

Service Excellence

@ UWindsor

Accessible Customer Service

Accessible customer service is providing service with the understanding that each individual may need a slightly different type of accommodation. For example, a person with a visual disability may need to have information read aloud; an individual with a learning disability may need to have instructions written down; and someone who uses a wheelchair may need help finding an accessible route.

Accessible customer service is good customer service: courteous, helpful and prompt (Office of Human Rights, Equity & Accessibility (OHREA), 2017).

In order to provide excellent service to persons with disabilities always start with people first. In communication that means saying “*person with a disability*” rather than “*disabled person*”. During the interaction it means addressing the person’s service needs rather than focusing on the disability.

It is important not to make assumptions about an individual’s disability and to keep in mind that all disabilities are not always visible.

The following are some service delivery best practices and tips:

SERVING PEOPLE WITH VISION DISABILITIES

- When greeting the person, identify yourself and introduce others who may be present. Do not assume the student/stakeholder cannot see you.
- Speak directly to the person, normally and clearly.
- Answer all questions verbally, do not rely on body language.
- If you are taking the person to another area, offer your elbow to guide. If they accept, walk slowly slightly ahead and describe the layout of the area, especially any obstacles such as stairs or furniture.
- Be precise and descriptive with information.
- If you are stepping away from the desk/office, advise the student/stakeholder that you are leaving.
- When possible, provide information in alternate format.

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

Ask – do not assume

Listen and speak directly to a person with a disability

Know how to accommodate (OHREA, 2017)

SERVING PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES AFFECTING MOBILITY

- Speak directly to the person.
- If the person is using a wheelchair:
 - Put yourself at eye-level.
 - If you are working behind a counter which may be too high or wide to be reached by an individual in a wheelchair, step around it to assist them.
 - Respect their personal space. Do not touch, lean on, or push the wheelchair unless it is an emergency.
- Provide seating for those individuals who may not be able to stand in line.
- Ask before you help and respect personal space.
- Do not touch any assistive devices or move any of their personal items unless it is an emergency.
- Be mindful of furniture or any other items that may be an obstacle or a hazard.



Service Excellence Vision

Together, we foster a culture of success and support by making every interaction an exceptional experience.

For more information go to www.uwindsor.ca/serviceexcellence



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SERVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THAT AFFECT SPEECH

- If possible, communicate in a quiet environment.
- Do not assume that because the person has difficulty speaking that they also have an intellectual disability.
- Give the student/stakeholder the time to get their point across, be patient. Do not interrupt or finish their sentences.
- Ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no', if possible.
- You may want to use pen and paper to help with the interaction.

SERVING PEOPLE WITH A DEAFBLIND DISABILITY

- Speak directly to the student/stakeholder, not the support person.
- Identify yourself to the support person.
- The student/stakeholder may advise you how you should communicate with them, sometimes using an assistance card or a note.
- Be patient, understand that the service interaction may take some additional time.

SERVING PEOPLE WITH HEARING DISABILITIES

- Attract the student/stakeholder's attention before speaking. Wave or gently touch the person on the shoulder or arm and say hello.
- Look directly at the person.
- Let the person take the lead in establishing the communication mode, such as lip-reading, sign-language or writing notes.
- Speak clearly, keep your hands away from your face. Always ensure that you are facing the person when you speak to them so they can read your lips if required.
- Reduce background noise.

SERVING PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- Do not assume what the student/stakeholder can and cannot do. Ask how you can help.
- Speak naturally, clearly and directly to the person.
- Use plain language, simpler concepts and step-by-step instructions.
- Take your time; be patient.

SERVING PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

- Be patient; people with certain learning disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- Demonstrate a willingness to assist and to find the best way to communicate.
- Speak normally, clearly and directly to the student/stakeholder.
- Be prepared to offer additional explanations to any materials you provide.
- Deliver information in a way that works for the person, such as pen and paper.

SERVING PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH DISABILITIES

- Do not make assumptions about a person's abilities. Ask how you may help.
- Be confident and reassuring.
- Be patient and not confrontational.
- Stay calm and courteous even if the student/stakeholder exhibits unusual behaviour.

Visit the Office of Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility (OHREA) website at www.uwindsor.ca/ohrea/accessibility for more information on:

- Accessible Customer Service (Handbook and Learning Module)
- Accessible and Inclusive Event Planning (Inclusive Meeting/Event Checklist)
- Creating Accessible Documents (Word, PDF and PPT)

Student Accessibility Services

The University of Windsor strives to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for students with disabilities. Student Accessibility Services assists students with disabilities in a variety of ways. Given that each student's needs are unique, services and accommodations are established individually as per the documentation provided. Advisors:

- Assess requests for accommodations, based on each student's submitted documentation

- Recommend and provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or support services for students with disabilities
- Assist students in communicating with faculty (when needed) about their disability and required accommodations

A complete list of services, required documentation and contact information can be found at: www.uwindsor.ca/studentaccessibility