CMU | CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2025 - 2026

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Statement of Commitment

CMU is committed to providing a learning and working environment that embodies barrier-free access for everyone, and to full compliance with the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA). We recognize that disabilities are not barriers, but that barriers exist when the needs of the entire community have not been considered.

We further recognize that barriers to access come in many forms: attitudinal, information or communication, technological, physical and architectural, and systemic. CMU will work continually to identify, remove, and prevent barriers that would otherwise prevent full participation for all members of the University community and the public.

CMU is a public-sector organization for the purposes of the AMA and is committed to ongoing compliance and exceeding requirements where possible. CMU shares the commitment to creating conditions of generous welcome across the University through the promotion of accessibility, diversity, and inclusion. We commit to ongoing attention to the quality of welcome and dignity experienced by all who connect with the CMU learning community.

Effective Period

The Accessibility Committee, in conjunction with consultation groups, have reviewed and updated the 2022 – 2024 Accessibility Plan, effective and published December 2024, for the period of January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2026.

CMU's Accessibility Plan will continue to be reviewed and updated every two years to ensure compliance with Accessibility Standard requirements. The Accessibility Committee is committed to conducting ongoing reviews of CMU's remaining barriers to ensure appropriate action plans are up-to-date and outlined in the Accessibility Plan.

Accessibility Inquiries

The Director of Human Resources, alongside the Accessibility Committee, supports CMU's accessibility programs and responds to accessibility and accommodation requests from employees and the public. Please direct questions or requests to the contact noted below:

> Meghan Thiessen
> Director of Human Resources
> Email: mthiessen@cmu.ca
> Phone: 204-594-0532

The Coordinator of Accessibility Services coordinates student-related accessibility programming and responds to accessibility requests from students. Please direct questions or requests to the contact noted below:

> Sandra Loeppky
> Coordinator of Accessibility Services
> Email: sloeppky@cmu.ca
> Phone: 204-487-3300 ext. 340

Accessibility Committee

The Accessibility Committee's mandate is to contribute to the well-being of the CMU community and members of the public on our campuses by identifying barriers that may keep an individual from participating in all aspects of campus life and services and advises the University on ways to reduce or remove those barriers. The role of the Accessibility Committee includes advising the Director of Human Resources in respect of this policy and recommending accessibility improvements across the University. Any member of the University community or public is welcome to provide input to the committee. Please direct questions or requests to the contact noted below:

       Email: accessibilitycommittee@cmu.ca

Achievements to Date

Academic

- Faculty work closely with the Coordinator of Accessibility Services to offer and provide accommodations to students.
- Creation of an internal Accessibility Hub on SharePoint site as a resource for students regarding the academic accommodations.
- Creation of an internal [Accessibility for Faculty](#) SharePoint site as a resource for faculty regarding the academic accommodation of students. Launched in Fall 2023.
- Design and seating configuration of classrooms is considered and reviewed when planning for students with physical disabilities.

Library

- Screen readers implemented in selected computer stations.
- High visibility keyboard available in the library on a public computer located near the circulation/info desk where assistance can be easily obtained from knowledgeable library staff.
- All public computers run on the Windows 11 operating system, which comes with the Narrator screen reader installed.

Student Life

- Addition of a full-time employment position in Accessibility Services specifically for students.
- Access to tutoring and counselling services provided to students free of charge.
- Reviewed and implemented practices in our student employment program to create more opportunities for students with disabilities to be employed on-campus.
- Testing Centre has been added to accommodate increased requests for exam accommodations.
- Increased accessible washrooms and accessible dorm rooms in residence buildings.
- Financial Aid has expanded access to funding for students with accessibility needs.
- Added additional note takers for students and increased tutoring for students.
- Added quiet rooms for orientations and welcome events.
- Created the Level It Up partnership to help neurodivergent students access practicum placements.

Information Technology
- Open Dyslexic font on all CMU computers; Open Dyslexic is a typeface designed to reduce some common symptoms of dyslexia

Human Resources
- Mandatory employee training videos developed and implemented for staff and faculty.
- Customer Service training videos incorporated into employee onboarding process for staff, faculty, and students.
- "Words with Dignity" cards distributed to faculty and staff to reinforce awareness.
- Updated accommodation request statement on all job postings and employment website page.

