



# Accessibility Review BCIT Faculty & Staff Association

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Conducted by:

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# Land Acknowledgement

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SPARC BC works with communities in building a just and healthy society for all. SPARC BC gratefully acknowledges that our office is located on traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Coast Salish People including the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) and sə́lilwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. They have been custodians of this land for thousands of years and we would like to pay our respect to their Elders and knowledge keepers both past and present. We are grateful for the opportunity to meet and work on this shared territory.

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# 1.0 Background and Introduction

## 1.1 Setting the Context

The BCIT Faculty & Staff Association (FSA) is a certified trade union and member-driven organization that represents full-time and part-time faculty and staff. The FSA office is located within the BCIT Burnaby campus at SE16-116, 3700 Willingdon Ave, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada. In January 2022, the FSA Equity Caucus presented an audit request to the FSA Board of Directors seeking funding to advance the equity-related priorities of the FSA. This included the engagement of SPARC BC to assist in undertaking an Accessibility Review of the FSA campus office(s) and meeting spaces as well as the examination of other equity-related priorities identified by the FSA as being important to their membership.

In creating the Terms of Reference for this initiative, the FSA Equity Caucus defined the scope of work widely, noting that their framing of accessibility is intentionally broad and includes improving the lived experience of members with disabilities as well as members who may be experiencing other types of barriers to participation or advancement in the workplace because of structural and systemic factors (conscious and unconscious).

Through this initiative, the FSA also expressed an interest in looking at potential actions or initiatives to meet the needs of the different equity-deserving populations. In undertaking this review the FSA also expressed an interest in looking at the types of strategies and initiatives that have been adopted by other organizations in their efforts to create welcoming and inclusive workplaces and spaces.

## 1.2 Priority Populations Identified

The following includes the equity-deserving groups identified by the FSA to be considered in this review:

- Women
- Indigenous Peoples
- Visible minorities and racialized populations
- Individuals who are gender-diverse or gender non-conforming
- Neurodivergent individuals
- Persons with disabilities
- Socio-economically disadvantaged individuals

## 1.3 The Structure of this Report

This report includes five sections. This initial section sets the context for this research and describes the scope of the engagement between SPARC BC and the FSA including a description of the specific research and study objectives.

**Section 2** includes information on leading practices related to physical accessibility including information on the principles of universal design and the role that universal design plays in creating spaces that support the independence and active participation of all individuals with physical and mobility-related disabilities as well as other types of health and activity limitations.

**Section 3** provides information on the different equity-deserving groups identified by the FSA and highlights the specific actions and measures that have been identified by the FSA to promote and support the FSA's equity-related priorities. This section also includes highlights of some of the key findings and recommendations arising from the *Diversity Circles* held by the FSA earlier this year.

**Section 4** includes information from the research literature on emerging thinking and practices around structural and systemic barriers (conscious and unconscious) experienced by the different equity-deserving groups identified by the FSA to be included in this review. This section also highlights key findings from a review of literature on the different types of barriers or challenges that these groups may experience as well as information on the different types of actions that have been identified by others as helping to promote and support a greater sense of belonging and inclusion among the different groups identified.

**Section 5** includes information on the different measures that can help to provide a deeper understanding of the extent to which the general social and demographic profile of the FSA workforce is representative of the broader community level data. This includes the collection and reporting of baseline level information and data from the 2021 Census and other sources related to the different priority groups identified by the FSA.

**Appendix A** provides highlights of the results of the accessibility audit of the FSA offices and meeting spaces.

# 2.0 Planning for Accessibility

## 2.1 Universal Design Principles

Universal design plays a central role in ensuring that spaces are accessible. Under the principles of universal design, the goal is to ensure that workplaces and spaces are designed in a way that allows for them to be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by as many people as possible regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability. Underpinning the concept of universal design is a desire to ensure that all spaces are fully accessible and available to anyone who wants to use them. Universal design also seeks to ensure that spaces are designed in a way that allows them to be used as independently, naturally, and comfortably as possible<sup>1</sup>.

**The following key principles help to shape and define the concept of universal design:**

**Equitable use:** The design of the space recognizes that different individuals have different needs. Equitable use means spaces are designed to be used by people with diverse abilities and that spaces should be designed so that anyone wishing to use a space may access it.

**Flexibility in use:** The design of a space accommodates the widest range of individual preferences, abilities, and needs with a central focus being on ensuring that the space can be used by anyone regardless of their circumstances.

**Simple and intuitive use:** The design of the space is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills or concentration level.

**Perceptible information:** The design of the space communicates necessary information effectively to the user and is easy to understand regardless of the user's cognitive or sensory abilities.

**Tolerance for error (safety):** The design minimizes the risk of any potential hazards and is designed to avoid any unintended consequences arising from the use of the space.

**Low physical effort:** The space is designed in a way that can be used efficiently and comfortably with minimal effort.

**Appropriate approach and use:** The design of the space is appropriate for all users regardless of their body size, posture, or mobility.

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<sup>1</sup> National Disability Authority. Centre for Excellence in Universal Design: The 7 Principles. Found at <https://universaldesign.ie/what-is-universal-design/the-7-principles>

## 2.2 Accessibility Benefits Everyone!

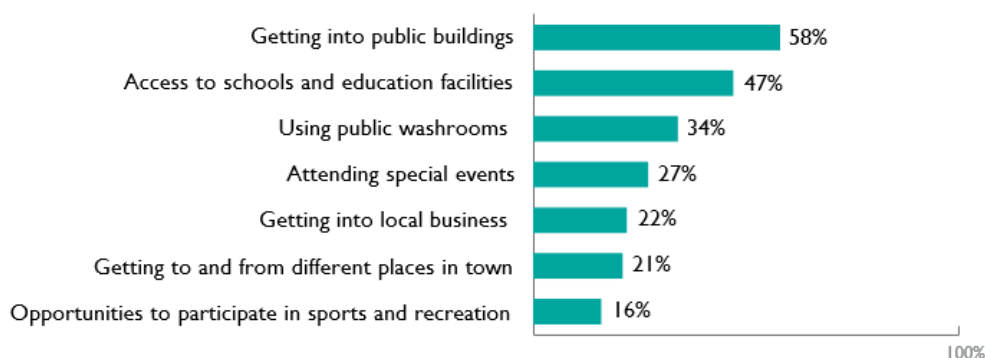
The literature on universal design observes that designing for accessibility can result in the design of spaces that meet diverse needs. For example, a level entrance not only helps to facilitate access to the space for someone using a wheelchair, but it also makes it easier for a parent pushing a stroller to navigate the same space. The same is true for a senior using a walker or for someone using a mobility aid. A level entrance can also make it easier for an individual with low vision or visual difficulties to use the space by removing the potential for a tripping hazard. Likewise, the inclusion of 'relaxed space' for neurodivergent individuals or others with sensory disabilities not only meets an important need for this specific group, but it also creates the opportunity for the spaces to be more welcoming and inclusive for other users as well by introducing the possibility of different types of uses of a space both 'active' and 'passive'.

## 2.3 Is it the Individual Who is Disabled or the Environment That is Disabling?

In looking at the physical design of spaces, the literature shows that in many cases it is the design of the space itself that is disabling to the individual and that if spaces were planned and designed with accessibility in mind and according to the principles of universal design, the space could be used more freely, independently, and comfortably by everyone.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, while Canadians generally support greater levels of accessibility, research undertaken by the Angus Reid Institute (2015) on behalf of the *Rick Hansen Foundation* found that:

- Only 1 in 3 individuals (34%) consider **public washrooms** to be accessible.
- Only 1 in 4 individuals (27%) consider **special events** to be accessible.
- Only 1 in 5 individuals (22%) consider **local businesses** to be accessible.
- Only 1 in 5 individuals (21%) consider **getting around their community** to be accessible.
- Only 1 in 6 individuals (16%) consider participation in **sports and recreation** to be accessible.

**Figure 1.1:** Perceptions Regarding the Accessibility of Various Community Facilities and Spaces



Source: Angus Reid Institute and Rick Hansen Foundation Survey on Accessibility in Canada (December 2015)

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. Health Topics: Disability. <https://www.who.int/health-topics/disability>



## 2.4 Thinking About Spaces As Places

In addition to looking at the overall accessibility of spaces, the literature on place-making includes considerations about the different types of activities or uses of a space as well as the different ways that spaces can be designed to build a deeper sense of connection and belonging among those who use the space with a focus on the following characteristics: *sociability, use and activities, access and linkages, and comfort and image*<sup>3</sup>:

### 2.4.1. Sociability

When looking at the questions around **sociability**, the following are specific considerations:

- Is the space being used by different groups of people?
- Are there opportunities for people to engage with one another?
- Can people engage in different ways?
- Does the space allow for a mix of ages and groups to participate in ways that reflect the community at large?

### 2.4.2. Uses and Activities

When looking at the question around **use and activities**, the following are some specific considerations:

- Are there opportunities for people to use the space in different ways (walk, sit, stand, and stay)?
- Is the space being used by people of different ages and abilities?
- How many different types of activities are taking place within a given space at one time?
- Is there information about the different types of activities and opportunities available?
- Do the different uses support greater intercultural or intergenerational connection and learning?
- Does the space offer opportunities for active and passive use?

### 2.4.3. Access and Linkages

When looking at the question around **access and linkage**, the following are some specific considerations:

- Is the space easy to access by different modes of transportation?
- Is the space well-integrated into the community and accessible to all?
- Are there any physical barriers that might limit the participation of people with disabilities?
- Are there opportunities for individuals to move easily through an area?
- Is the space designed for individuals to stay and engage if they choose?

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<sup>3</sup> Project for Public Spaces. *What Makes a Great Place*. Retrieved from <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

#### 2.4.4 Comfort and image

When looking at the question around **comfort and image**, the following are some specific considerations:

- Does the space feel welcoming and safe?
- Does the space offer clear sight lines and the ability to use the space comfortably and safely?
- Does the space feel natural and comfortable for individuals using the space?

## 2.5 Everyone's Experience of Disability Is Different

The literature also shows that disabilities are dynamic and can change over time depending on their nature and severity. Included in this are differences in the experiences of individuals who have had their disability from birth versus individuals who may have acquired a disability or who may have a chronic health condition that can result in specific challenges or limitations. The literature also suggests that one's experience of disability can be quite different depending on their overall health, socio-economic status<sup>4</sup> and their support networks.

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<sup>4</sup> Morris, S. et al. 2018. The Dynamics of Disability: Progressive, Recurrent or Fluctuating Limitations. Statistics Canada.; Blichfeldt, B.S. and J. Nicolaisen. 2011. "Disabled travel: not easy, but doable." *Current Issues in Tourism* 14 (1): 80.



# 3.0 Advancing the FSA's Equity Focus

## 3.0 Advancing the FSA's Equity Focus

Diversity and inclusion refer to organizational strategies, policies and programs that encourage representation and participation from workers from across diverse backgrounds and experiences. Included in this section is a discussion of the different types of actions and initiatives that the FSA identified in their efforts to ensure that BCIT realizes the benefits of a talented, diverse, and engaged workforce.

