Accessibility Plan

2023−2025

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General

The Canada School of Public Service (the School) invites you to submit your comments, feedback, questions or concerns about its Accessibility Plan by mail, telephone or email. You can also request an alternative format of the Accessibility Plan.

Feedback on the School's Accessibility Plan can be addressed to:

Director, Employee Experience
Canada School of Public Service
373 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6Z2

Telephone: 1-866-703-9598 (toll free in Canada only)

Email: csps.accessibility-accessibilite.efpc@csps-efpc.gc.ca

An acknowledgement of receipt will automatically be sent to all incoming emails. Should you wish to speak directly with a member of the Employee Experience team, please provide a contact name. You can expect an answer to your email within 5 business days.

To submit your feedback anonymously, please use the School's [Feedback form](#). You are not required to provide any personal information when submitting this form. However, the School will not be able to reply to anonymous feedback submitted through the form.

The School is committed to protecting the privacy rights of individuals, including safeguarding the confidentiality of information provided. All responses submitted anonymously through the [Feedback form](#) will be handled in accordance with the [Privacy Act](#).

Feedback received will be considered in preparing annual progress reports.

Message from the President

Every public servant has the right to a respectful and inclusive workplace. As an employer, the School has a considerable impact on the daily lives of its employees and must ensure that it offers a level playing field that provides each employee with equitable opportunities to grow and contribute.

As a service provider, the School provides learning and development opportunities to all public servants to help them fulfil their responsibilities in serving Canadians and must ensure that its learning products, platforms, facilities and delivery channels are accessible and barrier-free in order to reach its standards of excellence.

In keeping with the principle of "nothing without us," it is my vision that the School be a leader in public service accessibility and collaboration. This plan is not only for the benefit of persons with disabilities, but rather for everyone and anyone who interacts with our organization. As a first step, this plan was developed in consultation with persons with a diverse range of disabilities, as well as with experts and specialists.

I am proud of the efforts already deployed by our business lines and service providers, and it is my commitment that progress reports, adjustments and further iterations of this three-year plan will be elaborated upon just as collaboratively and with just as much consultation as we continue to eliminate barriers to our programs and services.

Taki Sarantakis
President
Canada School of Public Service

Message from the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Co-Champions

The School's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Forum brings together employees interested in advancing equity, diversity and inclusion throughout the organization. As co-champions, we believe that broad anti-discrimination efforts and a sense of belonging for all employees are essential for a vibrant workplace. Our role is to assist in the efforts to reduce and remove barriers and to support EDI priorities. Our goal is to influence an organization-wide EDI culture so that, as a progressive workplace, we can continue to make progress towards becoming more representative, inclusive, and barrier-free.

The School's EDI Forum continues to identify priority areas for action, and in doing so, continues to gather input from employees across the organization, using a "nothing without us" and intersectional approach, while working closely with all focal points, including the focal point responsible for mobilizing the network of employees with disabilities.

Much progress has been made, but more work remains to be done, and we are committed to supporting this work by carrying the voices of our employees to senior management. This Accessibility Plan is an important step in the right direction, and the School's EDI Forum will be a critical influencer in ensuring that the work done directly aligns with and supports this plan.

The inclusion of people with disabilities is crucial to the EDI health of any organization, and we applaud the contributions of those who may not have experienced identity-related oppression as well, because true inclusion is only possible with everyone's participation.

Nathalie Laviades Jodouin and Portia Taylor
Co-Champions
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Forum

Executive summary

The *Accessible Canada Act* (the Act) came into effect in 2019. Its purpose is to create a barrier-free Canada by 2040, which benefits everyone, especially those living with a disability. The School's Accessibility Plan complements the Act's priority areas and describes the concrete steps that the School will be undertaking to eliminate known barriers to its programs and services and to prevent new ones.

This is the School's first accessibility plan, and it has been developed with the principles of "nothing without us." This means that persons with disabilities were engaged throughout the design and development phases, from the development of the School's Accessibility Strategy in 2020 up to the finalization of this plan. This consultative process reflects the School's commitment to preventing, identifying and removing barriers for persons with disabilities within the organization, and for everyone and anyone who interacts with it.

The plan identifies **26 concrete actions** to address the barriers identified through consultations. In implementing this plan, the School will collaborate with partners across the federal public service and develop a progress reporting framework to track and report on each action.

It is the School's ultimate goal to ensure increased accessibility as an employer and as a service provider for public service learners across Canada. This includes optimizing learning delivery modalities and leveraging virtual tools to enhance their learning experience. Furthermore, the School will improve and expand the functionality of its learning and publishing platforms to fully adopt the Government of Canada's digital and accessibility standards.

The Canada School of Public Service

The School was established on April 1, 2004, when the legislative provisions of Part 4 of the Public Service Modernization Act came into force. The School has been part of the Treasury Board Secretariat Portfolio since July 2004.

