



AODA – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Policy

Intent

Dundas Valley School of Art (DVSA) strives to make its programs, exhibitions, events and services accessible to our visitors with disabilities. We are committed to work in partnership with staff, volunteers and the community to identify, prevent and remove barriers to participation.

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of the [Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11](#) for the Information and Communications Standard set forth under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#). This policy applies to the provision of information and communications services and materials for people with disabilities.

In demonstrating leadership, DVSA is:

- Integrating access so it will positively impact all people.
- Focusing on innovative accommodation in the area of program development.
- Reviewing initiatives on an ongoing basis to meet and exceed, where possible, the compliance requirements of the *Customer Service Standard of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.
- Including enhancements and improvements to accessibility in the DVSA budget.

All goods and services at DVSA will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity of people with disabilities.

Definitions

Accessible Formats - Include but are not limited to large print, written and verbal formats that are usable by persons with disabilities.

Dignity - service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.

Disability -

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (“handicap”).

Environmental Restoration - Activities that will benefit the environment.

Exterior Paths of Travel - Refers to sidewalks and walkways designed and constructed for pedestrian travel and intended to provide a functional route from Point A to Point B, rather than a recreational experience.

Independence - when a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own, without unnecessary help or interference from others.

Integration and Equal Opportunity - service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other customers, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with disability to access goods or services. They should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain service. They should also not have to accept inconvenience or lesser quality. Sometimes this may mean that DVSA has to treat individuals slightly differently so that they can benefit fully from the services.

Performance Management - Activities related to assessing and improving employee performance, productivity and effectiveness with the goal of facilitating employee success.



Redeployment - The reassignment of employees to other departments or jobs within the organization as an alternative to layoff, when a particular job or department has been eliminated by the organization.

Redeveloped - A planned significant alteration to a public space. It does not include maintenance activities or environmental restoration.



General Principles

In accordance with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11*, this policy addresses the following:

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1) General Requirements

General requirements that apply across all of the five (5) standards (information and communication, employment, design of public spaces, and customer service) are outlined as follows;

Establishment of Accessibility Policies and Plans

DVSA will develop, implement and maintain policies governing how it will achieve accessibility through these requirements.

DVSA will include a statement of its commitment to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner in its policies. These documents will be made publicly available in an accessible format, upon request.

DVSA will establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan outlining its strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the IASR. Accessibility plans will be made available in an accessible format, upon request, and will be posted on our website.

DVSA will review and update its accessibility plan once every year and will establish, review and update our accessibility plans in consultation with persons with disabilities or an advisory committee.

Procuring or Acquiring Goods and Services, or Facilities

DVSA will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities. The only exception is in cases where it is impracticable to do so.

Training Requirements

DVSA will provide training for its employees and volunteers regarding the IASR and the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) as they pertain to individuals with disabilities. Training will also be provided to individuals who are responsible for developing DVSA's policies, and all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of DVSA.

Training will be provided as soon as is reasonably practicable. Training will be provided on an ongoing basis to new employees and as changes to DVSA's accessibility policies occur.

Records

DVSA will maintain records on the training provided, when it was provided and all employees that were trained.



2) Accessibility Policy

a) Assistive Devices

DVSA is committed to serving people with disabilities, and ensuring that those who use assistive devices will benefit and enjoy their experience.

Procedures:

We ensure that:

Our employees are aware of the many assistive devices that may be used by students and visitors with disabilities while accessing our programs, events and services.

b) Communicating with a Visitor with a Disability

DVSA's policies and procedures take a person's disability into account when communicating with the individual. Two-way communication is a process of providing, sending, receiving and understanding information. To communicate in an effective way, DVSA considers how the disability affects the way that the person expresses, receives or processes communications. Where possible, DVSA asks the visitor directly the best way to communicate.

Procedures:

DVSA uses a variety of ways, wherever possible, to make communications more accessible by:

- Considering the needs of people with disabilities during the planning stage of services and communication development.
- Using plain language to make a document easier to read for people with certain learning disabilities.
- Offering information in alternate formats:
 - Hand-write or type information back and forth;
 - Printed hand-outs of commonly used information;
 - Large print of commonly used information for people who have low vision;
 - E-mail as an alternate channel to provide accessible communication.

c) Service Animals

DVSA is committed to welcoming visitors with disabilities who are accompanied by a trained, accredited service animal. A service animal may accompany a visitor or any third party with a disability to all parts of our premises that are open to the public. Service animals may be used for, but not limited to, the following disabilities: vision loss, physical disability, hearing loss, autism, epilepsy etc. Although service animals are most commonly dogs, other service animals could include, but are not limited to, ferrets, monkeys etc. DVSA ensures that all employees, volunteers, interns, third parties and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how



to interact with people with disabilities, who are accompanied by a service animal.