In engaging in this review, the FSA is committed to the development of a balanced, healthy, and harmonious work environment that prioritizes the economic and social inclusion of its members and that is based on the values of recognition, respect, representation, accountability, and responsibility with the FSA Equity Caucus being responsible for:

- Promoting, advancing, and advising on the implementation of FSA Policy 2.4.5 Equity
- Representing the interests of equity-seeking and equity-deserving groups within the FSA membership
- Providing input to the FSA on how the FSA can incorporate the needs of equity-seeking members into day-to-day workforce policies and practices
- Providing guidance on ways to encourage and enhance participation across equity-seeking members
- Facilitating participation and collaboration across members.

## 3.1 Current FSA Equity-Related Initiatives

The Equity Caucus is also responsible for identifying potential barriers to participation for the various equity-deserving groups identified including working to build increased acceptance and understanding through the design and delivery of specific education, and training initiatives with the following list highlighting some of the specific equity-related strategies and initiatives that have been developed and implemented by the FSA to date:

### 3.2 Equity Policy

### 3.3 Equity-Related Protocols

### 3.4 Equity Caucus

### 3.5 Diversity Circles

### 3.6 Strategic Planning

### 3.7 Collective Bargaining

### 3.8 COPTS

### 3.9 Appointment and Supporting Members

### 3.10 On-going Education and Training

### 3.11 Universal Design and Accessibility Considerations

# 4.0 Planning for Equity

## 4.0 Planning for Equity

Planning for equity requires an explicit commitment to identifying and removing barriers that have the potential to limit access to opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences. This section provides an overview of emerging thinking and practice around the specific workforce related experiences and needs of the different priority populations and equity-deserving groups.

### 4.1 Women

Gender disparities can take many different forms including gender bias which can result in unfair assumptions or stereotypes (conscious or unconscious) that can limit access to opportunities for women in the workforce. The literature identified different factors that play a role in shaping the experiences of women including differences in the type of work that is assigned, the expectations placed on women as well as the compensation that women receive.

In setting the context for this work, the FSA also expressed an interest in exploring the gendered nature of workforce inequality and the specific challenges that women experience as they juggle responsibilities for childcare and eldercare and their work-related responsibilities. The literature also suggests that opportunities for advancement may be more limited especially for women who are mid-career<sup>5</sup>, with their family responsibilities having the potential to be viewed as a lack of interest or lack of availability to be consideration for promotion or advancement opportunities.

The literature also suggests that there continue to be fewer women in senior leadership positions which means that there are fewer women who can provide mentorship or networking opportunities for other women who are interested in more senior roles<sup>6</sup>. As well, the literature suggests that women continue to experience on on-going 'wage equity gap' when compared to their male counterparts in the workforce.

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5 Ammerman Colleen and Boris Groysberg. 2022. "3 Workplace Biases that Derail Mid-Career Women" Published in the Harvard Business Review. September 16, 2022.

6 Reichheld, Ashley, Emily Werner, and Wenny Katzenstein. 2023. "Research: Why Women Trust Their Employers Less Than Men Do". Published in the Harvard Business Review. April 20, 2023.

## 4.2 Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous Peoples in Canada include First Nations, as well as Inuit or Métis people. Across British Columbia, there are 203 Distinct First Nations communities as well as 39 chartered Metis Nations. The distinct and unique characteristics of the different groups that make up Indigenous culture in Canada should be recognized and celebrated. This includes recognition of the distinct rights, histories, and territories of these different nations.

In looking at the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, there is the need to build a deeper understanding of the impact and legacy of the history of colonialism and the residential school system in Canada including the lasting and enduring affect that these institutions have had on the experiences and circumstances on Indigenous families and individuals over their life course. This has included a history of intergenerational trauma, systemic racism, and discrimination.

In working to build new pathways forward, there is the need to become familiar with the findings of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, and the report *Reclaiming Power and Place*, the final report of the National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and to acknowledge the harms that Indigenous Peoples in Canada experienced and continue to experience.

There is also the necessity to recognize Treaty Agreements as well as actively support the restoration of the language and cultures of all Indigenous Peoples including their different ways of being and knowing. This includes the recognition of the unique experiences of the Metis and Inuit people in Canada as well as urban Indigenous peoples who include status and non-status First Nations people living in urban areas or rural, remote, or isolated areas that are not part of a First Nations reserve. It can also include Indigenous people living on a reserve that is away from their home community.

In working with Indigenous peoples and communities, it is also necessary to recognize that there is the need to engage in ways that incorporate the principles of *cultural safety*,<sup>7</sup> *cultural humility*,<sup>8</sup> and *data sovereignty*<sup>9</sup> with systemic racism being defined as:

*...societal systems, structures, and institutions in the form of “requirements, conditions, practices, policies, or processes that maintain and reproduce avoidable and unfair inequalities across ethnic and racial groups that results in racialized inequality with systemic racism arising from the failure of those in power (decision-makers and policy makers) to act in a manner which addresses existing inequities and which results in an on-going and systematic exclusion of Indigenous Peoples from participation in political and economic activities as well as other social systems such as education and health”<sup>10</sup>.*

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- 7 **Cultural safety** includes respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in society and to create an environment that is free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe and respected when engaging with others. <https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Creating-a-Climate-For-Change-Cultural-Humility-Resource-Booklet.pdf>
  - 8 **Cultural humility** is a process of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience.
  - 9 **Data sovereignty** especially as it relates to Indigenous communities, recognizes that Indigenous peoples have been disproportionately harmed by the misuse and misinterpretation of data such that Indigenous communities are now advocating for greater ownership, representation and control over their data as it relates to their communities, practices and history (Ontario Non-Profit Network. 2023. Using data and decent work to advance equity within the non-profit sector”).
  - 10 The Wellesley Institute. 2015. *“First Peoples, Second Class Treatment: The role of racism in the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples in Canada”* Retrieved from <https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Summary-First-Peoples-Second-Class-Treatment-Final.pdf>

In moving forward to address these harms, there is the need to seek to advance the principles enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP)<sup>11</sup> and B.C.'s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)<sup>12</sup>.

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11 United Nations. 2018. "**United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**" Retrieved from [https://social.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/migrated/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://social.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/migrated/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf) (UNDRIP)

12 Government of British Columbia. 2022. "**Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act**" Retrieved from <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/indigenous-people/new-relationship/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples> (DRIPPA)

### 4.3 Individuals from Visible Minority Groups or Racialized Populations

When newcomers come to Canada, they leave behind friends and family as they start their new life. This means starting over in terms of building connections, finding employment, and re-establishing themselves. The transition can be made more challenging as individuals face barriers related to language, transportation, and access to opportunities. A survey of newcomers completed by SPARC BC in 2020 found that newcomers to the Lower Mainland experienced the following challenges:

- Lack of professional connections (46%)
- Need to upgrade their English language skills (40%)
- Foreign work experience or education not recognized (40% work experience, 31% education)
- Need to upgrade skills (37%)
- Need to gain more work experience (34%)
- Need to obtain a driver's license (31%)
- Need assistance in finding work (23%)
- Not enough jobs available (20%)
- Inability to find suitable childcare arrangements (17%)
- Discrimination or racism (14%)

These types of challenges can mean a larger proportion of immigrants, especially recent immigrants, reporting difficulties in accessing opportunities meaningful and important to them. This is also true for individuals from visible minority groups or racialized populations.

Information published by Statistics Canada also reported that a larger proportion of individuals from visible minority groups and racialized populations were living in poverty in 2021 with the findings from the Canadian Income Survey reporting that 1 in 10 individuals from racialized populations were living below the poverty line in Canada in 2021<sup>13</sup>.

### 4.4 Individuals Who Are Gender Diverse or Gender Non-Conforming

Society's understanding of sex and gender has evolved. Today, there is greater awareness of the differences between the sex that someone is assigned at birth, and one's lived experience of gender. In looking at current definitions, cisgender refers to a person whose gender identity and gender expression correspond to the cultural expectations of the sex they were assigned at birth while transgender describes people whose gender identity or expression, is different from cultural expectations of the sex they were assigned at birth.

Individuals who are gender non-conforming, in turn, include individuals whose behaviour does not confirm to traditional expectations of gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category. Many but not all gender non-conforming individuals identify as transgender and include those who do not identify with traditional binary gender categories (man and woman). Non-binary individuals also include individuals who see themselves as falling completely outside of the traditional gender categories<sup>14</sup>.

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13 Statistics Canada. 2023. Results from the **Canadian Income Survey, 2021** Reported in the Daily, Tuesday, May 2, 2023. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/230502/dq230502a-eng.pdf?st=3MuE3poT>

14 Yousif, Nadjia, Annika Zawadzki, and Kushal Khandhar. 2023. Companies Are Failing Trans Employees. Published in the Harvard Business Review. March 31, 2023.



While within mainstream society there appears to be growing awareness and acceptance of the different experiences of gender identity and gender expression, within the workforce a significant number of individuals from gender diverse or gender non-conforming backgrounds continue to report significant barriers<sup>15</sup> Based on the findings from a survey of more than 2,000 transgender and gender non-conforming employees completed by BCG Global in 2022 on average 60% of respondents who identified as transgender or non-binary reported that over a 12 month period they experienced ten (10) or more incidents of negative behaviour towards them in their workplace<sup>16</sup>. This included incidents like gossip, exclusion by other employees, being labeled or mislabeled as well as being the subject of insensitive comments or even discrimination. Approximately 40% of respondents also reported that they had experienced aggressive attitudes or behaviour including sexual harassment and other forms of misconduct.

When looking at the specific needs of individuals who are gender diverse or gender non-conforming, the literature suggests that not all individuals want to share this part of themselves with others in their workplace with some reporting concerns that by sharing this information they will experience unwanted or unhelpful attention. Others were concerned about negative reactions from clients, customers, or co-workers along with concerns about the potential damage to their career.

The research literature also suggests that among those who reported that they have a level of comfort sharing this aspect of themselves with others, there is a greater sense of belonging and connection including a stronger sense that they can be their authentic selves. This is more likely to be accomplished when organizations build a sense of trust that leads to a workplace culture that is culturally and psychologically safe. In terms of the different experiences captured through the BCG Global Survey, the following were the challenges identified by participants:

1. Discouraged from coming out with their gender identity
2. Referred to by the wrong gender
3. Discouraged from using preferred pronouns
4. Required to wear gender specific clothing
5. Required to use a gendered washroom
6. Discriminated against while using the washroom
7. Asked invasive gender questions
8. Sexually harassed or experienced inappropriate conduct
9. Stereotyped or assumed to have certain interests
10. Denied or discouraged from career advancement
11. Actively excluded by co-workers
12. Told not to share their identity with their co-workers
13. Forced to disclose their identity to their co-workers

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15 Harvard Business Review. 2022. BCG global TGNC Study.

