



KWANTLEN  
POLYTECHNIC  
UNIVERSITY

# Accessibility Plan

MAKING KPU FULLY  
INCLUSIVE FOR PEOPLE  
WITH DISABILITIES

2023





**m̓i ce:p k<sup>w</sup>ətɬ<sup>w</sup>iləm**

**Welcome You All**

We at Kwantlen Polytechnic University respectfully acknowledge that we live, work and study in a region that overlaps with the unceded traditional and ancestral First Nations territories of the xwməθkwəyə m (Musqueam), q̓i cá ỳ (Katzie), SEMYOME (Semiahmoo), scə waθən (Tsawwassen), q̓iqéyt (Qayqayt), and kwikwəłə m (Kwkwetlem), and with the lands of the q̓w̓ α:n̓ ɛ̓ n̓ (Kwantlen) First Nation, which gifted its name to this university.

In the cause of reconciliation, we recognize our commitment to address and reduce ongoing systemic colonialism, oppression and racism that Indigenous Peoples continue to experience.

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# Message from the President

Kwantlen Polytechnic University has long valued the importance of diversity in both our student and employee populations. In order to have a population that includes and is representative of people with disabilities, both visible and invisible, the barriers that prevent their inclusion need to be identified and removed. Some barriers can be addressed with infrastructure such as ramps and elevators or with individual accommodations. At the same time, systemic and attitudinal barriers persist that require deeper commitment and broader education and awareness to begin being addressed.

While KPU has been taking steps to address these barriers for many years, our latest strategic plan makes this commitment more explicit. In Vision 2026, we commit to advancing equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility across KPU.

This action plan sets out how we aim to further the full inclusion of people with disabilities through a series of recommendations that address six categories of barriers to access. I encourage all members of the KPU community to engage with the recommendations in the accessibility plan and play their part in continuing our efforts to make the university a welcoming place for all.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Alan Davis**

President and Vice-Chancellor



# Message from the inaugural Vice President,

## EQUITY & INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) is actively working towards making all spaces inclusive and welcoming to all people. Efforts toward addressing established barriers to accessibility is an important part of greater inclusivity, and work that is long overdue.

As a direct result of the advocacy of people with disabilities in the KPU community, Accessibility Committee, and active allies, KPU has started dismantling barriers to provide the same level of access and experiences to everyone. I acknowledge and thank the team for the tremendous work towards making KPU more inclusive.

As the VP Equity & Inclusive Communities, I will uphold implementation of the recommendations and support other areas of KPU as well. Together we continue our journey to making KPU a place where everyone belongs.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Nadia Mallay**

Vice-President,

Equity & Inclusive Communities

# Message from the Co-Chairs

## KPU'S ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

It is an honour to be serving as the first Co-Chairs of KPU's Accessibility Committee and to be presenting Kwantlen Polytechnic University's (KPU's) inaugural Accessibility Plan. The Accessibility Committee is focused on a core purpose of overseeing the development, implementation, and evaluation of accessibility planning at our university. Our primary objective is to establish an Accessibility Plan that aligns with the requirements of the Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA). This plan is designed to address the needs of all individuals interacting with KPU and to establish feedback mechanisms to inform our ongoing work in support of disability inclusion.

The development of this Accessibility Plan has been a collaborative effort involving valuable input from a broad range of voices within our university. We believe in the power of diverse perspectives and, importantly, that accessibility planning must include the voices and experience of our students and employees living with disabilities. Accessibility Committee members are dedicated advocates for disability justice and, as a committee, we recognize the positive impact we can have on shaping attitudes and practices within and beyond our campus borders. Together, we stand firm in our resolve to make KPU an exemplar of accessibility and inclusivity and will work persistently to support KPU in achieving this goal, guided by the ABCA and the principles that underpin our efforts.

Although KPU's Accessibility Committee has only recently been established, work to improve accessibility for KPU students and employees with disabilities has been ongoing for many years. To that end, also contained within this Accessibility Plan is an impressive list of relevant initiatives already underway across our university.