Operations
- Fully accessible gender-neutral Washroom built in 600 Shaftesbury.
- Accessible reception counters installed at main reception areas of main campus.
- Accessible doors and ramps installed in several locations.
- After-hours accessible door installed.
- Accessible parking stalls provided near entrances.
- Strobe alert system installed in two dorm rooms in Concord Hall.
- Yellow tape installed on stairs down to south side basement to assist with vision impairment.
- Installation of gender-neutral washroom signs on six washrooms to provide greater clarity of accessibility.
- Auto Operators installed in MAG main entrance, the interior and exterior door, and in the main floor gender-neutral washroom.

Marketing & Communications
- Positive impacts on the CMU website.
- Compliant with benchmarks for website accessibility.
- Responds to requests for forms in different formats to accommodate needs.

Admissions
- Admission Counsellors are provided with accessibility training specific to conducting campus tours.
- Accommodations are offered to prospective students during campus tours.

Policies
CMU currently provides the following policy guidance in support of this Accessibility Plan:
- Employee Opportunity Policy: Commits the University to identifying and removing discriminatory barriers in hiring.
- Respectful Campus Policy: Prohibits discrimination and harassment, promotes a respectful campus, and provides procedural guidance for addressing instances of discrimination and harassment with both employees and students.

- Workplace Safety, and Health, and Wellness Policy: Promotes and ensures a safe workplace.
- Scent Free Policy: Scent-free environment in recognition of individuals with asthma, allergies, and environmental/chemical sensitivities.
- Scholarship and Financial Assistance Policy: Provides accommodation for students that require a reduced course load due to a disability by ensuring their ongoing eligibility for scholarships and financial assistance that would otherwise be unavailable with a reduced load.
- Students with Disabilities Policy: Ensures that appropriate academic supports are provided for academically qualified students with disabilities.

Remaining Barriers

Academic
- Faculty members would benefit from clearer guidance, resources, and ongoing and resources in several areas including identifying and removing barriers to student academic participation and success, expanding pedagogical approaches in recognition of learner disabilities, and making use of available classroom technologies.

Library
- Several aspects of library operations need further assessment, including access to materials located on mobile shelving, availability of assistive technologies, and availability of alternative communication formats.

Student Life
- Ongoing work to ensure all communications are available in alternate formats.
- Some students may feel hesitant to seek out resources and support, particularly in cases of invisible disabilities such as anxiety and depression.
- Review and improve student access to accessibility assessments.

Marketing & Communications
- Ongoing work is needed to monitor and assess accessibility impacts of changing technologies.
- On-campus signage does not fully currently communicate the availability of accessibility features.

Admissions
- Develop a communication plan for when lifts and/or elevators are down; define procedures and alternative routes/options.
- Include an accessibility checklist during event planning.

Administration
- Develop monitoring controls to ensure that new protocols are implemented and continue to function (e.g. new technology sign-off, website version control.

- Further training of staff in relation to available accessibility features, including document formatting.
- Increase campus wide professional development for staff and faculty regarding neurodivergent students, mental health needs, and physical disabilities.

Operations
- CommonWord Bookstore's full-height service counter creates a barrier for people using wheelchairs.
- Katharine Friesen Apartments – no elevator or accessible doors have been installed.

Accessibility Plan

Consultations

In the development and review of this plan, consultations were undertaken with stakeholders within the University as well as persons with disabilities. This plan was developed with input from the following internal individuals and groups:

- Academic Deans
- Librarians
- Student Life staff
- Communications and Marketing department
- Administrative and Operations departments
- Senior Administration
- Students

In addition, the following consultations were engaged to incorporate the perspectives of people with disabilities affected by barriers at CMU:

- The Director of HR worked in collaboration with the Post-Secondary Institutions (PSI) network to create online training modules for mandatory training on the Customer Service Standard.
- As part of the collaboration with the PSI network, consultations were completed with disability groups to ensure the training identified barriers and solutions.
- Student concerns and opinions regarding accessibility were sought and collected by Student Life staff members.

Policy Development

To meet the goals of this Accessibility Plan, certain areas of policy guidance require improvement, either through policy revisions or the development of new policies. The following items will be addressed within this plan's effective period:

Policy Revisions Required
- Respectful Campus
- Workplace Safety, Health, and Wellness
- Employee Opportunity

- Scent Free Policy
- Student Academic Accommodation Policy

New Policies Required
- Emotional Support Animal Policy: Will provide guidance for assessing and approving requests for the accommodation of an emotional support animal in residence.
- Service Animal Policy: Will provide guidance affirming that the University welcomes service animals anywhere on campus.
- Student Non-Discrimination Policy: Will formalize current practice and website wording into an approved policy.
- Workplace Accommodation Policy: Will provide guidance for employees outlining a process for obtaining workplace accommodations.