16 Yousif, Nadja, Annika Zawadzki, and Kushal Khandhar. 2023. Companies Are Failing Trans Employees. Published in the Harvard Business Review. March 31, 2023.

## 4.5 Neurodivergent Individuals

Neurodiversity is a term first introduced by the sociologist Judy Singer (1998) to reflect the idea that people are different in terms of how they think, how they understand information, how they interact with others and how they communicate. Based on the literature, Individuals who fit within the autism spectrum, including individuals who have been diagnosed with ADHD as well as different types of anxiety, depression, and obsessive-compulsive disorder fit under the umbrella of neurodiversity<sup>17</sup>.

In 2017 the Canadian Survey on Disability found that only 33% of adults on the autism spectrum were employed and that the unemployment and under-employment of neurodivergent individuals can be attributed to a significant lack of understanding and undervaluing of the potential strengths and contributions that neurodivergent individuals can make.

Information published by the Conference Board of Canada also reported that neurodivergent individuals continue to face barriers to employment and career progression with neurodivergent individuals facing potential challenges both in terms of the interview process as well as in terms of their communication in the workplace. Employers have also found that neurodivergent individuals bring a broad and diverse set of skills and when given the chance have a lot to offer their workplace<sup>18</sup>.

The Conference Board of Canada has also suggested that ways to make the recruitment and hiring process more inclusive of neurodivergent candidates<sup>19</sup> might include:

- Providing interview questions in advance
- Providing multiple options for participating in an interview where appropriate (in person, over the phone, virtually, over e-mail)
- Avoid abstract or behavioural questions
- Focus on a “skills match” not a personality match
- Provide job-seekers with a hands-on opportunity to demonstrate their skills

In working to promote greater diversity and inclusion, it is necessary to work to build an inclusive workplace culture -one where individuals feel a sense of belonging and connection. Belonging includes considerations around being one’s authentic self, as well as a sense of caring and support for their well-being. It is a workplace where everyone feels accepted for who they are<sup>20</sup>.

## 4.6 Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities include individuals with a permanent, temporary, or episodic disability or health-related conditions which can affect their ability to participate in everyday activities. Persons with disabilities may differ in terms of the nature of their disabilities including the frequency, duration, and severity.

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<sup>17</sup> The Conference Board of Canada in collaboration with the Future Skills Centre. ***Building Workplaces Where Neurodivergent Workers Thrive. Issue Briefing. November 10, 2022.***

<sup>18</sup> The Conference Board of Canada in collaboration with the Future Skills Centre. ***Building Workplaces Where Neurodivergent Workers Thrive. Issue Briefing. November 10, 2022.***

<sup>19</sup> The Conference Board of Canada in partnership with the Future Skills Centre. 2023. ***Breaking Down Barriers: Improving the Workplace Experience for Neurodivergent Canadians. Impact Paper. March 14, 2023.***

<sup>20</sup> Brecheisen, Jeremie. 2023. ***Research: Where Employees Think Companies DEIB Efforts are Failing.*** Published in Harvard Business Review. March 9, 2023.

Findings from the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability<sup>21</sup> reported that one in five (22%) Canadians 15 years and older had one or more disabilities with women (24%) being more likely to have a disability when compared to men (20%). The research also suggests that disabilities related to pain, flexibility, mobility, and mental health were among the types of disabilities most frequently reported.

The research also shows that having a disability can affect one's access to employment and other opportunities. Based on the findings reported in the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, 59% of individuals between the ages of 25 and 64 who reported having a disability also reported that they were employed compared to 80% of individuals between the ages of 25 and 64 who did not have a disability.

Lack of access to employment can affect one's overall economic well-being with findings from the Canadian Income Survey (2021) reporting that persons with a disability were more likely to be experiencing poverty and exclusion with 10.6 % of individuals aged 16 and older who have a disability being more likely to be living below the poverty line.

## 4.7 Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Individuals

The FSA also expressed an interest in policies and measures that can help to support greater equity and inclusion among different socio-economically disadvantaged individuals and groups. This includes adopting practices that can help to build a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the points of 'intersection' or multiple levels of exclusion and disadvantage that different groups may experience over their life course. This includes the different interrelated factors that can affect one's access to opportunities.

In looking at the experiences and circumstances of socio-economically disadvantaged groups, the use of a GBA+ approach (gender-based analysis+) as well as the use of an intersectional approach<sup>22</sup> can offer a useful organizing framework for looking at the multiple and overlapping identifies that can affect the opportunities available to individuals. This includes differences based on gender, race, sexual orientation, sexual preference, age, ethnicity, class, education, health status and citizenship<sup>23</sup>.

## 4.8 Taking into Consideration the 'Social Determinants of Working'

When looking at equity-related policies and approaches, there is also the need to consider policies that takes into consideration 'the social determinants of work' which recognizes that workforce outcomes are not the effect of labour market dynamics alone and that there is the need to also look at the extent to which individuals are able to access 'good jobs' as well as the related community-level determinants of working including the cost of housing, transportation, as well as family, and childcare needs<sup>24</sup>.

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21 The Canadian Survey on Disability is updated every 5 years with the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability currently being completed.

22 The idea of 'intersectionality' was first developed by Kimberle Crenshaw (1990) a prominent U.S. scholar who observed that people's lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identifies and the combined nature of these experiences. When looking at the experience of black women in the United States, Crenshaw observed that the intersection of gender, race and class can result in multiple points of oppression that continue to reinforce and perpetuate historical patterns of inequality and inequity.

23 American Planning Association (APA). Planning for Equity Policy Guide. (2019) Ratified by the APA Board of Directors on May 14, 2019. Published by the American Planning Association. Found at [https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download\\_pdf/Planning-for-Equity-Policy-Guide-rev.pdf](https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/Planning-for-Equity-Policy-Guide-rev.pdf)

24 PolicyLink (2022). Advancing Workforce Equity in Nashville. A Blueprint for Action.

[https://www.policylink.org/research/workforce-equity-nashville:](https://www.policylink.org/research/workforce-equity-nashville)

# 5.0 Establishing Baseline Measures

Comparison to broader community level indicators and benchmarks is also helpful in terms of building a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the extent to which organizations have been successful in creating access to opportunities for equity-deserving or under-represented populations. This includes the collection of baseline measures that can offer insight into potential patterns of exclusion or under-representation among specific groups. The information reported in this section is based on information found in the 2021 Census as well as other sources.

## 5.1 Women

### 5.1.1 Total Number of Women

In 2021 women accounted for approximately 51% of the total population across British Columbia as well as approximately 51% of all individuals living in Metro Vancouver. Women also accounted for approximately 50% of all individuals living in the Fraser Valley.

**Table 5.1.1 Total Number of Women (British Columbia, Metro Vancouver and FVRD)**

	Total Population	Women	%
British Columbia	5,000,879	2,543,365	50.9%
Fraser Valley Regional District	324,005	162,935	50.3%
Metro Vancouver	2,642,825	1,348,405	51.0%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

### 5.1.2 Women Who Are Working Age (Between the Ages of 16 and 84 Years Old)

In 2021 women accounted for approximately 51% of the total working age population between the ages of 16 and 64 across British Columbia. This was comparable to profile of working age women across the Metro Vancouver region with the overall representation of women between the ages of 16 and 64 living in the Fraser Valley being only slightly lower.

**Table 5.1.2 Women Who Are Working Age (Between the Ages of 16 and 84 Years Old)**

	Total Population	Women	%
British Columbia	3,267,620	1,652,995	50.6%
Fraser Valley Regional District	204,215	101,635	49.8%
Metro Vancouver	1,809,990	918,860	50.8%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

### 5.1.3 Representation of Women in the Workforce

In 2021 women accounted for approximately 49% of the workforce across B.C. including 49% of the workforce in Metro Vancouver as well as 48% of the workforce in the Fraser Valley.

**Table 5.1.3 Representation of Women in the Workforce**

	Total Population	Women	%
British Columbia	2,886,365	1,415,030	49.0%
Fraser Valley Regional District	179,195	86,005	48.0%
Metro Vancouver	1,569,015	773,010	49.3%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

## 5.2 Wage Gap and Income From Employment

The information from the 2021 Census also includes information on the general ‘wage equity’ gap reported across women with men across B.C. reporting an average income from employment of \$59,800 compared to an average employment income of \$40,840 among women. This translates into an overall ‘wage equity gap’ of \$18,960 across B.C. with the overall wage equity gap between men and women being even greater across Metro Vancouver. In particular, the findings show that in 2021, men reported an average annual income from employment of \$63,500 compared to the average annual income from employment reported by women in the workforce who reported an average annual income of \$43,840.

**Table 5.2.1 Income from Employment (2020)**

	Total Population	Men	Women
British Columbia	\$50,520	\$59,800	\$40,840
Fraser Valley Regional District	\$44,840	\$53,800	\$35,160
Metro Vancouver	\$53,650	\$63,500	\$43,480

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

**Table 5.2.2 Wage Gap**

	Total Population	Men	Women
British Columbia	\$59,800	\$40,840	(-\$18,960)
Fraser Valley Regional District	\$53,800	\$35,160	(-\$18,640)
Metro Vancouver	\$63,500	\$43,480	(-\$20,020)

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

## 5.3 Total Number of Jobs

The following table shows the total number of individuals employed including the breakdown between full-time and part-time employment across B.C. as well as across the Lower Mainland. Based on the information reported in the table below, the findings suggest that across B.C., approximately 52% of jobs were full-time jobs while 48% were part-time jobs. Across Metro Vancouver, the findings in table 5.7 suggest that across Metro Vancouver, approximately 53.4% of jobs were full-time while 46.6% were part-time.

**Table 5.3.1 Total Number of Individuals Employed (Full-Time and Part-Time)**

	Total Employed	Full-Time	Part-Time
British Columbia	2,497,240	1,301,410	1,195,830
Fraser Valley Regional District	153,890	83,300	70,590
Metro Vancouver	1,364,665	728,635	636,030

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

**Table 5.3.2 Total Number of Individuals Employed (Full-Time and Part-Time)**

	Total Population	Full-Time	Part-Time
British Columbia	100%	52.1%	47.9%
Fraser Valley Regional District	100%	54.1%	45.9%
Metro Vancouver	100%	53.4%	46.6%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

## 5.4 Total Number of Women in Full-Time Jobs

Province-wide women account for approximately 43% of all full-time workers with similar findings being reported for Metro Vancouver.

**Table 5.4 Full-Time Employment**

	Total Population	Women	%
British Columbia	1,301,410	564,300	43.4%
Fraser Valley Regional District	83,300	33,450	40.2%
Metro Vancouver	728,635	316,570	43.4%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

## 5.5 Average Income from Full-Time Employment and Wage Equity Gap

In looking at the differences in the incomes reported across men and women working full-time, the findings suggest that the wage equity gap is even greater with the 2021 Census (2020 incomes) suggested that men working full-time in the Metro Vancouver region earned on average an annual income of \$92,300 while women working full-time earned on average an income of \$69,900. This translates into a wage equity gap of \$22,400 across the Metro Vancouver region and \$20,600 Province-wide.