We would like to thank all of the members of the Accessibility Committee for their efforts in the drafting of this Accessibility Plan. As we have been working on a tight timeline, we have had many long meetings in the past few months. Their willingness to discuss some difficult and often personal stories of navigating their roles at KPU has been invaluable. We must also express our gratitude to some specific individuals whose efforts in support of drafting this Accessibility Plan have been so important: **Dr. Fiona Whittington Walsh**,

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## *MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS, CONTINUED*

KPU's Lead Advisor on Disability, Accessibility and Inclusion who is the lead author of this Accessibility Plan; **Trina Prince**, KPU's Manager of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion who has played a critical role coordinating administrative support for the Accessibility Committee in addition to informing the development of the Accessibility Plan so well, and; KPU's **Disability Inclusion Group (DIG)** with leadership from **Dr. Romy Kozak**, KPU's Director of Diversity, who for a number of years have provided a valuable forum for understanding and addressing the barriers and needs of KPU students and employees with disabilities.

In line with our commitment to transparency and accountability, we have established a public feedback process. We encourage all members of the KPU community to actively participate in this process and share their valuable insights and observations regarding accessibility challenges they may encounter. Your feedback is essential in driving positive change.

As we move forward, we are excited to be working with KPU's new VP, Equity and Inclusive Communities, Dr. Nadia Mallay toward the implementation of this plan's recommendations and the ongoing work of disability justice at KPU. We welcome further collaboration, support, and engagement across KPU. By uniting as one community, we can create a more equitable and inclusive environment for everyone.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Ann Marie Davison** (she/her)

Faculty, Biology Department

**Joshua Mitchell** (he/him)

Associate Vice-President, Student Affairs

# Accessibility Committee Members

**Cherylynn Bassani** is a Sociologist. Dr Bassani's current research and advocacy focuses on the areas of disability, violence and gender.

**Lynda Beveridge**, RCC (she/her) is the Director of student Counselling and Accessibility Services. Lynda is also a clinical counsellor with a practice that specializes in working with neurodivergent individuals.

**Rachel Chong** (she/her) is the Indigenous Engagement and Subject Liaison Librarian and the Accessible Services Librarian at KPU. She is also a member of Métis Nation BC.

**Ann Marie Davison** (she, her) has almost 30 years of experience as faculty member in the Biology department of the Faculty of Science and Horticulture, specializing in genetics. Currently, the favourite part of her job is working with research students. She has a rare congenital mobility impairment which is why she is seen zooming around the campuses of KPU in her scooter.

**Simon Driver** (he/him) is a white cis gendered able-bodied male. Simon is a full time KPU faculty member (Employment and Community Studies). Simon works to deepen his understanding of the privileges that his gender, race and University title provide him.

**Usha Gunatilake** (she/her) is the Kwantlen Students Association's Students with Disabilities Representative. She is honored to be able to work with the disability community at KPU and improve student life.

**Michelle Ikoma** (she/her/hers) is a BCGEU employee in the Faculty of Science and Horticulture. She has cerebral palsy (spasticity) and has experienced a variety of barriers and ableist attitudes throughout her life. She has been self-advocating and educating since her parents empowered her at the age of six.

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## ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE MEMBERS, CONTINUED

**Jennifer Lamont** (She/Her/Hers) is the Coordinator for Indigenous Student Transitions and Engagement, in the Indigenous Student Services department. Jennifer is an alumni of the Wilson School of Design at KPU with her BDes. She is Metis and suffers from arthritis in her hands, anxiety, migraines and insomnia. Jennifer has a son who is Autistic and advocates for him through her work and within the community.

**Nadia Mallay** (she/her/hers) holds the inaugural role of Vice President, Equity and Inclusive Communities, at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. At KPU, Dr. Mallay will build out the new Equity & Inclusive Communities portfolio and lead the next phase of equity work started by the KPU community. Dr. Mallay strives for meaningful and lasting positive change at KPU that creates an increased sense of belonging for all within and outside of the KPU community.

**Joshua Mitchell**, MA (he/him/his) is KPU's Associate Vice President, Student Affairs. Aligned with a divisional priority for promoting accessible and inclusive campus communities, Student Affairs is also home to KPU's Accessibility Services department, whose core mission is facilitating inclusive learning experiences and reducing barriers for students with disabilities.

**Alberta Mwangi** (she/her) is an Advisor of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at KPU.

**Trina Prince** (they/them) is very honoured to be the Manager, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at KPU. As a white, trans, non-binary, neurodivergent, disabled, fat person, they have a lot of intersecting identities that they love bringing to this work across the institute.