Under the Canada School of Public Service Act, the objectives of the School are to:

- encourage pride and excellence in the public service
- foster a common sense of the purposes, values and traditions of the public service
- support the growth and development of public servants
- help ensure that public servants have the knowledge, skills and competencies they need to do their jobs effectively
- assist deputy heads in meeting the learning needs of their organization
- pursue excellence in public administration

For information about the School's core responsibilities, planned results and resources, reporting framework and more, consult its departmental plans.

Mission

The primary responsibility of the Canada School of Public Service is to provide a broad range of learning opportunities and to establish a culture of learning within the public service. The School supports common public service learning at all levels nationwide in over 90 federal departments and agencies, allowing them to focus on delivering mandate-specific training and development.

The School has one strategic outcome: federal public service employees have the common knowledge, skills and competencies to fulfil their responsibilities in serving Canadians.

Organizational culture

The School emphasizes a culture of excellence within the public service, with the belief that integrating accessibility into organizational culture is a journey, not a destination. Improving accessibility within the School, and across the public service, needs to be an ongoing effort at both the organizational and individual levels. By challenging assumptions and beliefs about people with disabilities and shifting the perception from the impairment to the barrier, we can create a culture of inclusiveness that leaves no one behind.

Business lines

Each business line has a distinct role in identifying and removing barriers under each priority area.

- [Respectful and Inclusive Workplace](#)
  Knowledge and awareness necessary for fostering an inclusive workplace and for developing inclusive policies, programs and services for people in Canada.
- [Government of Canada (GC) and Public Sector Skills](#)
  Agile, responsive and comprehensive training and learning unique to the craft of government.
- [Indigenous Learning](#)
  Co-developed curriculum to educate public servants on the history, cultures, and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) and their long-standing relationships with the Crown.
- [Transferable Skills](#)
  Skill sets and mindsets applicable inside, outside and across the GC to help create a public service that is kinetic, connected and collaborative.
- [Digital Academy](#)
  Knowledge, skills and practical experience public servants need for government in the digital age.

Areas of expertise

Policy and Strategic Relationships

The Policy and Strategic Relationships team provides internal policy support to the organization. With respect to accessibility, it develops internal policies and related tools to support employees in the fulfilment of their duties. It also ensures that these policies and tools are aligned with the accessibility requirements defined in the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (the Act).

Future of Work and Employee Experience

The Future of Work and Employee Experience team is responsible for the organizational accessibility plan, as required by the Act. The plan is based on the current Canada School of Public Service Accessibility Strategy, while ensuring compliance with the [Accessible Canada Regulations](#).

In the development of the plan, the Future of Work and Employee Experience team coordinates with experts and specialists from business lines across the organization involved in accessibility, from both an employer and a service provider standpoint. In addition, the team is responsible for leading ongoing consultations with employees who identify as persons with disabilities.

CSPS Digital Academy

The CSPS Digital Academy was established by the School in 2018 to help federal public servants gain the knowledge, skills and mindsets they need in the digital age. It supports the principles of an agile, inclusive and equipped workforce and a digital-first approach that aligns with the Government of Canada Digital Standards. These ten digital standards form the foundation of the government's shift to becoming more agile, open and user focused. One of the digital standards is to **build in accessibility from the start**. Digital Academy learning products introduce public servants to this standard, support its implementation, and are built around an inclusive and human-centred design process.

Respectful and Inclusive Workplace

The Respectful and Inclusive Workplace team is responsible for the development and delivery of learning products on accessibility for federal public servants. Respectful and Inclusive Workplace collaborates with the Office of Public Service Accessibility, the Office of the Chief Human Resource Officer, the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology team, people with disabilities and many other stakeholders to co-create informative, innovative, and engaging learning experiences on the topic of accessibility and disability inclusion.

Digital Accessibility in Learning

The Digital Accessibility in Learning team, under the User Experience division, provides the School business lines with training, tools, guidelines, and advice to meet accessibility standards so that they can provide learners with a meaningful, inclusive, and accessible learning experience. Accessibility must be by design and by default. The team helps to:

- lead the culture change towards accessible and inclusive design through training and technology support
- establish and reinforce accessible and inclusive design best practices from the start
- support the purchase of accessible learning solutions and accessible authoring tools
- collaborate with other accessibility, design, research, and usability specialists within the School and across the public service
- establish guidelines, best practices, and processes for implementing and maintaining accessibility and inclusive products and services
- provide coaching and professional development to School employees on accessibility

Training

From making documents accessible to inclusive hiring, the School offers a variety of resources, training and events to federal public servants under the theme of accessibility.

Participants learn about the different barriers that people with disabilities face and are provided with various tools and resources to support and create a barrier-free workplace.

Please refer to the Accessibility Learning Series for the full list of School accessibility learning resources.

