



MCMASTER STUDENTS UNION

Accessible Customer Service Plan

Providing Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

The McMaster Students Union (MSU) is committed to accessibility as expressed in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (hereinafter referred to as the AODA).

The MSU is committed to fostering, creating, and maintaining a barrier-free environment in a way that respects the dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity for all individuals, while promoting a respectful attitude and awareness of the needs and abilities of persons with disabilities.

The commitments in this policy are intended to ensure that accessibility remains a priority in the MSU's decision-making processes and will serve to assist in ensuring that decisions are improving accessibility and not inadvertently creating barriers.

ASSISTIVE DEVICES

The MSU will ensure that our staff members are trained and familiar with the various assistive devices we have on site or that we provide that may be used by persons with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

The MSU is committed to enhancing the accessibility of our website, telecommunications, and other infrastructure. As part of this commitment, the MSU will ensure that persons with disabilities are permitted to use their own assistive devices to access goods and services of the MSU, subject to reasonable limitations.

Upon request, the MSU will be prepared to assist, or arrange for assistance, while individuals are using goods or services of the MSU, subject to reasonable limitations.

SERVICE ANIMALS & SUPPORT PERSONS

The MSU welcomes persons with disabilities and their service animals and support persons on the parts of our premises that are open to the public, except where excluded by law.

Service Animal: any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to assist a person with a disability. If they meet this definition, animals are considered service animals. A service animal is not a pet. If it is not readily apparent that an animal is not a service animal, confirmation from a regulated health professional may be requested.

Service animals perform some functions and tasks that the person with a disability cannot perform for themselves. For example, guide dogs used by some individuals who are blind, alerting persons with hearing impairments to sounds, pulling wheelchairs or carrying and picking things up for persons with mobility impairments, assisting persons with mobility impairments with balance.

Support Person: Any person who assists a person with a disability.

A service animal or support person must be permitted to accompany the individual to all areas of the MSU's operations where members of the public (as applicable) are normally allowed to go. An individual with a service animal may not be segregated from other individuals.

If goods, services, or facilities are defined as off-limits to service animals or support persons, the MSU will make every effort to provide alternate ways for persons with disabilities to access such goods, services, and facilities.

To find out a specific area is off-limits to service animals or support persons, contact the designated department manager.

The MSU will provide notice in advance about whether an admission fee will be charged for support persons, if applicable. Before making this decision, the MSU will: consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs; consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence; determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premise. In such a situation, the admission fee for the support person, if applicable, will be waived.

In order to respect employees or students whose health may be impacted by the presence of service animals, these individuals may request reasonable accommodation suitable to their health needs.

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION IN SERVICE

The MSU will provide notice to members of the public when there is a temporary disruption of services or facilities (planned or unplanned).

Service disruptions shall include information related to facilities or goods/services. Disruptions to all services, such as during a power outage do not require this special notice. For large-scale business disruptions that might be caused by a labour dispute by workers of McMaster University, please reference McMaster University's Business Continuity Plan.

All service disruption notices shall include:

- Name of the service/event impacted;
- Expected duration of disruption;
- Any alternate means of accessing the facility or service;
- Who to contact for assistance; and
- Any other relevant information for accessing the facility or service.

For information related to closure due to inclement weather, please reference McMaster University's Storm Policy. MSU Child Care Centre shall follow the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Cancellation of School and Board Administrative Operations policy for closure due to inclement weather.

TRAINING

The MSU will provide training to all staff, including paid employees, elected executives, and volunteers, as soon as possible, following the commencement of their duties. Training will also be provided on an on-going basis, in connection with any changes to the policy and in support of procedures and practices that govern the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.

Training will include:

- An overview of the AODA and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- The MSU service plan policy related to the customer service standard;
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device, require the assistance of a service animal, or support person;
- How to use equipment or devices that are on the MSU's premises that may assist with the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities; and
- What to do if persons with disabilities have difficulty accessing the MSU's goods and services.

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to this policy.

FEEDBACK & COMPLAINTS

Where persons with disabilities have concerns or feedback regarding the services provided by the MSU, they may bring such feedback forward to the following areas:

McMaster Students Union
c/o John McGowan, General Manager
McMaster University, 1280 Main Street West
MUSC Room 201
Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4S4
905-525-9140 x22003
gm@msu.mcmaster.ca

Ombuds Office
McMaster University, 1280 Main Street West
MUSC Room 210
Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4S4
905-525-9140 x24151
ombuds@mcmaster.ca

Any feedback provided by an individual must be addressed in a timely manner. However, some complaints, suggestions, or recommendations may require more effort to address and must be reviewed for action. Feedback will be reviewed and responded to within 10 business days or as soon as reasonably possible. All responses shall be provided to the originator in a format that meets their needs.