

Policy Title:	ACCESSIBILITY POLICY	Area of Responsibility: VICE PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT & STUDENT SERVICES
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2.2 ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

At St. Clair College, we believe in and promote the rights of all persons with disabilities as enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)* and its related *Accessibility Standards Regulations*. The College is committed to fostering a rich working and learning environment that affirms the rights of all persons, including those with disabilities, to have access to equal opportunity in employment, education, accommodation or business dealings with the College.

This policy applies to all members of the College community, which includes all employees, students, volunteers and others who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the College.

1.0 Principles

The College further affirms its commitment to promoting the following principles in all of its policies and interactions with persons with disabilities:

- Dignity - treating those with disabilities with dignity who are as valued and deserving of effective and full service as any other customer, client or employee.
- Independence – freedom from control or influence of others; freedom to make your own choices.
- Integration – allowing people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar ways as others.
- Equal opportunity – having the same access, as others.

2.0 Objectives

In accordance with the aforementioned principles, the College strives to provide, short of undue hardship:

- a framework for the adoption of and compliance with all regulatory standards legislated by the government of Ontario vis-à-vis accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities;

- equal access to services, facilities and educational programs;
- equal opportunity in employment;
- a work and study environment that is free of discrimination;
- the continual improvement of access to college property, facilities and services;
- the development, publication, and review of its annual Accessibility Plan including participation of persons with disabilities;
- quality services – both what we deliver and how we deliver services – to all members of the College community.

All areas of the College are accountable for ensuring accessibility and all areas of the College are responsible for the appropriate internal and/or external communication to support this policy.

3.0 Framework

Consistent with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act’s purpose of achieving “...accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025.”, St. Clair College strives to provide an accessible learning and work environment for all persons with disabilities who interact with the college,

This policy is a resource to the St. Clair community in its efforts to ensure the College is accessible to persons with disabilities, and in compliance with the regulations set forth by the Government of Ontario. As such, this policy mirrors the regulatory standards developed by, or in development by, the government and its representatives on the standards development committees.

These regulatory standards include:

- 1) Standard for Accessible Customer Service (*Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*)
- 2) Standard for Accessible Information and Communication (in development)
- 3) Standard for Accessible Employment (in development)
- 4) Standard for Accessible Transportation (in development)
- 5) Standard for Accessible Built Environments (in development)

To fulfill these commitments, St. Clair College will develop appropriate procedures, which will be monitored and reviewed, to ensure access and accommodation for all persons with disabilities.

4.0 Definitions

The definition of disability used in this policy is the same as that used by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) and the Ontario Human Rights Code. That is, a disability is:

(a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, 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 developmental disability.

(c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.

(d) A mental disorder.

(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.

5.0 Annual Accessibility Planning

As per the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)*, St. Clair College will carry out annual Accessibility planning, with representatives from the disabled population of the St. Clair community. The plan and report will be publicly available.

6.0 Accessible Customer Service

In its provision of goods and services to members of the public with disabilities, the College will do so following the principles of **independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity**.

In such cases where a person with a disability requires (usually an approved accommodation through a counsellor and healthcare professionals) the use of their own personal **assistive devices** in order to access the goods and services provided by the College, they are welcome to do so. Assistive devices include, but is not limited to the following examples: hearing aids, wheelchairs, electronic organizers, magnifying devices, electronic voice synthesizers.

Persons with disabilities, who rely on the service of a **guide dog** or other **service animal**, are welcome to bring such animals with them to the College in order to access the goods and services provided. The only exception to this practice is where such animals are prohibited by law.

If the use of a **support person** is required in order to access the goods and services provided by the College, persons with disabilities are welcome to bring such support persons with them to the College. A support person may be a trained professional, friend or family member – whomever the person with a disability deems appropriate.

Further, in compliance with the **Accessibility Standards for Customer Service**, Ontario Regulation 429/07, the College shall:

- Use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.
- Ensure all members of the College community communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
- Where admission fees are charged, provide notice ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person of a person with a disability.
- Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access or use the College's goods or services are temporarily disrupted.

- Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who interact with the public or other third parties on the College's behalf on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
- Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who are involved in developing College policies, practices and procedures on the provision of goods or services on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
- Establish a process for people to provide feedback on how the College provides goods or services to people with disabilities and how the College will respond to any feedback and take action on any complaints. Additionally, the College shall make the information about its feedback process readily available to the public. Comments, questions and concerns can be submitted via the web at <http://www.stclaircollege.ca/studentservices/learningcommons/disability.html>
- Communicate all these services and procedures to the public in an accessible manner, including their provision in alternative formats. This includes posting this policy, the annual plan and report and associated documentation on the College's website. The St. Clair College policy for accessibility for persons with disabilities can be found at <http://www.stclaircollege.ca/studentservices/learningcommons/disability.html>.

7.0 Standard for Accessible Information and Communication

St. Clair College is committed to ensuring its communications and information is accessible. The College will meet the communication needs of persons with disabilities and will provide information and communication materials in accessible formats or with communication supports upon request. The College will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the accessible format or communication support.

If St. Clair determines that the information or communication is unconvertible, the College shall provide to the person requesting the information or communication with an explanation as to why it is unconvertible and a summary of the unconvertible information or communication.

For the purposes of this commitment and in accordance with this legislation, information and communications are unconvertible if it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communications or the technology to convert the information or communications is not readily available.

This aspect of the policy will continue to be developed as relevant regulation is developed and proclaimed as law by the government of Ontario.

8.0 Standard for Accessible Employment

St. Clair College is committed to ensuring its employment practices are accessible. The College's recruitment and selection practices will provide equal treatment in employment without discrimination as stated in the Ontario Human Rights Code and will comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and any other enabling legislation. To support AODA requirements:

- St. Clair College will notify job applicants, through all job postings, that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used. If accommodations are requested, Human Resources will consult with the applicant to best determine how to arrange for suitable accommodations that take into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to their disability.
- The College will also ensure when making offers of employment to new employees, through the Letter of Offer, that related policies and practices to accommodate employees with disabilities are communicated.
- Other policies, available to staff via the intranet, that support AODA requirements include:
 - ❖ St. Clair College has a Return to Work and/or Temporary Modified Work Policy.
 - ❖ WSIB Return to Work/Temporary Modified Work Program and Case Management Policy.
 - ❖ Request for Accommodation Policy.

9.0 Standard for Accessible Transportation

The College is committed to ensuring its transportation services are accessible. This aspect of the policy will be developed more fully once the relevant regulation is developed and proclaimed as law by the government of Ontario.

10.0 Standard for Accessible Built Environments

The College is committed to ensuring its buildings are accessible and incorporating accessibility standards in the construction of new facilities and when renovating existing space to create barrier free access. This aspect of the policy will be developed more fully once the relevant regulation is developed and proclaimed as law by the government of Ontario.

11.0 Authority

All areas of the College are accountable for ensuring that the principles of this policy are upheld. However, it is the responsibility of the Senior Operating Committee, to ensure that this policy is reviewed every three years and as required to ensure adherence to developing law (i.e., regulatory standards for accessibility).