

Complete Policy Title:  
**McMaster University Policy on  
Accessibility**

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by:  
**Senate  
Board of Governors**

Date of Most Recent Approval:  
**February 10, 2010  
March 4, 2010**

Date of Original Approval(s):

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated:

Responsible Executive:  
**Human Rights & Equity Services Officer**

Enquiries:  
[University Secretariat](#)

*DISCLAIMER: If there is a Discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held by the policy owner, the written copy prevails*

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## **STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

1. McMaster University is committed to accessibility as expressed in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (hereinafter referred to as the AODA), which places a legal obligation on organizations to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025.
2. McMaster University is committed to fostering, creating and maintaining a barrier-free environment for all individuals providing equal rights and opportunities, including:
  - a. promoting a respectful attitude for persons with disabilities;
  - b. promoting awareness of the needs and abilities of persons with disabilities;
  - c. informing the University community about the services available to persons with disabilities and seeking to ensure that such services are delivered in ways that promote equity; and
  - d. providing support services, subject to certain limitations.
3. McMaster University recognizes that barriers to participation exist and that adjustments to policies and practices of the University are required. This is

accomplished through the prevention, identification and removal of barriers within the University systems, structures and policies. It is understood that where this Policy refers to “barriers” it is referring to barriers such as a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, and information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, or a policy or practice.

4. The commitments in this Policy are intended to ensure that accessibility remains a priority in McMaster University’s decision-making process and will serve to assist in ensuring that decisions are improving accessibility and not inadvertently creating barriers.

## **PURPOSE & SCOPE**

5. This Policy provides a framework within which accessibility plans and initiatives are to be created in order to move the University towards the goal of building an inclusive community with a shared purpose. It is also the purpose of this Policy to endeavour to provide the foundation to create an environment that provides the widest feasible scope of access, which is the right or opportunity to reach, use or participate in the University’s systems, facilities and services.
6. This Policy applies to:
  - McMaster University students,
  - McMaster University employees,
  - Applicants for employment with McMaster University, who may require employment accommodation through the recruitment, assessment, selection, and hiring process,
  - Visitors and volunteers, and
  - Contractors and subcontractors engaged by McMaster University.

## **PRINCIPLES**

7. In order to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, the principles of approach are:
  - Dignity - service is provided in a way that allows the individual to maintain self-respect and the respect of other persons.
  - Independence - when a person is able to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.
  - Integration - service is provided in a way that allows the individual to benefit from equivalent services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other individuals, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable the individual to access goods or services.
  - Equal Opportunity - service is provided to individuals in such a way that they

- have an opportunity to access goods or services equal to that given to others.
- Reasonable Efforts – taking approaches that meet the required needs of the individual.

### **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

8. The University will work to improve accessibility by developing an Accessibility Plan that conforms to this Policy. The University will also establish targets and goals related to improved accessibility and initiatives to achieve those targets. The University will monitor and report regularly on the implementation of the Accessibility Plan and the progress of achievement of specific goals and objectives.
9. The University will identify and implement training and education requirements or opportunities to increase the awareness of accessibility and remove attitudinal barriers.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

10. All members of the University community are responsible for adhering to and following the commitments set out in this Policy. The Office of Human Rights & Equity Services is the administrative unit responsible for the administration of this policy.
11. The University will monitor and evaluate accessibility initiatives and changes to applicable legislation and/or regulations. Changes to policies, plans and initiatives will be incorporated as required. The University will also report on performance in relation to established accessibility goals and targets.
12. The Policy will be communicated to the University community and the University will make the Policy publicly available on its website.

### **GUIDELINES**

13. McMaster University provides Guidelines on specific accessibility considerations with respect to the application of this Policy. This guide will be updated as required by Human Rights & Equity Services, in consultation with the McMaster Accessibility Council.

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## **1. Use of Assistive Devices Guideline**

Personal assistive devices are often used by persons with disabilities to help them with daily living. They are usually devices that people bring with them to the University and may consist of any auxiliary aids such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and/or medical aids.

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, people may use their own personal assistive devices while accessing goods and services at McMaster University, subject to certain limitations.

Assistive devices may include but are not limited to:

- Manual and motorized wheelchairs, scooters, canes, crutches, walkers,
- hearing aids and personal TTYs
- magnifiers,
- oxygen tanks,
- computers and adaptive technology.

## **Principles**

McMaster University is committed to enhancing the accessibility of its education delivery, websites, telecommunications and other infrastructure. As part of this commitment, the University will ensure that persons with disabilities are permitted to use their own assistive devices to access goods and services of the University, subject to reasonable limitations.

## **Protocol**

Upon request, McMaster University will be prepared to assist, or arrange for assistance, while individuals are using goods or services of the University, subject to reasonable limitations.

## **Availability of Assistive Devices:**

The University provides measures to assist persons with disabilities to benefit from the equivalent level of service, in the same place and in a similar way, as other individuals. Where an assistive device or support does not exist on campus, the University will make reasonable efforts to ensure that appropriate devices or supports are made available, subject to reasonable limitations.

