



HUMAN RESOURCES

ACCESSIBILITY

Established: July 1, 2011

Last Updated: April 24, 2020

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Perimeter Institute is committed to providing a research and work environment that is accessible and inclusive to all persons who work, study or visit the Institute (including volunteers and third-party contractors).

General Principles

The Institute will strive to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following core principles as outlined in the AODA.

Dignity: Goods and services are provided in a manner that is respectful to persons with a disability and does not diminish the person's importance.

Independence: Accommodating a person's disability means respecting their right to do for themselves and to choose the way they wish to receive goods and services.

Integration: Persons with disabilities can access all goods and services. This may require alternative formats and flexible approaches. It means inclusiveness and full participation. This is a fundamental human right.

Equal Opportunity: Service is provided to persons with disabilities in a way that their opportunity to access goods and services is equal to that given to others.

The Institute is committed to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities by identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility in a timely manner.

Definitions

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005

Disability - Under the AODA, the definition of “disability” is the same as the definition in the Ontario Human Rights Code:

(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 coordination, 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.

Customer Service

Service Animals, Support Persons and Assistive Technology

Service Animals

Service animals accompanying persons with a disability are welcome within the Institute facilities if not otherwise excluded by law. If a service animal is excluded by law, the Institute will ensure that alternate means are available within reasonable time and location to provide persons with a disability access to the Institute’s services.

There may be rare circumstances where, for reasons of health and safety of another person, allowing a person with a disability to enter a premises accompanied by a service animal needs to be considered. Examples of such situations include but are not limited to: a) where chemicals and/or equipment present hazards to other persons and/or to the service animal; and b) where a person is allergic to animals and adversely affected if they are in close proximity to a service animal. In such circumstances the Institute will examine alternate measures available to enable the person with a disability access.

If it is not readily apparent that an animal is a service animal, Security may ask the person with the service animal to provide verification of the animal’s duty. Please note that the use and safety of the service animal is the responsibility of the person with a disability.

Support Persons

The Institute welcomes support persons accompanying persons with a disability in order to assist in accessing goods or services or for the purposes of providing support with mobility, personal assistance or communication provided the interaction between the person and their support person does not compromise academic integrity. Individuals who are accompanied by a support person are encouraged to inform Human Resources of their companion.

Where there are admissions fees for an event organized by the Institute, persons with a disability shall be expected to pay the same fee as other attendees. Admission fees for support persons accompanying an attendee with a disability will be offered at a discounted rate of 50% the normal fee.

Assistive Technology

Personal assistive technologies are permitted and unrestricted in all areas of the Institute to which residents and the public have access, except when subject to operator safety and/or academic integrity. Please note that the provision, use and safety of various assistive technologies is the responsibility of the person with the disability.

Notice of Planned or Unplanned Disruption in Services and Facilities

In the event of a service disruption to residents or members of the public, it is the responsibility of individual service areas (i.e. Academic Programs, Researcher Services, Library, Facilities, Human Resources, IT Services, etc.) to take reasonable steps to report such disruption in a timely fashion through appropriate information channels. Such channels include, but are not limited to, the Institute website, temporary signage on or immediately adjacent to the affected area, and/or communication via email to affected individuals, departments or groups. In accordance with the AODA, notice must be conspicuous and indicate any alternatives that exist to allow access to persons with disabilities during the disruption. The required information necessary for any communication of a temporary disruption may include:

- The time, date and location of the disruption;
- Information about the reason for the disruption;
- Anticipated duration of the disruption;
- Descriptions of alternative facilities or services, if any; and
- Contact information for the responsible service area.

Feedback

Feedback about the delivery of services to persons with disabilities is welcomed, as it may identify areas that require change and assist in continuous service improvement. Such feedback may be forwarded by telephone, in person, in writing, by email, on diskette or otherwise. The Institute will make best efforts to provide a response in the same format in which the feedback was received.

Where possible, feedback will be addressed immediately. Some feedback may, however, require more effort to address and may need to be reviewed before an action is taken. The Institute will respond within 21 working days to all formal feedback.

Feedback may be provided directly to:

Mail: People and Culture, 31 Caroline Street North, Waterloo, ON, N2L 2Y5

Telephone: (519)569-7600 ext. 6092

Fax: (519)883-4482

Email: accessibility@pitp.ca

In person: Manager, People & Culture, 31 Caroline Street North, Waterloo, ON

Accessible formats and communication supports to provide feedback are available upon request.

Training

The Institute shall provide training on AODA customer service and how to interact with people with different disabilities to all employees and volunteers of the Institute.

Such training shall include:

- A review of the purposes of the AODA and its requirements;
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with persons 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 services;
- How to develop and review policies, procedures and practices relating to the provision of services to persons with disabilities.

New employees will be trained on our AODA policy as soon as practical. When changes are made to this policy it will be communicated to all employees and when appropriate, employees will be given additional training.

Training will be documented and the documentation will be collected by Human Resources.

Information & Communication Standard

Availability and Format of Documents (Alternative Formats)

All documents required by the AODA including this policy, employment documents, notices of temporary disruptions, training records, and feedback are available upon request, subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (“FIPPA”). When providing these documents to a person with a disability, the Institute will endeavour to provide the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes the person’s disability into account.

Communication

When communicating with a person with a disability, the Institute will do so in a manner that takes into account the person’s disability. The Institute commits to provide training regarding how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.

Employment Standards

Recruitment, Assessment & Selection Process

All job postings will notify potential candidates about the availability of accommodations and provide instructions on how to request accommodation. In addition, when an applicant is selected to participate in further assessment or selection they will be informed that accommodation is available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used.

Notice to Successful Applicants

When making offers of employment, the Institute will notify the successful candidate of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Workplace emergency response information

The Institute will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to all employees who have a disability. Employees are responsible for identifying the need if it is related to a disability that may not be apparent. Individualized workplace emergency evacuation plans may also be initiated by the Manager or as part of the Return to Work or Accommodation Plan. The individual emergency evacuation plan will be determined by the employee and People & Culture. The plan will be shared with the employee's manager. Individual work plans will be reviewed on an annual basis and when an employee moves location. A sample individual emergency evacuation plan can be found on the PI portal.

Individual Accommodation Plans

All employees requiring accommodation will have a documented individual accommodation plan. Please see the [Accommodation Process](#) for more details.

Return to Work Process

All employees returning to work who have been absent due to a disability will have an individual return to work plan. Please see the [Return to Work Procedure](#) for more details.

Performance Management & Career Development

When conducting performance management and providing career development opportunities the Institute will always take into account the accessibility needs of the employees with disabilities and their accommodation plans.

Any questions or concerns relating to this policy should be addressed to accessibility@perimeterinstitute.ca.