

AODA Postsecondary Education Standard Recommendations

May 26, 2023

Presentation to Senate

Presented by Accessible Post-Secondary Education Committee:

Erika Kustra – Centre for Teaching and Learning (Co-Chair)

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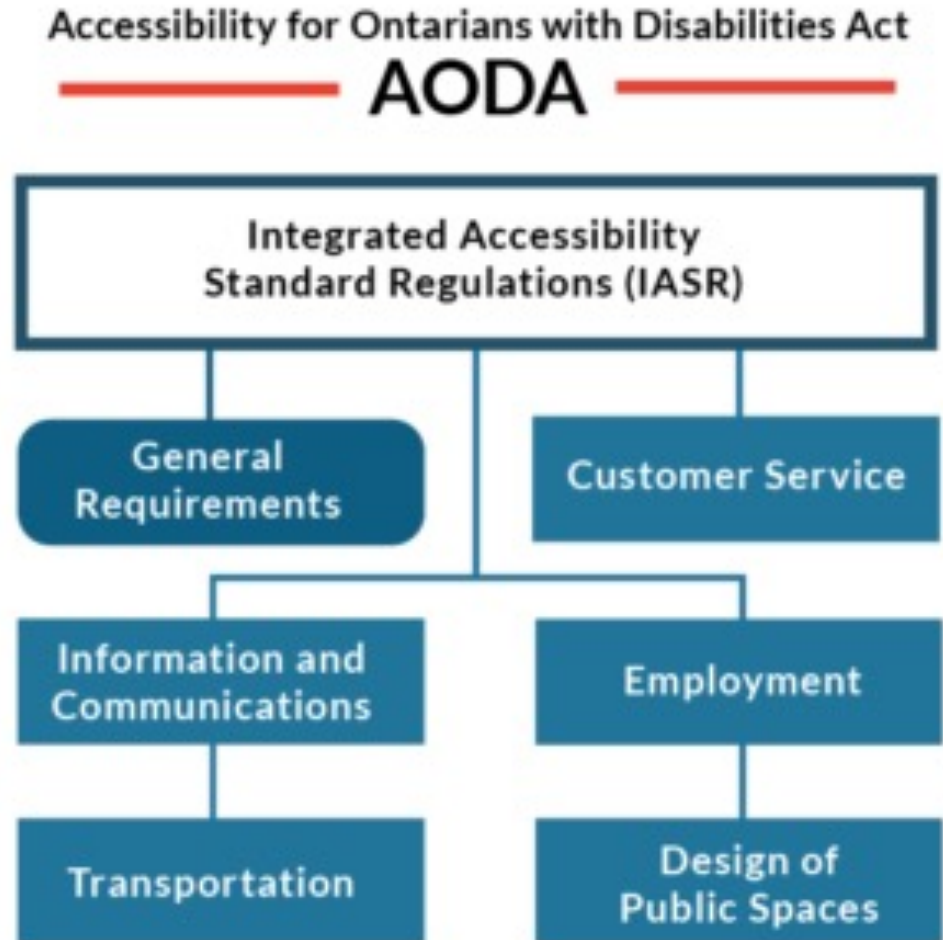
AODA Structure