The Accessible Canada Act (the Act)

We all benefit from a society and an economy without barriers to inclusion. When persons with disabilities can participate in all aspects of society, including accessing employment, resources and services, it enriches Canada's economy.

— Employment and Social Development Canada, National AccessAbility Week 2020 Campaign

In 2016, the Government of Canada began consultations with Canadians for the purpose of developing new federal accessibility legislation as part of Canada's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Accessible Canada Act (the Act) was enacted by Parliament on July 11, 2019, with the purpose of realizing a Canada without barriers by 2040, particularly by the identification and removal of existing barriers, and the prevention of new barriers, in these specific areas:

- employment
- built environment
- information and communication technologies (ICT)
- communication (other than ICT)
- procurement of goods, services and facilities
- design and delivery of programs and services
- transportation

This historic legislation not only acknowledges publicly the value of persons with disabilities, but even more importantly, it requires the adoption of regulations to set standards and measures to guide the progress of Canadian institutions when it comes to inclusive services.

Even as people with disabilities lead the way forward, many still face discrimination, exclusion, and barriers.

Today, we recommit ourselves to building a more inclusive country—and world—based on equality and respect for everyone's human rights.

— Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, 2019

Accessibility statement

In July 2020, the School Accessibility Strategy proposed a set of activities aimed to identify, prevent, and remove barriers to participation for persons with disabilities. The strategy was used as a roadmap to prepare this Accessibility Plan.

The Future of Work and Employee Experience team, under Human Resources Management, is responsible for preparing, consulting on, receiving feedback on and publishing the School Accessibility Plan every three years and the School Progress Report every year.

In progressing towards a fully accessible Canada by 2040, the School is committed to providing accessible services to all employees and learners by default.

In addition, the School is committed to:

- identifying specific needs in each area of priority by completing the annual Accessibility Self-Assessment, available through the Office of Public Service Accessibility
- working alongside persons with disabilities to identify, remove and prevent barriers
- collaborating with employee networks that intersect with accessibility, disability management and accommodation to consolidate the education, training, events and resources available to employees and Canadians
- continuing to foster an equitable and inclusive workplace

The School is also committed to providing the best work environment by using different methods to gather feedback, analyze this feedback, and apply it to improve the quality of its work environment.

The consultations conducted during the development of this plan have provided the School with key insights, which resulted in the priorities identified in this plan.

Consultations

The School held numerous engagements sessions, through formal committees and informal working groups, to obtain employees' views on accessibility barriers at the School and potential solutions. To provide a forum for confidential input and feedback, an anonymous employee accessibility survey was circulated to all employees and made available on the School intranet. Bargaining agents were also involved and consulted.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

An Accessibility Advisory Committee was formed with specialists and experts from all levels across the organization, including management and employees. Regular monthly meetings allowed each sector to share and report on their initiatives and progress, as they established priorities from both employer and service provider perspectives.

Accessibility Working Group

A call-out was sent to all School staff requesting volunteers to form an Accessibility Working Group. The group consists of persons with disabilities, subject matter experts and allies. Members were involved in reviewing and providing feedback on the various iterations of the plan, as well as in the development of the employee survey, intranet page and communications products.

What we learned

## School employee accessibility survey

A School employee accessibility survey was made available to all employees on the School's intranet for one month. The survey asked for feedback about several different types of barriers that employees may face, such as systemic, organizational, and attitudinal barriers, as well as any barriers to architectural or physical spaces, technology in the office, communication or transportation.

Out of 778 employees at the School, 183 employees responded to the survey, a 23.5% response rate. Of these respondents, almost one quarter of them (24%) identified as having one or more disabilities or impairments.

The survey played an important role in understanding where the School's areas of focus should be in this plan. Results were compiled to show the proportion with which respondents encountered each type of barrier, relative to other barriers. The chart below (Image 1) depicts these proportions as a slice of pie for each type of barrier.

