



Fanshawe College 2020 Accessibility Plan

Summary

This is Fanshawe College's eighteenth annual Accessibility Plan under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) Section 15, and the eighth annual plan report under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) Section 4. This document is in-conjunction with the College's Multi-year Accessibility Plan as posted on the College's website.

This Plan describes the measures that Fanshawe College has taken during the past year based on our 2019 Accessibility Plan and our objectives for 2020 to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.

Plans for accessibility improvements are developed annually through the College's operational and capital planning processes.

The College's Accessibility Plan addresses:

1. Physical Facilities, Maintenance, Signage and Wayfinding
2. Academic Services
3. Student Services and Supports
4. Human Resources and Awareness for Staff
5. Information and Communication
6. Accessibility Planning Objectives for 2021
7. Accessibility Plan Communication

We will continue to build on our accessibility improvements over the next year.

1. Physical Facilities, Maintenance, Signage and Way-Finding

Physical Facilities

Accessibility is a high priority at Fanshawe College and all renovations are reviewed for AODA compliance, current building code compliance and the College continues to renovate beyond the code by adopting the current CSA Accessible Design standards. In 2015, the Ontario Building Code along with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (Design of Public Spaces Standard/Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment) enabled improved accessible/universal design of physical spaces.

Accessibility Improvements Completed – September 2019 to August 2020:

The following renovations were completed to College facilities over the past year:

- Various student lounge spaces with new furniture
- International Centre expansion
- New LPT3 classroom (moveable furniture, various monitors, group working areas) B1079
- Remedial sidewalk repair and curb-cuts
- Auto operators R1 residence
- New Welding Simulator Lab Z1027 (10 stations)
- Language and Liberal Arts reception area renewal
- Relocation of Accessibility Lab and Student Testing Centre F3
- Continuation of new card access system at main campus
- High tech classroom upgrades (45 rooms)

Maintenance

With over 242 thousand square meters of space, (2.6 million square feet), Fanshawe takes emergency and preventative maintenance seriously. Emergency and temporary maintenance interruptions are carefully planned to minimize the impact on accessibility for our community.

The Facilities Management and Community Safety Department (FMCS) utilizes a preventative maintenance work order system to ensure all of our facilities are well maintained. FMCS employs 78 staff to support these units; Maintenance/Operations (30), Security (13), Environment, Health, Safety and Emergency Services (11, +140 volunteers), and Campus Planning/Administration (24).

FMCS completed 2,266 preventative maintenance work orders and 8,624 service requests of which 1,279 were dispatch response requests (spills, out of service, etc.). When the College control center is notified of services affecting accessibility, they respond by dispatching staff to investigate/repair; post electronic notice for both students and employees; place signage at the location; and provide alternate access routes for redirecting pedestrian traffic. The same process is applied for planned maintenance.

Signage and Wayfinding

Facilities Planning and Development conducted a number of sessions in the spring of 2018 to gather insights from diverse student, faculty and staff groups to shape a Wayfinding Master Plan and guidelines. The new plan will incorporate accessibility standards including the use of braille and optimal sign heights.

Implementation of the Wayfinding Master Plan has been delayed with an expected start date in 2021/22.

2. Academic Services

Centre for Academic Excellence

The Centre for Academic Excellence (CAE) continues to support the College's accessibility plans by ensuring that accessibility is addressed through new course and program development, on-going program review and e-learning initiatives with the following resources:

- ***The CODE Book*** is a comprehensive, faculty-focused resource for developing a new course or revising an existing one, which includes a chapter that specifically addresses UDL guidelines as well as UDL teaching examples throughout the book
- The **FanshaweOnline (FOL) Course Blueprint** is an accessible and structured course content template that aligns with the Quality Matters standards for quality online courses. This research project, *Reaching through the Screen*, was developed and piloted in 2019, to enhance engagement in online course development and delivery. The FOL Course Blueprint was rolled out extensively across the College in 2020 to provide faculty with a framework for organizing their online content during the pandemic.
- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL) reference materials** for course development (e.g., overview, hyperlinks, images, tables, accessibility checker and fonts) continue to be available on the CAE portal.

Additionally, in collaboration with Organizational Development and Learning and Learning Systems Services, CAE delivers faculty training sessions on the use and application of these resources for accessible course development and course delivery (e.g., *How to Build a Week's Worth of Online Content*, *Evaluation Strategies and How to Build Them Online*).

