

2022-2025

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

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MSVU ACCESSIBILITY PLAN REQUIREMENT

Nova Scotia is the third province in Canada to pass accessibility legislation. The passage of Bill 59 - Accessibility Act, (2017) recognizes and regulates the process of removing barriers for persons with disabilities.

The Accessibility Act, 2017. An Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia, recognizes accessibility as a human right and has a goal of an accessible province by 2030. Through the development of standards and other initiatives, the legislation aims to remove barriers to participation in:

- The Built Environment - Delivery and Receipt of Goods and Services
- Information and Communication - Education - Employment - Transportation

Under the Act, Nova Scotia's universities and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) were prescribed as public sector bodies, effective April 1, 2020. This means all Nova Scotian Post- Secondary Institutions must 1) develop multiyear accessibility plans, 2) establish accessibility advisory committees, 3) monitor and evaluate these plans every 3 years and 4) comply with accessibility standards when they are developed. The aim is to remove barriers for persons with disabilities in accessing post-secondary education in Nova Scotia and working at our post-secondary institutions.

Access to education is a human right, and Nova Scotia's post-secondary sector is committed to ensuring access for persons with disabilities and others who experience barriers to accessibility. Accessibility is a collaborative practice, requiring participation from all stakeholders - departments, faculty, staff, students, and partners. It requires understanding the barriers persons with disabilities face accessing education and committing to prevent and remove them through the proactive design and revision of programs, policies, practices, services, and infrastructure.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & VICE-CHANCELLOR

I'm thrilled that this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for Mount Saint Vincent University has been developed. We are a university community that is committed to being a national leader in the removal of systemic barriers to full participation in the university experience for all faculty, staff and students, especially for those from groups who have been marginalized, including persons with physical, intellectual and/or learning disabilities. We believe that to build stronger societies, we must enhance access to education.

The underlying theme of MSVU's Strategic Plan 2021-2028: Strength Through Community is our continuing leadership related to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA). In the plan, we state that "MSVU will be a safe and welcoming place for all through our unwavering commitment to EDIA." We also state that we will be "the study and work destination of choice among members of marginalized and underrepresented groups and their allies." While the University has done much to improve accessibility in all facets of our operation – MSVU is a Leader in Universal Design for Learning; we are a Dimensions participating institution, we have an MSVUSU Accessibility Rep, we offer MountAbility (Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Program), Accessibility Services, the EDIA Committee, and the Employment Equity Committee – there is still more work to be done. The creation of this plan will allow us to transform words into action.

I give my sincere thanks to the members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the group responsible for creating this plan. Your dedication and commitment are greatly appreciated. I also want to thank the members of the MSVU community who contributed to the development of this plan through the completion of accessibility surveys, and participation in consultations. Together, I have no doubt that we will achieve the goals and objectives laid out in this plan and beyond.

Dr. Joël Dickinson
President & Vice-
Chancellor
Mount Saint Vincent University

PURPOSE

The MSVU Accessibility Plan provides direction on how the MSVU Community will work to remove even more barriers and support our staff, students and visitors to our community. The purpose of this plan is to work toward full and equitable access to education, programs, and services at Nova Scotia Post-Secondary institutions through a collaboratively developed and value-based commitment to accessibility that prioritizes institutional accountability within a human rights framework. Through this plan, we will continue to create spaces where diversity is our strength.

INTRODUCTION

Mount Saint Vincent University has a long tradition of social justice and inclusion and is committed to a campus community that welcomes all learners. As we continue to prioritize EDIA, we recognize that successful learning, living, and employment are the result of a shared responsibility and commitment on the part of students, employees, faculty, and senior administrators. Our culture of inclusiveness will require the recognition and support of everyone on campus to ensure the removal of barriers to accessibility.

This Accessibility Plan was developed by the MSVU Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), composed of students, staff, faculty and community members and working groups in each area of commitment.

The focus of the AAC is identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers experienced by people with disabilities in post-secondary education – not limited to program, services, attitudinal, structural, systemic and built environment. This document outlines the overarching goals for improving accessibility at MSVU so we can better meet the needs of students, faculty and staff with disabilities.

MSVU is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the Accessibility Act, 2017. This accessibility plan outlines the steps we are taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. We commit to fostering a culture of accessibility, and encouraging the prevention and removal of barriers to education. It is essential to include first voice perspectives and lived experiences of people with disabilities in the implementation of this plan, actions, and decision-making processes through an intersectional and culturally responsive approach.

