Assiniboine College

Accessibility Plan Update

2025-27

This document is available in alternate formats upon request.
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ACCESSIBILITY PLAN UPDATE 2025-2027

Date of first approval: January 2016

Updated: December 2024

Years applicable: January 2025 to December 2027

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Accessibility Committee representatives: Student Success Advisors, Assiniboine College Students' Association, staff, faculty, students, senior management & Student Accessibility Coordinator

MESSAGE FROM THE ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

We, the members of the Accessibility Team at Assiniboine College, present our Accessibility Plan Update for 2025 - 2027. This plan aligns with The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA), ensuring our commitment to creating a barrier-free environment. As a public sector organization, we are responsible for:

▶ Identifying, preventing, and removing barriers

▶ Reviewing and updating our policies, programs, and services regularly

▶ Pursuing continuous improvement across the college

CONSULTATION AND FEEDBACK

As required by The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, we consulted with students, staff, and members of the college community to gather feedback for updating this plan. This inclusive process involved multiple methods, such as surveys and meetings to ensure diverse perspectives, including those of individuals disabled by barriers.

PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Since the last update, we have:

▶ Completed substantial accessibility projects, including improvements to campus infrastructure, such as automatic door openers, accessible doorways and accessible seating at reception desks, meeting rooms and computer spaces.

▶ Launched training resources to support all Accessible Manitoba Act Standards

implemented to date. This includes Accessible Customer Service, Employment and Information and Communication. This promotes awareness and adherence to accessibility standards.

▶ Enhanced employee education with workshops and resources on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and accessible document creation, embedding these principles into ongoing professional development.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Moving forward, we will continue to:

▶ Enhance Accessibility in Staff Development: Expand training plans for accessibility awareness and embed them into existing staff development opportunities, ensuring accessibility is integral to our learning environment.

▶ Commit to Consultation: Continue to involve individuals with disabilities and their representatives in ongoing consultations, ensuring that our plans and policies evolve to address emerging barriers.

▶ Review Policies and Infrastructure: Periodically review our policies, practices, and campus infrastructure to meet accessibility requirements.

▶ We are committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment at Assiniboine College. This Accessibility Plan Update reflects our dedication to continuous improvement. We look forward to implementing the strategic goals outlined in our plan to ensure a fully accessible community for all.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Creating accessible opportunities at Assiniboine College is central to our vision of providing exceptional educational experiences for our students, staff, and the communities we serve. Our dedication to meeting the standards of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act further reinforces that vision, ensuring we are continually improving and delivering outstanding learning experiences in adaptive and innovative environments.

To fulfill our mission of transforming lives through applied education and research, it is essential that the opportunities we offer are inclusive and equitable. We remain committed to advancing our efforts toward barrier-free environments.

Mark Frison
President, Assiniboine College

APPENDIX FOR POLICY

Below are the policies that are linked with this plan:

▶ Accessible Customer Service

▶ Reasonable Accommodation & Accessible Employment Policy

▶ Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

▶ Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

▶ Respectful College Policy

▶ Service Animal Policy

▶ Parking Regulations and Procedures

▶ Use of Recording Devices

PROGRESS

1. THE ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

We have an established Accessibility Committee with a rotating chair position, currently held by the Senior Advisor, Student Affairs. The committee, which includes representatives from Student Success Advisors, Students' Association, staff, faculty, students, Student Accessibility Coordinator, and senior management, continues to meet quarterly to assess ongoing efforts. The rotating chair of the committee presents bi-annual reports to the Senior Leadership Team.

Going forward: We will continue updating the college community on the actions and initiatives of the Accessibility Committee, actively involving them in the implementation process. We also commit to integrating accessibility planning into the broader college culture by encouraging ongoing staff education and feedback from the community. This will include consultations, as required by The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, to ensure diverse voices shape our future accessibility strategies. We will also engage with people with disabilities or representatives from related organizations to gain meaningful insights.

Lead: Rotating Chair of the Accessibility Committee/Accessibility Committee

Timeline: Ongoing, with progress reported at quarterly committee meetings.