**Table 5.5.1 Average Employment Income (Full-Time Employment)**

	Total Population	Men	Women
British Columbia	\$77,700	\$86,600	\$66,000
Fraser Valley Regional District	\$66,700	\$73,700	\$56,250
Metro Vancouver	\$82,600	\$92,300	\$69,900

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

**Table 5.5.2 Wage Gap (Full-Time Employment)**

	Total Population	Women	Women
British Columbia	\$86,600	\$66,000	(\$20,600)
Fraser Valley Regional District	\$73,700	\$56,250	(\$17,450)
Metro Vancouver	\$92,300	\$69,900	(\$22,400)

## 5.6 Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous peoples account for approximately 6% of the total population across British Columbia as well as approximately 6.6% of the total population across Metro Vancouver.

**Table 5.6** Individuals Who Identify as Indigenous

	Total Population	Indigenous	%
British Columbia	5,000,879	297,960	6.0%
Metro Vancouver	2,642,825	174,150	6.6%
Fraser Valley Regional District	324,005	14,800	4.6%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

## 5.7 Individuals from Different Ethnocultural Backgrounds

Approximately 29% of individuals across British Columbia reported that they were from an immigrant background with 13.8% of all British Columbia's reporting that they were recent immigrants. Across Metro Vancouver, 42% of all individuals reported that they were from an immigrant background with 14.2% reporting that they were recent immigrants.

**Table 5.7.1** Individuals from an Immigrant Background

	Total Population	Immigrant Background	%
British Columbia	4,915,940	1,425,710	29.0%
Fraser Valley Regional District	317,670	68,015	21.4%
Metro Vancouver	2,607,015	1,089,185	41.8%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

**Table 5.7.2** Recent Immigrants (Moved Between 2016 and 2021)

	Total Population Immigrant Background	Recent Immigrants	%
British Columbia	1,425,710	197,425	13.8%
Fraser Valley Regional District	68,015	8,610	12.7%
Metro Vancouver	1,089,185	154,820	14.2%

## 5.8 Individuals from Visible Minority Groups or Racialized Populations

Approximately 34% of individuals across British Columbia were a visible minority or from one of the racialized population groups with this increasing to almost 55% of all individuals from across Metro Vancouver. It also includes approximately 1 in 4 individuals from across the Fraser Valley.

**Table 5.8** Individuals from Visible Minority Groups or Racialized Populations

	Total Population	Visible Minority Populations	%
British Columbia	4,915,945	1,689,490	34.4%
Fraser Valley Regional District	317,670	81,030	25.5%
Metro Vancouver	2,607,010	1,420,270	54.5%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census



## 5.9 Representation Across Different Racialized Groups

Table 5.9 includes information on the number of individuals represented across the different visible minority or racialized population groups.

**Table 5.9 Representation Across the Different Visible Minority Groups**

	British Columbia	Metro Vancouver	Fraser Valley
Total	4,915,945	2,607,010	317,670
Total visible minority population	1,689,490	1,420,270	81,030
South Asian	473,965	369,290	53,585
Chinese	550,590	512,260	4,565
Black	61,760	41,180	3,520
Filipino	174,280	142,125	4,665
Arab	28,010	22,440	1,010
Latin American	65,970	51,500	3,045
Southeast Asian	71,785	56,815	3,815
West Asian	69,270	64,640	1,035
Korean	72,815	63,465	2,225
Japanese	44,120	31,195	1,150
Visible minority, n.i.e.	18,080	14,750	565
Multiple visible minorities	58,840	50,600	1,840
Not a visible minority	3,226,450	1,186,740	236,645

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

## 5.10 Individuals Who Are Gender-Diverse or Gender Non-Conforming

As part of the 2021 Census, Statistics Canada included a question to identify Canadians aged 15 and older whose gender identity does not align with the binary understanding of gender which has traditionally been either a man or a woman. Under the non-binary category are individuals who may identify as neither a man nor a woman, both or anywhere along the gender spectrum. Based on the findings, approximately 100,815 Canadians 15 and older were either transgender (59,460) or non-binary (41,355) which represents approximately 1 in every 300 Canadians 15 and older.

The information published by Statistics Canada also shows that the proportion of individuals reporting as transgender or non-binary were 3 times to 7 times higher among individuals born between 1997 and 2006 accounting for .79% of the population as well as .51% of those born between 1981 and 1996 while this was the case for only .19% of the population born between 1966 and 1980 and .15% among those born between 1946 and 1965 with some of the difference being assigned to the fact that younger generations are more likely more comfortable reporting their gender identity when compared to older generations<sup>25</sup>.

The findings reported by Statistics Canada align with the findings reported by the Pew Research Center which found that 1.6% of U.S. adults identified as transgender or non-binary with the proportion increasing to 5.1% of all adults under the age of 30. As well, the survey found that 42% of U.S. adults reported that they knew someone who is transgender<sup>26</sup>.

25 Statistics Canada. 2022. "Canada is the First Country to Provide Census Data on Transgender and Non-Binary People: Filling Gaps in Gender Diversity in Canada". Published in The Daily. April 27, 2022. Found at <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/220427/dq220427b-eng.pdf?st=xlq2hbg>

26 Yousif, Nadjia, Annika Zawadzki, and Kushal Khandhar. 2023. *Companies Are Failing Trans Employees*. Published in the Harvard Business Review. March 31, 2023. Page 10.



## 5.11 Neurodivergent individuals

In 2017 the Canadian Survey on Disability found that only 33% of adults on the autism spectrum were employed and that the unemployment and under-employment of neurodivergent individuals can be attributed to a significant lack of understanding and undervaluing of the potential strengths and contributions that neurodivergent individuals can make to their workplace.

## 5.12 Persons with Disabilities

### 5.12.1 Number of Persons with a Permanent Disability

Approximately 25% of all individuals across B.C. reported a permanent health or activity limitation compared to almost 30% of all individuals living in the Fraser Valley and approximately 21% of all individuals living in the Metro Vancouver region.

Table 5.12.1 Number of Individuals Reporting a Permanent Disability (Always)

	Total Population	Health and Activity Limitation (Always)	%
British Columbia	1,881,970	462,590	24.6%
Fraser Valley Regional District	108,395	32,120	29.6%
Metro Vancouver	960,895	201,115	20.9%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census (Custom Data on Individuals Reporting Health and Activity Limitations (HALS))

### 5.12.2 Number of Persons Reporting an Episodic Disability

Approximately 7.9% of individuals across British Columbia reported an episodic disability including 7.5% of all individuals across Metro Vancouver as well as 8.9% of all individuals living in the Fraser Valley region.

Table 5.12.2 Number of Individuals Reporting an Episodic Disability (Often)

	Total Population	Health and Activity Limitation (Often)	%
British Columbia	1,881,970	148,195	7.9%
Fraser Valley Regional District	108,395	9,700	8.9%
Metro Vancouver	960,895	71,640	7.5%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census (Custom Data on Individuals Reporting Health and Activity Limitations (HALS))

### 5.12.3 Number of Persons Reporting a Permanent or Episodic Disability

Approximately 32.5% of individuals across British Columbia reported they had a permanent or episodic disability including 28.4% of all individuals across Metro Vancouver as well as 38.6% of all individuals living in the Fraser Valley.

**Table 5.12.3 Number of Individuals Reporting a Permanent or Episodic Disability (Always/Often)**

	Total Population	Health and Activity Limitation (Always/Often)	%
British Columbia	1,881,970	610,785	32.5%
Fraser Valley Regional District	108,395	41,820	38.6%
Metro Vancouver	960,895	272,755	28.4%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census (Custom Data on Individuals Reporting Health and Activity Limitations (HALS))

### 5.12.4 Individuals from Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Backgrounds

Across British Columbia, approximately 10.8% of all individuals across British Columbia were in low income based on Statistic Canada’s Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT). This includes approximately 11.1% of all individuals living in Metro Vancouver as well as 9.4% of individuals living in the Fraser Valley.

**Table 5.12.4 Individuals in Low Income**

	Total Population	In Low Income (LIM-AT)	%
British Columbia	4,915,940	528,870	10.8%
Fraser Valley Regional District	317,670	29,910	9.4%
Metro Vancouver	2,607,010	289,615	11.1%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

Among those between the ages of 18 to 64 years old (working age) across British Columbia approximately 9.7% were in low income based on LIM-AT compared to 11.1% of individuals 18 to 64 years old living in Metro Vancouver. Across Metro Vancouver, this translates into 10.1% of all individuals while it includes approximately 7.8% of all working age individuals living in the Fraser Valley.

**Table 5.12.5 Individuals in 18 to 64 in Low Income**

	Total Population 18 to 64	In Low Income (LIM-AT)	%
British Columbia	3,085,015	297,960	9.7%
Fraser Valley Regional District	189,640	14,800	7.8%
Metro Vancouver	1,716,485	174,150	10.1%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

# Appendix A

In looking at issues related to social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion there is the need to explore ways to expand the choices and opportunities that are available to all citizens with a specific focus and responsibility on identifying and removing barriers that may be limiting individuals from meaningful participation in the workforce. The information set out in this section helps to provide baseline information that can be used to inform future union work. This information also helps to provide baseline information for determining the extent to which the FSA has also been successful in creating opportunity that reflect the general social, economic, and demographic profile characteristics of the region. In creating this information, the over-riding objective is to continue to explore ways to identify and remove barriers to participation in campus and community life as well as the overall BCIT workforce in a way that promotes and supports true economic and social inclusion.

## Appendix A: Results of the Physical Accessibility Review

This section looks at the physical accessibility of the BCIT campus as well as the specific spaces occupied by the FSA as a tenant. The ability and authority to make changes to improve the overall physical accessibility of the various campus spaces or to address limitations noted in this section may fall outside of the direct authority of the FSA as a tenant in the building. The information that has been gathered, however, help to promote a deeper understanding of the changes that are needed and the potential opportunities for action to improve accessibility for staff, faculty, and members of the BCIT student community who experience mobility-related challenges. These guidelines may also be helpful to inform future planning.

Appendix A provides information on the accessibility-related considerations included in their review. This includes considerations related to:

- The parking and path of travel
- Doorways, entrances, and waiting areas
- Service areas, circulation, and programming for workspace and meeting rooms
- Workspaces and meeting rooms
- Washrooms and other amenities
- Communication
- Emergency preparedness

A **colour-coded system** has been included in this report to give the reader a sense of the extent to which specific accessibility-related standards have been met, along with those areas which may require more attention.

- Green means the established accessibility standards have *been met*.
- Yellow means the established accessibility standards are *not fully* met
- Red means the established accessibility standards have *not been* met.