**Lesli Sangha** is a mature student of colour, disability mentor, author, and former Vice President of the Kwantlen Student Association (2021-2023). She is the recipient of multiple KPU awards in recognition of her work to create an accommodating and inclusive learning environment for all students. Her strong EDI advocacy led to a university policy revision that now allows part-time students with disabilities to access the Dean's Honour Roll. Her lived experience with complex health challenges helps guide her passionate quest for improved supports for all individuals with disabilities at KPU.

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## *ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE MEMBERS, CONTINUED*

**David Stewart**, MBA, CPA, CMA, PMP (he/him/his) is the Executive Director– Facilities Services. David’s team is committed to supporting people with disabilities by reducing and removing barriers in the built environment, enabling them to meaningfully participate with the KPU community.

**Alexandra Taylor** is a fourth year Political Science student and working as project support in KPU’s Campus and Community Planning Department. She is passionate about creating accessibility in post-secondary education and believes online learning platforms have untapped opportunities to remove economic and accessibility barriers.

**Katelyn Watson** (she/her) is an undergraduate psychology student and an avid researcher and advocate for accessibility in higher education, as well as pediatric chronic pain. Growing up with chronic illness and disability, Katelyn is well aware of the immense impact of (in)accessibility at all levels of education.

**Fiona Whittington-Walsh** (she/her) is a disabled white cis settler disability justice scholar. She is currently the university’s Lead Advisor on Disability, Accessibility, and Inclusion and past president of Inclusion BC. Her main area of focus is fully inclusive and accessible post-secondary opportunities for all students including students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

# An Unofficial History of Disability Justice at KPU

ANN MARIE DAVISON



When I first started working at what was then Kwantlen College in January 1995, the words equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) were rarely heard or seen. The only power doors were at the main entrances to each campus. Fortunately, things are quite different at KPU today.

Some support for EDI was present, primarily through the office of Services for Students with Disabilities, now known as Accessibility Services. While attending provincial union events, I often heard that KPU was a leader in ensuring that students with disabilities were given the accommodations required to enable them to succeed. Although there will always be room for improvement in this area, including suggestions made in this Accessibility Plan, KPU has always recognized the importance of including students with disabilities.

BEFORE



AFTER



Another long-standing avenue for EDI at KPU is the program originally called Access Programs for People with Disabilities, now known as the Employment and Community Studies

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# AN UNOFFICIAL HISTORY OF DISABILITY JUSTICE AT KPU, CONTINUED



Program (EACS). This program has provided vocational training and employment opportunities for students with diverse learning needs who would have been excluded from traditional post-secondary programs. KPU can be proud to say they have supported more than two thousand students through this program since its launch in 1981.

Although students with disabilities were being supported, when I tried asking where employees with disabilities were being supported, no clear answers were provided. I learned that I needed to speak up for what I needed, and that my union would support me when necessary. I met with the president of the institution to explain that accessibility needed to be considered for employees,

as well as students, which was a new concept for most people at that time. I discovered that the institution did not have a good understanding of how to support employees with disabilities, as evidenced by a registered letter delivered to my home on December 24th saying that my request for accommodation was being denied (fortunately that decision was reversed several months later).

Steps forward in supporting employees with disabilities were made with the launching of the Joint Faculty Rehabilitation Committee in 2002, and the formation of a similar committee for BCGEU employees several years later. These committees support employees who are unable to work due to illness or injury through a difficult period in their lives. I had the honour of serving with on the faculty rehab committee for 20 years, and the opportunity to assist many faculty in feeling included and getting the accommodations required for their return to work.

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## *AN UNOFFICIAL HISTORY OF DISABILITY JUSTICE AT KPU, CONTINUED*

EDI at KPU took another step forward with the formation of the President's Diversity and Equity Committee in 2012. This committee created a space for discussion of the needs of members of all equity-deserving groups at KPU. It was there that I started to see a shift in the previous "what are we obligated to do?" attitude to one of "what can we do?". Personal stories can have tremendous power in raising awareness and creating change. I'm very pleased to say that conversations at PDEC had a big impact on Facilities' approach to accessibility of the physical spaces at KPU. Facilities now is working towards making KPU an exemplar of post-secondary accessibility.