2. EMPLOYEE EDUCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

We are committed to providing continuous employee education on accessibility standards, such as the Accessibility Style Guide and the creation of accessible documents. Training initiatives, guides, and workshops on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and inclusive classroom practices are available, facilitated by the Faculty Development Coaches, Educational Developer, Program Review Specialist, Quality Assurance Specialist, Student Accessibility Coordinator, Learning Strategists, and Educational Technology Specialists.

Going forward: We will continue expanding these resources, including training plans and standards as they are developed.

Lead: Facilities, Learning Commons and Human Resources

Timeline: Ongoing throughout the academic year.

3. CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We acknowledge the importance of consultation with people affected by barriers. During the accessibility plan's development and updates, we engaged stakeholders, including staff, students, and representatives from disability communities, as outlined in The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Consultations provided insights into the real, everyday challenges faced by those with disabilities and highlighted specific barriers that hinder full participation. These discussions were instrumental in shaping our priorities, ensuring that our actions address not just physical barriers, but also attitudinal, informational, and systemic challenges.

Going forward: Future consultations will continue to be inclusive, accessible, and conducted through a variety of channels, such as in-person meetings, virtual platforms, focus groups, and surveys, ensuring input from a wide range of individuals with disabilities. This will help us stay accountable and foster improvements.

Lead: Accessibility Committee

Timeline: Consultations will take place every two years, in alignment with accessibility plan updates.

ONGOING EMPLOYEE EDUCATION

Assiniboine College is committed to educating employees and providing resources on accessibility standards. We accomplish this by providing ongoing employee education. As outlined in the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, employees are required to take three courses: Accessible Customer Service, Accessible Employment, and Accessible Information and Communication Standards, which are available to all staff through our online Moodle platform or the Accessibility for Manitobans on-line learning portal. In addition to the training provided by the Manitoban Accessibility Office, hiring managers receive training through our Managers Toolkit training to ensure our hiring practices are accessible.

Employees are notified of the option to create an Individual Emergency Evacuation Plan through the onboarding process and through intranet communication.

Learning Management System (Moodle) Moodle Minimum Presence Standards were revised in spring 2024. Moodle Minimum Presence Standards are intended to provide a consistent student experience in Moodle and ensure that students can access the critical information they need to be successful. There are 16 standards that can be categorized into (a) elements the Moodle course page contains, and (b) the online presence of the instructor. The Moodle Minimum Presence Standards support accessibility by reducing barriers.

Our CLI team continues to deliver workshops and training in Universal Design for Learning (UDL), accessibility and inclusive classrooms. Professional development opportunities and job aids in assessment, instruction, and classroom management are often grounded in a universal design for learning mindset.

Going forward: Our Faculty Development Coaches, Educational Developer, Program Review Specialist, Quality Assurance Specialist, Student Accessibility Coordinator, Learning Strategists, and Educational Technology Specialists will provide leadership on Universal Design for Learning. Their goal is to support staff and faculty in creating a more inclusive teaching and learning environment. This team will facilitate the application of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act in a postsecondary context, helping Assiniboine College to develop a deep understanding of what it means to provide accessible customer service as college employees. Learning Curve staff go through extensive training in assistive software, creating accessible documents, learning strategies and disability-specific issues. Our plan will embed accessibility into existing staff development opportunities (such as our Faculty Development workshops and Manager's Toolkit training), and new sessions dedicated to accessibility.

We will continue the development of training plans for the standard as they are released

Lead: Human Resources, Learning Commons

Timeline: New training offerings occur throughout the year, while the Customer Service course will continue to be available.

IDENTIFICATION OF SYSTEMIC BARRIERS

We have identified numerous opportunities to enhance understanding and awareness of accommodation and accessibility at Assiniboine College. To support this, we have developed comprehensive educational materials for employees and students. The roles of the Student Accessibility Coordinator, Student Success Advisor, and Learning Curve team are explained during student orientation and staff onboarding sessions to ensure clarity from the outset.

We have also introduced targeted training for staff and faculty, including the "Leading for Mental Health" program. This training emphasizes the importance of mental health accommodations and educates participants on fostering an inclusive environment for all members of the college community. These initiatives aim to build a culture of awareness, support, and proactive engagement with accessibility needs across the college.