Procedures:

To be considered a service animal under this standard, it must either be readily apparent that the animal is being used because of a person's disability or the person with a disability may be asked to provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that it is required because of his or her disability. Service animals are not pets - they are working animals. They are used by people with disabilities to overcome barriers much like assistive devices such as a white cane or a wheelchair.

At times, due to capacity, visitors with disabilities accompanied by service animals may be advised that the crowded conditions may make it difficult to manoeuvre.

Guide dogs or other service animals, including service animals in training, are allowed to accompany people on DVSA's premises open to the public.

If the service animal is causing a disturbance for other visitors, the visitor and accompanying service dog may be required to leave the area or the facility.

The owner is responsible to "stoop and scoop".

DVSA anticipates there will be special situations and is prepared to make every effort to accommodate the circumstances on an individual basis, as they arise, keeping safety to the student/visitors and service animals.

d) Support Persons

DVSA is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person is allowed to enter DVSA's premises with their support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access their support person while on DVSA premises.

A support person is an individual hired or chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

Procedures:

Fees are not to be charged for the support person. Complimentary admission for one support person is the standard. Additional requests are addressed on a case by case basis.

At events where food and/or beverages are served, a support person who wishes to participate in the food and/or beverage service will be charged the regular price. Support persons may exclude themselves from the food or drink service, and accompany the visitor with a disability at no charge. In the case of studio programs, if the support person wishes to participate in the art-making activities, they will be charged the regular price; if they choose not to participate, they will not be charged.

For pricing for special events – such as the annual fundraising events – where food and/or beverage is an integral part of the event, please contact DVSA for further information.

e) Temporary Disruption of Service

DVSA is aware that temporary disruptions of services (daily functions – elevators, physical operations) and programs may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within DVSA's control or knowledge. DVSA makes a reasonable effort to provide advance notice of the disruption to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available.

Procedures:

Where possible, advance notice is made available for updates through the following networks, as appropriate.

- <http://www.dvsa.ca>
- Telephone Recordings
- Temporary signage

In the event of an unexpected disruption, advance notice is not possible. In such cases, DVSA provides notice, as soon as possible, through the above communication networks

f) Process to Receive and Respond to Feedback

DVSA has a process in place for receiving and responding to feedback about how goods and services are provided to students/visitors with disabilities.

Procedures:

Students/visitors with disabilities can offer their feedback in the following ways:

- a) On-line at the DVSA web site (specific e-mail links);
- b) E-mail and telephone, (re-directed, as required, to the appropriate response employee); In writing where correspondence is re-directed to the appropriate response employee; In person to:
 - DVSA staff, faculty and/or management
 - Volunteers
- c) The visitor is requested to provide their name and contact information (phone, e-mail).

Once feedback is received, the following actions are taken to respond:

- The feedback is directed to the appropriate person for action.
- The feedback is assessed for appropriate action. (Note: the Customer Service Standard does not require a response to be provided for all feedback).
- Students/visitors who submit feedback can expect an answer within two business days.



The feedback process is readily available to the public through:

- A notice on the web site
- A sign in DVSA's facility
- A document describing the feedback process, available on request in different formats
- Other communication networks, as appropriate

The notice includes the following:

Dear Valued Visitor,

We strive to improve accessibility for our visitors with disabilities. We welcome your feedback. Please e-mail info@dvsas.ca or call (905)628-6357 option "1" to share your comments, or request a copy of our accessibility policy.

Thank you,

Management

g) Customer Service Training

DVSA provides training to all employees, interns, contract staff and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies and procedures on providing goods and services to students/visitors with disabilities. DVSA is working to ensure that third party and others, who deal with the public, have the required AODA training.

Procedures:

Individuals in the following positions are trained by DVSA:

- Board of Directors
- All Staff
- Faculty & models
- Interns
- Contract staff

All new employees will also receive training. This training will be provided as soon as practicable or as soon as it can be done in the circumstances, after an employee commence their duties.

Training is also included as part of a larger training program, such as basic orientation, training on effective communication or general customer service.