Dr. Romy Kozak, KPU's Director of Diversity, saw a need for a space for discussion of EDI focusing on disability issues, and brought together people from across the university to form the Disability Inclusion Group (DIG) in 2021. DIG has empowered students to achieve improvements in university processes to increase equity for students with disabilities. DIG has become a place for areas of the university to consult about accessibility issues. It is wonderful to see that KPU is becoming proactive in these areas.

Another EDI milestone at KPU was the hiring of Trina Prince into the new position of Manager of Equity, Diversity,

& Inclusion and the founding of the EDI office in Human Resources in January 2022. Trina and their colleagues have provided valuable input and support at PDEC, DIG and the Accessibility Committee.

In the spring of 2022, KPU created the Lead Advisor on Accessibility, Disability, and Inclusion position held by Dr. Fiona Whittington-Walsh. She serves as the leading academic voice on disability, accessibility and inclusion, and manages the Including All Citizens Pathway (IACP). The IACP has a unique pedagogical model that involves the full inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities into Faculty of Arts (FA) courses at KPU for credit and on an equal basis with other students.

The newest step in the evolution of EDI at KPU is the hiring of Dr. Nadia Mallay as our first VP, Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC) just a few months ago. One of the key recommendations of the Accessibility Plan, echoing those of the report of the Task Force on Antiracism and the EDI Action Plan, is the creation of a disability justice position in the EIC office. Twenty-eight years later, there will finally be a clear answer to the question of where employees with disabilities can go for support!



# Accessibility Initiatives at KPU

## 1. Lead Advisor on Accessibility, Disability, and Inclusion

**A.** In Spring 2022, [KPU announced the creation of this new position, click here to learn more](#). The Lead Advisor serves as the leading academic voice on disability, accessibility and inclusion, while providing advice, leadership, and research to the University community. The Lead Advisor also manages the Including All Citizens Pathway.

**B.** Including All Citizens Pathway (IACP):

The Including All Citizens Pathway (IACP) is one of the first pedagogical models that involves the full inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities into Faculty of Arts (FA) courses at KPU for credit and on an equal basis with other students. [Click here to learn more about the IACP](#). This model opens the doors of education by making existing university courses environments where all students can participate and succeed. Without adapting curriculum, the IACP uses the principles of universal design for learning (UDL) to transform teaching and deliver curriculum to a wide range of learners. This is a student-centred learning environment where everyone is included and valued on equal basis, thereby making it an exemplary learning experience for all and is one of the first fully inclusive, for-credit university certificate programs. Students in the IACP are working towards their Faculty of Arts, Certificate in Arts, an exit credential consisting of 30 academic credits (10 courses) that is fully transferable through the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer. The FAC pre-exists the IACP and is designed to provide an educational experience that prepares students for work, citizenship, and critical engagement with their communities. [Click here to read more about how KPU celebrated the first graduates of IACP in June 2021](#).

**C.** In 2015, KPU became the first post-secondary institute to be an affiliate member of Inclusion BC. Inclusion BC is a provincial non-profit organization that advocates for with families and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be fully included in all aspects of society. KPU provides a generous sponsorship for Inclusion BC's annual conference. [Click here to learn more about Inclusion BC](#).

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## ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES AT KPU, CONTINUED

**D.** In 2021, KPU became the first post-secondary institute in Canada to sign the proclamation declaring November as Indigenous Disability Awareness month. [Click here to learn more about Indigenous Disability Awareness.](#)

**E.** Fall 2022, the Lead Advisor worked with facilities in creating a gender neutral fully accessible changing station on Surrey campus. This is one of the first changing stations in a post-secondary campus in BC. [To learn more about the accessible changing station click here.](#)

**F.** Starting in Spring 2023, the Lead Advisor on Disability, Accessibility, and Inclusion has been working collaboratively with the Faculty of Arts, Facilities, and Accessibility Services, to create a pilot which will see the creation of a fully accessible and inclusive classroom on the Surrey Campus.