Our work across these priority areas will be guided by the following principles:

- **Human Rights:** We uphold accessibility as a fundamental human right and model this in our work. We prioritize the social model of disability, recognizing disability as impacted by environmental, structural, and attitudinal barriers that limit the full participation of persons with disabilities.
- **First Voice:** We value first voices and prioritize them in our work to advance accessibility, recognizing the lived experiences and expertise of students and employees with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility.
- **Diversity:** We understand the diversity of disabilities and how other identities, circumstances, and experiences intersect and impact accessibility. Disability is valued as a category of diversity and reflected in Post-Secondary diversity policies, programs and services.
- **Inclusion:** We are committed to creating equitable and inclusive learning and working environments, where students and employees are treated with respect and dignity.
- **Collaboration:** We share information and promote collaboration and coordination across our university and with our sister institutions, as well as among sectors, stakeholders, communities and initiatives. Students, employees and external service providers work collaboratively to foster learning environments, experiences, and services that create opportunities for success for students with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility.
- **Innovation:** We understand that being innovative, proactive, and flexible are essential to advancing accessibility.

As new standards are introduced, increased collaboration and new technologies become available, we will review and update this plan to ensure its relevance. As such, this plan should be interpreted as a living document. It is essential to continue to collaborate with other Post-Secondary institutions, their Accessibility Advisory Committees, the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate, and community partners to advance this plan and work towards improved accessibility at MSVU.

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

In accordance with section 44 (2) of the Accessibility Act, 2017, at least one half of the members of an accessibility advisory committee must be persons with disabilities or representatives from organizations representing persons with disabilities. The MSVU AAC meets this requirement. The AAC would like to thank the many members of the university community for their hard work and collaborative efforts as we continue to foster equity and inclusion and make progress towards a barrier-free MSVU campus.

Dr. M. Brook Taylor, Interim Vice-President, Academic and Provost, AAC

Chair Caryn Small Legs-Nagge, Harassment and Discrimination Advisor

Christine McNeille, Development Manager, Information Technology &

Services Corinne Gilroy, Manager of Library Operations, Library Services

Dr. Cornelia Schneider, Faculty Member

Dr. Emily Ballantyne, Instructional Developer, Teaching and

Learning Centre Glenda Stewart, Student Representative

Gloria Johnston, Manager, Accessibility Services, AAC

Coordinator Jennifer MacNeil, CNIB, Community

Representative

Dr. Joël Dickinson, President & Vice-Chancellor

Joseph Kippax, Manager, Security, Facilities Management

Julie Fillmore, Assistive Technology Specialist, Accessibility

Services Katie Crawley, MSVUSU Accessibility Rep

Dr. Keltie Jones, Associate Vice President Student Experience, Student

Experience Dr. Leigh-Ann MacFarlane, Educational Developer, Teaching

and Learning Centre Mary MacDonald, Student Representative

Dr. Mary-Jane Harkins, Faculty

Member Meagan Pottie, NSGEU

Representative

Rhonda Bursey, MSVU Faculty Association

Representative Samantha Garland, Autism NS,

Community Representative

Sarah Bond MacDonald, Accessibility Advisor, Accessibility Services, AAC

Coordinator Dr. Sarah Reddington, Faculty Member

Steven Song, Safety Officer, Facilities Management

Sumaya Elfalah, MSVU Alumni

Tammy Mercer, Human Resources and Diversity Advisor, Human

ResourcesTom Strapps, Director, Facilities Management

Previous Members:

Devin Peterson, Manager, Facility Operations

Elizabeth McAra-Crawford, Autism NS, Community Representative

Kelly Cantelo, Manager, Teaching and Learning Centre and Online

LearningLynn Cashen Basso, Manager, Residence Life

Dr. Ramona Lumpkin, Interim President & Vice-

ChancellorTomi Adesina, Student Representative

Velma Journeay, Student

RepresentativeWill Brewer,

MSVUSU Accessibility Rep

Working Group Members:

Awareness & Capacity Building

Lead: Kelly Gallant

Members: Dr. Sarah

Reddington

Meagan

Pottie

Sumaya

Elfalah

Caryn Small Legs-

NaggeJennifer

MacNeil

Teaching, Learning & Research

Lead: Dr. Leigh-Ann

MacFarlaneMembers: Rhonda

Bursey

Dr. Mary Jane

HarkinsDr. Emily

Ballantyne Tomi

Adesina Meagan

Pottie Sumaya Elfalah James

Jollymore

Information & Communication Lead:

