

Accessibility Policy and Multi-Year Plan

1. Statement of Commitment

Vector Institute (the “Corporation”) is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the “AODA”). In that regard, the Corporation has established this Accessibility Policy and Multi-Year Plan to meet its obligations under Regulation 191/11, “Integrated Accessibility Standards” (“Regulation”) under the AODA.

The Corporation strives at all times to provide services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. The Corporation’s vision for accessibility is to give people with disabilities, visible or invisible, the same opportunity as others to obtain and benefit from services offered by the Corporation. The Corporation’s goal is to make reasonable efforts to provide services in such a way that the key principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities are respected.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals employed and/or engaged by the Corporation, or those who participate in developing the Corporation’s policies, practices, and procedures governing the provision of goods, services, or facilities to the public and every other person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Corporation. This includes permanent and temporary employees, secondees, faculty members, research scientists, service providers, Board members, and volunteers who interact with the Corporation’s current and prospective employees, volunteers, agents, customers, clients, suppliers, and any other users of the Corporation’s services. The Employment Standards set out in section 6 apply as indicated in that section.

3. Training

The Corporation provides in-person accessibility training required by the Regulation to all employees who are employed by the Vector Institute including those individuals who participate in developing the Corporation’s policies. Other individuals (e.g., researchers, interns, faculty, secondees, volunteers) will also receive training as required.

Training materials have been developed with content made publicly available by Access Forward and the Ontario Human Rights Commission and include the following:

- An introduction to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*
- Information on the standards and requirements in the Regulation
- The *Ontario Human Rights Code*
- Understanding the duty to accommodate
- Applying human rights principles
- Compliance and enforcement

These are the training materials that the Corporation uses. Materials will be updated as needed.

Training will be provided as soon as practicable and as often as necessary. If any changes are made to this policy or the requirements, training will be provided to include those changes. The Corporation maintains a record of the dates when training was provided and the number and names of individuals to whom it was provided.

4. Information and Communications Standards

The Corporation is committed to making its information and communications accessible to persons with disabilities.

Feedback Processes

The Corporation will ensure that its processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports upon request.

Feedback may be provided:

- by voicemail at 647-313-1875;
- by email at communications@vectorinstitute.ai;
- by mail to 661 University Ave, Suite 710, Toronto, ON, M5G 1M1; and/or
- in person, by arranging an appointment.

Feedback will be routed to the Director, Communications & Engagement, or in the case of voicemails, to the Office Services Manager, who will assess and direct feedback (if required) to the appropriate member of Vector's staff, which may include other members of the Communications & Engagement or Office Services Teams, the Chief Operations Officer, or Manager, Human Resources.

The Corporation will acknowledge and respond to all accessibility related enquiries within five (5) business days.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

The Corporation will, upon request, provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities in accordance with the Regulation as follows:

- i. In a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to a disability;
- ii. At a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons;
- iii. In consultation with the person making the request to determine suitability of an accessible format or communication support;
- iv. The Corporation will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

Unconvertible Information or Communications

If the Corporation determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the Corporation will provide the person requesting the information or communication with,

- a. an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
- b. a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

Information or communications are unconvertible if:

- a. it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communications; or
- b. the technology to convert the information or communications is not readily available.

Website Accessibility

The Vector Institute website and all web content conforms with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 initially at Level A and increasing to Level AA.

By January 1, 2021 internet website and web content posted after January 1, 2012 will conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA, as required by the Regulation.

5. Customer Standards

Guiding Principles and Scope

The Corporation is committed to excellence in serving all customers, including persons with disabilities, and will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- a) The Corporation's services (e.g., events, seminars, workshops, courses) and facilities are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- b) The provision of the Corporation's services and facilities to persons with disabilities and others are integrated to the extent possible, unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the services;
- c) Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use, or benefit from the Corporation's services; and
- d) The Corporation communicates with persons with disabilities in a manner that takes into account their disabilities.

To ensure the best possible customer service, the Corporation encourages open two-way communication and expects persons with disabilities to communicate their need for accommodation or assistance if it is not readily apparent how that need can be met.

Communication, Support Persons, Service Animals and Assistive Devices

The Corporation is committed to communicating with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account the person's disability. The Corporation will work with persons with disabilities to provide alternative communication formats that will meet their needs as promptly as feasible, to provide information to customers in an alternative format that will meet their needs in a timely fashion, and, if telephone or other used forms of communication are not suitable for a customer's needs, to provide alternative forms of communication, to the extent required by law.