AODA – Overarching legislation

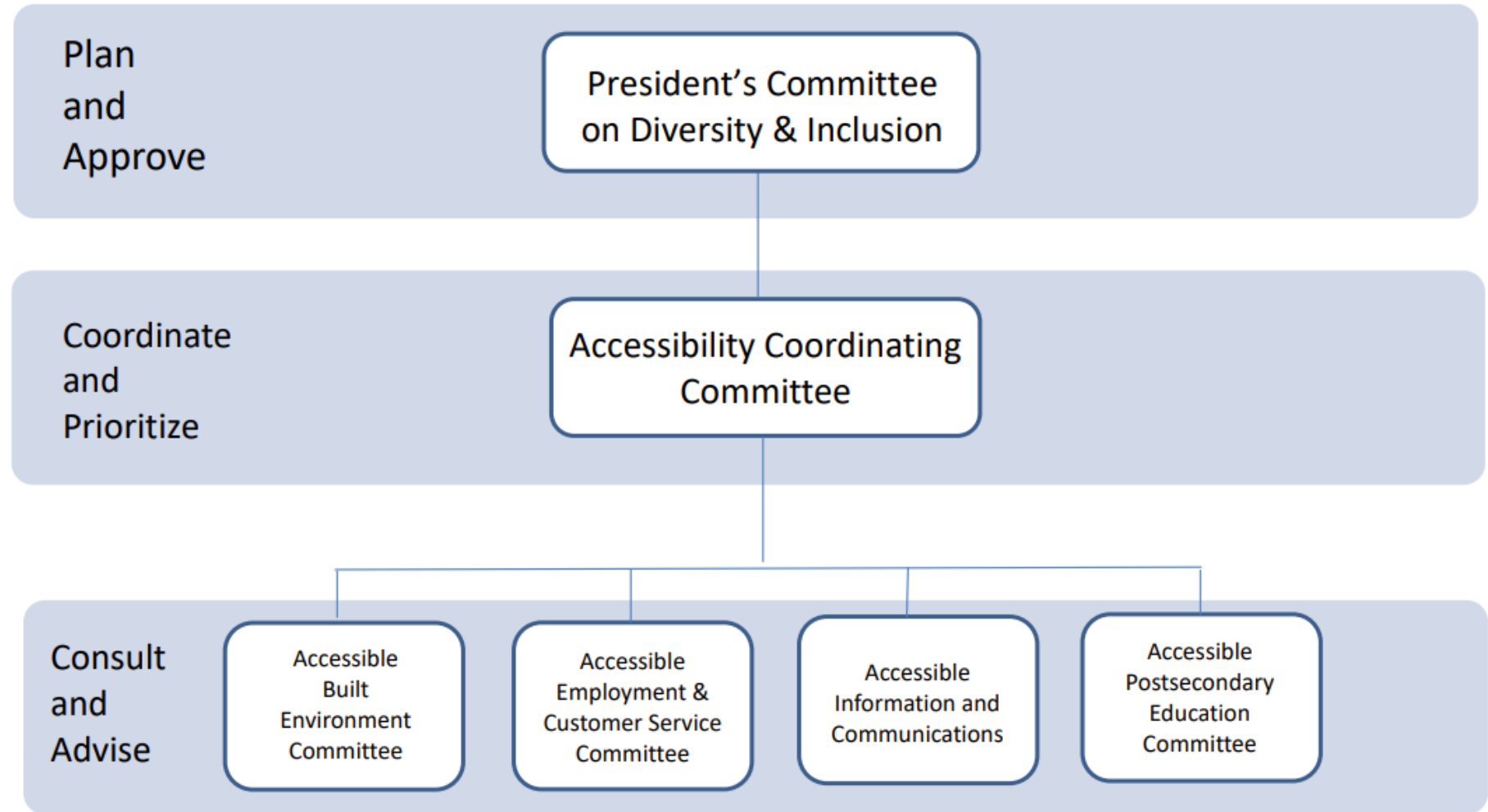
Five (5) Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR) outline **specific measures** and **implementation timelines** to which organizations must comply.

Three upcoming standards:

- Accessible Healthcare
- Accessible K-12 Education
- Accessible Post-Secondary Education



University of Windsor Accessibility Reporting Structure



New Context for PSE Standard

- New proposed Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Standard under the AODA
- 185 recommendations: Government, institution, and shared
- Additional transition recommendations from the Technical sub-committee
- Developed from expert panel and broad consultation across sector
- Will be brought to legislation
- Recommendations may be accepted in whole or in part as law
- Intention is to have everything implemented and a *Fully Accessible Ontario* by 2025 (Government of Ontario)
- Improvements will benefit faculty and staff as well



Guiding principles



- Accessibility efforts should be **proactive, rather than reactive.**
- **Disability is a critical aspect of diversity and intersectionality.** There must be a recognition of intersectionality and the compounded impact of multiple identities. Therefore, the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion underlie all aspects of the committee's work.
- Students ought to be able to **navigate a system that is transparent and seamless.**
- **Innovation** should be celebrated and encouraged.
- There is a **shared responsibility** for accessibility across all members of an institution.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/development-proposed-postsecondary-education-standards-final-recommendations-report-2022#section-2>



University of Windsor

Nine main categories of barriers in new standard

1. General overarching barriers
2. Attitudes, behaviours, perceptions, and assumptions
3. Awareness and training
4. Assessment, curriculum and instruction
5. Digital learning and technology
6. Organizational barriers
7. Social realms
8. Physical and architectural barriers
9. Financial barriers



Impact on faculty

- Extensive **training** required
- **Accessibility by design**, with plan for individual accommodation where needed
- Minimum **accessible and inclusive pedagogy standards** to be created and enforced
- **All course materials** and **assessments** shall be in accessible formats
- Institutions shall **mandate** that faculty use textbooks/learning materials which are available in **multiple formats** (hard copy, electronic copy, audio, etc.)
- Functionally usable **alternatives** to all technology must be made available
- Students must have access to digital resources **before** having to use them for learning