Emily Ballantyne

Members: Christine McNeille

Tomi Adesina Glenda

Stewart

Delivery of Good & Services Lead:

Sarah Bond Members:

Rhonda Bursey

Tammy Mercer Kyle

Cleversey Alexa Goucher

Melanie MacIssac

Employment

Lead:

Tam

my Mercer

Members:

Jenni

fer MacNeil

Mary MacDonald

Dr. Connie Schneider

Transportation

Lead: Corinne

Gilroy Members:

Members: Mary

MacDonald

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Built Environment

Lead:

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Members:

Cor

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Julie

Fillmore

Tomi

Adesina

Ryan

Walker

Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation

Lead: Gloria

JohnstonMembers:

Steven Song

Sumaya

ElfalahSarah

Bond

HIGHLIGHTED ACCESSIBILITY ACHIEVEMENTS

The MSVU Accessibility Plan builds on the many accessibility initiatives already complete or underway at MSVU. Some of our most recent initiatives, include:

- Establishment of MountAbility, an inclusive Post-Secondary education program for students with diverse abilities.
- Creation of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, with a minimum of 50% persons with disabilities to guide plan development, implementation and ongoing review.
- Creation of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Advisor role.
- Accessibility Services department to support students and faculty.
- Full review of the Senate Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.
- Leadership provided to the Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Accessibility Services Working Group and its sub-groups, including the Post-Secondary Awareness and Capacity Building Project and the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework working group.
- Updated campus-wide wayfinding signage to include braille and address accessibility standards where applicable.
- Include information on EDIA-specific student supports as part of student recruitment materials.
- Provide expert training on and availability of UDL frameworks and accessibility checklists for faculty for course development.
- Created EDIAD section of resources in the TLC Intranet Resource Repository (includes course outline template, Intracultural Teaching Competencies, Implementation Checklist for Inclusive Teaching Practices, and more).
- Teaching & Learning Centre established an EDIAD faculty of Community of Practice.

- CART/ASL (Computer Assisted Real-Time Transcription and American Sign Language Interpretation) available for classroom service and MSVU events.
- Accessibility Services and the office of Harassment and Discrimination delivered information sessions to the MSVU community on Accessibility Services, Disability and Human Rights and Duty to Accommodate.
- Co-hosted (with NSCC) Making Space – a session on faculty support and accessibility.

- Hosted the Equity Summit: Post Secondary Education 2021 and launched Transforming Practice: Learning Equity, Learning Excellence modules. These modules focus on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) & Culturally Responsive Pedagogies and Practices (CRP). They were developed with first-voice and subject matter experts from most post-secondary institutions in NS.
- Coordinated effort by the MSVU Library, Accessibility Services, and the Print Shop to provide accessible scans to students with a print disability.
- Library Services provides auto – OCR services for all PDFs uploaded to the system and has located the new book drop at grade and accessible from Lumpkin Rd.
- MSVU is an Employer Partner with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI), which provides training and resources to faculty and staff.
- Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Award recognizes champions of EDIA at MSVU.
- Approval has been received to implement EDIA competency in MSVU's staff performance review program.
- Annual workforce analysis conducted on staff and faculty self-identification. In addition, the related MSVU Demographic Survey has been updated to include optional questions related to areas in which individuals may experience barriers in the workplace, as well as a question related to identifying the type(s) of disability individuals experience.
- The addition of the McCain pedway, increased lighting and accessible parking spots to improve access to campus.
- Security (resource) for assisting students, faculty and staff with disabilities, including internal transportation upon request.
- Seton auditorium renovations to ensure accessible access, including stage access for events (e.g. convocation).

- Campus-wide review of curb cuts and painting and signage improvements on all accessible entrances.
- MSVU Art Gallery provides an accessible space and EDIA focus in programming.
- Rosaria Multi-Purpose Room is an accessible space for meetings and events.
- Full campus-built environment infrastructure accessibility audit 2022.
- New accessible lift in Evaristus Tunnel which completes an internal indoor accessibility route through main buildings on campus.

AREAS OF COMMITMENT

Consistent with the Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Framework 2020, we have identified commitments to improving accessibility within 8 areas of focus.

These priority areas include (1) Awareness and Capacity Building (2) Teaching, Learning and Research

(3) Information and Communications (4) Delivery of Goods and Services (5) Employment (6) Transportation (7) Built Environment (8) Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Working towards equitable access in these priority areas will help to identify, prevent, and eliminate barriers for people with disabilities to participate fully in our Mount community.

