

	Approved by: <b>Academic Coordinating Committee</b>
	Authorizer: <b>VP Student Affairs</b>
	Effective Date: <b>January 1, 2010</b>
Policy Title: <b>Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities-Customer Service Policy</b>	

**Policy Statement:**

Conestoga College is committed to providing an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment and supportive of academic achievement and the dignity, self-esteem and fair treatment of everyone taking part in its activities. The college seeks to create a climate of mutual respect that reinforces opportunity and allows for each person to contribute fully to the development and wellbeing of the community.

“The college recognizes its responsibility to ensure that every person in its community is protected from unlawful discrimination and harassment in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code”. (Conestoga College, *Protection of Human Rights Policy and Procedure*, January 2007).

To this end, the College affirms the rights of all persons, including those with disabilities, to have equal access in employment, education, accommodation or business dealings with the College.

In keeping with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, the College further affirms its commitment to promoting the following principles in all of its policies and interactions with persons with disabilities:

- Dignity: treating those with disabilities as valued and deserving of effective and full service as any other person
- Independence: providing freedom from control or influence of others; freedom for those with disabilities to make their own choices
- Integration: allowing those with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar manner as others
- Equal opportunity: giving those with disabilities the same chances, options, benefits and results as others have.

**Scope:**

This policy and procedure applies to all employees and students, Board of Governors members, members of committees, societies or associations established or recognized by the college, residence staff, contractors, providers of service or research, visitors or guests, and applicants for admission or employment.

## **Definitions:**

The definition of disability used in this policy is the same as that used by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005):

### **Definition of Disability:**

- 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 co-ordination, 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* (Part 1, Section 2).

### **Responsibilities:**

Members of the College community who interact with the public will:

- complete the AODA training provided in various formats by Conestoga College
- incorporate these customer service standards into the delivering of goods and services to the students, clients, staff and visitors with disabilities.

The Human Resource Department /Manager of Professional Development will:

- resource and/or develop AODA training content
- develop and implement AODA training plan
- develop and monitor tracking system to ensure organizational compliance

Administrators:

- will complete AODA training
- work with Human Resources to ensure employees, volunteers and contractors in their departments have completed AODA training as plan
- ensure compliance with standards within their departments

### **Properly Discharged Supervision/Evaluation:**

The College recognizes its obligation to ensure that this policy and the procedures are enforced. Managers and others in authority will be made aware of their responsibilities under this Policy.

**Feedback Process:**

Conestoga College is committed to providing fair and equal access to facilities, services and educational programs for everyone, including persons with disabilities. A feedback questionnaire is available for individuals to provide feedback to the College related to their ability in accessing our services. The questionnaire for feedback can be accessed online at <http://www.conestogac.on.ca/about/contact/index.jsp>

**Application of this Policy:**

The College affirms its commitment to promoting the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity in all of its policies and in all of its interactions with persons with disabilities.

**Education:**

The primary purpose of this policy is to meet the expectations of Ontario Regulation 429/07.

To this end the college is committed to ensure that each member of the college community is made aware of the Policy through ongoing information, education, and training.

**PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES****Compliance:**

Conestoga College is required to comply with Ontario Regulation 429/07 made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. This policy reflects that all members of Conestoga College's community are required to comply with this policy. To this end the college provides the procedures described below.

**Communication:**

In order for the College to communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability,

- all employees are trained in how to interact with people with various types of disabilities;
- alternative methods of communication are provided as quickly as possible when requested;
- telephone services are provided clearly and in plain language;
- printed material will be produced in plain language keeping in mind accessibility for screen readers.

**Assistive Devices:**

The College is committed to providing for persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use, or benefit from our goods and services. We ensure that the College community is familiar with various assistive devices.

**Use of Support Persons and Service Animals:**

Conestoga College is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who use a support person in order to access the goods and services provided by the College. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter the premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises. Nor will the support person be charged fees for attendance at College events while supporting the individual with disabilities.

The College is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal in every area of our facility except as such animals are prohibited by law.

**Notice of Temporary Disruption:**

Each College service area provides customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services that may be used by people with disabilities. These may include (but are not limited to) elevator or lift outage, areas designated for repairs or servicing pathways, and devices.

The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

**Training:**

Conestoga College provides training to all employees about providing excellent customer service for persons with disabilities. Training is developed and delivered in various formats to all staff including administrators, support staff and faculty.

The training is provided as a condition of employment to new staff and on an on-going basis for staff in order to stay current.

AODA Customer Service Standard Training will include instruction on the key tenets of the Customer Service Standard and awareness of relevant College policies, practices and procedures. Overall, the training will include:

- 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 guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person
- How to use equipment or devices available on campus that may help with the provision of good or services to a person with a disability
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods and services

All staff review the materials on Customer Service for persons with disabilities at Conestoga College as a condition of employment. On-line workshops and in-class orientation are tracked by Professional Development. AODA Customer Service Training will occur several times throughout the year. The training is delivered in person each year at Employee Orientation for Support Staff (October and April) and Faculty

(August and January). In addition to in-person training, new employees are able to complete an on-line AODA Customer Service module.

**Policy Review:**

This Policy will be reviewed at least every three years, thus ensuring that it addresses the concerns of the campus community, is updated, and adheres to any legislative changes. In the case of a significant revision of the Ontario Human Rights Code or Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, or as a result of finding that a procedure contained in the Policy is either contrary to legal practices or inoperable, the Policy may be reviewed and revised when appropriate.

**References:**

- *Ontario Human Rights Code*
- Conestoga College, *Protection of Human Rights Policy and Procedure*, January 2007
- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)*
- *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*. Ontario Regulation 429/07 made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

**Revision Log:**

Revision Date	Summary of Changes