Library Learning Commons (LLC)

The Library Learning Commons has been renamed and is now a more inclusive and accessible space for students who require academic assistance that supports their in-class learning. Students can now access Library and Learning Services all in one place, including research, Writing, English as a Second Language, Math, Science, and Peer support.

The LLC also moved to a new space that has been designed with AODA requirements and compliance in mind and in consultation with our local shareholders. As such, we no longer have private study rooms and have moved to an overall more accessible space for all.

The 32,000 physical book collection has largely moved online, with the exception of the remaining 5,000 physical books. This digitized collection provides greater accessibility to the research collection, as the subscription databases have read-aloud features and/or PDFs that are fully accessible.

The LLC also completed a full accessibility audit of its website (conducted by Digital Echidna) and updated and improved it based on their recommendations.

The Ontario College Library Service also launched the Library eResources Accessibility Portal (LEAP) to help libraries meet the AODA standards by 2025 (by identifying and removing barriers for people with disabilities). So far, this project has assessed 50 different databases, which allows libraries to not only evaluate databases, but also advocate for more accessible databases. More databases will be added as the colleges complete the second round of assessments. Fanshawe College actively participates in the project, and the LLC has completed the assessment for three of its databases thus far.

All of the same supports (ACE, self-checkout, one-on-one meetings, accessible tools for software/databases, etc.) continue to be available for the College community.

3. Student Services and Supports

Student Services launched its ***Here for You*** campaign in January 2019. This awareness campaign focuses on the many facilities and support services available to our students outside the classroom.

In 2020, the ***Here for You*** campaign implemented on-campus Student Service Hubs, to respond to student questions and help direct students to campus resources. For the fall Open House, ***Here for You*** Instagram Stories and Reels were created, showcasing student service areas and supports. Student Service action plans were implemented to ensure accessible offerings of their services both online and in-person to students studying in both fully online and/or blended delivery formats.

Counselling and Accessibility Services

Fanshawe College's 2020-21 report includes highlights of our activities and statistical information related to Accessibility Services. This year Accessibility Services provided support to 3,426 registered students with disabilities from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021. Keeping in trend with the last several years the number of students registered with a mental health diagnosis continues to represent the largest disability category registered with Accessibility Services. An increase in students presenting with complex issues that include mental health diagnoses and concurrent disorders was also noted.

This reporting period reflects the supports and services provided to students during the Covid-19 pandemic and represents a very high percentage of online learners. The shift to a primarily online learning format presented additional challenges for students with disabilities.

Accessibility Services offered remote service to students during this time and strived to be innovative, flexible, and compassionate in our service provision to help support learners through these challenging times.

Mental Health

Students with a psychiatric diagnosis continued to represent the largest population of students seeking accommodations representing 1,105 students this year. In addition, 476 students did not disclose a diagnosis but presented with documented functional limitations and symptoms consistent with a mental health issue.

Accessibility Services continues to work with other areas of the college to support Fanshawe's overarching Mental Health Strategy. Presentations on accommodating students with mental health continues to be a focus and numerous learning opportunities continued to be provided to divisional areas in a variety of formats. For example, faculty orientations, Teaching Circles sessions, departmental meetings, student governance, full day faculty training days on Mental Health First Aid were offered virtually.

Counseling and Accessibility Services continues to provide Mental Health First Aid training and individually designed faculty training around mental health awareness, the duty to accommodate, and to offer support and collaboration in developing complex accommodation plans. Individual faculty consultations are welcomed and encouraged.

The successful partnership between Fanshawe and CMHA (Canadian Mental Health Association) continued this year and after-hours crisis support was offered virtually for several peak periods in the fall and winter terms.

A host of student wellness programming was offered virtually in an attempt to engage and connect with students. Specialized psycho-educational and support groups for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and for students diagnosed with ADHD was offered and well attended on a weekly basis. A series of individualized learning strategies and specialized tutorials geared to student need were available to students with Learning Disabilities and memory issues. Other groups and presentations that were offered virtually included: Strategies for Coping with stress, Test Anxiety, Dealing with Depression, Creating Healthy

Relationships, Coping with Addictions, and a general Be Well group (to support overall emotional regulation). Groups are well attended and were especially important this year to support students' wellness in a proactive manner while engaging them at a time when many felt disconnected due to remote learning.

Services for Apprentices with Disabilities

Accessibility Services supported 106 apprentices with identified disability challenges.