AWARENESS & CAPACITY BUILDING

Goal - Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions foster a culture of accessibility and equity, encourage and facilitate the prevention and removal of barriers to participation, and build capacity in these areas among employees and students.

Actions

Design and deliver an Access by Design 2030 Awareness Campaign for employees and students to increase knowledge and understanding of accessibility, equity, human rights, disability rights, and barriers to participation in post-secondary education.

Develop Communications Plan for key messages, key audiences and strategic considerations including collaborating with the Accessibility Directorate to build capacity and increase awareness about the obligations of the post-secondary sector under the Accessibility Act.

Create a MSVU Multi Year Accessibility Plan webpage for clear objective and public accountability on the goals of the MSVU Accessibility Plan with regular updates and perpetual 3-year review.

Host regular Accessibility Town Halls to gather first voice and lived experience information and informed feedback on removing barriers at MSVU and monitoring implementation by campus

area.

Research and develop a training module on accessibility, UDL and Duty to Accommodate focusing on accessibility in post-secondary for faculty and staff.

Explore opportunities to host provincial post-secondary accessible events, conferences, speakerseries and awareness campaigns.

TEACHING, LEARNING & RESEARCH

Goal - Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions are leaders in inclusive and accessible teaching and learning, and collaborative research on accessibility.

Actions

Support and promote the MountAbility (IPSE) inclusive education program that welcomes students with diverse abilities to explore academic interests, engage in lifelong learning and make meaningful connections within the Mount community.

Promote and develop inclusive teaching and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) faculty training and resources with a focus on building capacity and implement supports for faculty and other employees to remove barriers to learning through inclusive practices and equitable assessment, such as principles outlined in universal design for learning and culturally responsive teaching and learning.

Develop incentive and recognition programs for applied UDL and inclusive teaching for faculty and staff. Develop communities of practice and deliver the Transforming Practice: Learning Equity, Learning Excellence Training Modules produced by the Nova Scotia Social Equity Working Group Curriculum Committee. This curriculum contains learning modules designed for both faculty and professional staff in Nova Scotia post secondary institutions, addressing topics like Universal Design for Learning, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Learning Equity.

Explore the development of an Equitable Research Program, including connections to the Dimensions Program to increase awareness and engagement by supporting the growth of research and scholarship on accessibility and disability studies, including collaborative accessibility research initiatives among Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions.

Further refine process for accessible and inclusive teaching, learning, and research materials and learning spaces including efforts to enhance and develop access to and use of accessible technology in teaching and learning.

Review and enhance access to education supports by identifying barriers to ensuring students have access to resources, including accommodations, to support academic success and wellness.

Develop a students with disability focused program and supports for transitions from high school and to employment, the community, or further study.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

Goal - Information and communication at Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions is accessible.

Actions

Prepare and deliver a best practice guideline for accessible document policy review across all departments for removing barriers and enhancing accessibility including the provision of all MSVU policies and relevant documents in multiple and accessible formats.

Conduct an external audit of the content on the main university platforms including the MSVU website, myMount, Moodle, Intranet, and social media for WCAG 2.0 AA compliance.

Explore permanent funding for staff training and support role in accessible communications to better enhance campus wide communications and that key communication platforms are adequately resourced on a permanent basis, particularly from a content perspective.

Provide training and ongoing internal reviews of the content posted to university platforms including website, myMount, Moodle, Intranet using an externally developed audit tool for continued enhancement to WCAG 2.0 AA compliance.

Review and update annually existing guidelines related to content creation on university communication platforms (e.g. website, social media and Moodle).

Create an Accessible Communication policy on accessible communication guidelines and procedures and develop and education and awareness campaign to promote the creation of accessible materials in multiple formats and accessible communication.

Develop MSVU accessibility online resource that hosts the progress of the Accessibility Plan, provides resources and promotes accessibility initiatives across the MSVU community.

DELIVERY OF GOODS & SERVICES

Goal - Students, employees and visitors with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility have equitable access to goods and services provided by Nova Scotia's postsecondary institutions.

Actions

Review procurement policy and integrate accessibility requirements by embedding accessibility into procurement processes, including creating common accessibility language, accessibility requirements and criteria in tenders for goods and services purchased.

Develop and implement customer service training focused on accessibility for all Mount employees including opportunities to participate in Mental Health First Aid and other training.

Develop policy on Support Animals as a supplementary addition to the Senate Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with a Disability.

Explore opportunities to enhance service provision of Accessibility Services with the creation of a MSVU Accessibility Services Centre with enhanced capacity for accommodated testing services.