## Accessible Parking and Path of Travel to the facility



### Accessible Parking



#### Guideline

Is there accessible parking available?

#### Observation

There were two (2) accessible parking spaces at the Roper Ave Parking lot. It is recommended that one of the parking spaces should be van accessible. There is parking space for motorbikes adjacent to one of accessible parking spaces, which is ideally where an access aisle for a van accessible parking space could be created.



### Accessible Parking (Signage)

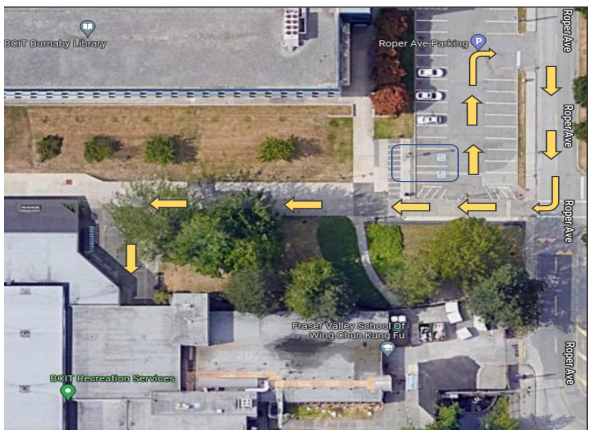


#### Guideline

Is there clear signage to notify users of the accessible parking space and its rules?

#### Observation

There is a highly visible paved signage of the International Symbol of Accessibility, but there is no vertical signage. There is no indication to display a valid Parking Permit for someone to park in this space.



### Path of Travel

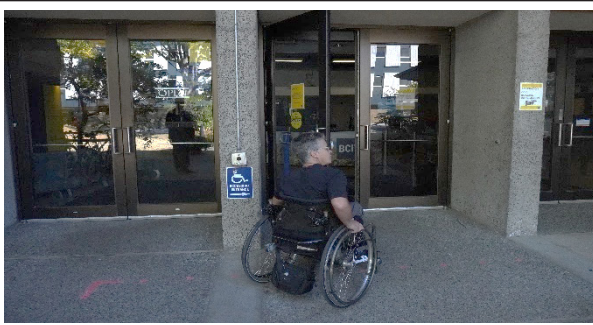


#### Guideline

Is there a clear and safe path of travel from the parking to the entrance of the building?

#### Observation

The path of travel was relatively a long walk from the parking lot to the building entrance, which included walking into the vehicular traffic. Ideally, there should be a curb ramp to allow for a safer and closer access to the building entrance.



### Building Entrance



#### Guideline

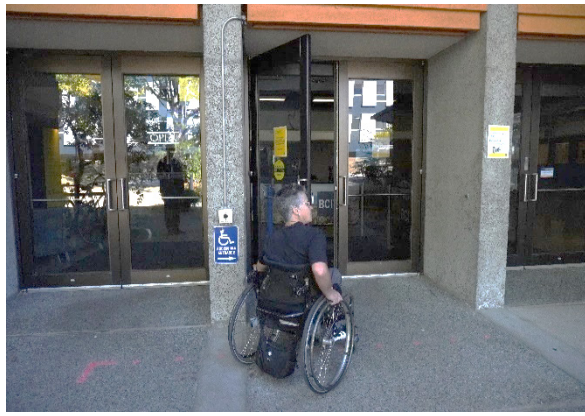
Is there a clear and safe path of travel to the entrance of the building?

#### Observations

The entrance of the building has a paved entryway which is level and accessible.



## Doorways, entrances, and waiting areas



**Accessible Entrance**  
(Automatic door opener)



**Guideline**

Is the main entrance to the building accessible?

**Observation**

The entrance is obstruction-free, level, and accessible. There is an automatic sensor-based door opener. It is ideal to have an emergency call button for assistance too.



**Accessible Entrance**  
(width)

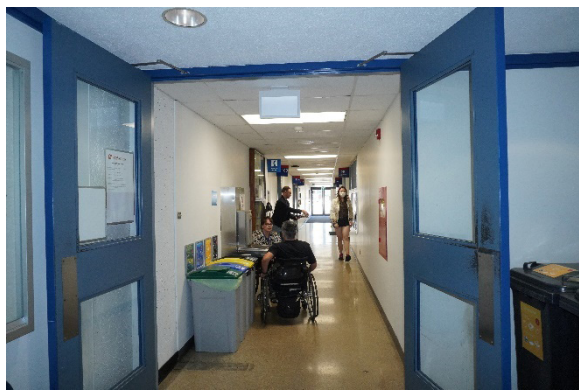


**Guideline**

Is the main entrance wide enough to allow for someone in a wheelchair to enter?

**Observations**

The main entrance is wide enough to allow for ease of access and the threshold is level. The door handle is of a design that requires minimum dexterity and offers a good grip.



**Accessible Entrance**  
(width)

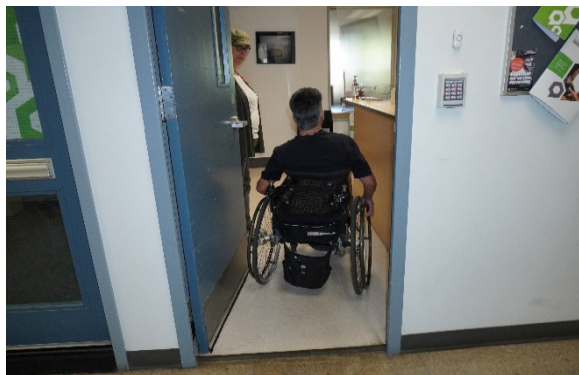


**Guideline**

Is the facility entrance wide enough to allow for someone in a wheelchair to enter?

**Observations**

There is a corridor from the main entrance to the FSA's office entrance. It is wide enough for two persons with mobility aids to get through.



**Accessible Entrance**  
(width)



**Guideline**

Is the facility entrance wide enough to allow for someone in a wheelchair to enter?

**Observations**

The office entrance is not fully accessible. The door is less than 914 mm in width due to jamming. The door is also very heavy to operate, and there is no automatic door opener available.

Doorways, entrances, and waiting areas



**Accessible Entrance**  
(Doorway threshold)

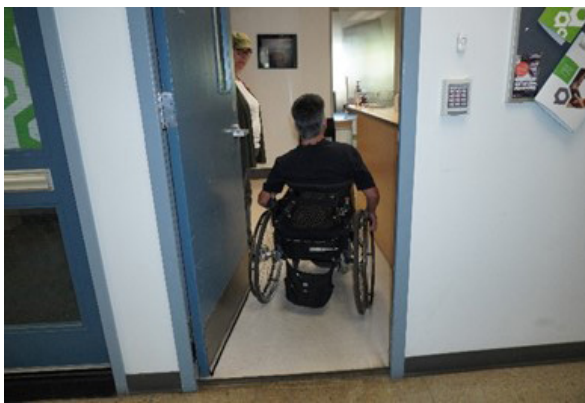


**Guideline**

Does the door have an accessible threshold?

**Observation**

The door threshold was level and allowed easy access to the office space. The kick plate is also designed at the right height. However, it requires someone to open the door from inside, since it is quite heavy to operate for someone using a mobility device.



**Door hardware**



**Guideline**

Is the door handle comfortable for someone with limited hand dexterity?

**Observations**

The door handle is of a design that requires minimum dexterity and offers a good grip; however, the door is quite heavy, and it is difficult to use without the presence of an automatic door opener.



**Accessible Entrance**  
(Automatic door opener)



**Guideline**

Is there an accessible door opener available?

**Observation**

There is no automatic door opener. However, there is an intuitive 0–9-digit keypad. There is also a sensor which needs to be placed lower in height, to make it accessible to someone in a wheelchair.



**Waiting Area**



**Guideline**





Is there an accessible waiting area?

**Observations**

The office has waiting area which has moveable furniture and information brochures placed at an accessible height.



## Service Areas, Circulation and Programming

	<p><b>Service Area/ Reception</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p>	<p><b>Guideline</b> Is the service counter or information desk accessible?</p> <p><b>Observation</b> The service counter's front desk is at an inaccessible height for someone in a wheelchair. There is an alternative space on the other side, but it lacks a counter space.</p>
	<p><b>Circulation (Steps and Ramps)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p>	<p><b>Guideline</b> Can the space be used comfortably and independently by users of different ages and abilities?</p> <p><b>Observation</b> Efforts have been made to ensure that someone with a wheelchair can get around and access most of the office area. There is a small step where a ramp was provided. It could be replaced with a more gradual ramp to ensure more safety and comfort.</p>
	<p><b>Circulation (Floor and surfaces)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p>	<p><b>Guideline</b> Can the space be used comfortably and independently by users of different ages and abilities?</p> <p><b>Observations</b> The floor surface is level, single colour tone, without any obstructions. It is accessible for a variety of users.</p>
	<p><b>Magazine and brochure display</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p>	<p><b>Guideline</b> Can the space be used comfortably and independently by users of different ages and abilities?</p> <p><b>Observations</b> The notice board is at an accessible height however the take-away magazine rack should be placed at a lower height for ease of access.</p>



## Amenities



### Kitchen and Common Area



#### Guideline

Is the kitchen and common area accessible?

#### Observations

The kitchen-dining area and counter spaces are accessible. The furniture is moveable, and the common space is obstruction free.



### Kitchen Amenities



#### Guideline

Are the kitchen amenities accessible for users of different ages and abilities?

#### Observation

The oven/toaster is placed at an accessible height, but the microwave is not. The counter surface allows for "roll-in space" making it accessible for someone in a wheelchair.



### Kitchen Amenities



#### Guideline

Are the kitchen amenities accessible for users of different ages and abilities?

#### Observations

The paper towel dispenser and water dispenser are both accessible.



### Storage



#### Guideline

Is there a storage option that is accessible to users of different ages and abilities?

#### Observations

There is additional counter space and storage section available at an accessible location. There might be more of such storage options required depending on the number of staff in the facility.

## Washrooms and facilities



### Washrooms (Accessible Washroom)



#### Guideline

Is there an accessible washroom available?

#### Observation

Gender specific accessible washrooms are available along with visible signage.



### Washroom (Accessible Entrance)

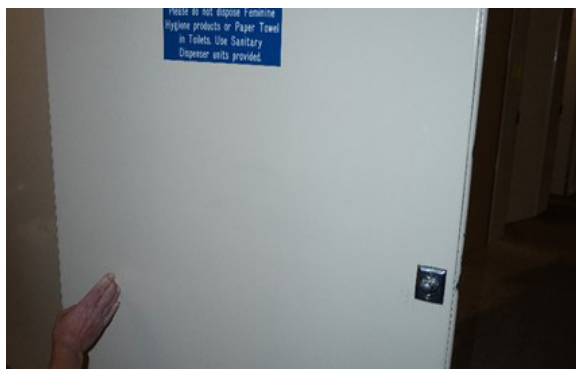


#### Guideline

Is the entrance to the washroom accessible?