The training outcomes include:

- Awareness of AODA, including the economic benefits to the organization.
- Awareness of the importance of access and the four principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.
- An understanding of the impact on the individual's role.
- Increased confidence by the staff and volunteers when welcoming and hosting visitors with disabilities and their empowerment to respond to individual needs.
- Understanding that everyone who comes to DVSA has the opportunity to connect to the arts in their own way within the boundaries of conservation, visitor safety and personal safety.
- Understanding of DVSA's commitment to access and its financial responsibility.
- Willingness to make a commitment to create solutions and explore possibilities.

The training content includes the following:

- The history of the legislation and the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing DVSA's goods and services.
- DVSA's policies and procedures relating to the customer service standard.
- Definitions of disability, dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. Student/visitor scenarios, specific to DVSA's experience.

On-going training in connection with any changes to DVSA's policies and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities is provided.

An evaluation process is in place for continuous improvement in training content and delivery.

Training is on-going and recorded through HR records for staff, faculty, board members and interns.



h) Posting of Documents

These documents are available for review as required by the Customer Service Standard and are available upon request and will be provided in a format that takes a person's disability into account.

Additional DVSA Policies and Procedures to Enhance the Visitor

In addition to compliance with the Customer Service Standard –AODA, DVSA has several additional policies and procedures to enhance the experience for students and visitors with disabilities. These include:

- Student and Faculty Policy Handbooks
- Sit down service:
 - The counter at the front desk is at two different heights.
 - If required, employees leave the desk and come around to assist the visitor with a disability.
- Scooters are allowed – no size restrictions – at DVSA.
- An emergency plan is in place to assist visitors with disabilities via areas of safe refuge whereby students and visitors await rescue by the fire department in cases of emergency.
- All public areas are accessible, with the exception of the Central Staircase. DVSA has:
 - Wheelchair accessible entrances from the street.
 - Automated door openers at all entrances.
 - Currently all existing washrooms conform to Building code.
- The following programs are offered to students and visitors with disabilities upon request:
 - A pre-scheduled tour with description for visitors with vision loss, designed to increase their opportunities to engage with art.
 - All staff and volunteers delivering the specialized programs have received specific training for interacting with students and visitors with disabilities.
 - Most programs are held in accessible areas.
 - Site visits are being made in program areas to determine access barriers for participants with disabilities and identify solutions.

3) Information and Communications Policy

a) Feedback Process

DVSA will ensure that all feedback processes (both internal and external) are made accessible to students, visitors or employees, upon request.



In accordance with the customer service standards, DVSA will make known the availability of accessible feedback formats.

b) Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

DVSA will do its best to arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities, upon request. Accessible formats and communication supports will be provided in a timely manner and at no additional cost to the individual.

DVSA will take into account the person's accessibility needs when customizing individual requests and shall consult with the individual making the request to ensure suitability.

DVSA will make the availability of accessible formats and communication supports publicly known.

c) Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information

DVSA will ensure that all publicly available safety and emergency information (e.g. evacuation procedures, floor plans etc.) is provided in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request.

d) Accessible Websites and Web Content

DVSA will ensure that our website, and where applicable web content, conforms to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) as outlined in the IASR.

e) Education and Training Resources and Materials

Upon request, DVSA shall provide or arrange for the provision of the following information in an accessible format to students (past, current and potential) with disabilities:

- Training resources and materials*
- Student records
- Program information (e.g. course requirements, descriptions and availability).

Accessible formats will take into account the needs of the individual to whom the material is being provided.

*Training resources and materials may be provided in an accessible or conversion-ready format.

f) Training to Educators

In addition to the general training requirements DVSA will provide all educators with, accessibility awareness training.



g) Records

DVSA will maintain a record of all training provided. Records will include participants name and the dates on which training was completed.

h) Producers of Educational and/or Training Materials

DVSA shall create and make available accessible materials including print-based supplementary learning resources, upon request.

i) Exceptions

The Information and Communications Standard does not apply to:

- Products and product labels
- Unconvertible information or communications
- Information that the organization does not control either directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship.

Unconvertible Information or Communications

If it is determined, in consultation with the requesting party, that information or communications are unconvertible, DVSA will ensure that the individual who made the request is provided with an explanation and a summary of the information.

4) Employment Policy

a) Recruitment, Assessment and Selection

DVSA is committed to equity, diversity, accessibility and inclusion in its workplace and employment practices and we respect the right of applicants and employees to fair and equitable treatment in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code as well as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

DVSA will notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for job applicants who have disabilities. Applicants will be informed that these accommodations are available, upon request, for the interview process and for other candidate selection methods. Where an accommodation is requested, DVSA will consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.

