

Council of Ontario Universities
Accessible Customer Service eLearning

GLOSSARY

The following terms are commonly used in discussions about accessibility in general, and accessible customer service on campus in particular. Refer to Sources and Resources for the sources of information on which these definitions are based.

Accessibility

Accessibility is the degree to which persons with disabilities can access a device, service or environment without barriers. Accessibility is also a process – it is the **proactive** identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities.

Accessibility standards

An accessibility standard is a rule that persons and organizations have to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers. Each university must ensure that its policies, practices and procedures address the requirements of Ontario’s accessible customer service standard, and ensure that they are consistent with the principles of dignity, equal opportunity, independence and integration.

Dignity

Providing service with dignity means the customer maintains his or her self-respect and the respect of other people. Dignified service means not treating persons with disabilities as an afterthought or forcing them to accept lesser service, quality or convenience.

Equal opportunity

Equal opportunity means having the same chances, options, benefits and results as others. In the case of services, it means that persons with disabilities have the same opportunity as others to benefit from the way you provide goods or services.

Independence

Ensuring people are able to do things on their own without unnecessary help, or interference from others.

Integration

Integration means providing service in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers.

Accommodation

Accommodation is an individualized and reactive adaptation or adjustment made to provide a person with a disability with equitable and non-discriminatory opportunities for participation. For students with disabilities, accommodation is a collaborative process between the student,

faculty and disability service personnel to identify and remove environmental barriers to learning and performance. Appropriate and reasonable accommodation is determined based on an individualized assessment of the interaction between the student's disability and required tasks. Accommodation is **not** treatment or rehabilitation.

Alternative format

Alternative format refers to the conversion of printed text, audio or video files into formats more easily accessed by persons with disabilities.

Audio format

Audio is an alternative format for persons with a vision, intellectual or developmental or learning disability, or who cannot read print. Labels should be prepared in large, high-contrast print and Braille.

Braille

Braille is an alternative format for persons who are blind or deafblind. It is a tactile system of raised dots representing letters or a combination of letters of the alphabet. Braille is produced using Braille transcription software.

Captioning

Captioning translates the audio portion of a video presentation by way of subtitles, or captions, which usually appear on the bottom of the screen. Captioning may be closed or open. Closed captions can only be seen on a television screen that is equipped with a device called a closed caption decoder. Open captions are "burned on" a video and appear whenever the video is shown. Captioning makes television programs, films and other visual media with sound accessible to persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Descriptive Video Service (DVS)

DVS provides descriptive narration of key visual elements—such as the action, characters, locations, costumes and sets—without interfering with dialogue or sound effects. DVS makes television programs, films, home videos and other visual media accessible for persons with vision disabilities.

Electronic text

Electronic text is used with computer synthetic voice technology (screen reading software) that allows persons who are blind, have low vision (such as seniors) or who have learning disabilities to hear a spoken translation of what others see on the monitor. When an electronic form of a document is placed on a CD, it should be labelled in large, high-contrast print and Braille.

Large print

Large print is an alternative format for persons who have low vision. Large print materials should be prepared with a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger.

Windowing

Windowing enables persons who are deaf to read by means of a sign language interpreter what others hear in a video presentation or broadcast. The interpreter appears in a corner or “window” in the screen, translating spoken word to sign language. Windowing may include open or closed captioning.

Assistive device

An assistive device is a tool, technology or mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks such as moving, communicating or lifting. Assistive devices help persons with disabilities maintain their independence at home, at work and in the community.

Digital audio player

An assistive device that enables persons with hearing loss to listen to books, directions, art shows, etc.

FM transmitter system

An assistive device used by persons who are Deaf, deafened, oral deaf or hard of hearing to help boost sound closest to the listener while reducing background noise

Hearing aid

An assistive device that makes sound louder and clearer for persons who are Deaf, deafened, oral deaf or hard of hearing

Magnifier

An assistive device that makes print and images larger and easier to read

Mobility device

An assistive device that helps persons who have difficulty walking. Examples include wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, canes and crutches.