#### Observation

The main entrance to the washroom is level, wide-enough and hands-free making it accessible.



### Washroom (Door Hardware)



#### Guideline

Is the door hardware and locking system accessible?

#### Observation

There is an accessible locking mechanism but there are no door handles making it inaccessible for someone with limited hand dexterity and unsafe for someone in a wheelchair.



### Washroom (Transfer Area and Grab Bars)



#### Guideline

Does the washroom include sufficient transfer area and grab bars for additional support?

#### Observations

The toilet seat is at an accessible height with sufficient transfer area; however, lack of grab bars makes it difficult for someone to transfer from their wheelchair.



## Washrooms and facilities



### Washroom (Sink)



#### Guideline

Is the sink at an accessible height?

#### Observations

The sink is at an accessible height, and it has roll-in space beneath the sink making it accessible for someone in a wheelchair.



### Washrooms (Soap and Paper Towel Dispenser)



#### Guideline

Are the soap and paper towel dispenser placed at an accessible height?

#### Observation

The soap and paper towel dispenser are placed at a convenient height for someone in a wheelchair and the location is intuitive for someone who is vision impaired.



### Washroom (Mirror)



#### Guideline

Is the mirror placed in an appropriate location?

#### Observation

There is a full-length mirror placed at an appropriate height and location for someone in a wheelchair. It has decent lighting and an obstruction-free view.



### Washroom (Taps/Faucet)



#### Guideline

Is the faucet accessible?

#### Observation

The faucet handles are levered hence they are easier to use for someone with limited hand dexterity to use.

## Staff workspace



### Working stations



#### Guideline

Is the staff workspace accessible for users of different ages and abilities?

#### Observation

All the desks and tables are at an appropriate height, with sufficient roll-in space, and the chairs are moveable which means that the space can be configured to be accessible.



### Storage (drawers)



#### Guideline

Does the staff workspace offer accessible storage options for users of different ages and abilities?

#### Observations

There is moveable storage cabinet which is of a good height making it accessible for someone in a wheelchair. It is also designed in a way that makes it accessible for someone with limited hand dexterity.



### Storage (stationery)

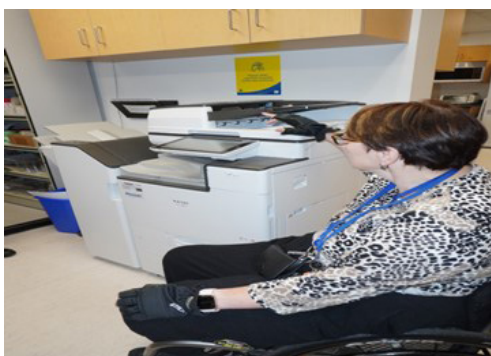


#### Guideline

Is the common storage accessible for users of different ages and abilities?

#### Observations

There is a step to access the office storage cabinet for stationery and file folders. There needs to be an alternative cabinet or a ramp to access this section.



### Amenities (Printer)



#### Guideline

Are the workplace amenities accessible for users of different ages and abilities?

#### Observation

The printer/scanner machine is accessible.



## Boardroom 1



### Entrance

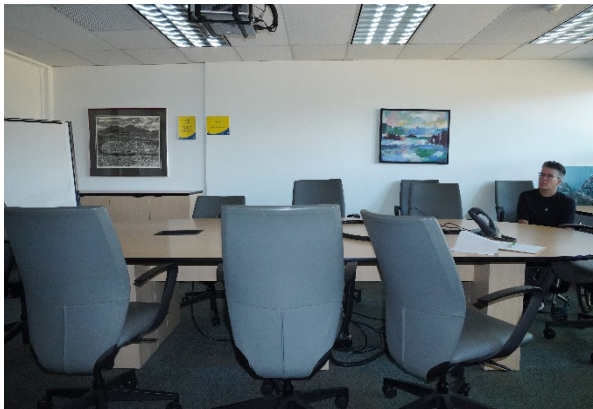


#### Guideline

Is the entrance to the Board Room accessible?

#### Observation

The Board room has a level entrance and wide enough for one person in a wheelchair to pass.



### Seating



#### Guideline

Is the Board room seating accessible for users of different ages and abilities?

#### Observation

The meeting table is at an appropriate height, with sufficient roll-in space, and the chairs are moveable which means that the space can be configured to be accessible. The floor carpeting is low-pile and easy to maneuver.



### Light and ventilation

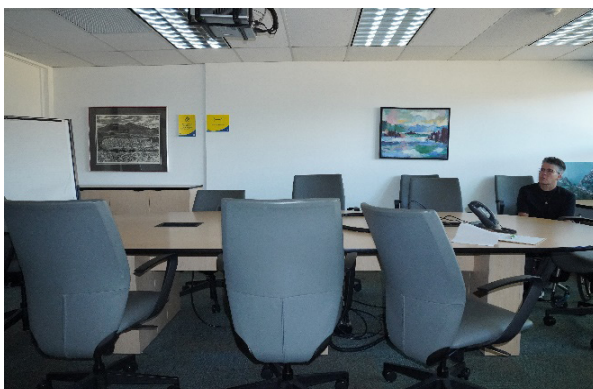


#### Guideline

Is there enough light and ventilation in the Board room?

#### Observation

The Board room is well lit and ventilated. Special designed windows have been installed to make it accessible for someone in a wheelchair.



### Amenities







#### Guideline

Are the Board Room amenities accessible for users of different ages and abilities?

#### Observation


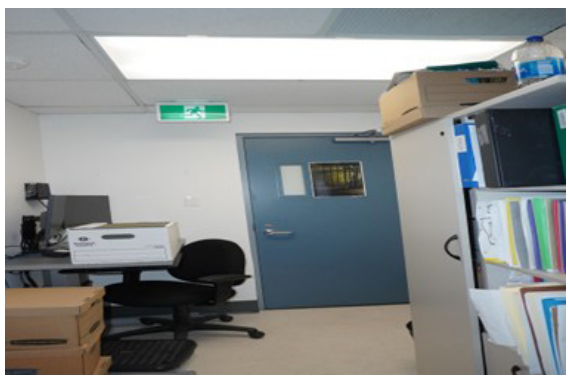
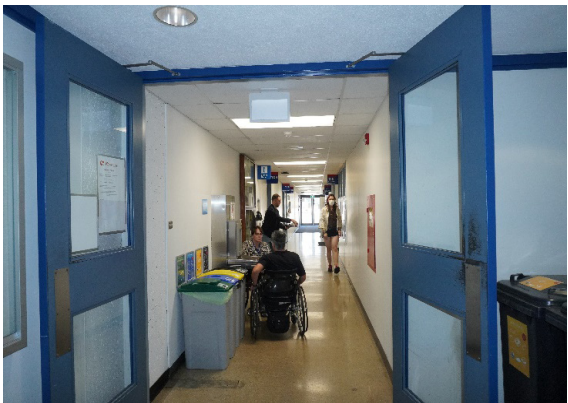
Most of the amenities in the board room including conference phone and projector screen are accessible to users with different needs. However, the white board is not accessible for someone in a wheelchair.

## BCIT Meeting Rooms and Circulations

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Entrance</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p>	<p><b>Guideline</b> Is the Board Room entrance accessible for users of different ages and abilities?</p> <p><b>Observation</b> The Board room has a level entrance and wide enough for two persons in a wheelchair to pass.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Seating</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p>	<p><b>Guideline</b> Is the Board room seating accessible for users of different ages and abilities?</p> <p><b>Observation</b> All the furniture in this board room is moveable means that the space can be configured to be accessible. The floor carpeting is low-pile and easy to maneuver.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Light and ventilation</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p>	<p><b>Guideline</b> Is there enough light and ventilation in the Board room?</p> <p><b>Observation</b> The Board room is well lit and ventilated. The power plugs and switches are located at an accessible height.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Amenities</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p>	<p><b>Guideline</b> Are the amenities accessible for users of different ages and abilities?</p> <p><b>Observation</b> Most of the amenities in the board room are accessible to users with different needs. The phones need to be placed a bit lower to make them accessible.</p>



## Emergency Preparedness

	<p><b>Emergency Evacuation (Refuge Area)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p>	<p><b>Guideline</b> Are there clear emergency exit signs?</p> <p><b>Observation</b> There was signage available to point towards the exit. It is recommended to maintain a sign-in sheet for visitors to inform the staff about the need for assistance in an emergency.</p>
	<p><b>Emergency Alarm</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p>	<p><b>Guideline</b> Does the emergency alarm include both audible and visual cues?</p> <p><b>Observation</b> There is an emergency alarm in the Interactive activity room which has an audible as well as a visual alarm signal. This will help alert individuals who maybe deaf and hard of hearing, of the potential danger.</p>
	<p><b>Emergency Exit</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p>	<p><b>Guideline</b> Is there a clear emergency evacuation plan and refuge area that is accessible for users of different ages and abilities?</p> <p><b>Observation</b> There is an accessible, obstruction-free doorway to exit from the office. There is an accessible refuge area outside the office.</p>
	<p><b>Emergency Assistance</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p>	<p><b>Guideline</b> Is there a way for emergency respondents to identify individuals who may need assistance in an emergency?</p> <p><b>Observation</b> It might be possible to have individuals identify any accessibility needs with the office administrator. Emails or notices outlining the various accessibility features and exit points should be regularly shared with staff and members.</p>

# Appendix B

## Appendix B: Event Planning-Accessibility Considerations

### B3.1 Finding an Accessible Venue

There are certain key aspects of the venue that will hold a greater weight in determining how accessible an event is, depending on the kind of audience and category of event. It is always suggested to visit the venue before the event to survey any potential barriers. The event invites should provide a way of contact for any accommodation or assistance that might be needed and reserve enough time to decide. For walk-in events, it is ideal to maintain a sign-in sheet which also maintains assistance needs in case of an emergency.

Ideally, the venue for the event should follow the below guidelines. Guests would always value if the accessibility details are shared along with the event invite.

### B3.2 Accessible Parking

- The venue should have accessible parking available. Designated accessible parking stalls should be marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility and should be within 30m of an accessible entrance.
- Ideally, there should be van accessible parking available for guests who will be using modified vehicles with ramps. If there is only 1 designated accessible parking space available, it should be van accessible.
- Details of where the accessible parking will be located, the quantity and the type of spaces available should be communicated to guests prior to the event.

### B3.3 Accessible Transportation

- The venue should be in a proximity to public transportation routes served by accessible vehicles.
- Information on how to get to the venue and the location of passenger-drop off areas should also be available to guests beforehand.
- Those who rely on HandyDART services will need at least one week notice to arrange a trip. In addition, those who will need to book an accompanying assistance may require more time to plan.



### **B3.4 Safe, Accessible Path of Travel**

- For both indoor and outdoor events, there should be a clear path of travel from the parking/drop-off area to the entrance, and wherever a guest may need to travel.
- This includes removing any potential obstacles and ensuring that surfaces are level and firm. A path should be wide enough to allow for someone using a mobility aid to pass through.

