at The University of Western Ontario September 24, 2004**

**Lisa Klinger, MSc, OT Reg (Ont); Dr. Linda Miller, PhD**

Since receiving initial funding from the Vice President-Administration in May, 2003, 31 buildings on campus have been assessed using the University Campus Accessibility Measure (UCAM). A list of the buildings assessed/not yet assessed is attached. The list shows that the following buildings have yet to be assessed: the Law Building (due to major construction begun this summer); two "buildings" which we were unable to locate; five buildings for which no floor plans were available; seven residences; and eight additional buildings listed under "What's Left?".

Evaluation of accessibility has been done in detail, as per the UCAM enclosed. The raw data is being stored in two locked filing cabinets in Elborn College, and we would be happy to share this data. We have also been in the process of entering the data into an electronic database, and our target is to have all data available in SPSS format by the end of September. We would be happy to share the electronic data as well, if that is useful.

A map of accessible exterior routes was provided to the Division of Physical Plant and Capital Planning Services in September, 2003. Our understanding is that this is being used to create an updated map of campus that will be available on the University's web-site. We believe that a fair amount of work has been done on this project, but that Physical Plant did not have sufficient resources to be able to get the map ready for posting to the web-site by September, 2004, our original target date.

This past summer, we were also able to gather data on wheelchair accessible interior routes, including tunnels, and estimated times from building to building in a motorized wheelchair.

A preliminary report has been completed, summarizing findings from the Chemistry, Biological and Geological Sciences, Steven Lawson, University College, and Western Science Centre buildings, and providing specific recommendations. A copy of that report is enclosed. We recognize that the existing format of this report may have some limitations, and we would appreciate receiving feedback regarding the University's needs, in order to determine the most appropriate format for a final report.

It is our goal to have a final report, based on the rest of the data gathered over the past two summers, completed by September 30, 2005. We would also appreciate receiving feedback as to whether there is, or is not, merit in assessing the left over buildings during summer 2005.

At this point in time, we also feel comfortable providing some key, global recommendations to enhance safety and accessibility. Overall, accessible classrooms are available, and while not all classrooms are accessible, we did not identify this as a major problem. The key issues appear to be accessible washrooms, movement through the buildings, and safety issues. Accessibility on campus would be much improved by attention to the following:

- 1) Signage in the form of the International Symbol of Accessibility needs to be installed to mark all accessible entrances, elevators, washrooms, and routes through all buildings.
- 2) There should be at least two fully accessible washrooms in each building.
- 3) There should be at least two accessible entrances for each building.
- 4) All clutter and obstacles such as showcases, vending machines, etc. should be removed when they render passageways narrower than 1800 mm (roughly 6 ft), to enhance accessibility and safety.

- 5) An evacuation plan should be in place for every building whenever someone with a mobility, visual, or hearing impairment is in the building.
- 6) The University should continue to diligently maintain the condition of external routes (curb cuts, condition of sidewalks, and snow clearance), to facilitate safe access.

For more specific recommendations, we refer to the existing report. We await your feedback, in order to proceed with a final report.

### Status of Building Reviews

<b>Finished Buildings</b>	Thames Hall	TD Waterhouse Stadium
3M Centre	The Allyn and Betty Taylor Library	Siebens-Drake Research Institute
Alumni Hall	The Laurene O. Paterson Building, Western Science Centre	Spencer Hall
Biological & Geological Sciences	Thompson Engineering Building	Staging Building
Collip Building	University College	
Chemistry Building	University Community Centre	<b>Residences</b>
Cronyn Observatory	Weldon Library	Alumni House Residence
Dental Sciences Building		Delaware Hall Residence
Elborn College	<b>What Remains</b>	Elgin Hall Residence
Health Sciences Addition	Bio-Engineering Building	Essex Hall Residence
Althouse Faculty of Education Building	Biological & Geological Greenhouses	Medway Hall Residence
Thompson Recreation and Athletics Centre	Boiler House	Perth Hall
John Labatt Visual Arts Centre	Boundary Layer Wind Tunnel	Syndenham Hall Residence
Kresge Building	Central Food Commissary	Saugeen-Maitland Hall Residence
Middlesex College	Josephine Spencer Niblett Law Building	Westminster College
Music Building	McIntosh Gallery	<b>Off-Campus Housing</b>
Molecular Biology Laboratory	Medical Sciences Building	Ausable Hall (Glenmore)
National Centre for Management Research and Development	North Campus Building	Bayfield Hall (Glenmore)
Natural Sciences Centre	Services Building	Beaver Hall (Glenmore)
Physics & Astronomy Building	South Valley Building	Lambton Hall
Richard Ivey School of Business		Platt's Lane Estates
Social Sciences Centre		<b>Affiliates</b>
Somerville House		Brescia University College
Spencer Engineering Building		Huron University College (complete)
Stevenson Lawson Building		King's University College
Talbot College		

