

Accessibility at Laurier



Understanding
disability and accessibility
in your community.

Diversity & Equity Office
Wilfrid Laurier University

What is a disability?

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation, or disfigurement caused by bodily injury, birth defect, or illness
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- A learning disability
- A mental disorder
- Disabilities include epilepsy, a brain injury, paralysis, amputation, hearing impediment, muteness, physical reliance wheelchair or other remedial device

Why is **awareness** important?

- Awareness of disabilities helps to provide an **equitable** and **inclusive** environment for all.
- Participation in addressing accessibility helps to **identify** and **reduce barriers** to teaching, learning, and working.
- All members of our community have a right to feel **safe, welcome,** and **accepted**. Students and staff have a responsibility to be conscious and understanding of disabilities and issues regarding accessibility.

Disclosure and Assistance

- It is important to be **open** and **welcoming** to an individual who chooses to disclose disability.
- How you react to a disclosure can effect how a person will approach a new situation or relationship in the future. Your response can have a positive or negative effect.
- Disclosures of disability should always be received **respectively** and **sensitively**.
- If you are unsure how to assist someone with a disability, just ask them! They are their own expert regarding accommodation.

Respectful Accessibility

- All interactions should maintain **dignity** and **independence** of the individuals involved and provide **integration** and **equal opportunity**.

Dignity – Goods and services are provided in a manner that is respectful to persons with a disability and does not diminish the person's importance.

Integration – Persons with disabilities can access all goods and services. This may require alternative formats and flexible approaches. It means inclusiveness and full participation.

Independence – Accommodating a disability means respecting their right to do for themselves and to choose how to receive goods and services.

Equal Opportunity – Service is provided to persons with disabilities in a way that their opportunity to access goods and services is equal to that given to others.

Assistive Devices & Service Animals

- Persons with disabilities have a right to use **assistive devices** that allow an extension of personal capabilities and independence.
 - Examples of devices include: Laptops, digital audio players, hearing aid, mobility devices such as scooters, walkers or crutches, magnifiers, white cane, communication boards, speech generating devices
- Like assistive devices, **support animals** increase a person's independence and capabilities
 - Examples of types of support offered by animals include: Guide dog, seizure response animal, therapeutic assistance animal

What is AODA?

- AODA (**Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**) calls on business to develop, implement and enforce mandatory accessibility standards dealing with:
 - Customer Service
 - Information & Communication
 - Employment
 - Transportation
 - Built Environment
- These Standards are the rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario will have to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.



**Ontario's Goal:
Fully Accessible
by 2025**

Questions?

- For more information about accessibility and disabilities speak to your Don or contact the **Diversity & Equity Office** (diversity@wlu.ca).
- For more information regarding AODA visit: www.waterloo.mylaurier.ca/diversity/info/aoda