Specific Actions

The following specific actions are planned in response to the assessments of remaining barriers noted in the Baseline Report. These actions will be implemented within this plan's effective period and will further reduce or remove identified barriers.

Academic	
Initiatives/Actions	**Expected Outcomes**
Continue to provide faculty training in awareness of barriers experienced by people with disabilities	Faculty will be more knowledgeable about barriers and disabilities and will be more likely to identify and remove barriers
Implement faculty training in areas of pedagogy and teaching methods	Enable faculty to create courses that allow for a greater variety of students to acquire the necessary knowledge and achieve their educational goals
Implement faculty training in the use of technology	Increase the variety of technology faculty can use in the classroom, especially how that technology can be utilized by students with disabilities

Library	
Initiatives/Actions	**Expected Outcomes**
Evaluate the physical library space to access barriers (mobile or fixed shelves; operating computer, printer or copier)	Remove or mitigate physical barriers as identified (e.g. mobile or fixed shelves; entering the library; using a computer, printer, or copier)
Research and consider implementing assistive tools and technologies	Improved access to library materials
Offer scanning/OCR service to make library materials electronically readable	Improved access to library materials
Acquire books in large print or eBook format; videos with closed captioning or subtitles	Improved access to library materials

Provide alternative formats for certain communications	Improved access to library materials
Evaluate the accessibility of library website with CMU webmaster	Library staff will be able to provide better customer service
Train library staff how to assist a person who is deaf or blind during an emergency	Library staff will be able to provide better customer service

Student Life	
Initiatives/Actions	**Expected Outcomes**
Provide improved or alternative formats for Community Gatherings events materials (PowerPoint slides, handouts, programs)	Improved level of participation by people with disabilities in Community Gatherings events
Provide alternative format communications during events (e.g. FM system, large print, interpreters)	Improved level of participation by people with disabilities in Student Life and Athletics events
Continue to work with and train staff and faculty in responding to requests from persons with disabilities	Foster a common awareness of best ways to think about and respond to people confronting barriers
Ongoing review of fire safety equipment (auto operators, alarms, ramps, lifts, elevators) and fire response policy	Recommendations to Operations in relation to accessible fire safety equipment and policy

Marketing & Communications	
Initiatives/Actions	**Expected Outcomes**
Website New website design for roll out in September 2025 to consider the latest best practices and website accessibility guidelines. Ongoing reviews and updates for improved accessibility to continue	Ensure CMU website is fully accessible and bring satellite websites to compliance
Online Forms and Documents Assess which online forms and documents are not accessible; make available via plain text document or embed on website in manner compatible with web readers - ongoing migration PDF forms to website-embedded forms compatible with web readers	All online forms and documents are fully accessible in one format or another (active offer–information is available in alternate formats upon request)
Review New Technology Research new technology available for viewing websites that would assist people with a disability. Implement as appropriate/feasible web updates are regularly made to incorporate the latest standards and best	Ongoing updates

practices - ongoing as extension of *Website* above	
On-Campus Signage Include accessibility considerations as part of the campus-wide signage strategy as part of the institutional rebranding initiative. Implementation of the campus signage strategy to begin in summer 2025	Campus will be easily navigated by everyone

Administration	
Initiatives/Actions	**Expected Outcomes**
Human Resources	
Continue to provide training and access to training modules for faculty and staff	Faculty and staff will be better equipped to understand and provide appropriate services to persons with disabilities
Employees continue to meet with HR to work together on an accommodation plan to increase accessibility	Employees are provided with consultations to ensure that appropriate accommodation plans are put in place, including consideration of invisible disabilities
Information Technology	
Review technology and software in relation to support for accessibility	Identify and provide technology that allows people with disabilities to be fully engaged
Ensure alternative formats are available for all IT communication	Improved accessibility of IT Department communication
Educate IT department on accessibility tools	Improved awareness among university employees of available tools
Consider accessibility when evaluating new technology	All new technology has been implemented with consideration of accessibility impact
Ensure computers in each lab have accessibility features enabled	Ongoing oversight and monitoring of accessibility features activation

Operations	
Initiatives/Actions	**Expected Outcomes**
Ensure there are smooth transitions between sidewalks, buildings, and rooms	Safe access to grounds and buildings
Install additional automatic door openers, update existing lifts, improve existing ramps; install or improve safety railings	Expand the space on campus that is fully accessible in an easy way
Provide clear instructions for using accessible devices	Easy-to-use accessibility features improve the sense of using facilities in a way that feels normal
Create an accessible service counter in the CommonWord Bookstore and Resource Centre	Improve customer experience for individuals using wheelchairs