Accessibility Counsellors and adaptive technologists continue to support individuals in apprenticeship programs with identified learning challenges and disabilities to support their success. Learning Strategies and specialized tutoring continued to be offered virtually to apprentices with learning challenges. The Apprentice Intake position works to enhance delivery of orientation sessions for apprentices and other sponsored students.

Diagnostic Psychological Assessments

As a result of Covid-19 students were not referred directly to community psychologists for psychoeducational assessments. Rather comprehensive interim accommodations and supports were provided based on screeners that were completed with Counselors. Students had the option of pursuing assessments privately with psychologists who were functioning in person with safety protocols in place. Local psychologists were not providing full psycho-educational assessments virtually due to validity concerns. Our process ensured that students' academic accommodation needs were met in a timely manner.

Currently we have 52 students on our wait list to be referred for a psycho-educational assessment when it is (COVID-19) safe to proceed. This includes students who require an updated assessment, students who have never had an assessment but our screening indicates a disability is highly probable, and students who have a documented disability but require an assessment to clarify another possible disability (LD, ADHD, ASD) and appropriate accommodations.

Transitions:

Transitions workshops were offered virtual throughout the year and additional summer transitions programs were provided virtually in Aug and Sept. Stepping into Fanshawe, a transition program for students with mental health issues, specialized transition programming for students with ASD, and programming supporting mature students with disabilities were offered in addition to our regular transition programming. Core elements of all programs included navigating and accessing campus services, student panels or mentoring opportunities, information on managing stress and coping strategies, and connecting with the Accessibility team.

The Transitions Team continued to work with regional agencies and school boards offering virtual activities for highs schools and the community to engage those with disabilities who are considering post-secondary education. This proved challenging due to a variety of Covid-19 related factors. Despite these challenges our Transition team managed to connect with numerous prospective students virtually throughout the year

In 2020-2021, our AS Transition Counsellors provided preadmission information and

counseling appointments to 93 prospective students with disabilities and their families. Additionally, the Registrar's Admissions Officers worked to provide information related to Accessibility Services to incoming students. Additional transition support was offered in the fall and winter terms through group programs, virtual high school visits, case management services, and peer mentoring support.

Transition and Support for Students on the Spectrum:

Last year 128 students with ASD registered with Accessibility Services. Programming to meet the unique social and learning needs of this population continue to be developed and were offered in a virtual format. Virtual transition programming was offered to both students with ASD and their parents. Collaboration and partnership continue with the Autism and Behavioral Sciences academic program at Fanshawe College to foster new and innovative ways to help enhance the student experience for these students. The ASD support and social group continued to run the full year and was well attended despite the challenges of an online format. Transition programming continues through liaising with local school boards to develop and offer early specialized transition programming for students with ASD.

Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

Fanshawe supports Deaf and Hard of Hearing students with a range of services including professional note takers and ASL interpreters. We continue to actively recruit and interview interpreters to ensure the needs of Deaf students can be met despite the regional shortage of interpreters. Our interpreters met the student need with great flexibility this year by providing interpretation virtually or in person when required.

Specialized orientation sessions are offered to this student group. Faculty are also provided with additional education and awareness materials on accommodating students who are Deaf in the classroom. Resources pertaining to Deaf culture and appropriate communication strategies are also available to faculty.

Test Centre:

The Test Centre was closed for a period of time during the pandemic during which time it was relocated and expanded. With the vast majority of learning occurring online most accommodation needs were met in a virtual environment. The Test Centre was innovative in meeting the need for readers and scribes virtually for students who required this accommodation. Students who were studying in a blended program and tested on campus had access to the Test Centre and 324 accommodated tests were delivered during this time. The shift to online learning and meeting the testing needs within the online testing environment accounted for the lower numbers this year. Once academic programming is transitioned back on campus the Test Centre will see a drastic increase in need for accommodated tests.

Note Taking Support

This year the emphasis continued on matching students with note taking needs through the transcription service, Note Taking Express, whenever possible. The majority of note taking needs were met this way but peer note taking was offered as an alternative when required. Note taking requests and accommodations totaled 892 from 191 unique students. This number continues to drop as many requests for a peer note takers are now successfully filled

with increased collaboration from professors, and the development of recorded lectures that has been a result of the online format of many classes.

Enhanced Service Accommodations

Enhanced service accommodations, including professional note takers, specialized tutors, educational aides, and, academic strategists were offered to students with complex disability related academic needs. When specialized or enhanced services are required for academic accommodation, Fanshawe College recruits external contractors and matches them to students requiring these services. In most cases these specialized services are funded by the Bursary for Students with Disabilities.

