Seneca

Seneca
Multi-year Accessibility Plan
2022 – 2025

Seneca

Table of Contents

Seneca

Introduction

Seneca is committed to providing an accessible teaching, learning, living and working community that is barrier-free and inclusive for all individuals. The purpose of this policy is to ensure practices and procedures are consistent with the accessibility standards under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Seneca strives to meet the needs of its employees and customers with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. Seneca is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This Multi-year 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 play our role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians. This plan is reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years.

1. Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

Customer Service

Seneca's AODA Committee developed an Accessibility Policy addressing the following:

1. The use of assistive devices

2. The use of authorized service animals and support persons

3. Notice of temporary service disruptions

Seneca provides an Accessible Customer Service online training module for the following:

- Administrative Staff
- Faculty
- Support Staff
- Contracted third party staff who deliver services to members of the Seneca community

Seneca has developed and distributed the Community Barrier Identification Form along with a variety of feedback methods including:

- Visiting Accessibility at Seneca and completing the AODA Feedback form
- Completing the Community Barrier Identification Form
- Emailing barrieridentification@senecacollege.ca

Seneca

Information and Communication

Significant progress was made on a variety of fronts in continuously improving resources and services covered by the Information and Communication Standards at Seneca.

A completely updated and redesigned [Accessibility for Library Users](#) page was launched in 2021.

Seneca Libraries were equipped with accessible self-checkout kiosks. These accessible kiosks provide height adjustable controls, surface areas that hold bags and extra books, and extra-large monitors designed to help make self-checkout more accessible to many.

The Seneca web development team followed the [W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0](#) when developing and maintaining the main Seneca and library websites. Seneca tests its website using a combination of automatic accessibility checkers such as [Wave by WebAIM](#), manual testing using screen-readers such as [NVDA](#), JAWS and usability tests with members of the Seneca community who use assistive technology devices.

Accessible facilities are located throughout Seneca libraries. All Seneca libraries utilize automatic doors and visual and audio fire alarms. Wheelchair accessible workstations with a clearance of 28" (71cm) are available at all campuses and service desks provide accessible access.

Seneca greatly expanded its resources in accessible digital assets for learning and research. In order to make library collections more accessible to patrons with print disabilities, Seneca Libraries facilitates access to the Accessible Content E-Portal (ACE). ACE is a repository of books in accessible format that is managed by Scholar's Portal, a service of the Ontario Council of University Libraries. ACE provides books in the following formats: colour PDF, black & white PDF, DAISY, plain text and e-pub. 95% of the library's collection is in digital format to facilitate 24/7 access to resources for Seneca faculty, students and staff across the globe.

Seneca Libraries also offer audio functionality built-in that will produce a computer-generated reading of text-based content such as magazine, newspaper, and journal articles or e-book text. See our [Databases with Text Reading Functionality page](#) for lists of those databases at Seneca Libraries that do and do not offer this functionality. Seneca Libraries participates in LEAP (Library eResources Accessibility Portal) by conducting accessibility assessments of our eResources and adding them to the repository.

Seneca has developed extensive resources to help and guide its employees and students in the development of accessible documents. Both online and classroom-

Seneca

based training are offered and an extensive list of resources are available. All letterhead and commonly used communication templates have been made into accessible templates.

Employment

As part of the ongoing review of AODA Employment standards, Seneca revised its employment web page, job postings, and email correspondence to applicants to include a statement indicating that accommodations will be provided upon request.

Seneca also ensures that email correspondences to selected candidates outline that Seneca will provide accommodations when a request is made. Seneca updated its hiring package to include information on Seneca's accommodation policies.

In 2021, Seneca launched a major review of hiring practices with the goal of identifying and eliminating barriers. The following focus areas were in scope:

- General EDI statement and updates to statements: Draft sample EDI and sample accessibility statements for job postings and review current postings with a goal of updating language to make it more inclusive.
- Job Board & Question Library: Create a list of resources to be used in reaching candidates from diverse communities, including people with disabilities.
- Outline of the equitable hiring process: Draft a guide that provides key steps to designing an equitable hiring process.
- Process outline for designated positions: Development of a resource guide that addresses the approach to recruitment of designated positions for equity deserving groups. The guide will include posting template and language, approval path, advertising sources, the screening process, interview questions, onboarding process. Training will be offered to review the content of the guide.
- Hiring Panel Training: Provide advice and training about how to understand and operate in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, and how to manage the recruitment process for preferred vs. designated positions.