People with disabilities may use their own personal assistive devices, service animals (as defined by the Customer Service Standards in the Regulation) or be accompanied by support persons (as defined by the Customer Service Standards in the Regulation) while obtaining any service provided by the Corporation. Service animals are permitted on the parts of our premises that are open to the public or other third parties, unless excluded by law.

The Corporation may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person, but only if, after consulting with the person with a disability and considering the available evidence, the Corporation determines that the support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with the disability or of others on the premises, and there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person with the disability or others on the premises.

Customer Service Training

As set out above, the Corporation provides training in accordance with the Regulation.

The training includes instruction on:

- The purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards;
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person;
- How to use any equipment or devices that may be available on the Corporation's premises or that may otherwise be provided by the Corporation that may help with the provision of the Corporation's services to a person with a disability;
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the Corporation's services; and
- The Corporation's current policies, practices, and procedures relating to the Customer Service Standards and providing goods, services, or facilities to persons with disabilities.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions

The Corporation will provide notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services for facilities used by persons with disabilities. Such notices will include information about the reason for the disruption, how long the disruption is expected to last, and a description of any alternative services or facilities, if available. Such notice will be provided via email or another accessible format as required.

6. Employment Standards

The Corporation will comply with the requirements of the Employment Standards in the Regulation. The Employment Standards apply in respect of employees, and not volunteers or other non-paid individuals.

Recruitment

The Corporation is committed to fair and accessible employment practices that attract and retain employees with disabilities. This includes providing accessibility across all stages of the employment cycle.

The Corporation will notify all applicants about the availability of accommodations for persons with disabilities in its recruitment processes. Where applicants are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process, they will be notified that accommodations for this process are available upon request.

If a selected applicant requests accommodation, the Corporation will consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for a suitable accommodation, taking into account the individual's needs.

When a successful applicant requests an accommodation, the Corporation will consult with the applicant and provide for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs.

Employee Notification

The Corporation shall inform its employees of its policies used to support employees with disabilities, including but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

Such information will be provided as follows:

- i. To new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment;
- ii. To existing employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Upon request by an employee with a disability, the Corporation will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:

- i. Information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- ii. Information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

Such requests should be made to the Manager, Human Resources, and the Corporation will consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Individual Accommodation Plans (IAP)

The Corporation has developed a written *Individual Accommodation Plan Process* for developing a documented individual accommodation plan for employees with a disability. The process includes the following elements:

1. The manner in which an employee requesting accommodation can participate in the development of the individual accommodation plan.
2. The means by which the employee is assessed on an individual basis.
3. The manner in which the employer can request an evaluation by an outside medical or other expert, at the employer's expense, to assist the employer in determining if accommodation can be achieved and, if so, how accommodation can be achieved.
4. The steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information.
5. The frequency with which the individual accommodation plan will be reviewed and updated and the manner in which it will be done.
6. The means of providing the individual accommodation plan in a format that takes into account the employee's accessibility needs due to disability.
7. If an individual accommodation plan is denied, the reasons for the denial will be provided to the employee.

If requested, individual accommodation plans will include any information regarding accessible formats and communication supports provided, and if required, will include individualized workplace emergency response information. They will also identify any other accommodation to be provided.

Return to Work

The Corporation has in place a *Return to Work Process* for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodation in order to return to work. The process is documented and outlines the steps that the Corporation will take to facilitate the return to work. Individual accommodation plans will be used in the return to work process as appropriate.

Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement and Redeployment

Performance management processes related to assessing and improving employee performance, productivity and effectiveness will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans.

The Corporation will take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities as well as any individual accommodation plans when providing career development and advancement opportunities to its employees.

If the Corporation has the need to reassign employees to other departments or jobs within the organization as a result of job elimination, the Corporation will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities as well as individual accommodation plans.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

The Corporation shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the employer is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

If the employee who receives individual workplace emergency response information requires assistance, and with the employee's consent, the Corporation shall provide the workplace emergency information to a person designated by the Corporation to provide assistance to the employee. This will be done as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

7. Design of Public Spaces

The Vector Institute office space at 661 University Ave, Suite 710, is an accessible space. The Corporation will comply with the design of public space requirements in any future renovation to the extent required by the Regulation and will maintain public spaces in accordance with the Regulation.

8. Posting/Availability

This policy and plan are available to the public on the Corporation's website and will be provided in an accessible format upon request. The Corporation will take the disability of any person requesting an accessible format or communication supports into account when determining the appropriate format or support to provide.

9. Questions

For requests for this information in an accessible format and questions about the Corporation's accessibility policy, please contact communications@vectorinstitute.ai and/or the Manager, Human Resources, or Chief Operations Officer.