### **B3.5 Accessible Washrooms**

- There should be an accessible washroom available abiding by the guidelines discussed above in the accessibility review.
- There should be a signage outside the venue pointing towards where the accessible washroom is located.

### **B3.6 Lighting Levels**

- Adjustable lighting is ideal to control the brightness of indoor venues. People who are deaf or hard of hearing may need good lighting to read lips or communicate with sign language.
- Natural light should be able to be controlled as too much direct natural lighting can cause glares and lower visibility. Strobe lights should be avoided as they may trigger seizures for people with epilepsy.

### **B3.7 Acoustics**

- Be aware of the acoustics inside of the venue. Environments that produce an echo may be problematic for guests who are hard of hearing.

### **B3.8 Service Animals**

- Through the event invite, guests can be asked to indicate if they need to bring along a service animal to the event.
- Make sure there is a relief area for these animals, and make sure their owners know where it is.
- Having a water bowl on hand is a very good way to make a guest with a service animal feel welcome.

### **B3.9 Communication**

- Communicate your event using a variety of methods (email, website, social media, posters, mail, etc.) to ensure that guests with disabilities have the option to receive the information they need in a way that works best for them.
- Communication should be crafted with a text size of at least 14 point and a clear sans serif font such as Arial or Verdana. Avoid embedding important information in graphic formats as they cannot be read by assistive technology. If a video format is used, be sure to include captions and audio descriptions.

- It is important to communicate the accessibility features of the event to attendees beforehand. Provide contact information on all materials so that attendees can request assistance. There should be sufficient time reserved for accommodating the requests (at least 2-4 weeks) so it is ideal to send out information at least 4 weeks in advance.
- Some guests may have chemical sensitivities, for which you may wish to request attendees to avoid wearing scented products.
- Other inclusive communication practices include:
  - » Use of gender-neutral pronouns when making introductions
  - » Use of correct individual pronouns
  - » Use of language that is 'strengths-based' and not 'deficit based'
  - » Use language and symbolism that is meaningful and that shows support
  - » Use person-first language when talking about persons with disabilities for example "person with a disability" or "person who is blind"
  - » Use identity-first language when talking about autistic persons/neurodivergent individuals for example "autistic person" or "deaf person"
  - » Asking individuals about their preferences in terms of language and introductions

### **B3.10 Physical Materials**

- If your event will be using written materials, use non-toxic materials such as unscented markers and non-plastic name badges.
- Materials should also be offered to attendees in advance, in alternative formats if requested.

### **B3.11 Displays and Signage**

- If your event will have displays, consider the height so that they are accessible to those seated in mobility devices.
- There should be signage outlining the accessible entrances, parking, washrooms, transit points, and other key areas.
- All signage should be placed at an accessible height.
- It could be beneficial to offer signage with multiple languages and forms. Ideally, 3 formats should be provided if possible: tactile graphics, tactile lettering, and Braille.

# In-Persons Events

## B3.12 Seating

- To facilitate inclusion, avoid designated area for “wheelchair use” unless it is necessary to do so. This can create segregation and takes away the privilege of choice for wheelchair users to be seated with their able-bodied friends or colleagues.
- It is ideal to plan for moveable furniture and tables with roll-in space beneath to allow for people in wheelchairs and mobility aids to sit along with others.

## B3.13 Food and Beverage

- Prior to the event, ask attendees if they have any dietary restrictions or food sensitivities. Be sure to label the accommodated meals and if possible, serve these meals first in case there is a change needed.
- For buffet-style events, ensure the food is clearly labelled including the ingredients. If possible, have staff or volunteers available to assist guests who require assistance with pouring or serving.
- Plastic straws and cups with handles can be useful to guests who have limited hand dexterity and may struggle to grasp objects.

## B3.14 Presentations

- Before your event, ask speakers and attendees how they would like to be referred to and their pro-nouns. Welcome your participants using gender-neutral terms such as “folks” rather than “ladies” or “gentlemen.”
- It is ideal for each speaker to describe themselves as well as any visual content in their presentations. Speakers should also identify themselves by name each time they speak to benefit visually impaired attendees.
- Be aware that if presentations run later than scheduled, some individuals who use specialized transportation services may need to leave the event on time.

## B3.15 Staff and Volunteers

- One member of staff or volunteers should be trained on accessibility issues as a resource to attendees, staff and volunteers leading up to and during the event. However, all staff and volunteers should be informed of the accessibility features of the venue as well as emergency evacuation procedures.
- Specific staff or volunteers can be designated to assist people with disabilities and seniors in the event of an emergency.
- Staff and volunteers may need to assist seniors or people with disabilities by escorting them to their seat if needed, getting food/drink, or travelling to the washroom.
- Remind staff and volunteers not to make assumptions about what a person with a disability can or can't do, they can instead simply ask the individual how they can help.

# Virtual and Hybrid Events

Just like in-person events, when you plan a virtual event, make sure you give participants the opportunity to identify their accommodation needs early in the process. This should be done in the initial notice or invitation, which will support an inclusive environment from the beginning of the planning and set the tone for the meeting.

## Prior to the event

- Send out the invitation well in advance with opportunity to allow attendees to get back for questions or to indicate any accessibility needs.
- Provide a date by which attendees should request accommodations. Providing a date one week before the event is a common practice.
- If requested, arrange American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters or CART (real time captioning and transcription) at least one week in advance.
- Familiarize yourself with the accessibility features of your chosen platform, including captions, screen reader commands and keyboard navigability. Make sure your platform has a call-in option on the telephone.
- Any graphics or images in your outreach materials should have text descriptions. If there is a presentation or video to be displayed on screen during the event, make sure it is emailed to attendees in an accessible format prior to the event. If there is a presentation or video to be shared during the event, make sure it is made available to attendees in an accessible format prior to the event.
- The invitation should include a calendar invite, a confirmation email and one or more reminder emails prior to the event. Each of these should include:
  - » Event details
  - » Instructions for accessing the event
  - » A list of what attendees should bring with them
  - » Information about how to access accommodations
  - » A point of contact for any questions about accessibility

## During the event

- Admit interpreters and captioners to virtual meetings first. Spotlight or pin ASL interpreters alongside speakers. Make sure that your meeting settings are open to external attendees, as captioners and interpreters may come from external providers.
- Communicate with attendees by both chat and audio and allow attendees to do the same. If important information appears in the chat box, read it aloud to the group.
- Enable captions or live transcription at the start of every Zoom or Teams session. Make sure that captioners have access to the captions feature.
- Review the features of the platform, including accessibility features like captions, at the start of every session.

- Speakers should have their cameras on, face the camera and make sure their mouth is visible to engage participants, and to allow attendees with certain hearing disabilities to better process the information. If the speaker needs to convey message through ASL, it is ideal to have the interpreter, or the host turn on the camera and translate to the attendees.
- Each person should say their name each time they speak so that attendees, captioners, and interpreters know who is speaking.
- Attendees should have the option to turn off camera and mute themselves when needed.

### **After the event**

- All follow-up emails, resources and websites should be accessible.
- Provide follow-up contact information for attendees and include both email and telephone.
- Provide any notes, slides or materials distributed at the meeting in digital form to attendees.
- Accessibility is a continues process. There is always more to learn from the experience of others. It is a good idea to survey attendees about their experience and record any feedback on access problems.

# Appendix C

## Appendix C: Accessibility Standards

### C.1 Entrances

This section focuses on accessibility-related considerations for building entrances:

- There should be a clearly marked pick-up and drop off zone to allow people with disabilities to be dropped off (ideally, it should offer some protection from the weather).
- Entrances (including main entrance doors, gates, emergency exits) must be at least 915 mm (3 feet) wide to allow room for people using mobility aids to maneuver.
- Wherever possible, automatic doors should be provided. In cases where an automatic door is not feasible, lightweight doors should be provided to make it easier for people with limited upper body strength to open.
- Accessible door handles should be used (levered handles with a push plate/door pull) so that people with limited upper body strength will be able to open the doors. Levered handles are easier for people to use if they are unable to open their hands fully.
- Doors should have a kick plate to allow people using wheelchairs to push the door open using their legs, while at the same time not scratching the door.
- Doorway thresholds should be gently beveled and be no more than 13 mm high so that they do not block access. Level thresholds are preferred.
- Doormats should be low pile doormats with gently beveled edges so that it is easy for people using wheelchairs to wheel over them. It is necessary to ensure that the edges of a doormat are stuck down so that they do not roll up and create a tripping hazard.

### C.2 Service Counters, Signage and Wayfinding

- Persons with visual limitations, seniors, and neurodiverse individuals may be dependent on a comprehensive signage system for orientation and wayfinding.
- The signage that is introduced should be logical, consistent in design and include lettering and images that are legible and easy to comprehend.
- All directional signage and locational signage should be mounted at eye level.
- The service counter should include a wheelchair accessible counter that is at a lower height and includes space to wheel in.

- There should be a service bell at an accessible height (e.g., 1.2 m above the floor).
- All signs and notices should be in accessible formats (large print, Braille).
- There should be a TTY phone for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Events should be advertised using accessible formats.

**Figure 3.8.3.19.** Page 101 in BC Building Accessibility [Handbook](#) illustrates an accessible counter.

### C.3 Interior Spaces, Steps and Stairs

- **Interior Spaces**

- » Interior and exterior floor surfaces should be non-slip and low glare.
- » All level changes, whether at stairs, steps, escalators, or ramps should be marked by both distinct colours/tones and textual changes at the walking surface.
- » Notification of changes in level should occur at least one pace before the actual level change.
- » Textures can also be used on wall surfaces as part of the overall wayfinding.

- **Steps and Stairs**

- » Yellow paint can help to provide contrast between stairs and stairs nosing.
- » Circular handrails are easier to grip for someone with limited hand strength or dexterity.
- » Tactile stair nosing and a tactile warning strip at the top of the stairs and on the landing, areas can help to warn people with visual disabilities that there are stairs.
- » The start of the level handrail extensions should be aligned with the top and bottom of the staircase to help to warn individuals with low vision that it is the start and end of a staircase. The top should be aligned with the top stair nosing while the bottom should be aligned with one tread past the bottom stair riser.
- » Exterior steps should be of firm; non-slip materials with a maximum rise of 188 mm and a maximum tread length of 280 mm.
- » Tread nosing should be clearly marked with either a brightly painted non-slip finish and/or include an integrated non-slip nosing that clearly contrasts in tone and colour from the tread.
- » Continuous handrails should be provided on both sides of all exterior flights of stairs or steps which include 3 or more risers.