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## **2. Guidelines for Service Animals & Support Persons**

### **Purpose:**

Service animals and support persons required to assist a person with a disability will be present and welcome at campus locations except where excluded by law.

### **Definitions:**

**Service Animal:** Any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability. If they meet this definition, animals are considered service animals. A service animal is not a pet.

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that the person with a disability cannot perform for themselves.

For example, guide dogs used by some individuals who are blind, alerting persons with hearing impairments to sounds, pulling wheelchairs or carrying and picking up things for persons with mobility impairments, assisting persons with mobility impairments with balance.

**Support Person:** Any person who provides assistance to a person with a disability.

### **Principles:**

McMaster shall not prohibit the use of a service animal by a person with a disability in the conduct of regular business or activities except where excluded by law, these include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Locations that would be deemed as a health and safety risk (e.g. operating rooms, nuclear reactor) and,
- Location where an education placement is performed and the owner/lessor of such locations has a policy or practice governing service animals or support persons contrary to McMaster's Policy.

### **Protocol:**

Within the parameters of the Principles noted above, the service animal or support person must be permitted to accompany the individual with a disability to all areas of the University where members of the public (as applicable) are normally allowed to go. An individual with a service animal may not be segregated from other individuals.

If goods, services or facilities are defined as off-limits to service animals or support persons, the University will make every effort to provide alternate ways for persons with disabilities to access such goods, services and facilities.

To find out if a specific area is off-limits to service animals or support persons contact the designated department head.

The University will provide notice in advance about whether an admission fee will be charged for support persons, if applicable.

In order to respect employees or students whose health may be impacted by the presence of service animals at McMaster, these individuals may request reasonable accommodation suitable to their health needs.

### **3. Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Service**

#### **Purpose:**

The University will provide notice to members of the public when there is a temporary disruption of facilities or services (planned or unexpected) that are usually used by persons with disabilities at the University.

#### **Scope:**

Service disruptions shall include information related to facilities (e.g. elevators, building ramps, accessible washrooms) or goods/services (e.g. events, lectures, amplification systems, TTY services).

Disruptions to all services, such as during a power outage or during a labour dispute, do not require this special notice. For information on large-scale business disruptions, please reference the University's Business Continuity Plan.

For information relating to University closure due to inclement weather please reference the University's Storm Policy.

#### **Protocol:**

Where a service disruption is unavoidable the University shall:

- Post a notice at the location, for example if an elevator disruption then a notice will be posted at the site on all floors,
- Provide advance notice, where possible, to all building occupants and/or affected participants using email distribution lists, website, internal electronic signage

All service disruption notices shall include:

- Name of the service/event impacted
- expected duration of disruption,

- any alternate means of accessing the facility or service,
- who to contact for assistance, and
- any other relevant information for accessing the facility or service

In such cases, the person may be offered the following as a means of accessing the facility, event or service, such as:

- the goods and service delivery agent may provide the goods or service directly to the person with a disability at an alternate place and time, as deemed appropriate; or
- any other assistive measures available and deemed appropriate to deliver goods and services.

Individuals can be added to building email distribution lists via the Department of Facility Services, <http://ppims.services.mcmaster.ca/pplant/alerts.html>

#### **4. Guideline for Providing Feedback & Complaints**

##### **Purpose:**

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, McMaster University is required to establish a mechanism for receiving and responding to feedback from persons with disabilities about accessibility in relation to the way the University provides its services to them.

##### **Protocol:**

Complaints involving accessibility issues may follow the [Anti-Discrimination Policy](#), which contains provisions for managing complaints alleging discrimination related to disability.

Where persons with disabilities have concerns or feedback regarding the services provided by the University they may bring such feedback forward to the following individuals/areas:

##### *Students:*

- Their Faculty office,
- Residence manager, if applicable or,
- Centre for Student Development, <http://csd.mcmaster.ca>

##### *Employees:*

- Their supervisor,
- Human Resources Services, [www.workingatmcmaster.ca](http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca) and/or union/employee association, if applicable

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*For both students and employees:*

Human Rights & Equity Services  
McMaster University, 1280 Main St. W.  
MUSC Room 212  
Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4M4  
Phone: 905-525-9140, ext. 27581  
Email: [hres@mcmaster.ca](mailto:hres@mcmaster.ca)

Ombuds Office  
McMaster University, 1280 Main St. W.  
MUSC Room 210  
Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4M4  
Phone: 905-525-9140 ext. 24151  
Email: [ombuds@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ombuds@mcmaster.ca)

Any feedback provided by an individual must be addressed in a timely manner. All responses must be provided to the originator in a format, which meets their needs.

Other applicable legislation and McMaster University policies include:

- [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario](#)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)
- [Personal Health Information Protection Act \(PHIPA\)](#)
- [Personal Information Protection & Electronic Documents Act \(PIPEDA\)](#)
- [Employment Accommodation Policy](#)
- [McMaster Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [McMaster University Anti-Discrimination Policy](#), and
- [Employment Equity Statement](#)
- [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
- McMaster University Risk Management Manual, RMM#[1002 Return to Work Program](#) July 2009
- McMaster University Risk Management Manual, RMM#[111 Contracting Work Safety Program / Due Diligence Program](#) January 2009