**G.** The Lead Advisor has worked with the Policy Writing Team in bringing an accessible and disability lens to the revisions of several Policies including:

- i. AR5 Dean's Honour Roll and Procedure
- ii. ST12 Academic Renewal and Procedure
- iii. ST13 Course Withdrawal and Procedure

**H.** Senate and Accessibility:

The KPU Board of Governors and Senate Offices are committed to increasing inclusivity and accessibility through their meetings and related documents. Both websites now include specific information under the heading Accessibility. These sections outline how meetings are being held and what format documents are provided. They also provide the option for additional supports and services to be requested. In addition, both Board and Senate and their committee meetings are held mostly on MS Teams, which offers transcription and recording capabilities. Agendas, minutes and cover sheets have been updated to align with accessible principles, including accessible fonts, removing tables and including written descriptions of charts. Conversations regarding accessibility and governance at KPU are ongoing and changes will continue to be made as information and feedback is received. [Click here to learn more about KPU Board of Governors.](#) [To learn more about Senate click here.](#)

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## ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES AT KPU, CONTINUED

### 2. Employment and Community Studies Program/EACS

The newly revised program has been improved by:

- A.** reducing admission requirements
- B.** embedding disability studies in the curriculum
- C.** a commitment to breaking down systemic barriers and challenging ableist attitudes in education and employment.

This program is:

- A.** Developing essential competencies including both digital and human literacies, creativity and self-expression, personal reflection, and community building.
- B.** Serving a diverse and dynamic student population by offering flexible approaches to learning, cross-departmental connections, and community partnerships. Notable developments include the creation of a Digital Learning Community, the development of a pilot Entrepreneurship Focus (supported through a collaboration with the Melville School of Business). Future initiatives include: engaging current EACS students in curriculum conversations supporting the development of an Entrepreneurial Pilot program, and re-shaping the EACS Advisory Board.
- C.** Emphasizing lifelong learning by providing opportunities for critical self-reflection, folio thinking approaches to teaching and learning. Notable developments include the use of PebblePad to support folio thinking in the classroom.
- D.** Fostering innovative teaching and learning approaches by incorporating relevant research and scholarship into the curriculum, as well as embracing new pedagogical methods that promote engagement and critical thinking. Notable developments include the hiring of EACS student learning assistants to provide mentorship and peer support in our Digital Learning Community and EACS courses.

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## ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES AT KPU, CONTINUED

**E.** Building community as EACS staff and faculty attend community events, transition fairs, and build community connections within KPU and beyond to ensure that students are well supported as they transition both towards our program and their next steps in learning, employment, and leadership. Recent examples include off site learning through the UBC Museum of Anthropology and participation at KPU's 2023 KDocs Social Justice Film Festival, and work experience placements including but not limited to: merchandizing, manufacturing, education, design and child care.

### 3. Provost's office

**A.** The customized CourseLeaf software that was launched in August, 2022, is ADA and WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) compliant. This software replaced a set of forms for course outlines that were developed on SharePoint. This software upgrade has made the course outlines accessible for screen readers and other visual assistive devices.

**B.** KPU is currently developing a second module of this software to replace all program development and revision forms, which will provide the same benefit.

### 4. Student Service Initiatives

**A.** Revision of Policy ST14 Services for Students with Disabilities (at consultation phase)

**B.** Enhanced budget for academic accommodations, including ASL interpreting

**C.** Alignment of practices, (including services and in-class practice enhancement and guidelines), with privacy legislation to ensure protection of personal information of students with disabilities

**D.** Worked with Facilities on ergonomic chairs for classrooms (growing the number of, and refreshing existing ones)

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# ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES AT KPU, CONTINUED

## 5. Trades

[Click here to learn more about the Introduction to Parts and Warehousing for People with Disabilities.](#)

Trades ran an intake in January 2023 and April 2023, but do not have any future intakes scheduled.

## 6. Library

- A. Jaws & zoomtext at all campus libraries (Cloverdale only on loaner laptop)
- B. Print enlarge stations at S, R, L
- C. Laptop loans with assistive technology
- D. White noise machine loans
- E. 3rd party book pick up options
- F. Braille on elevator and emergency exits
- G. Height adjustable desks (with a few more on order)
- H. Captioning and transcript of library produced instructional videos
- I. Captioning for some library films
- J. Library webpage on accessible services (to be expanded)
- K. Materials by people with diverse disabilities
- L. Noise zones for diverse study needs

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# ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES AT KPU, CONTINUED

## 7. Teaching and Learning Commons

### A. Technology Accessibility to Support Learning

[Click here to learn more about the Accessibility Teaching Resource.](#) This teaching resource site has been designed to provide KPU faculty and instructional staff with tools and strategies that can support technology for accessibility to provide students with more equitable learning experiences.