Procurement

Seneca reviewed its existing Procurement Policy and revised it as necessary. Seneca has incorporated an accessibility statement into its Procurement policy. Seneca developed training resources to guide accessible purchasing practices throughout the college.

Self-service Kiosks

Seneca identified departments responsible for the design, acquisition and procurement of self-serve kiosks. Seneca also developed a resource to guide the design, procurement and/or acquisition processes for self-service kiosks.

Training

AODA training, as defined in Section 7(1) of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, must be completed by all full-time, part-time, contract and volunteer personnel. This is mandatory training upon hire. All policy formulation is undertaken by Seneca personnel and these individuals are required to complete the mandatory AODA training as described above. Mandatory AODA training is also completed by all other persons who provide services on behalf of the Seneca. This group includes individuals providing services for Seneca residences, bookstores, campus security, custodial and food services. Seneca has implemented a system to record training completion and maintain compliance with the educator training requirement.

The mandatory AODA training and other supporting training materials relating to accessibility are updated on a regular basis. The core AODA training modules were updated in 2020 and inserted into the Seneca learning management system in 2021.

Seneca has required all employees to complete mandatory AODA training since 2009. All historical training completions are documented and captured in a database of completions. The training modules have been updated several times since 2009. The most recent update was in the fiscal year 2020/21.

Design of Public Spaces

Seneca continues to comply with or exceed the requirements for the Design of Public Space Standards. Any new space that is built, or any existing space that is renovated, is designed in accordance with the Ontario Building Code and the current AODA standards.

Seneca is in the process of constructing a new four-story parking structure, intended to be operational in 2022. Seneca has ensured that the parking facility meets the accessibility requirements as outlined in the Design of Public Spaces standards. In addition, the team referenced The City of Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines and incorporated the provisions within. Seneca also adheres to all of the provisions included within the Ontario Building Code.

Seneca

Transportation

Seneca established an accessible transportation service for inter-campus shuttle buses. The Campus Shuttle Buses are required to be fully accessible and equipped with wheelchair lifts and appropriate in-shuttle safety equipment. Operators are to be trained in appropriate equipment operating and safety protocols. Operators are also required to be trained in AODA Customer Service training and must receive the appropriate sensitivity training regarding the handling and managing of passengers with special needs.

Other

In 2016, Seneca established a centrally managed AODA Capital budget dedicated exclusively to funding the required changes needed to remove barriers and improve accessibility for all members of the Seneca community.

2. Strategies and Action

Outlined below are the initiatives that Seneca plans to undertake between now and 2025 to meet the requirements of the AODA and to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

Customer Service

Seneca is committed to identifying improved ways to ensure customer access to all aspects of the Seneca experience.

Ongoing Practices and Processes:

- Continue to deliver mandatory training on how to provide accessible customer service to all employees, volunteers and individuals who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of Seneca.

- Monitor customer service delivery to maintain and improve upon the level of accessibility provided in programs, services and facilities.

- Offer multiple formats for student services' functions such as registration, academic and medical appointments, mental health and wellness support, financial aid and career development support, etc.

- Provide additional technology and resources to ensure equal opportunity to online services and classrooms (some examples are scanners, height-adjustable tables, and adaptive software).

- Offer a variety of assistive/adaptive technology and alternate formats of Seneca materials and forms, multimedia, course material, etc.

Customer Service Goals:

- Revise and update content in AODA legislated training modules.

- Student service areas to refine their web-based tutorials and educational workshops to increase accessibility for student participation.

- Increase awareness and use of the library's accessible content and resources. Expand the platform that provides access to a collection of books that have been digitized and made available online in accessible formats.

- Review all critical customer service touchpoints to ensure that new and emerging points of interaction provide accessible options.

Information and Communication

Seneca is committed to providing and receiving information and communications in ways that are accessible and has met all the current requirements of the Information and Communications Standard.

Ongoing Practices and Processes:

- Maintain a process for receiving and responding to feedback in ways that are accessible.

- Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and provide accessible formats, upon request.

- Provide emergency information in alternative formats, upon request and maintain an accessible website and web content.

- Monitor all websites for compliance with accessibility standards.

- Review documents and templates to ensure they are accessible.

Information and Communication Goals:

- All public Seneca websites will meet or exceed WCAG 2.0 Level AAA by January 1, 2025. Decommission Continuing Education website by June 2023.

- Ensure all videos are captioned campus-wide to align with AODA AAA plan.

- Ensure that print documents are available in an accessible format.