The Learning Curve team is committed to increasing awareness of services for faculty and students not located on one of our main campuses, including those at rural sites, distance learners, and temporary contract locations. All Learning Curve team members are certified to deliver training in Read&Write assistive software, which is available to all students. The team also promotes various accessibility tools, including MS Office features and Microsoft Lens, and AI applications to enhance learning strategies and reading comprehension. Additionally, specialized equipment such as document readers, talking calculators, and ergonomic tools are available for students to borrow, with training provided on their use.

The learning management system, Moodle, used by Assiniboine College now has an integrated accessibility tool that allows users to make changes to the background colour, font colour, and font size in a way that addresses their unique needs. There is also an Accessibility Review option for course facilitators to run an accessibility analysis of their Moodle course. The analysis identifies accessibility issues and provides suggestions for fixing them.

We have developed a Student Success Course called College Foundations to support students in managing the transition to college, which often requires greater responsibility for their learning. College Foundations help students proactively develop self-awareness, increase academic preparedness, and become active learners who take ownership of their education. As part of this course, students are introduced to accessibility services and assistive technology available at the college.

To ensure a safe working and learning environments for all students, staff, and faculty, we have established an Individual Emergency Response Plan procedure. Employees with disabilities—whether permanent, temporary, visible, or invisible—requiring assistance during an emergency are asked to complete a self-assessment form, which is then submitted to Human Resources. The Health & Safety Officer collaborates with the individual, Human Resources, and Student Success Advisors to develop an appropriate individualized emergency response plan.

Going forward: We are in the process of launching the Faculty Handbook, which is set to be published by the Centre for Learning Innovation (CLI) in December 2024. This handbook includes strategies for effective instruction of students with a variety of learning and disability-related needs, addressing some of the most common accommodations in a post-secondary classroom. It also serves as a guide for faculty in applying the principles of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act and integrating accessible customer service practices into their teaching.

The Faculty Handbook is intended to empower instructors with practical tools to create inclusive

learning environments, ensuring that all students, regardless of their individual needs, have equitable opportunities to succeed. Additionally, college policies and procedures are being reviewed to identify gaps or necessary revisions, ensuring alignment with accessibility standards, and fostering an inclusive learning atmosphere.

Our commitment extends to actively offering Accessibility Services at college events, reinforcing our dedication to fostering an environment where all members feel welcomed and supported. The policy renewal process also includes the development of new initiatives, such

as Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) policy, to strengthen our commitment to equitable access and support for all students, faculty, and staff. These initiatives are aimed at eliminating systemic barriers and promoting full participation for everyone at Assiniboine College.

Lead: Accessibility Committee and Accessibility and Disability Services, CLI, Human Resources

Timeline: Faculty Handbook is being launched December 2024. The College Foundations course continues to be evaluated and updated yearly to align with accessibility standards.

ACCESS AND IMPROVEMENT OF COLLEGE INFRASTRUCTURE

We have completed an internal assessment that included accessibility factors such as doors, meeting spaces, offices, washrooms, and other potential barriers to participation. This assessment led to the creation of an Accessibility Campus Map and the identification of barriers on campus, which are reviewed and updated annually.

COMPLETION OF PAST PROJECTS

Since our last update, we have completed several major accessibility projects, including:

▶ **North and South Entrances:** The North and South main entrances of the Victoria Avenue East campus were renovated with new concrete walks and ramps.

▶ **Evacuation Chairs:** Evacuation chairs were installed in stairways at the Victoria Avenue

East and North Hill campuses to assist individuals with reduced mobility.

▶ **Barrier-Free Desks:** New barrier-free desks were added at the Registrar's Office on the Victoria Avenue East campus and at other major campuses.

▶ **Automatic Door Openers:** Fourteen (14) automatic door openers were installed at the Victoria Avenue East and North Hill campuses to promote barrier-free access.

▶ **Center for Creative Media:** Installed push button door opener to ensure access.

▶ **Students' Association Area Renovations:** Renovated with accessibility in mind, including an accessible-height reception desk and hallways wide enough for mobility aids.

