



HEQCO MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN (2021–2026): ANNUAL STATUS REPORT 2025

Introduction

The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) strives to meet the needs of its employees and customers with disabilities and is working to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

HEQCO is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). This accessibility plan outlines the steps we are taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. Our plan shows how we will fulfill our role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians.

The Multi-year Accessibility Plan, together with the Integrated Accessibility Policy, were developed in accordance with the requirements of the AODA, and together, they outline our commitment and strategy to achieve accessibility goals.

The Annual Status Report highlights the progress HEQCO has made with respect to accessibility and the initiatives listed in the Multi-year Accessibility Plan 2021–2026. Some areas of progress are summarized below.

In March 2025, the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility conducted a desk audit on HEQCO's compliance with the AODA. HEQCO provided supporting documentation and details of internal processes covering all aspects of the requirements of the AODA including training and compliance reporting. The audit successfully concluded on April 7, 2025.

Customer Service

- HEQCO operates as a virtual agency, but staff remain committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities either by phone, mail, email or when presenting at in-person events.
- HEQCO's website is updated to ensure that persons with disabilities are given an equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from HEQCO's research products.
- HEQCO hosted an in-person conference in November 2025 which included an accessible online registration process, conference content and conference venue. Dedicated seating

areas at the tables were clearly identified with clear access for attendees with accessibility needs to participate in the conference sessions.

- HEQCO provided mental health supports as part of the conference agenda through providing a dedicated room designed to support individual needs for quiet time and reflection.

Information and Communications

- All content added on the HEQCO website conforms with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA.
- HEQCO posted a notice on the website that information is available in a variety of accessible formats upon request.
- HEQCO is committed to the provision of accessible formats and communication supports to people with disabilities in a timely manner and upon request, considering the individual's accessibility needs, and at no additional cost.
- HEQCO uses accessible Alt Text in all social media content.
- HEQCO welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. All feedback, including complaints, are collected by phone or in writing (letter or email) and customers can expect a response within five business days.
- HEQCO templates and presentation materials conform to accessible standards including this report.
- HEQCO publicly posts on the website the most recent AODA Annual Compliance Report as required.

Recruitment and Employment

- HEQCO continued its commitment to fair and accessible employment practices and continues to recruit using accessible job postings, which include information on how HEQCO will accommodate people with disabilities throughout the recruitment and onboarding processes.
- HEQCO will establish a return-to-work plan for employees who have been absent from work due to disability or a change in disability resulting from injury or illness.
- HEQCO provides policies supporting employees with disabilities to new employees as soon as possible after hiring as part of the onboarding process.

Procurement

- All RFPs (Requests for Proposals) and EOIs (Expressions of Interest) are posted on HEQCO's website in a format compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards.



Training

- HEQCO provides training resources for employees on accessibility standards and the *Human Rights Code* as it relates to people with disabilities. Training is provided in a way that best suits the duties and needs of employees.
- All new employees complete accessibility training within 30 days of employment or internship.
- HEQCO Communications staff receive external training on AODA-compliant document creation and formatting as part of their ongoing professional development.
- HEQCO maintains employee training records in the payroll software system including dates of completion for each employee.

Further Information

HEQCO's accessibility plan is publicly posted at www.heqco.ca.

For more information on the Accessibility Plan, please contact:

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Both standard and accessible formats of this document are free upon request from:

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