



Similarly, the number of staff with disabilities increased during the same period. In 2018, staff with

Dalhousie tracks and reports progress each year during our annual Accessibility Week, which precedes the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Highlights of that work are as follows.

Established accessibility criteria in three [Facilities Management Design Guideline documents](#) to enhance accessibility for built environment projects.

Developed a [digital all-gender and accessible washroom map](#) (completed by Facilities Management and the University Libraries GIS Centre).

Established snow removal procedures that prioritized accessible entrances.

Implemented an Emergency Evacuation Plan, prioritizing the safety of people with disabilities in incident response planning.

Installed emergency maintenance communication signage in all accessible washrooms across all four campuses.

Installed accessible picnic tables across all four campuses at various locations.

Removed 2,000 built environment barriers across all four campuses as part of ongoing infrastructure renovations.

Created an accessible Chemistry Laboratory suite, which included the first electric height-adjustable fume hood on campus. This was a partnership between the Student Accessibility Centre, Environmental Health and Safety Office, Facilities Management, and the Department of Chemistry.

Responded to multiple service requests regarding student accommodations (examples include retrofitting sinks in the Chemistry lab with emergency eyewash stations), accessible power door operators, and accessible furniture in classrooms (completed by Facilities Management).

Facilitated workshops, retreats, studios courses, and consultations focused on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) with educational supports available institution wide.

Hosted Transformative Pedagogies Retreat sessions on disability and accessible language in the classroom,

responsibilities when engaging accommodation processes and establishing how Dalhousie reflects a broader institutional commitment to accessibility.

Hosted a kick-off event for [Able after Dal](#), a career transition program for students entering the workforce or students seeking work-integrated learning experiences. The Accessibility and Employment panel featured employers committed to recruiting individuals with disabilities, removing barriers, and ensuring an inclusive work environment. The panel also featured Dal students sharing their experience navigating disability on their path to career readiness. Collaborators included Lime Connect, industry partners, and the Public Service Commission of Canada.

Developed and adopted a resource for students, staff and faculty on accessible event practices and created a digital accessibility and accessible events guide on) SharePoint.

Established a working group to work towards the provincial accessibility recommendations.

Migrated Employee Accommodation Policy, documentation on the employee accommodation process, and

Listen. Learn. Act. Listening to, learning from, and acting on feedback from across the university and community

To inform our updated plan, we drew from multiple sources:

Student Accommodation Policy review.

Accessible Course Design Policy development.

Feedback from students, staff, and faculty through pop-up consultations.

Data from) Our Voice Survey, Be Counted Census, Community Equity Report, Employment Equity Plan, Employment Equity Plan Progress Report⁸, and internal surveys administered through Student Affairs.

Additional evaluation and reporting efforts have included, but have not been limited to:

- Collaborating with the Provincial Community of Practice to define and implement a framework to track progress across Dalhousie and other provincial post-secondary institutions.
- Conducting an annual review of the plan and sharing updates broadly.
- Completing compliance reporting, as required.
- Identifying methods to collect feedback and mechanisms to address that feedback.

The Accessibility Plan Working Group held pop-up consultations across all four campuses to ask students, staff, faculty, and community for recommendations to improve accessibility at Dalhousie. Recommendations touched on all six standard areas.

- o Provide remote options to join class.
- o Have more hybrid classes in-person/virtual/split class.
- o Increase note takers for classes.
- o Improve accessibility in classrooms.
- o Maintain the same advisor throughout degree.
- o Require Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in courses.
- o Improve access to information about accessibility supports.
- o Record all lectures.
- o Schedule classes at non-peak hours (6-10pm).

- o Improve snow clearing/ice buildu((/-)4(ice)10()9(b)3(u)3(ii)3(d)3(u)3(((/-)4(ice)10()9(b6cce)8(ss t)6(o)-5(inf)1

The following recommendations have emerged through consultations, a review and analysis of relevant reports (e.g., Employment Equity Plan Progress Report), and ongoing monitoring of our progress.

Per our Accessibility Plan, each of the recommendations listed below will form part of our strategic and operational priorities with accountabilities across Dalhousie.

) We will implement a standard-specific approach, as appropriate, to ensure consistency across commonly identified actions such as budget planning and allocation, incorporation into campus master planning, and communication and/or development of educational tools and resources.

- 1) Adopt Provincial Built Environment Accessibility Standards. Where feasible, Facilities Management (FM) will follow CSA B651, in the interim of Provincial Standards.
- 2) Integrate provincial Built Environment Accessibility Standards into the FM Built Environment Accessibility Audit Tool.
- 3) Embed accessibility design into FM's Design Guidelines and Operational Procedures to enhance campus development.
- 4) Develop internal processes to utilize provincial alternative compliance mechanisms where renovations are unable to meet provincial Built Environment Accessibility Standards.
- 5) Participate on the Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Accessibility Leads Community of Practice (CoP) and collaborate on Post-Secondary Accessibility Framework initiatives.
- 6) Develop a strategy for Accessibility Plan implementation and funding, including a multi

communication regarding projects, and other unplanned events with accessibility impacts).