Image 1: Barrier proportions

The pie chart shows the proportion with which respondents who identified as having a disability or impairment faced each type of barrier, relative to other barriers. There is a detailed description below the image.
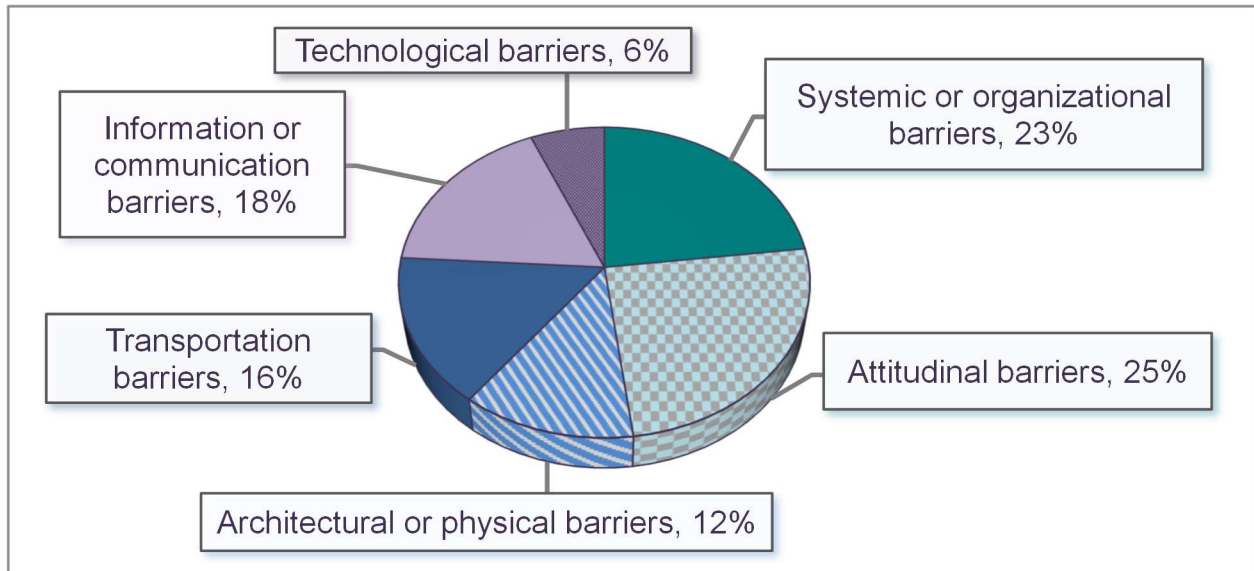
The proportion (represented as a percentage) with which respondents who identified as having a disability or impairment faced each type of barrier, relative to other barriers, is as follows, beginning at the top of the image and going clockwise:

- Technological barriers, 6%
- Systemic or organizational barriers, 23%
- Attitudinal barriers, 25%
- Architectural or physical barriers, 12%
- Transportation barriers, 16%
- Information or communication barriers, 18%

End of long description for Image 1.

While 16% of barriers identified were related to transportation, it is important to note that the School's mandate does not include the provision of transportation for employees, learners or clients. The information regarding potential transportation barriers was requested to help broaden our understanding and situational awareness of what persons with disabilities face in their day-to-day lives.

An interesting piece of information gathered from this survey came from a group of questions asking respondents about their interest in receiving training specifically related to making documents, meetings, and web content more accessible. Both respondents who identified as having a disability or impairment and respondents who did not were extremely receptive (71%) to the idea of receiving this training if it was offered.

In conclusion, the School is satisfied with the outcome of this survey and the positive response rate as it provides detailed and useful comments that will help guide its Accessibility Plan over the next three years.

School accessibility workshops

Meaningful consultation workshops were held in October 2020. These workshops were open to all School employees (executives and non-executives) without the need to self-identify. This recruitment approach allowed a level of anonymity for the participants and encouraged dialogue. A total of 34 participants took part in the workshops.

These workshops:

- informed participants about the School's Accessibility Strategy
- obtained participants' views on gaps or barriers and actions to mitigate them
- solicited participants' input on which actions to prioritize to improve the strategy, including identifying the office of primary interest, its supporting teams or leads, and timelines for priority actions

Workshop participants identified that it was important to focus on the following areas:

- Raise awareness of and eliminate barriers to recruitment, retention, and promotion of people with disabilities.
- Use interviews with employees with disabilities to identify barriers across the full spectrum of employee experience.
- Engage in government-wide initiatives to identify the accessibility needs of clients.
- Streamline the process for accommodation with a centralized system to avoid repetition and respect privacy.
- Collect user experience feedback and create best practices.
- Implement intranet plain language.
- Make events more accessible by having interpreters, by having live captioning and/or by publishing bilingual captioned recordings.
- Ensure that accessible templates for learning products, communications, and presentations are available to all employees on the intranet.
- Create a list of accessible services and tools available at the School and put it in a central location.
- Integrate accessibility considerations into all new learning content.
- Lead and support a new working group focused on an accessibility.

Priority areas

This School's Accessibility Plan is based on the seven priority areas defined in the *Accessible Canada Act*:

- Employment
- Built environment
- Information and communication technologies (ICT)
- Communication (other than ICT)
- Procurement of goods, services, and facilities
- Design and delivery of programs and services
- Transportation

Identifying barriers in these priority areas involved using a variety of sources, such as the Public Service Employee Survey, internal human resources metrics, the Maturity Model on Diversity and Inclusion, the Employment Equity Annual Review, and the Management Accountability Framework.

Consultations with the School's Accessibility Advisory Group, Accessibility Working Group, People With Disabilities Employee Network, employees and clients, as well as with other government departments, have helped to determine the different ways the School is perceived, and how the School can continue to improve its workplace environment, structures, processes and services.

Based on this comprehensive review, the following barriers have been identified, and the following actions proposed to remove or prevent these barriers.