- Ensure that documents and content posted online are in accessible formats.

- Ensure internal Seneca forms are made accessible.

Seneca

Employment

Ongoing Practices and Processes:

- Notify applicants about the availability of accessibility accommodations in the recruitment process.
- Advise all new employees about the availability of accommodations for employees with disabilities with a link to accessibility policies in the employment contract.
- Inform all employees of the supports available through the employee intranet.
- Ensure policies on accommodation and supporting employees with disabilities are posted to the employee intranet and communicated to all employees whenever there is a change.
- Offer accessible formats and communication supports for employees with disabilities who require them.
- Provide individually accessible workplace emergency response information for employees who require it.
- Develop and document individual accommodation plans for employees who require them and offer this through the return-to-work process.
- Offer a return-to-work process to support, document processes and fund furniture, equipment and technology supports to accommodate employees who have been absent from work due to a disability.
- Consider the needs of employees with disabilities in development planning, career development and planning processes.

Employment Goals:

- Continue to regularly review employment-related policies and practices to ensure applicants with disabilities receive the supports and accommodations they require.
- Develop and implement a communications plan to raise awareness of the availability of individualized emergency response information accommodations for employees with disabilities.
- Conduct training and provide learning resources to management that outlines best practices in how to accommodate their employees with disabilities.
- Develop an Authorized Animal Policy. Train all managers in the policy content.
- Recruiting Process Review
  1. General EDI statement and updates to statements: Draft sample EDI and sample accessibility statements for job postings and review current postings with a goal of updating language to make it more inclusive.

2. Job Board & Question Library: Create a list of resources to be used in reaching candidates from diverse communities, including people with disabilities.
3. Outline of the equitable hiring process: Draft a guide that provides key steps to designing an equitable hiring process.
4. Process outline for designated positions: Development of a resource guide that addresses the approach to recruitment of designated positions for equity deserving groups. The guide will include posting template and language, approval path, advertising sources, the screening process, interview questions, onboarding process. Training will be offered to review the content of the guide.
5. Hiring Panel Training: Provide training on the protected grounds (with a particular focus on the protected ground of disability) of the Ontario Human Rights Code, and how to manage the recruitment process for preferred vs. designated positions.

Procurement and Self-Service Kiosks

Ongoing Practices and Processes:

Seneca will continue to incorporate accessibility when procuring goods and services (including self-service kiosks). Specifically, the following procedures will be continued:

- The AODA components of the Procurement policy will be strictly adhered to, especially when quotes are required for an RFP.

- Seneca will continue to ensure that those leading procurement initiatives are well versed with the Procurement policy and AODA components.

Procurement goals:

- Monitor the accessible purchasing requirements through random audits of files and provide additional support where necessary.
- Annually, new capital initiatives are submitted in the planning/budget process for executive review and approval. AODA compliance as part of the procurement process will be required for approval.

Training

Seneca maintains a disciplined process to ensure all key stakeholders participate in mandatory AODA training. In addition, there are a range of other resources available to help Seneca employees gain additional competency in accessible web design, creating accessible documents and general education relating to accessibility.

Seneca

Ongoing Practices and Processes:

- AODA training, as defined in Section 7(1) of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, must be completed by all full-time, part-time, contract and volunteer personnel. This is mandatory training upon hire.
- All policy formulation is undertaken by Seneca personnel and these individuals are required to complete the mandatory AODA training as described above.
- Mandatory AODA training was also completed by all other persons who provide services on behalf of Seneca. This group includes individuals providing services for Seneca residences, bookstores, campus security, custodial and food services.

- Provide faculty with resources and professional development opportunities at faculty orientation and throughout their careers so they are equipped with current and relevant instructional strategies to engage all students.

- Provide resources to empower full-time and contract faculty to incorporate accessibility in learning materials. For example, how to include closed captioning on recorded videos.

- Provide comprehensive material on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) curriculum design and delivery principles aimed at creating an inclusive and accessible learning experience for students. Seneca offers a variety of programs including the following:

  o Teaching Unique Diverse Learners at Seneca: UDL at Seneca

  o Accessibility for Educators

  o Numerous other tools and resources

Training Goals:

- Seneca will be developing a series of automated tools to ensure the completion of all required training for new and existing personnel. This is expected to be operational by September 2022.
- There are also plans to expand the training library for creating accessible documents to include a more comprehensive instruction using the accessibility functionality of both Microsoft and Adobe applications.
- A more comprehensive Ontario Human Rights Code for Managers training will be developed in fiscal 2022/23 and will be offered as both a webinar-based and asynchronous online training.