Successful applicants will be made aware of DVSA's policies and supports for accommodating people with disabilities.

b) Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

DVSA will ensure that employees are aware of our policies for employees with disabilities and any changes to these policies as they occur.

If an employee with a disability requests it, DVSA will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for the following:

- Information needed in order to perform their job.
- Information that is generally available to all employees in the workplace.

DVSA will consult with the employee making the request to determine the best way to provide the accessible format or communication support.

c) Workplace Emergency Response Information

Where required, DVSA will create individual workplace emergency response information for employees with disabilities. This information will take into account the unique challenges created by the individual's disability and the physical nature of the workplace, and will be created in consultation with the employee.

This information will be reviewed when:

- The employee moves to a different physical location in the organization.
- The employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed
- DVSA reviews general emergency response policies.

d) Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

DVSA will ensure that our website and all web content published after March 1st, 2024 conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 and will refer to the schedule set out in the IASR for specific compliance deadlines.

DVSA must also develop and have in place written processes for documenting individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. The process for the development of these accommodation plans should include specific elements, including:

- The ways in which the employee can participate in the development of the plan.
- The means by which the employee is assessed on an individual basis.
- The ways that an employer can request an evaluation by an outside medical expert, or other experts (at the employer's expense) to determine if accommodation can be achieved, or how it can be achieved.
- The steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information.
- The frequency with which the individual accommodation plan should be reviewed or updated and how it should be done.

- The frequency with which the individual accommodation plan should be reviewed or updated and how it should be done.
- The way in which the reasons for the denial of an individual accommodation plan will be provided to the employee.
- The means of providing the accommodation plan in an accessible format, based on the employee's accessibility needs.
- The individual accommodation will also:
 - a) Include information regarding accessible formats and communication supports upon request; where needed
 - b) Include individualized workplace emergency response information and outline all other accommodation provided.

e) Performance Management and Career Development and Advancement

DVSA will consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when implementing performance management processes, or when offering career development or advancement opportunities.

Individual accommodation plans will be consulted, as required

f) Return to Work

DVSA will develop and implement return to work processes for employees who are absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodation(s) in order to return to work.

The return to work process will outline the steps DVSA will take to facilitate the employee's return to work and shall use documented individual accommodation plans (as described in section 28 of the regulation).

g) Redeployment

The accessibility needs of employees with disabilities will be taken into account in the event of redeployment.

Individual accommodation plans will be consulted, as required

5) Design of Public Space

a) Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas

DVSA is committed to ensuring that any newly constructed and/or redeveloped outdoor public use eating areas have a minimum 20% of tables that are made accessible in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards, section 80.17.

b) Outdoor Play Spaces (including Play Spaces)

Consultation

Prior to constructing or redeveloping an outdoor play space, DVSA shall consult on the needs of children and caregivers with disabilities with the public and persons with disabilities.

Accessibility in Design

DVSA will ensure that any new or redesigned outdoor spaces incorporate various accessibility features (e.g. sensory and active play components) into their design and are constructed in accordance with the requirements outlined in the Integrated Accessibility Standards, section 80.20.

c) Exterior Paths of Travel

To ensure the health and safety of all pedestrians, any newly constructed or redeveloped exterior paths of travel will meet, and where possible exceed, the technical requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards, section 80.23, and where applicable, sections 80.24 – 80.28.

Consultation on Rest Areas

Prior to constructing or redeveloping rest areas on exterior paths of travel, DVSA shall consult on the needs of adults, children and caregivers with disabilities with the AODA Committee and persons with disabilities.

d) Obtaining Services

Service Counters

When constructing or replacing any service counters, DVSA will ensure that at least one (1) counter is made accessible in accordance with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards*, [section 80.41](#).

Waiting Areas

When constructing or redeveloping an existing waiting area, DVSA will ensure that a minimum of 3% of the seating is made accessible. DVSA will ensure that there will be at least one (1) accessible seat.

e) Maintenance

DVSA shall ensure that our multi-year accessibility plan addresses:

- Preventative and emergency maintenance procedures for the accessible elements in public spaces
- Procedures for temporary disruptions to accessible elements.



f) Exceptions

There may be times where it is not possible for DVSA to meet all technical requirements as outlined within legislation. In these instances, DVSA will strive to meet the requirements to the fullest extent to allow for accessible use with particular constraints as addressed in legislation.

6) Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly, by the AODA committee, to ensure that it is reflective of DVSA's current practices as well as legislative requirements.