Barriers and action plan

Employment

The employment priority area focuses on indicators such as recruitment, retention, career advancement, accommodation requests, and the employee life cycle.

The School will continue working with the Public Service Commission and other stakeholders to seek candidates with disabilities to join the public service, and support the implementation of government-wide initiatives to increase representation across occupational groups and levels. The School will support the growth and leadership of persons with disabilities, improve the accommodations and onboarding process, and focus on specialized mentoring and networking opportunities, all with the aim of providing an environment in which persons with disabilities can thrive.

Here are some relevant key figures for the employment priority area:

- Total School population (as of November 1, 2022): **778**
- Workforce availability for persons with disabilities (based on Census 2016 and the 2017 Survey on Disability): **9.1%**
- School representation of persons with disabilities: **7.19%**
- Gap between workforce availability and representation: **1.91%**

Using these key figures, along with research and consultations, the School identified four employment barriers with action items to be carried out over the next three years:

1. **Promotions and retention:** Attitudinal barriers can impact views of what persons with disabilities are capable of, which can affect opportunities for advancement and overall satisfaction.

> **Action 1.1** – Increase executives' and hiring managers' knowledge and awareness to build inclusive teams**.**
>
> - Provide guidance and training for supervisors, managers and executives on accessibility and persons with disabilities.
> - Share hiring tools specific to hiring persons with disabilities with supervisors, managers and executives, such as the Federal Public Service Inclusive Appointment Lens, Fairness Review Checklist, and Guide for Assessing Persons with Disabilities.

Action 1.2 – Provide career support to persons with disabilities to enable them to reach their career goals through job mobility and promotions.

- Promote the Mentorship Plus program and encourage the participation of mentees and mentors.
- Increase management and executive awareness to equip them to support persons with disabilities in their work, performance and career aspirations.

2. **Recruitment:** Accessibility of recruitment tools and biases in the hiring process can lead persons with disabilities to be underrepresented in the School's workforce.

Action 2.1 – Broaden outreach activities and promote targeted recruitment to increase departmental representation of persons with disabilities.

- Work with community organizations such as LiveWorkPlay, Neil Squire Society, and Ready, Willing and Able.
- Leverage existing programs and inventories such as the Federal Student Work Experience Program and Virtual Door to Talent with Disabilities. A comprehensive list can be found at Hiring persons with disabilities: Managers Toolkit (available on the Government of Canada network).
- Promote candidates with disabilities who have self-identified and are qualified in existing pools.
- Analyze disaggregated data for gaps in workforce representation and create specific recruitment targets.

3. **HR policies and processes:** Some current policies and processes were not developed with the needs of persons with disabilities in mind.

Action 3.1 – Adjust the way HR processes are worded and implemented to be more inclusive of persons with disabilities.

- Simplify the statement of merit criteria to ensure the use of plain language and to focus more on competencies.
- Improve the School's application process with an aim to eliminate barriers to people with disabilities in consultation with the School's People with Disabilities Employee Network.

4. **Biases in the public service about hiring persons with disabilities:** Biases in the hiring process can lead persons with disabilities to be underrepresented in the Government of Canada workforce.

Action 4.1 – The School will play an active role in building awareness and mitigating bias by providing training to all public servants on inclusive workplaces, accessible and fair staffing, and being mindful of disabilities.

- Promote the School's course Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce (COR120) to all public servants. It focuses on acknowledging potential barriers and identifies tools and strategies for conducting fair, inclusive and accessible staffing processes.

Built environment

The built environment priority area focuses on the physical work environment and the equipment and tools available in it. All individuals deserve access to an equitable and safe work environment.

The School will be focusing on enhancing the accessibility of all its facilities by assessing physical accessibility for employees and clients, and ensuring that on-site events and courses are physically accessible. By modernizing School workspaces and increasing the number of ergonomic and accessible workspaces, the School aims to reduce known physical accessibility barriers.

In preparation for this report, the School carried out assessments, research, and consultations, and identified two built environment barriers with action items to address these barriers over the next three years:

5. **Accommodation:** Not all physical workspaces meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The accommodation process currently in place can be improved for better and more accessible service.

> **Action 5.1** – Engage in ongoing consultations with individual persons with disabilities and with committees and networks of persons with disabilities.
>
> - Become proactive instead of reactive to the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities.

6. **Physical accessibility:** Some offices, primarily regional offices, have not been recently renovated and may not meet or exceed accessibility standards.

> **Action 6.1** – Adapt workspaces to respond to the most common disability needs in all sectors and zones of the School's facilities, including regional offices.
>
> - Engage the School's People with Disabilities Employee Network and regional offices in the accessible workplace planning process.
> - Exceed minimum building code requirements where possible.

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

The ICT priority area focuses on making information and communication technology usable by all. ICT includes the development and use of hardware and software, as well as intranet sites, web applications, and other digital products.