- b. Evacuation procedures including fire alarm upgrades, expansion of accessibility scope, and updates to emergency signage to meet Nova Scotia Built Environment Accessibility Standards.
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- 11) Conduct ongoing built environment audits to monitor and report on accessibility improvements.
 - 12) Develop a response plan, portal, process, and funding plan for additional accessibility enhancements and requests.
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- 1) Ensure that Dalhousie research centres and institutes focused on accessibility consistently demonstrate engagement in accessibility and disability studies in their annual reports and strategic plans.
 - 2) Actively promote and encourage opportunities for faculty and students to engage in accessibility and disability studies scholarship and research (e.g., Healthy Populations Institute).
 - 3) Continue to develop and deliver accessibility education, resources, and capacity building for faculty, staff, and students, including assistive technology and student learning strategies.
 - 4) Create pathways to support post-graduation employment, additional education, and other opportunities for students with disabilities.
 - 5) # () Accessible Course Design Policy, which includes a commitment to Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and provision for faculty education.
 - 6) Support faculty members with disabilities in accessing and being successful in research environments.
 - 7) Invest in technology to support accessible learning, including technology to support alternative format course material, up-to-date assistive technology, assistive listening systems in classrooms and auditoriums, and training.
 - 8) Envision and launch an Accessibility Hub to support and measure the impact of cutting-edge work on accessibility at Dalhousie. This will be a shared venture that connects students, staff, and faculty to develop innovative approaches to accessibility for our university community and potentially beyond.
 - 9) Using Lean Process Improvement principles, identify and address operational priorities. Assess impact.
 - 10) Explore the creation of purpose-built spaces for accommodated exam testing.
 - 11) Ensure that work-integrated learning opportunities, capstone projects, and other co-curricular or extra-curricular opportunities have institutional support to focus on accessibility.
 - 12) Introduce the revised Student ~~thesis~~

1. Embed accessibility into all stages of the employment cycle, from pre-hiring to retirement.
2. Provide comprehensive training on accessibility legislation (employment) and the employee accommodation policy to all members of the university community. Training will include an understanding of the impact of misinformation and stigma related to disability.
3. Create and implement a formal return-to-work policy and process guidelines for persons with disabilities returning from extended medical leave or long-term disability.
4. Increase career development and advancement opportunities for employees with disabilities.
5. Ensure the widespread inclusion of persons with disabilities in recruitment, assessment, selection, and onboarding policies, processes, and procedures, including hiring committees. Verify that job postings only list essential qualifications and experience, taking into consideration transferable skills.
6. Formalize a job exit process for all employees to gather information on job exits for employees with and without disabilities. Information gathered via job exit procedures will support identifying trends and improving the retention of employees with disabilities.

- 1) Develop and regularly audit comprehensive customer service accessibility standards and associated guidelines that are:
 - a. Informed by existing gaps between the standard and the current state of existing customer services spaces.
 - b. Aligned with CSA B651⁹ and the newly established provincial built environment standards and guidelines for new construction and renovation of customer service spaces.
 - c. Monitored and evaluated, with appropriate mechanisms, resourcing, and staffing in place.
- 2) Ensure all customer service spaces meet accessibility standards by identifying short-term and long-term renovations.
- 3) Develop a multi-year budget and annual allocation process for accessible goods and services initiatives, identifying potential funding mechanisms for physical space improvements of current customer service spaces to meet accessibility standards.
- 4) Collaborate with government partners, post-secondary institution representatives, and the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate to develop a provincial accessibility-focused customer service training module.
- 5) Complementing the provincial module, develop an accessible customer/client service training module customized for Dalhousie.

⁹ <https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/built-environment/>

- c) Allocation of additional funding through existing sources such as facilities renewal (no current funding stream for new accessibility projects); new strategic initiative funding; loan and grant program leveraging in partnership with government entities; or capital campaigns.
- 3) Develop and execute an accessible signage and wayfinding project specific to transportation on and around campuses.
- 4) Expand research project opportunities for students. Opportunities will be identified and secured by working with faculty and students through classes, internships, and thesis work.
- 5) - () U -Campus Master Plan address:
 - Parking lot accessibility improvements.
 - Outdoor lighting upgrades.
 - Pathway upgrades, including slopes, sidewalks, roadways, and entrances.
- 6) Develop and deliver accessibility education and training for departments and senior leaders responsible for transportation.
- 7) Define projects around critical destination routes.
- 8) Deliver program and service upgrades such as adaptive bikes in loan program and covered bike parking.

Individuals and groups from all parts of the university played a vital role in) updated Accessibility Plan. Through various phases of consultation and development, our students, faculty, staff, departments, and external organizations took the time to share their insights and perspectives.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to engage in the planning process. Special recognition and thanks are due to the following units and individuals:

- Dalhousie University Accessibility Advisory Committee

) This information is informed by various institutional reports and provincial government resources. We are sharing the following references for our readers.

- j [Dalhousie Accessibility Home Page](#)
- j [Dalhousie Accessibility Progress Report 2023 \[PDF\]](#)
- j [Dalhousie Accessibility Progress Report 2024 \[PDF\]](#)
- j [Community Equity Data Report \[PDF\]](#)
- j [Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Accessibility Framework \[PDF\]](#)
- j [Dalhousie Employment Equity Plan \[PDF\]](#)
- j [Dalhousie Employment Equity Plan Progress Report Year 1 \[PDF\]](#)
- j [Dalhousie Employment Equity Plan Progress Report Year 2 \[PDF\]](#)
- j [Access by Design 2030](#)