Develop action plan to improve public service areas on campus that are conducive to positive accessible customer service experience.

Develop process to regularly audit current service areas for accessibility in collaboration with the campus wide built environment and infrastructure audit.

Regular audit and enhance wayfinding and signage across campus including accessible areas, features and accessible service areas.

EMPLOYMENT

Goal - Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions are accessible and equitable employers, support the careers of employees with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility, and ensure their employees reflect the diversity of Nova Scotians.

Actions

Develop an Employment, Disability and Accommodations Policy that provide inclusive, adaptable accommodations and adaptive tools for employees with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility and appropriate and supportive leave practices and return to work plans.

Review staff and faculty recruitment process to ensure processes, policies and practices facilitate and encourage the recruitment, selection, transition, career growth and advancement of persons with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility.

Develop process for employee feedback on accessibility in addition to the Climate Survey.

Provide training to new and existing staff and faculty on employee rights and responsibilities in terms of disability, duty to accommodate and workplace accommodations.

As an accessibility employer, explore partnership opportunities to build capacity among employees and senior leadership to cultivate a culture of inclusion and equity that supports, retains, and provides opportunities for career growth to employees with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility by collaborating with community partners and organizations focusing on employment and disability.

Continue to Invest in assistive technology to support employment for persons with a disability.

Review employment documents and provide training on accessibility documents for all departments.

Implement document accessibility standards ensuring that all staff have access to documents in accessible multiple formats by request.

TRANSPORTATION

Goal - Transportation provided to employees and students is accessible.

Actions

Explore opportunities to ensure safer and more equitable transit around campus for Mount community members with disabilities. For example, explore options for a wheelchair-accessible and powerchair-accessible van that meets or exceeds legislative requirements, as well as exploring options for a user-friendly, accessible, multi-modal system for transportation around campus.

Investigate and pursue safer campus access for all members of the campus community who arrive via public transit or active transportation, especially community members with disabilities.

Collaborate with HRM City Council for immediate crosswalk improvements around MSVU campus.

Develop accessible, multi-format campus maps that specify key accessibility features such as accessible parking spots, Access-a-Bus pick-up points, the McCain-Rosaria pedway, elevators and accessible washrooms (including details about their features or limitations), the new Rosaria- Evaristus lift, etc. Maps will be available in multiple and accessible formats.

Explore opportunities to improve overall campus access, especially for students, staff, and faculty with disabilities who use public transit, by collaborating with Halifax Transit to improve connections and schedules between MSVU, major transit hubs, and other universities.

Revisit and consider the standard scheduled breaks (10-15 minutes) between class periods on campus with considerations of students and faculty with disabilities, chronic illness, or injury to transit between buildings, attend to medical needs, seek out an accessible washroom, etc.

In alignment with the built environment audit, critically review the quality, quantity, and placement of designated accessible parking spaces on campus. Factors to consider include: location of curb cuts relative to parking spots; removal of snow and debris (quality and speed of removal); proximity of pay parking stations or HotSpot information signage; proximity of maps and directional signage.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Goal - Buildings and outdoor spaces on Nova Scotia's post-secondary campuses provide meaningful access for intended users.

Actions

Complete, report and operationalize results from the campus wide Accessibility Audit to understand the requirements across campus in the identification, prevention and removal of barriers to accessibility for meaningful access on the MSVU campus.

Develop an input mechanism for allowing Mount Saint Vincent University students, staff, faculty, and visitors to submit requests, work orders and suggestions on how accessibility requirements may be met as it relates to campus infrastructure and the built environment including seasonal maintenance work (debris, snow removal, closures etc.).

Ensure all emergency evacuation systems, policies, procedures, communications and training enable the safe and efficient evacuation of persons with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility during an emergency or disruptions in the built environment of MSVU (effective communication of fire alarm procedures, evacuation procedures, building and weather disruptions, procedures for debris and snow removal and other unplanned events that affect campus accessibility. Explore potential of MSVU Safe APP additions for enhanced security measures and communication.

Create opportunity for Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification for at least one member of the facilities staff to provide ongoing support to the Mount community.

Collaborate with Mount Saint Vincent University Financial Services, Advancement Office and Finance Committee to explore opportunities to allocate annual funding for built environment

accessibility improvements.

Adopt Provincial Built Environment standards to ensure accessible access to buildings and campus locations, new constructions and renovations. Achieve minimum compliance with the Nova Scotia Building Code and the Rick Hansen Foundation Gold rating standards and that progress and proposed changes are communicated campus wide.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING & EVALUATION

Goal - Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions regularly monitor and evaluate progress to remove barriers to accessibility, and the impact on students and employees, and continue to identify opportunities to improve access to education.