The School is committed to providing its employees, clients and learners with the access and training to use all information and communication technologies, regardless of ability or disability. The School strives to meet the new ICT Accessibility Standard (available on the Government of Canada network) in the areas where it has not already done so, and is using support such as the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) Program.

In preparation for this report, the School carried out assessments, research, and consultations and identified three ICT barriers with action items to address these barriers over the next three years:

7. **Digital product and service accessibility:** Some internal digital products and services are not fully accessible.

Action 7.1 – Improve the accessibility of our internal digital products and services.

- Adapt existing products and services to increase their accessibility. Examples include PDFs not opening in Teams, digital signatures that are not compatible, macros and Excel sheets.

Action 7.2 – Build capacity and expertise in digital accessibility across the School.

- Establish accessibility awareness training for course developers, instructional designers, and all individuals in service delivery roles.

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8. **Technology in the office:** Persons with disabilities can experience technology issues when working from the office.

Action 8.1 – Train IT service desk support specialists to support persons with disabilities.

- Have the IT Service Desk and Accommodations teams meet with employees who use assistive technologies to determine their on-site requirements.
- Provide accessibility awareness training to IT support specialists.

> **Action 8.2** – Improve the accessibility of audio-video setup to enable employees to set up hybrid meetings and virtual classrooms from the office.

9. **Accessibility of external digital products:** Some of the School's external digital products and services are not fully accessible.

> **Action 9.1** – Continuously test for and manage accessibility issues related to the use of the School's learning platform and learning catalogue.
>
> - Use automatic testing tools, manual testing and user testing with persons with disabilities.
> - Add accessibility improvements achieved by other government departments to our roadmap.

> **Action 9.2** – Improve the accessibility of the content creation templates that are used when adding content to our learning platforms.

> **Action 9.3** – Ensure that third-party vendors involved in supporting or providing content for School platforms, courses, learning products and the catalogue meet the Government of Canada's [Standard on Information and Communication Technology Accessibility](#).

> **Action 9.4** – Continuously identify and analyze barriers that learners experience across our digital products, and share common accessibility issues encountered at Accessibility Working Group meetings and other School forums.

Communication (other than ICT)

The communication (other than ICT) priority area focuses on promoting a respectful and inclusive workspace by integrating accessibility considerations in content across business lines, enhancing development programs, and mobilizing GC-wide synergies.

The School regularly explores new innovations for accessible communications, creates accessible corporate templates, and provides in-house and third-party testing capabilities to ensure that learning products and multimedia products such as videos are accessible and inclusive.

Through assessments, research, and consultations, the School identified two communication (other than ICT) barriers with action items to address these barriers over the next three years:

10. **Best practices not readily available:** It can be difficult to find reliable, updated accessibility best practices for communications, templates, forms, and emails.

> **Action 10.1** – Establish and promote accessibility best practices for each communication channel.
>
> - Present, share, and promote communications best practices across the School through internal channels, including but not limited to the News at the School weekly email, the intranet, internal emails to staff and the new employee onboarding guide.
> - Provide feedback mechanisms to accept comments on barriers and improvements.

11. **Accessibility of the event and video streaming platforms:** The event and video streaming platforms are not all fully accessible.

> **Action 11.1** – Adapt existing platforms to meet accessibility and inclusive design guidelines.

Procurement of goods, services, and facilities

The procurement priority area focuses on removing and preventing barriers to accessibility in procured goods, services, and facilities by procuring accessible products and services and aligning with GC accessibility norms for procurement.

The [Directive on the Management of Procurement](#) states that accessibility requirements are to be considered for all procurement. Through assessments, research, and consultations, the School identified two procurement barriers with action items to address these barriers over the next three years:

12. **Delays:** Delays occur in acquiring equipment recommended by the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) Program.

> **Action 12.1** –Improve collaboration among key stakeholders (HR, Procurement, Occupational Health and Safety, AAACT, IT) for faster interventions and acquisitions.

> **Action 12.2** – Customize and fast track the purchases of AAACT Program-recommended equipment.

> **Action 12.3** – Increase employee awareness of the AAACT Program.

13. **Accessibility of the procurement portal:** Employees using the portal to procure goods or services may encounter accessibility issues.

> **Action 13.1** – Collaborate with the Digital Accessibility team to bring the portal, internal documents and templates up to accessibility standards.

Design and delivery of programs and services

The design and delivery of programs and services priority area focuses on integrating accessibility considerations into all new and existing learning products, services and events, to remove and prevent barriers. This will be achieved by launching new products and by embedding accessibility and disability inclusion learning throughout the School curriculum.

The School engages learners with disabilities in the co-design, testing and piloting of its learning products and platforms. The School will work with experts, engage with the interdepartmental Accessibility Learning Advisory Committee and other partners, seek feedback from sources with expertise and lived experience, and evaluate its data and strategies. The School will also develop an effective process for responding to complaints in a timely and respectful fashion and provide the right training and tools for the people developing courses.