Flexible learning options



<https://www.flaticon.com/free-icons/choices>

- Institutions should respect a learner's disability-related needs around how they engage in their learning environment at any point in time, by **providing flexible and equivalent ways to participate, interact and demonstrate their knowledge**
- Institutions are encouraged to continue to provide students with a **range of directed and flexible choices** in their daily learning environment (for example, **in-person, online, synchronous or asynchronous**)
- Online can't be used solely as an accommodation
- Institutions **must** offer **alternate pathways** for students with disabilities in their programs and alt **program maps** must be public



Digital learning environments



- Need to develop a **Digital Accessibility Plan**
- Continue to provide and expand barrier-free digital learning opportunities
- Ensure the **usability** of the digital learning environment for all students through **accessible feedback, tracking and reporting mechanisms**
- Support the **development** of accessible digital learning content, including alternative media
- All technologies **acquired or purchased by instructors and/or the institution must** meet **accessible procurement standards**, and **accessibility and usability testing** must be done prior to procuring



Program level requirements

- Bona fide and **essential academic requirements** of a program/course shall be made **publicly available** and shall **explicitly identify how each assessment is connected to those requirements**
- Student **course feedback surveys (SET/SPT)** and **program reviews (UPR/IQAP)** shall include **mandatory questions** related to **standards compliance** and **inclusive instructional design**



Resource implications

Tracking

- Increased tracking and reporting

Student Experience

- Accessible processes for admission
- Institutions shall fund supports (e.g. sign language & attendant services) for students with disabilities to enable full participation in governance bodies and non-academic activities
- Cost of required medical documentation for accommodation to be borne by institution
- Equitable access at no extra cost to the student



Resource implications

Teaching and Learning

- Instructional design and accessibility auditing of course materials (PDF, alternative formats)
- Accessibility review and remediation for all virtual and physical labs and sims
- Accessible co-op and experiential learning
- All seminars and conferences part of learning in programs must adhere to accessible and inclusive event planning and content delivery guidelines



Resource implications

Graduate Students

- Create an institutional fund available to students with disabilities to offset accommodation and unique costs associated with their graduate programs
- Create a conference accessibility fund for students with disabilities' needs in travel
- Extend time frame of grad student financial aid if needed for an accommodation



Resource implications

Positions

- Appoint a high level Accessible Digital Technology lead
- Each faculty must have an Accessibility and Accommodation Coordinator

Physical Spaces

- Government to set minimum portion of institutional budget to be spent on physical accessibility (maintenance, repair, enhancement, new build)
- Procurement of common accessibility repair supplies to reduce time to remedy



Shared responsibility

- Accessibility will need to be a **shared responsibility** across campus
- **Campus leadership will need to live and model the desired behaviours**
- Knowledge on accessibility and disability will need to be developed institution-wide to be put into practice
- Funding, technology, and human resources will be required to meet compliance requirements
- Shared responsibility between **institutions/Province /Federal Government**



Opportunities

- Potential new enrolments and/or improved retention (not just for learners with disabilities)
- Positive impact on reputation – accessible spaces and curriculum are welcoming, inclusive, humanized
- Overall enhanced student, staff and faculty experience, consistent with the goals of Aspire Strategic Plan
- Helpful tool to guide the institution towards becoming a place of inclusive, equitable, and effective learning



Thank You!

Questions?



References 1/2

Accessibility for Ontarians Act: [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11](#)

Integrated Accessibility Standards: [O. Reg. 191/11: INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS](#)

Final Recommendations – Postsecondary Education Standards

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/development-proposed-postsecondary-education-standards-final-recommendations-report-2022>

Final Recommendations - Accessible transitions for students with disabilities in kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12): to the workforce, the community and postsecondary education - <https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-transitions-students-disabilities-kindergarten-grade-12-k-12-workforce-community>



Resources 2/2

Access ON (2014). *A guide to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*. Retrieved from <https://docs.ontario.ca/documents/4845/guidelines-to-iasr-english.pdf>

AODA.ca (2018). *What is the AODA?*. Retrieved from <https://www.aoda.ca/what-is-the-aoda/>

Ontario Government (Feb. 12, 2021). *About accessibility laws*. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/about-accessibility-laws>

Advocacy:

[AODA Alliance \(Advocacy efforts for a strong and effective AODA\)](#)