Actions

Establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and terms of reference outlining how the AAC will develop, implement and maintain the multi-year MSVU Accessibility Plan and meet regular monitoring and evaluation requirements.

Develop a multi-year accessibility plan and annual status report in alignment with MSVU Strategic Planning reporting and updates.

Designate an Accessibility institutional lead(s) to coordinate the monitoring, implementation and evaluation of this plan with a perpetual 3-year review and revision.

Implement a process for receiving and responding to feedback that is accessible to persons with disabilities and arrange for accessible formats and communications supports upon request.

Draft and outline resources required for a MSVU campus wide Accessibility Needs Assessment.

Seek and develop process for funding requests, grants and accessibility funding opportunities locally, provincially and nationally.

Follow guidelines and process from the provincial Monitoring and Evaluation Framework seeking key performance indicators and deliverables to achieve the goals outlined in this plan.

GLOSSARY

Glossary – from Nova Scotia Post Secondary Framework.

Accessibility – The prevention and removal of barriers (physical, attitudinal, technological, or system) to allow equitable participation for persons with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility.

Accessibility Act - The provincial legislation enacted in 2017 to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities. It has a goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030. The Act outlines some responsibilities for municipalities, universities, and other entities, including developing accessibility plans and establishing an accessibility committee. It allows Government to develop and implement standards (regulations) in education, the built environment, the delivery and receipt of goods and services, transportation, information and communication, and employment.

Accessible Employer – Reducing and preventing barriers in hiring, retaining, career development and advancement for employees, and addressing employee needs with individualized, flexible accommodations.

Accessible Customer Service – Ensuring all persons have the same opportunity to seek, obtain, use or benefit from the service. Accessible services are easy for all people to use, interact with, and understand.

Barrier – Anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society. Barriers can be physical, attitudinal, technological, or systemic (policy or practice). Accessibility barriers may be related to areas such as employment, education, the built environment, transportation, the delivery and receipt of goods and services, or information and communications.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) – A teaching method that acknowledges the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and frames of reference of students and uses it to make learning more relevant and effective. It ensures that students from diverse cultures have equitable opportunities and supports for success within school systems and that design is reflected in pedagogy, not just additional targeted services.

Deaf - A sociological term referring to those individuals who are medically deaf or hard of hearing who identify with and participate in the culture, society, and language of Deaf people, which is based on Sign language (Canadian Association of the Deaf))

Disability – A physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society.

Employees – Administration, faculty, and staff employed at a post-secondary institution.

Equity/ Equitable – Equity is fair treatment of individuals, acknowledging and making provisions for their differences by ensuring that employment and educational processes are free from systemic barriers. Equity does not mean ignoring differences and treating everyone the same. Instead, it means recognizing and valuing differences, removing systemic barriers and accommodating individual differences, as needed.

Glossary continued

First Voice – First voice perspectives generally refer to the knowledge generated by persons with disabilities and others who experience barriers to accessibility that emerges from lived experience, community connections, knowledge traditions, and scholarly activities that are typically under-valued and under-represented.

Inclusion - The process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for individuals or groups of individuals who are disadvantaged or under-represented, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights. This creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, fights exclusion and marginalization and offers the opportunity of upward mobility and results in increased social cohesion.

Meaningful access – When referring to the built environment, meaningful access is the intent to meet the needs of all users of a site (a building or outdoor space) regardless of their ability. It means that not only individual features of a site, such as an entrance or washroom, must be accessible, but the entire experience throughout.

Neurodivergent – Neurodivergent means having a brain that functions in ways that diverge significantly from the dominant societal standards of “normal”. It recognizes diverse neurologies and ways of being, as variation of human experience, rather than deficiency in need of remediation or cure. It includes those who identify with autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, Tourette’s syndrome, and dyslexia, to name a few.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) - An educational approach to designing instructional goals, assessments, methods and materials, and policies that work for a diversity of learners. It employs flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual student needs.

INFORMATION

For more information on the MSVU Accessibility Plan, please contact:
AccessibilityFeedback@msvu.ca

An accessible plain text version of the MSVU Accessibility Plan can be found online at:
msvu.ca/accessibility

This document is available in alternate print formats by request. Please contact:
AccessibilityFeedback@msvu.ca

For more information on Bill 59, visit:
nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/bills-statutes/bills/assembly-62-session-3/bill-59