Personal data manager

An assistive device that helps persons with learning disabilities store, organize and retrieve personal information

Portable global positioning systems (GPS)

An assistive device that helps orient people to get to specific destinations

Speech generating device

These assistive devices are used to pass on a message using a device that “speaks” when a symbol, word, or pictures is pressed.

Teletypewriter (TTY)

An assistive device that helps persons who are unable to speak or hear to communicate by phone. The person types his her messages on the TTY keyboard, and messages are

sent using telephone lines to someone who has a TTY, or to an operator who passes the message along to someone who doesn't have a TTY.

White cane

An assistive device that helps persons who are blind or have vision loss find their way round obstacles

Augmentative communication

Any communication approach designed to support or augment an individual's communication output. There is a wide array of augmentative communication devices available, including voice output systems, keyboard text-to-speech generating devices, and picture or symbol communication boards or binders.

Barrier

A barrier is anything that keeps someone with a disability from participating fully in society because of his or her disability. Barriers can be visible or non-visible. Furthermore, while barriers are often unintentional, they can restrict access to goods and services.

Attitude

This barrier is about what we think and how we interact with persons with disabilities. It is perhaps the most difficult barrier to overcome because our attitudes – based on our beliefs, knowledge, previous experience and education – can be hard to change. For instance, some people don't know how to communicate with persons with disabilities – they may assume that someone with a speech problem also has an intellectual disability. Some people worry about offending someone by offering help and deal with this by ignoring or avoiding persons with disabilities.

Architectural or structural barrier

Architectural or structural barriers may result from design elements of a building such as stairs, doorways, the width of hallways and room layout. These barriers may also occur through everyday practices, such as when we store boxes or other objects in hallways, obstructing accessible pathways.

Information or communication barrier

Information or communication barriers – like small print size, low colour contrast between text and background or not facing the person when speaking – can make it difficult to receive or convey information.

Systemic

Systemic barriers can result from an organization's policies, practices and procedures if they restrict persons with disabilities, often unintentionally, as in the case with setting requirements such as full course loads in establishing eligibility for services such as residences, scholarships and honours listing.

Technology

Technology, or the lack of it, can prevent people from accessing information. Common tools like computers, telephones and other aids can all present barriers if they are not set up or designed with accessibility in mind.

Customer

University customers include a wide range of people who pay for services available on campus, such as full-time and part-time undergraduate and graduate students, university staff and faculty using campus services, city residents, visiting alumni faculty, students' parents and other relatives, and representatives from other organizations, e.g., universities, government departments and business partners.

Disability

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* uses the Ontario Human Rights Code definition of "disability", which includes physical, mental health, developmental and learning disabilities. A disability may be visible or non-visible, as follows:

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and (...) includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, 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,
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a development disability,
- c) A learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) A mental disorder, or
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

Deafblind

A person who is deafblind can neither see nor hear to some degree. Many persons who are deafblind are accompanied by an intervenor. Intervenors are trained in special sign language that involves touching the person's hands in a two-hand, manual alphabet.

Hearing loss

Persons who have hearing loss may be deaf or hard of hearing. Like other disabilities, hearing loss has a wide variety of degrees. Deafness can be evident at birth, or occur later in life from other causes, such as meningitis. Persons who are partially deaf often use hearing aids to assist their hearing. Deaf persons also use sign language to communicate. While American Sign Language and Quebec Sign Language (LSQ, or Langue des signes québécoise) are commonly used in Ontario, not everyone with hearing loss uses them.

Deaf

In Deaf culture, indicated by a capital "D", the term "Deaf" is used to describe a person who has severe to profound hearing loss and who identifies with the culture, society and

language of Deaf persons, which is based on Sign Language. Persons who are profoundly deaf may identify themselves as culturally Deaf or oral deaf.