### C.4 Work areas and workspaces

Accessible workspaces should include:

- Wide corridors, hallways, and walkways (at least 1500 mm or 4 feet 11 inches).
- Entrance doorway with a minimum width of 915 mm (3 feet).
- Obstruction free pathways (obstructions could be mailboxes, garbage cans, small plants, or trees)
- An accessible lunchroom table.
- Tactile buttons on appliances to make them more usable for people with low vision.
- Tables and other furniture positioned in such a way as to create a clear path of travel.
- Appliances like microwave, coffee makers, paper towel dispensers be positioned at accessible heights (1.2m)
- Light fixtures and switches at an accessible height.



## C.5 Washrooms

**This section focuses specifically on specific accessibility-related considerations related to washroom spaces.**

- Washroom should be in an appropriate location that is easily accessible
- The door to the washroom must be a minimum of 915 mm (3') wide
- The door should have a kick plate on the bottom so that a person using a mobility aid can push the door open without damaging the door.
- An automatic door provides a higher level of accessibility. If the washroom door is not automatic, levered door handles should be used as they provide greater accessibility for people with limited hand dexterity.
- Accessible signage should be installed at the entrance of the washroom. The signage should include raised lettering or tactile markings for people with visual impairments.
- Within the washroom, there should be sufficient space to allow people with disabilities to maneuver. A minimum of 1500 mm (4 feet 11 inches) x 1500 mm (4 feet 11 inches) to allow someone in a wheelchair to maneuver in a complete circle. A larger space may be required for some scooters or larger motorized chairs.
- The stall door should open outwards for people with disabilities to grab onto the door and close it.
- There should be a handle on the inside of the door that allows people using a wheelchair to grab onto it to close the door.
- The locking system should be easy to lock and unlock for people with limited hand dexterity.
- There should be a coat hook on the wall no higher than 1200 mm (3 feet 11 inches) from the floor. This lowered coat hook height makes it reachable by a person in a wheelchair.
- There should be a minimum of 1020 mm (3 feet 4 inches) clearance beside the toilet so people using wheelchairs can pull up alongside the toilet and transfer from their wheelchair to the toilet seat.
- The transfer space should be kept clear of obstructions such as cleaning supplies, and garbage cans.
- Grab bars help when transferring. There should be non-slip grab bars installed by the toilet, on the opposite side of the transfer area. The grab bars should be 30 mm (1.2 inches) to 40 mm (1.6 inches) in diameter so that they are easy to grasp. Grab bar should be installed with a clearance between 35 mm and 45 mm from the wall. [Figure 3.8.3.13. Page 87](#) from the BC Accessibility Handbook shows dimensions for a water closet, controls, and grab bars
- Ideally, the toilet tank/water closet should be bolted down or locked into place as some people with disabilities hold onto it for extra support when transferring.
- If tank-type water closets are not used, a second grab bar should be mounted on the wall behind and centered over the water closet.
- The toilet seat should be located at the same height as a wheelchair or slightly lower. This makes it easier for an individual to transfer between the wheelchair and toilet.

- The accessible hand-operated flush control should be on the non-grab bar side of the toilet.
- The sink should be no higher than 865 mm (2 feet 10 inches) above the floor and should have space for someone using a wheelchair to wheel in underneath.
- Ideally, the sink basin should protrude from the wall and allow for enough roll-in space for someone in a wheelchair. The pipes underneath the sink should be insulated to protect people with disabilities from getting a burn from a hot pipe.
- Levered style faucet handles are easier for people with limited hand dexterity or strength to use.
- The soap and towel dispensers should be located beside the sink and should be placed at an accessible height so that they are easy to reach by someone in a wheelchair.

## C.6 Communication

- When designing information and communication material, emphasis should be given towards using accessible formats and presentation techniques that can be comfortable for a wide range of users. For example, presenting information in a readable font size and simple colors could serve well for users with low vision as well as for someone who is neurodivergent.
- For users in the autism spectrum, information should be presented in simple colours, plain language and simple sentences or bullet points. Buttons should be as descriptive as possible and overall design and layout should be consistent.
- When designing screen readers or digital information, it is a good idea to let users have control of the contrast and colours on the screen and using plain language, simple colours and a consistent layout for text. This is helpful for users with cognitive disabilities.
- There could be provision for adapted technology such as a portable FM listening system, or screen readers. Information on screen readers should be structured and follow a logical linear layout. User input should not be dependent on just mouse or touch and should allow for keyboard or speech input as well. This is helpful for users with physical or motor disabilities.
- Whenever there is the use of multi-modal materials like audio and video, it should always be accompanied by transcripts. Clickable links and headings should be descriptive.

## C.7 Emergency Preparedness

Thinking about accessibility when developing or updating your emergency plan means considering the needs of all visitors, including people with disabilities, when developing policies and services. The following are some specific accessibility considerations related to emergency preparedness planning.

- First responders need to address the evacuation requirements for vulnerable people in the event of an emergency.
- Emergency evacuation plans should include a designated area of refuge for people with disabilities on each floor.

- Ensure that the fire alarm system incorporates strobe lighting and are also available in washrooms.
- It should be frequently communicated to all staff the need for updating contact information and request that anyone requiring evacuation assistance self-identify their needs and discuss their personal evacuation plan. For visitors, there could be an option of a sign-in process (digital or paper) that includes emergency contact information and self-identification of their needs for an emergency evacuation.

# Glossary and Definitions

## Accessibility

Accessibility is the degree to which persons with disabilities can access a device, service, or environment without barriers. Accessibility is also a process – it is the proactive identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities. “Much of what disables people from participation is not the disability itself but rather the environment or aspects of the environment, external features of society created by people.” (World Health Organization).

## Accessible Path of Travel

An accessible path of travel or accessible route is designed to allow for safe, level, and continuous unobstructed travel.

## Accommodation

Accommodation is an individualized and reactive adaptation or adjustment made to provide a person with a disability equitable and non-discriminatory opportunities for participation.

## Alternative format

Alternative format refers to the conversion of printed text, audio or video files into formats more easily accessed by persons with disabilities.

- Audio is an alternative format for persons with a vision, intellectual, developmental or learning disability, or who cannot read print.
- Braille is an alternative format for persons who are blind or deafblind. It is a tactile system of raised dots representing letters or a combination of letters of the alphabet. Braille is produced using Braille transcription software.
- Captioning translates the audio portion of a video presentation by way of subtitles, or captions, which usually appear on the bottom of the screen. Captioning may be closed or open. Closed captions can only be seen on a television screen that is equipped with a device called a closed caption decoder. Open captions are “burned on” a video and appear whenever the video is shown. Captioning makes television programs, films, and other visual media with sound accessible to persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Descriptive Video Service (DVS) DVS provides descriptive narration of key visual elements – such as the action, characters, locations, costumes, and sets—without interfering with dialogue or sound effects. DVS makes television programs, films, home videos and other visual media accessible for persons with vision disabilities.
- Electronic text is used with computer synthetic voice technology (screen reading software) that allows persons who are blind, have low vision or who have learning disabilities to hear a spoken translation of what others see on the monitor.
- Large print is an alternative format for persons who have low vision. Large print materials should be prepared with a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger.
- Windowing enables persons who are deaf to read, by means of a sign language interpreter, what others hear in a video presentation or broadcast. The interpreter appears in a corner or “window” in the screen, translating spoken word to sign language. Windowing may include open or closed captioning.

## **Barrier**

A barrier is a circumstance or obstacle that keeps people apart. For people with disabilities, barriers can take many forms including attitudinal, communication, physical, policy, programmatic, social, and transportation.

## **Disability**

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

## **Neurodiversity**

Neurodiversity recognizes the many individuals with neurological conditions such as autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and dyslexia. Accommodations for neuro-diverse audience include but are not limited to, providing quiet spaces or noise-canceling headsets. Along with acoustics, a floor's color, pattern, texture, and wayfinding elements play a key role in supporting neurodivergent groups to improve their overall experience of the interior environment. It is also advised to avoid bright, flashing, or strobing lights unless it is for emergency alarm and maintaining a scent-free space.

## **Roll-in space**

Roll-in space means the knee clearance underneath the sink for a person with an assistive device to fit their knees. The sink's insulated pipes protect the knees from the hot water supply. This knee clearance should be at least 800 mm wide × 200 mm deep × 685 mm high, with an additional toe space at least 800 mm wide × 230 mm deep × 230 mm high. Source—Accessible design for the built environment (B651-18 National Standard of Canada) <https://www.csagroup.org/wp-content/uploads/B651-18EN.pdf>

# References

- <sup>1</sup> National Disability Authority. Centre for Excellence in Universal Design: The 7 Principles. Found at <https://universaldesign.ie/what-is-universal-design/the-7-principles>
- <sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. Health Topics: Disability. <https://www.who.int/health-topics/disability>
- <sup>3</sup> Project for Public Spaces. What Makes a Great Place. Retrieved from <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>
- <sup>4</sup> Morris, S. et al. 2018. The Dynamics of Disability: Progressive, Recurrent or Fluctuating Limitations. Statistics Canada.; Blichfeldt, B.S. and J. Nicolaisen. 2011. "Disabled travel: not easy, but doable." *Current Issues in Tourism* 14 (1): 80.
- <sup>5</sup> Ammerman Colleen and Boris Groysberg. 2022. "3 Workplace Biases that Derail Mid-Career Women" Published in the *Harvard Business Review*. September 16, 2022.
- <sup>6</sup> Reichheld, Ashley, Emily Werner, and Wenny Katzenstein. 2023. "Research: Why Women Trust Their Employers Less Than Men Do". Published in the *Harvard Business Review*. April 20, 2023.
- <sup>7</sup> Cultural safety includes respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in society and to create an environment that is free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe and respected when engaging with others. <https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Creating-a-Climate-For-Change-Cultural-Humility-Resource-Booklet.pdf>
- <sup>8</sup> Cultural humility is a process of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience.
- <sup>9</sup> Data sovereignty especially as it relates to Indigenous communities, recognizes that Indigenous peoples have been disproportionately harmed by the misuse and misinterpretation of data such that Indigenous communities are now advocating for greater ownership, representation and control over their data as it relates to their communities, practices and history (Ontario Non-Profit Network. 2023. Using data and decent work to advance equity within the non-profit sector".
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- <sup>17</sup> The Conference Board of Canada in collaboration with the Future Skills Centre. Building Workplaces Where Neurodivergent Workers Thrive. Issue Briefing. November 10, 2022.
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- <sup>20</sup> Brecheisen, Jeremie. 2023. Research: Where Employees Think Companies DEIB Efforts are Failing. Published in Harvard Business Review. March 9, 2023.
- <sup>21</sup> The Canadian Survey on Disability is updated every 5 years with the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability currently being completed.
- <sup>22</sup> The idea of ‘intersectionality’ was first developed by Kimberle Crenshaw (1990) a prominent U.S. scholar who observed that people’s lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and the combined nature of these experiences. When looking at the experience of black women in the United States, Crenshaw observed that the intersection of gender, race and class can result in multiple points of oppression that continue to reinforce and perpetuate historical patterns of inequality and inequity.
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# Accessibility Review BCIT Faculty & Staff Association

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