Seneca

- The Equitable Leader module will be added to the Seneca Leader series of workshops. This module will look at all aspects of the leadership function through the lenses of equity, inclusion and accessibility.
- Ensure that all experiential learning opportunities such as research, co-operative education, field placement opportunities, etc. consider the accessibility needs of the students.

Seneca Libraries

Seneca Libraries recognizes the importance of identifying and making available for use equitable, diverse and inclusive collections for the purposes of institutional teaching and learning, accountability, transparency, and research.

Ongoing Practices and Processes:

- Continue the ongoing rigour for website usability by employing both technical and user testing.

- Ensuring accessible facilities are located throughout libraries.

- Encouraging students to request alternative formats for textbooks through the library by contacting Accessible Learning Services.

- Continue to make library collections more accessible to patrons with print disabilities, Seneca Libraries facilitates access to the Accessible Content E-Portal (ACE).

- Continue the library practice of offering audio functionality that will produce a computer-generated reading of text-based content such as magazine, newspaper, and journal articles or e-book text.

- Seneca Libraries will continue to participate in LEAP (Library eResources Accessibility Portal) by conducting accessibility assessments of our eResources and adding them to the repository.

- Strive to have the maximum percentage of materials in digital format. As of February 1, 2020, 95% of the library's collection is in digital format.

Seneca Libraries goals:

- To support Seneca Libraries' commitment to equitable, diverse and inclusive collections, the EDI and ELS librarians will research, analyze, review, and recommend improvements for our collections, guidelines, practices and processes, in collaboration with internal and external Seneca partners.

- Photostock collection: Update descriptive metadata for photographs related to persons with disabilities to replace outdated language with person-first language.

Seneca

This initiative is inspired by a recommendation submitted by the Counselling and Accessibility Services department.

- Seneca library tours: With audio/visual support from Seneca Sandbox and through the guidance of the Library Accessibility Working Group as well as other Library and Seneca Stakeholders, Seneca Libraries will be positioned to create multimodal and accessible virtual library tours and information. These resources will guide users through our various spaces while showcasing each of our library's accessibility features.

This content can be created in a variety of formats including but not limited to:

- Video tours that are made accessible through their use of images, narration, closed captions and transcription.
- Audio tours made accessible through transcription and made available in various languages.
- Text-based tours catered to our online audience.
- Interactive floorplans that allow users to spotlight accessibility features located in each library.

Through these resources we will be able to bolster our in-person tours to address the needs and questions of those with accessibility needs.

Design of Public Spaces

Seneca will continue to:

- Incorporate public consultations into existing processes wherever possible.
- Meet or exceed the technical requirements of Design of Public Spaces Standard (DOPS) 2018-2023 Public Spaces Goals.
- Offer at least one height-adjustable chair in each classroom, review and evaluate assistive technology availability and needs at campuses.

Design of Public Spaces goals:

The following redesign of public spaces is planned to be completed from 2022 to 2025.

- Newnham Campus Service Hub
- Newnham Campus Networking Lab
- Newnham Campus Nursing Lab
- Newnham Campus Boutique
- Markham Campus – Seneca International Academy Training Center

With each redesign, all desks will be height adjustable with an extended range. Accessible service counters will be included in each build. Accessible washrooms with accessible stalls will be added. All meeting rooms will accommodate wheelchair space.

The commitment to making learning spaces increasingly more accessible will continue. Seneca will install 100 new accessible podiums and accessible teaching PCs as part of an ongoing investment in making learning spaces more accessible. Seneca will continue to refresh and expand its provision of accessible PCs for students.

Transportation

Seneca will continue to:

- Undertake to meet or exceed all applicable accessibility laws when providing transportation services.

- Accessible transportation services such as inter-campus shuttle buses are and will continue to be fully accessible and equipped with wheelchair lifts and appropriate in-shuttle safety equipment. In the case of equipment breakdown, Seneca will attempt to replace the vehicle with similarly accessible equipment.

- All shuttle operators are trained in proper equipment operation, safety protocols, and AODA Customer Service, including the appropriate sensitivity training regarding handling and managing passengers with special needs.

Transportation Goals

- Seneca will continue to meet or exceed all applicable accessibility laws when providing transportation services.

- Seneca will continue with the accessible inter-campus shuttle buses and operate in the above-described manner.

Other

This report is available online on [Seneca's Policies website](#).