Deafened

This term describes a person who has lost their hearing slowly or suddenly in adulthood. The person may use speech with visual cues such as captioning or computerized note-taking, speech reading or sign language.

Hard of hearing

This term describes a person who uses his or her residual hearing and speech to communicate. The person may supplement communication by speech reading, hearing aids, sign language and/or communication devices.

Oral deaf

This term describes a person who was born deaf or became deaf before learning to speak, but is taught to speak and may not typically use American Sign Language.

Intellectual or developmental disability

Persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit one's ability to learn. These disabilities are often non-visible.

Learning disability

The term "learning disabilities" refers to a range of disorders that affect how persons process information. Learning disabilities can result in reading and language-based learning problems (dyslexia), problems with mathematics (dyscalculia), or problems with writing (dysgraphia). Learning disabilities affect people from all backgrounds and are not a result of culture, language or lack of motivation. Persons with learning disabilities just learn differently.

Mental health disability

Mental health disabilities include schizophrenia, depression, phobias, as well as bipolar, anxiety and mood disorders. Mental illness is often episodic, so a person who has a psychological or psychiatric disability may not have symptoms all the time, and a person who has experienced an episode of mental illness in the past will not necessarily have a repeat experience.

Non-visible disability

Non-visible disabilities include a wide range of impairments that may not be immediately noticeable, such as back injury, vision or hearing loss, arthritis and medical conditions like diabetes or multiple sclerosis.

Physical disability

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities that can affect a person's mobility. The cause of the mobility disability may be non-visible, as in the case with arthritis, heart and lung conditions.

Speech or language impairment

Some people have problems communicating. It could be the result of cerebral palsy, hearing loss or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, causes slurring or stuttering, or not being able to express oneself or understand written or spoken language. Some persons who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

Vision loss

Vision loss reduces a person's ability to see clearly. Few persons with vision loss are totally blind. Some have limited vision such as tunnel vision, where a person has a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision, which means they cannot see straight ahead. Some can see the outline of objects while others can see the direction of light. Some common causes of vision disabilities are scratched corneas, diabetes-related eye conditions, injuries and corneal grafts.

Duty to accommodate

Duty to accommodate means accommodation must be provided in a manner that respects general principles such as dignity of the person, individualized, integration and full participation.

Inclusion

Inclusion is engaging differences to create a culture of belonging in which people are valued and honoured for the improvement of our society, world and enterprises. Inclusive behaviours are those practices and behaviours that leverage and honour the uniqueness of people's different talents, beliefs and ways of living,

Intervention

The act of going or mediating between. With regard to persons who are deafblind, an intervention is the process that enables a person who is deafblind to receive information so that the person can interact with his or her environment.

Intervenor

A person who provides intervention to an individual who is deafblind. Not to be confused with an interpreter, an intervenor is a specially trained professional who mediates between the person who is deafblind and others, enabling him or her to communicate effectively with and receive information from his or her environment.

Service animal

A service animal is an animal that does a job for a person with a disability. Examples include autism assistance or service dogs; guide dogs, dog guides or seeing eye dogs; hearing ear, hearing, sound alert or hearing alert dogs, cats or animals; psychiatric service dogs; service or mobility dogs or animals, special skills dogs or animals; seizure, seizure alert, seizure assist or seizure response dogs or animals.

Undue hardship

Organizations are required to accommodate someone with a disability to the point of undue hardship. There are only three factors to consider in assessing undue hardship: cost, outside sources of funding and health and safety requirements, if any.

Universal design

The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Universal Instructional Design

In terms of learning, universal design means the design of instructional materials and activities that makes the learning goals achievable by individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, speak, move, read, write, understand English, attend, organize, engage and remember. Universal design for learning is achieved by means of flexible curricular materials and activities that provide alternatives for students with differing abilities. These alternatives are built into the instructional design and operating systems of educational materials: they are not added after the fact.