

Respectful Customer Service

To provide an open and welcoming environment by considering the individual needs of a person with a disability, and by doing our best to accommodate those needs



Attitudes are barriers.
Choose respect.

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www.uwindsor.ca/accessibility

Disruptions in Service

It is possible from time to time that there will be disruptions in service, such as an elevator under repair, renovations that limit access to an area, or technology that is temporarily unavailable. It is important to provide reasonable notice if a disruption in service is planned or expected. People with disabilities often go to a lot of trouble to access services, such as booking transit or arranging a ride. By providing notice, you can save that person an unnecessary trip. Notice can be given using the University's website, by telephone, or in writing. Provide notice in a variety of ways, as quickly as possible and offer alternative methods of service.



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“Customer” refers to a person seeking or receiving a service

- Be polite, introduce yourself, and ask how you can help
- Relax – no need for nervousness - people with disabilities are just people
- Anyone can make mistakes, so just do your best. Offer an apology if you forget some courtesy, and ask for help if you need it
- Take the time to get to know your customers as some disabilities are not visible
- Ask before you offer to help. Customers with disabilities know if they need help and how you can provide it. Wait until your offer is accepted before trying to assist
- Be considerate of the extra time it may take some customers to do or say some things - patience, optimism, and willingness are your best communication tools
- Schedule adequate time for activities, discussion, or meetings, and if necessary, take breaks at suitable intervals

T Take time to ask “How may I help you?”

A Ask – don’t assume

L Listen and speak directly to a person with a disability

K Know how to accommodate

- Focus on the person’s needs and what service you can offer to meet those needs
- Don’t make assumptions about a person’s disability:
 - Don’t patronize or talk down to a person with disability, or assume that they won’t understand you - some kinds of disabilities may cause customers to take longer to understand and respond
 - Don’t shout, use big hand gestures, or speak extra slowly to someone who is hard of hearing or has difficulty understanding - just speak clearly
 - Don’t assume an intellectual disability when you are communicating with someone who has a disability
- Treat assistive devices as part of one’s personal space.
 - Ask permission before touching an assistive device such as a wheelchair, walker or service animal
 - Don’t push a person’s wheelchair if you haven’t been asked
 - Never lean on or hang things from a person’s wheelchair

Respectful Communication

- Speak directly to the customer, even when they are accompanied by an interpreter or assistant
- Ask the individual what their communication preference is (i.e. writing, speech-reading, interpreter, etc.)

- Be aware that some people may require written information to be provided in different formats, such as electronic, large font, Braille or audio. Verbal instructions can also be very helpful

Listening with Respect:

- Allow the person with a disability to explain the problem/concern in his/her own words
- Give the person time to express him or herself
- Pay attention to all non-verbal behaviour. If a person seems disoriented or distressed, ask what you can do to help

Speaking with Respect:

- Ask clarifying questions to get a full and clear understanding, or ask for clarity if you are not sure what someone wants
- Look at your customer, but don’t stare
- Use plain language and speak with short basic sentences using a limited but appropriate vocabulary
- When giving instructions or directions be precise, and break down into individual steps by supplying one piece of information at a time
- Be prepared to repeat and rephrase if not understood
- If you can’t understand what someone is saying, politely ask again or try another means of communication, like writing notes or simply following and reading body language (hand or facial expressions)
- If you are unable to communicate with a person due to their disability, contact someone in the department or on campus who can help you find a solution

Continued on reverse.