COLLEGE POLICY

Policy No. & Title:	**P-201 Accessibility (Customer Service Standards)**
Policy Sponsor:	Vice President, People & Culture and Career Services
Reference Cmtee:	Policy & Procedure Committee
Effective:	2023-07-01
Next Review:	2026-10-31

Purpose

In accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA),* the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act*, 2017 (Bill 59),* the *New Brunswick Human Rights Act, 2011 (Chapter 171),* and the *Accessible Canada Act, 2019 (Bill C-81),* to establish guidelines and principles for the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Scope

This policy applies to all College students, employees, delivery partners, affiliates, volunteers, and contractors.

Definitions

Assistive Device / Assistive Technologies: Assistive devices and technologies are those whose primary purpose is to maintain or improve an individual's functioning and independence to facilitate participation and to enhance overall well-being. They can also help prevent impairments and secondary health conditions. Examples of assistive devices and technologies include wheelchairs, prostheses, hearings aids, visual aids, and specialized computer software and hardware that increase mobility, hearing, vision, or communication capacities.

The Acts: Government legislation from the various jurisdictions in which the College operates, related to Accessibility for persons with disabilities, namely the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA),* the *Nova Scotia Accessibility Act, 2017 (Bill 59),* the *New Brunswick Human Rights Act, 2011 (Chapter 171),* and the *Accessible Canada Act, 2019 (Bill C-81).*

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The College is committed to providing people with disabilities with the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same goods and services, in the same place and in a similar manner as other customers.

Communications

1) The College is committed to training employees who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities guided by the principles of dignity, independent and equality.

2) When requested, the College will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
3) When requested, the College will offer alternative communication formats that will meet the needs of the customer within a reasonable time frame.
4) The College is committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train employees to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and respectful manner.
5) The College will offer to communicate with customers via alternative forms of communication if telephone communication is not suitable for their communication needs or it is not available.

Assistive Devices and Technologies

6) The College is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services.
7) The College will ensure that employees and volunteers are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.
8) Exceptions may occur in situations where the College has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of a person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.
9) As a result of this, if a customer with a disability is prevented from accessing goods or services at the College, the College will accommodate the customer by providing an alternative solution, in a timely manner, when and where feasible.
10) It is the responsibility of the customer with the disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is always operated in a safe manner.

Billing / Student Enrolment Contracts

11) The College committed to providing accessible invoices to customers. The College will make every effort to provide customers with invoices in alternative accessible formats in a timely manner upon request.
12) The College will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or e-mail.

Use of service animals and support persons

13) The College committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. The service animal must be easily identifiable as relating to the individual's disability (for example, it is a guide dog or other animal wearing a vest or harness) or the individual can provide documentation from a regulated health professional confirming the animal is required due to a disability.
14) The College will also ensure that all employees, volunteers, and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

15) Service animals are not permitted where food preparation is being undertaken or as otherwise disallowed by law.
16) In the event a service animal is to be denied access to a facility, classroom or meeting room, other accommodations may be afforded, such as:
    a) Alternate meeting / class formats (i.e., teleconferencing, or online meeting where technology permits).
    b) Delivery of goods or service at an alternate time or location.
    c) Other assistive measures available to deliver a good or service to ensure quality of the outcome.
17) The College is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person(s).
18) Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person(s) will be allowed to enter the College's premises with his or her support person(s).
19) At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person(s) be prevented from having access to his or her support person(s) while on College premises.
20) The customer shall determine whether a service animal or support person(s) is necessary, however, where an employee or volunteer believes that a support person(s) should be in attendance to protect the health and safety of the customer or others, the following criteria shall be used in consulting with the customer:
    a) When there is a significant risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or to others.
    b) When the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means.
    c) When the assessment of the risk is based on consideration of the duration of the risk, the nature and severity of the potential harm, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur, and the imminence of the potential harm.
    d) When the assessment of the risk is based on the individual's actual characteristics, not merely on generalizations, misperceptions, ignorance, or fears about a disability.
21) Workshops and seminars sponsored by the College or by third parties outside of daily classroom use do occur at our facilities. For such events, service animals or support person(s) shall be permitted entry to the College's facilities and meeting rooms that are open to the public, except:
    a) when there are fees applied by a third party and the support person(s) was not pre-registered and / or no vacancy exists.
22) If admission to a workshop / seminar is permitted and fees are payable to a third-party, the support person(s) will be permitted to attend the event at their own cost.
    a) Costs for services (*i.e.,* food, *etc*.) will be the responsibility of the support person(s).
23) If admission to a workshop / seminar to an event is permitted and fees are payable to the College the support person(s) is permitted to attend at no cost for admission, and
    a) Cost for other services ((*i.e.,* food, *etc*.) will be the responsibility of the support person(s).
    b) If a service animal or support person(s) is necessary for the health and safety of a person with disabilities, or for the health and safety of other persons, the College will require the accompaniment of a service animal or support person(s) on College premises.

24) Students are required to provide their own service animal or support person(s).
25) Students are expected to inform their Admissions representative at the time of enrolling in a program with the College that they will be attending classes with a service animal or support person(s).
26) The Admissions representative will inform the Campus Director/Remote Education Director that the new student will be attending classes with a service animal or support person(s).

Notice of temporary disruption

27) The College will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities.
28) This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.
29) The College will make customers aware of the disruption by:
    a) Placing notices at all public entrances and service counters on our premises.
    b) Campus Director/Remote Education Directors and Instructors will inform students of the service disruption.
    c) Messages regarding the disruption will be posted on the student web and the College website.
30) If an unexpected disruption occurs, persons with disabilities will be accommodated by other means to deliver the goods and services, including:
    a) An alternative location and time to provide the goods or services (*i.e*., an alternative classroom location, *etc*.).
    b) Any other appropriate assistive measures available to deliver the goods and services.

Training for employees

31) The College will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices, and procedures.
32) This training will be provided as a condition of employment to all new employees, contractors, and volunteers.
33) Training will be provided on an annual basis for current employees to ensure all employees, contractors and volunteers remain current with all policy and procedural changes.
34) Training will include the following:
    a) The purposes of the Acts and the requirements of the customer service standard.
    b) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
    c) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
    d) How to use the assistive devices available on the premises that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.
    e) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the College's goods and services.
    f) The College's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

35) Applicable employees will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Employees will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices, and procedures.

Related Policies

A-141 Academic Integrity
A-101 Student Accommodations

Supporting Documents/Forms

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
Nova Scotia Accessibility Act, 2017 (Bill 59)
New Brunswick Human Rights Act, 2011 (Chapter 171)
The Accessible Canada Act, 2019 (Bill C-81)
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