Through assessments, research, and consultations, the School identified two barriers to the design and delivery of programs and services with action items to address these barriers over the next three years:

14. **Diversity in learning content:** People with disabilities with various identities do not see themselves represented in all learning content.

Action 14.1 – Increase representation of people with disabilities in School and third-party learning content.

- Co-create content with the interdepartmental Accessibility Learning Advisory Committee or other relevant learning advisory committees.
- Update or replace learning content to increase representation of persons with disabilities (for example, include case studies and specific scenarios to increase learner understanding).

Action 14.2 – Continue learning about issues that persons with disabilities encounter through consultations and research.

- Consult with learners with disabilities to identify further areas for priority action and to promote open conversation.
- Review research and best practices in the federal government, other levels of government, the private sector and non-profit organizations.

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15. **Accessibility concerns with School learning:** GC learners with disabilities report accessibility concerns with School learning products.

Action 15.1 – Review and update all School learning content to meet or exceed accessibility standards.

- Consult with the Digital Accessibility in Learning team to identify learning barriers and areas for priority action.
- Test all products using built-in accessibility checkers.
- Include accessibility monitoring and improvement in the product review cycle.
- Include a variety of different modern learning approaches such as gamification and neurolearning in School learning products.
- Create facilitator manuals for facilitated learning products (for virtual and in-person learning) that include suggestions on how to conduct activities in an inclusive way.

Action 15.2 – Make sure accessibility tools are available to employees, learning designers, and programmers.

- Offer employees training to support the use of testing tools in their daily tasks.

Action 15.3 – Respond to accessibility-related complaints within 15 working days.

- Upon request, meet with learners to understand and record their needs and requirements.
- Upon request, provide course content in an accessible or alternative format.

Transportation

The School's mandate does not include the provision of transportation for employees, learners or clients.

Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring, measuring, and identifying new accessibility barriers are very important tasks in the process of reporting on progress.

The School's Employee Experience team, along with subject matter experts, persons with disabilities, employees, and allies, will be coordinating the implementation and measurement of the actions identified under each of the seven priority areas. This co-creation and collaboration will continue to foster an organizational culture that puts accessibility in the workplace at the forefront.

The Act establishes a schedule of reporting on the seven areas following a three-calendar-year cycle:

1. Cycle 1
   - Accessibility Plan 2023 to 2025 due December 31, 2022
   - Progress report due December 31, 2023
   - Progress report due December 31, 2024
2. Cycle 2
   - Accessibility Plan 2026 to 2029 due December 31, 2025
   - Progress report due December 31, 2026
   - Progress report due December 31, 2027
3. Subsequent accessibility plans to follow every 3 years
4. School to meet all legislative and policy requirements and aim for a fully accessible organization by 2040

Responsible areas will update the Accessibility Implementation Framework provided by the Employee Experience team. Human Resources management will report to senior management annually and central agencies when required on progress made on the Accessibility Plan.

In addition, an ongoing review of standard measurement tools will include:

- monitoring the Public Service Employee Survey
- monitoring the number of requests related to workplace accommodation
- monitoring the number of employee requests received through the Accessibility mailbox
- tracking the number of events related to accessibility and disability management, number of participants, feedback received, etc.

Appendix – School achievements from 2019 to 2022

- Developed the School Accessibility Strategy on July 22, 2020. The strategy set a common approach to accessibility across the organization, provided a timeline for implementation of major milestones and informed all senior officials of requirements, regulations and the upcoming publication of accessibility plans.

- Offered Delivering Client Service with Excellence (FON501) (online self-paced) and Delivering Inclusive Client Service (FON502) (facilitated virtual) learning products to increase awareness and promote deeper thinking and a more inclusive mindset.

- Launched Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce (COR120) (online self-paced) learning product for employees and managers to understand and recognize the impacts of potential biases and barriers in the context of staffing.

- Integrated inclusive leadership modules into the curriculum of the Executive Leadership Development Programs.

- Launched the Leadership Reflection Series with a specific focus on equity, diversity and inclusion.

- Integrated accessibility considerations into Authority Delegation Training Program courses, including procurement and human resources, to equip managers to carry out their responsibilities with accessibility and inclusiveness in mind.

- Launched a trio of foundational videos on disability inclusion on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, December 3, 2020, to increase awareness of the daily barriers faced by people with disabilities and of what public servants can do to reduce, remove and report barriers so as to foster an inclusive federal public service.

- Adopted an emphasis on the Inclusive by Design approach, designing with the core principle "nothing without us," with collaboration from interdepartmental working groups, learning advisory committees, subject matter experts, people with disabilities and the Office of Public Service Accessibility.

- Launched a job aid on Planning Accessible Virtual Events to provide information about how to make a virtual event accessible on December 3, 2020, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

- Launched a microlearning video, Making Documents Accessible, in collaboration with Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT).