- **Office Accessibility:** Office spaces have been made accessible.
- **Library Renovations:** Library shelving aisles are accessible via wheelchair. New meeting rooms and computer spaces were constructed to be fully accessible, and push button door openers were installed.
- **Victoria Avenue East Campus Updates:** Renovated the 500 hallways to include two accessible washrooms with automatic door openers. The I and J doors are also being fitted with automatic door openers.
- **Sidewalk Improvements and Bus Shelter:** Added an accessible sidewalk exiting to the North and erected a new bus shelter at the Victoria Avenue East campus, ensuring accessible doorways.

In addition to these structural projects, we created and widely distributed accessibility maps for all major campuses, highlighting accessible entrances, elevators, washrooms, and stairlifts. We have also implemented a phone application, SafetySmart, which provides digital access to these maps, as well as information on campus security and other resources to promote accessibility.

Going Forward: New Projects 2025-2027

As we move forward, we are focusing on new projects aimed at enhancing accessibility and safety:

- **Sharps Container Policy and Procedures:** We will develop policies and procedures regarding sharps containers, with plans to make at least one container available at each campus once the policy is approved.
- **Fire Drill Policy Update:** We will update the fire drill policy to include specific evacuation plans for staff and students who require assistance.
- **EvacuChair Training:** Training sessions will be set up for the use of EvacuChairs to facilitate the evacuation of individuals with limited mobility in buildings with stairs.
- **Accessible Access to East Doorways:** at Victoria East Campus anticipated to be completed by 2025
- Maintenance Connection-a request system to identify any accessibility issues/requests

Lead: Facilities (campus projects)

Timeline: Ongoing, with reports provided to the Accessibility Committee at quarterly meetings.

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND OVERSIGHT

The Assiniboine College Accessibility Committee has established Terms of Reference and defined quality assurance actions and roles to guide our efforts in creating an accessible and inclusive campus.

The Accessibility Committee, now with a rotating chair, is responsible for overseeing and maintaining accessibility initiatives throughout the college. This includes ensuring compliance with the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, supporting accessibility in both physical spaces and digital environments, and integrating accessibility into college culture through continuous improvement and stakeholder engagement.

The Accessibility Committee is responsible for the following quality assurance actions:

Establish and Maintain Terms of Reference: Continue to define the committee's scope, responsibilities, and procedures to ensure effective governance and accountability.

Maintain an Accessibility Plan: Ensure that the accessibility plan is in line with current legislation and standards, including regular updates to reflect evolving best practices.

Bi-Annual Reports: Develop and present bi-annual reports to the Senior Leadership Team, providing transparency and accountability regarding the progress of accessibility initiatives.

Training and Resources: Develop, update, and maintain accessibility training resources for staff and students. This includes training on new initiatives, such as the use of EvacuChairs for emergency evacuations and updated fire drill procedures to accommodate individuals needing assistance.

Sub-Committees for Ongoing Projects: Establish sub-committees to develop, review, and revise ongoing accessibility projects, such as infrastructure renovations and the implementation of new accessibility tools.

Stakeholder Feedback: Solicit feedback from internal and external stakeholders—including students, staff, disability organizations, and community members—to inform accessibility plan updates and identify new opportunities for improvement.

Going Forward (2025-2027): We will continue to support accessibility at Assiniboine College through a strategic, multi-year approach. Key actions include:

▶ **Sharps Container Policy and Procedures:** Develop policies and procedures for sharps container use, with at least one container available on each campus once approved.

▶ **Fire Drill and Evacuation Updates:** Update the fire drill policy to include detailed evacuation plans for staff and students requiring assistance and provide training for the use of EvacuChairs.

▶ **Stakeholder Engagement:** Continue to engage the college community through regular consultations to refine accessibility initiatives.

▶ **Accessible Infrastructure and Digital Environments:** Work with Facilities and community stakeholders to identify and address both physical and digital accessibility issues, ensuring that all future space designs meet or exceed accessibility standards.

▶ **Staff Development:** Enhance staff development opportunities by embedding accessibility considerations into existing training sessions and new sessions dedicated to accessibility.

▶ **Live Document:** the plan will remain an open plan and Assiniboine is committed to using the plan to identify new needs/priorities on an ongoing basis, recognizing changes in assets and development of our campuses.

Lead: Accessibility Committee (with a rotating chair)

Timeline: Ongoing, with quarterly committee meetings and regular updates provided to the college community.