Our Education Aides showed extreme flexibility in meeting student need during this unique year. Support was offered virtually and on campus when required by the student/program.

Bursaries for Students with Disabilities (BSWD):

In 2020-21, 387 unique Bursary applications were approved. The database system continued to be extremely helpful in tracking and communicating information in a timely and efficient manner. We received approval for \$506,028 in service funding and \$335,623 for equipment and software for a total of \$880,891 in approved bursary funding.

Universal Availability of Assistive Software:

Fanshawe College continued with site license purchases for Kurzweil and Read&Write Gold. Both software licenses included a 'take home' feature, allowing any Fanshawe student at any of our campus locations to download the software onto their personal laptop or desktop computer. Assistive Technologists continued to support regional campuses in Woodstock, St. Thomas, Simcoe, and at the London Downtown campus to provide virtual accessible technology services and training.

Building capacity across the College in UDL continues to be a focus. This year 305 requests for alternate format text books were processed with AERO filling 19 requests.

Area Campuses:

Fanshawe College is committed to supporting students with disabilities studying at our regional campuses in Simcoe, St. Thomas, Woodstock, London South, and the London Downtown Campus. Additional supports were also offered to satellite program sites in Clinton, Goderich and Kincardine. An Accessibility Counsellor is assigned to each regional campus to work with students with disabilities in supporting their accommodation needs. Students at regional campuses can also access virtual personal counseling and urgent same day service appointments as needed.

Staff Recognition

Counselling and Accessibility Services continues to recognize groups and individuals for demonstrating leadership in advancing the spirit of inclusion and full-participation for all students but especially those with disabilities. Certificates of appreciation are awarded to those being recognized as going above and beyond to encourage the participation of students with disabilities at the College

4. Human Resources and Awareness for Staff

The AODA Steering Committee (ASC):

The ASC is comprised of senior leaders who are responsible for championing accessibility and providing oversight of activities relating to the implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and its Standards and Regulations, planning and compliance.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC):

The AAC is comprised of College stakeholders including student, staff and community representation. This committee makes recommendations to the ASC on the identification and removal of barriers relating to the goods, services and facilities of the College and provides input to the College's Accessibility Plans.

In early January, some members of both committees attended a meeting with the Innovation Village Project Consultants and the Fanshawe team and were given an overview of the Consultants' initial design concept. The committee members were provided an opportunity to provide feedback regarding accessibility.

At the AAC February meeting Linda Young, Senior Manager and Kathy Day, Educational Technologist from Learning Systems Services attended to provide the committee with an overview of tools that will integrate with the Colleges' Learning Management System (Fanshaweonline) to enhance accessibility. One of the tools, Blackboard Ally focuses on accessible content and how to make documents accessible for a variety of end-users. Using Blackboard Ally, Faculty can also see at a glance whether their content is accessible or needs some work to be accessible. Blackboard Ally is currently being piloted with 10 professor and 407 students. On completion of the pilot, feedback will be collected to determine next steps. The committee were also given a demonstration of AIRA a visual interpreting service application for individuals who may require assistance in accessing visual information.

Organizational Development and Learning

As a result of the Pandemic and associated lock-downs and other restrictions, in March 2020, the College pivoted to online learning and blended learning. Organizational Development and Learning played a key role in this transition by creating a learning HUB with resources for faculty that includes a variety of topics to assist them teach online and provide the necessary resources for their students.

Courses on accessibility and online teaching were added to Fanshawearns to aid with the transition in addition to the courses listed below:

- FOL: UDL and Accessibility Tips, Tricks and FAQs: In this session we will review available FOL functions for accessibility and universal design and then share and compare your experiences and best practices, ask questions, and learn from others.
- Universal Design in Education (Introduction) and Universal Design for Learning (Advanced): Address issues of accessibility in the learning environment and

- incorporates Universal Design for Learning principles into the curriculum.
- Accessibility and Accommodations: Leveling the Playing Field: provides information on how to effectively support students facing barriers to learning by covering topics such as student disabilities, mental health and campus resources for supporting students with accessibility needs.
 - Adaptive Technology in the Classroom: Includes a range of hardware and software that can aid a student in the learning process. This technology can assist a student with learning difficulties as well as physical disabilities. The goal of the presentation is to demonstrate some of the existing technology that students are using in the classroom, and explain why they might be using it.
 - Diversity and Inclusion: Provides information on current diversity initiatives and best practices.
 - Mental Health First Aid: Participants learn skills for providing initial help to people experiencing mental health problems such as depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis and substance abuse. These sessions help to minimize fear and participants are able to identify and develop simple and effective intervention strategies. In 2020, 15 staff participated bringing the total number of participants to date to 310.