- Launched two online courses: Addressing Disability Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility (INC115) and Disability Management and Workplace Wellness (INC120).

- Launched two case studies to increase awareness of harassment and discrimination against people with disabilities, with a focus on workplace accommodation and career advancement, in collaboration with the Office of Public Service Accessibility.

- Delivered many events on accessibility, including the Spotlight on ACCESSibility Series, National AccessAbility Week 2022, Advancing Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities Series, Disaggregated Data: A Tool for Dismantling Systemic Barriers in the Federal Public Service, and an annual Government of Canada Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Conference (INC1-E25).

- Offered Inclusive by Design: Applying the GC Digital Standards and Gender-based Analysis Plus (DDN223) to help learners recognize biases and apply inclusive solutions using practical approaches.

- Launched the online course Introduction to Human-Centred Design (DDN207), which includes principles on inclusive design and unconscious bias.

- Enhanced accessibility of the School's vExpo virtual event platform by embedding accessible keyboard navigation into the 3D platform, updating the accessible mobile user interface, and engaging with users with disabilities to identify barriers.

- Embedded a new accessibility menu in the Busrides microlearning platform to help learners better navigate content.

- Hosted events with the National Managers' Community and the Office of Public Service Accessibility on various accessibility and inclusion topics, such as How to hire EC and CS with disabilities: HRC-PSC inventories.

- Allocated a budget and developed a Memorandum of Understanding with Shared Services Canada for Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) Program equipment.

- Evaluated virtual work stations and encouraged employees to purchase approved ergonomic equipment for telework through a new reimbursement program, including ergonomic chairs.

Glossary

accessibility

The degree to which a product, service, program or environment is available to be accessed or used by all.

accommodation

Any change in the working environment that allows a person with functional limitations in their abilities to do their job. Changes can include:

- adjustments to the physical workspace
- adaptations to the equipment or tools
- flexible work hours or job-sharing
- relocation of the workspace within the greater workplace
- the ability to work from home
- reallocation or exchange of some non-essential tasks for others
- time off for medical appointments

Accommodations can be temporary, periodic or long-term, depending on the employee's situation or changes in the workplace.

barrier

Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation. Barriers can be physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal.

disability

Any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment, or a functional limitation, whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society.

In 2017, Statistics Canada identified the following types of disabilities:

- **Seeing** disabilities affect vision, including total blindness, partial sight and visual distortion
- **Hearing** disabilities affect the ability to hear, including being hard of hearing, deafness and acoustic distortion
- **Mobility** issues affect the ability to move your body or perform motor tasks, and may involve using a wheelchair, a cane, or other mobility aids
- **Flexibility** disabilities affect physical capacity, mobility, or stamina
- **Dexterity** impairments limit the physical function of one or more limbs
- **Pain-related conditions** affect the ability to function on a regular or episodic basis, such as migraines, Crohn's disease, colitis, or other disabilities or health conditions
- **Learning** disabilities affect your ability to learn and to adapt behaviour to different situations
- **Developmental disabilities** are a group of conditions that result from a physical, learning, language, or behaviour impairment
- **Mental health**-related issues affect psychology or behaviour, such as anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, or phobias
- **Memory disorders** occur when damage to certain parts of the brain prevents or reduces the ability to store, retain, or remember memories

discrimination

Different or unfair treatment because of a personal characteristic or distinction that, whether intentional or not, has an effect that imposes disadvantages not imposed on others or that withholds or limits access that is given to others.

There are 13 prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act:

- race
- national or ethnic origin
- colour
- religion
- age
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender identity or expression
- marital status
- family status
- genetic characteristics (including a requirement to undergo a genetic test or disclose the results of a genetic test)
- disability
- conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered

diversity

The inclusion of different types of people. A diverse workforce in the public service is made up of individuals who have an array of identities, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, perspectives and experiences that are representative of Canada's current and evolving population.

inclusion

The act of including someone or something as part of a group. An inclusive workplace is fair, equitable, supportive, welcoming and respectful.

Inclusion recognizes, values and leverages differences in identities, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, experiences and perspectives that support and reinforce Canada's evolving human rights framework.

onboarding

The process of integrating an employee in a department and its culture and getting the employee the tools and information they need to become a productive member of the team.

persons with disabilities

Persons who have a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning impairment and who:

- consider themselves to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment, or
- believe that an employer or potential employer is likely to consider them to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment

Persons with disabilities include persons whose functional limitations owing to their impairment have been accommodated in their current job or workplace.

plain language

A writing technique of organizing information in ways that make sense to the reader. It uses straightforward, concrete, familiar words. Plain language helps the writer adapt what they have to say to the reading abilities of the people who are most likely to read the document.

workforce availability

The estimated availability of people in designated groups as a percentage of the workforce population. For the core public administration, workforce availability is based on the population of Canadian citizens who are active in the workforce and who work in occupations that correspond to the occupations in the core public administration.