## Annual Accessibility Plan- King's University College September 2004-August 2005

Submitted to: Western's Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee  
The University of Western Ontario

Submitted by: Mary Carol Watters - Dean of Students  
Joan Aldis - Coordinator of Counselling & Student Development  
and Services for Students with Disabilities

Date: September 30, 2004

This report addresses:

1. measures taken to remove barriers on the campus of King's University College
2. measures to be taken in the current year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities including faculty, staff, students, alumni and members of the public.

### **Barrier- Removal Initiatives in 2003-2004**

- The Computer Access Room in the Cardinal Carter Library was installed. This state-of-the-art computer station is equipped with an electric height adjustable table and an ergonomic chair, a Pentium IV 2.6G Computer & 19" Flat Screen Monitor, Speech Recognition Software (Dragon Naturally Speaking), Text-to-Voice Software (Kurzweil 3000, TextHelp, Ruby, and JAWS), print magnification software (ZoomText), learning strategy software (Inspiration) and an HP 8200 Scanner.
- Two (2) Obus Low Back Rests were purchased to be used by Services for Students with Disabilities.
- One (1) AMG Airgo Lightweight Transport Chair (wheelchair) was purchased and is available for use by students, faculty, staff and community members when visiting King's University College.
- Alternative Format Textbooks
  - Eight (8) 4 track tape recorders were purchased for audiotaping course materials for students with disabilities.
- A Website was launched that highlights information and services that are available for persons with disabilities at King's University College, the University of Western Ontario, and the London community. Areas included in the Website are:
  - Academic Accommodation
  - Exam Accommodations
  - Alternative to Print Materials
  - Assistive Technologies
  - Transportation and Parking
  - Interpreters or Computerized Notetakers



- Financial Assistance
  - Publications, Policies
  - Disability News
- A major renovation to the Lecture Theatre Building and Dante Lenardon Hall was completed during the summer of 2004. The two buildings were joined by a link and significant renovations were made to Offices of The Academic Dean. One of the key areas addressed in the design process was the removal of barriers for persons with disabilities and to increase accessibility. These changes include:
    - Installation of a new elevator in the Lecture Theatre Building.
    - Installation of a new lift in the Link between Dante Lenardon Hall and the Lecture Theatre Building.
  - Automatic door openers were installed for the men's and women's accessible washrooms in Bessie Labatt Hall.
  - A ramp was installed at the rear exit of Bessie Labatt Hall. There are now two accessible entrances to this building.
  - Braille signage was installed for all offices in the Monsignor Wemple Building and Dante Lenardon Hall.
  - The Centre for Social Concern and the Office of the Dean of Students provided financial and administrative support for a forum organized by The Ontarians With Disabilities Act (ODA) Committee, London Region held at King's University College on September 11, 2004. While the building met code, slight improvements were made to enhance accessibility.
  - The Office of the Dean of Students and the Academic Dean's Office attended a professional development session on the diagnosis of learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders.

#### **Plan for Removal of Barriers in 2004-2005**

- As part of the University of Western Ontario's Accessibility Plan, King's University College is to be assessed using the University Campus Accessibility Measure.
- Continue to ensure that barriers are identified and removed (per original report 2003-2004 and annual institutional priorities) and that accommodations, where required, are arranged in a timely manner.