The department continues to add curated online content to Fanshawearns, that follows accessibility guidelines. All new e-learning modules are created following UDL and AODA parameters.

The College continues to train new employees, volunteers, those who participate in the development of College policy, and all others who provide goods or services on behalf of the College on the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

All Academic staff are required to complete a module on accessible education principles and universal instructional design.

The Teaching and Learning site, a faculty teaching tool and guide, continues to be available. This site provides accessibility tips, tools and resources to support accessibility and accommodations for students in the classroom. Additional resources are continuously added to this site.

The College continues to subscribe to LinkedIn Learning that provides expert led courses on a variety of topics including how to create accessible documents.

The College Educator Development Program (CEDP) and the Orientation to College Teaching moved to online in 2020 to ensure accessibility for staff working from home. Additionally, the sessions are recorded and available with closed captioning on the department's YouTube channel.

Most webinars facilitated by the department are being recorded and available with closed captioning on the department's YouTube channel.

5. Information and Communication

The College continues to seek feedback from students, staff and the community on the accessibility of our goods, services and facilities. We continue to accept feedback through a variety of methods such as online, in person or by telephone.

Website Content

The College's website continues to meet all accessibility requirements. New content on the website is checked for accessibility prior to posting. The entire website is scanned for accessibility compliance once a year. Training for new and existing web authors continues to ensure content meets accessibility guidelines. Training for staff who frequently create Adobe Acrobat (PDF) documents is ongoing.

6. Accessibility Planning Objectives for 2020

To build on our progress over the past year, we have established the following Accessibility Planning Objectives for the coming year, in conjunction with the College's AODA Multi-Year Plan. While these objectives will be our priorities for the next year, other accessibility improvements are addressed as opportunities arise.

Innovation Village

Innovation Village (IV) will be a physical and virtual hub within the heart of Fanshawe College, where students will discover one-stop supports and exceptional learning. IV will include collaborative workspaces, virtual reality and multimedia labs, a maker space, project rooms, research support and cutting-edge equipment. Every student will be provided with a learning experience and job skills for the future so they gain the technical and human skills required for a changing world of work.

Construction for Innovation Village commenced in January 2020. Phase one, the Library Commons including the Indigenous Spirit Assembly opened in November. Phase two of this project (L Building, Welcome Kiosk, Welcome Lounge) started in December 2020 with an expected completion date of July 2022. Phase three of this project is expected to commence in January 2021 with a completion date of summer 2023. Access to some College buildings during construction will not be available, this information will be communicated and directional signage will be posted.

Physical Facilities

All new construction and renovations projects will meet the current Ontario Building Code and the AODA, Integrated Accessibility Standards and where these standards/regulations are lacking we will follow the CSA B651 12 Accessible Design for the Built Environment.

The following facility improvements are planned for the next year, September 2020 to August 31, 2021:

- A1008 Massage Lab phase 2 and Z2035 classroom refresh
- 15 New classrooms A, E, H and G buildings
- ARD-GRD studio refresh
- New leased space Oxbury Centre, renovatedNew LED lighting Good Theater LDB downtown campus
- New CICE offices and classrooms A1
- M to H Building third floor link
- Z Building new LED corridor lighting
- New PA AV equipment Colvin Atrium
- New Welding Simulator Lab Z1027 (20 stations)
- D1048 studio flooring renewal
- Y Building renovations
- Various student lounge spaces with new furniture

In the fall of 2020, the College applied for and was accepted for the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) program. RHFAC is a national rating system that measures and certifies the level of meaningful access to buildings and sites. The rating will allow the College to better understand its accessibility, how accessibility can be improved and identify any barriers to students, employees and community members. The RHFAC audit of the 21 buildings located at 1001 Fanshawe College Boulevard, Oxford Street, London will commence June 22, 2021.

7. Accessibility Plan Communication

This Accessibility Plan and the College's AODA Multi-year Accessibility Plan are available to students, staff and members of the public on the College's website <https://www.fanshawec.ca/accessibilityplan>.

Both plans are available in an accessible format upon request.