### B. Learning Technology Ecosystem: Accessibility features by platform

i. Moodle Learning Management System includes following accessibility features such as accessibility checker, screen reader checker, ability to add alt text, captions, transcripts etc.

ii. Venngage = accessible templates

iii. PebblePad – PebblePad public eportfolio on accessibility – [\(link Pebble+ Public \(pebblepad.co.uk\)\)](http://link Pebble+ Public (pebblepad.co.uk)) -note that this link and a screenshot is located under resources on ePortfolio Matters @KPU WordPress site here - Accessibility Features in PebblePad – ePortfolio Matters @KPU. Features include screen readers, keyboard shortcuts, design no-no's, and a list of resources. PebblePad also has alt text for images (though character space is somewhat limited).

iv. Padlet is compatible with screen reader software. Currently, the login page and the dashboard can be navigated through the keyboard.

### C. Accessibility Guidelines for Content, Communications Developed by Commons

At T&L Commons, we constantly develop creative works that includes video, audio, infographics, websites etc. To ensure that we communicate a message and create content that aligns with T&L values, Marketing guidelines, and audience appropriateness we have developed guidelines to assist you in your work. [Please click here and refer to this document](#) when creating content/communications developed in TL Commons.

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## ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES AT KPU, CONTINUED

### D. Designing for Accessibility Lunch & Learn Series

TL Commons is currently collaborating with Fiona Whittington-Walsh, Lead Advisor on Disability, Accessibility, and Inclusion to develop a series of lunch and learn sessions to be delivered for faculty related to designing courses keeping accessibility in mind.

## 8. Institute for Sustainable Horticulture

Facilities built a concrete ramp to our back door, and reversed the opening to make it accessible. Also, there is a cutout in line with the walkway that leads to the east doors and nursing wing.

In March, a plan for lab counters and cabinets upgrade was produced by an architect and they added several accessible features. The renovation would make the lab more accessible.

## 9. Physics

With the help of Facilities, an adjustable height table was purchased for a lab to make the lab more accessible to a student who uses a wheelchair.

## 10. Office of Global Engagement

**A.** attitudes and support, e.g. supporting students with learning disabilities to study abroad

**B.** virtual programming

**C.** expansion of funding, e.g., Access to Global Learning Award (AGLA)

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# ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES AT KPU, CONTINUED

## 11. Facilities

Over the past many years, Facilities Services has endeavoured to embed accessibility improvements in its projects, where appropriate, as a foundation of planning. In addition, capital funding streams have afforded opportunities to target deliberate accessibility improvement projects. These initiatives are generally planned and delivered in consultation with PDEC members and, more specifically, the Disability Inclusion Group (DIG).

### A. Capital Renewal Projects:

- i. Universal Access Design Audit of Surrey, Fir Bldg. to inform priorities for accessible upgrades
- ii. Fir Main floor washroom/shower station Universal Accessible Design (UAD) upgrades
- iii. All other Fir main, second, and third floor washroom upgrades to enhance accessible features
- iv. Numerous interior space, stairwell, accessible enhancements within Fir including infilling sunken inaccessible floor areas.
- v. New disabled access ramp in Surrey central courtyard (SE corner)
- vi. Wilson School of Design (WSOD) Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) Audit to inform priorities for accessible upgrades
- vii. Numerous interior space and furniture improvements within WSOD based on RHF audit
- viii. Design complete and moving to construction for new exterior disabled access ramp, Richmond north.
- ix. Expansion of south exterior plaza, Richmond to enhance access across eastern previously inaccessible portions
- x. 80% design ready package for future disabled access ramps upgrades, Richmond south concourse.

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## ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES AT KPU, CONTINUED

- xi. Langley main campus RHF Audit to inform priorities for accessibility improvements
- xii. Visual fire strobes at numerous campuses.
- xiii. Numerous and continuous annual power operated door installs targeting high profile public areas, conference centers, washrooms, and offices of the Deans, e.g., the office for the Dean of the Faculty of Science and Horticulture.
- xiv. UAD accessible elevator upgrades at Surrey, Langley, Richmond.
- xv. Hands-free main entrance doors at Langley, Surrey, Richmond (underway); KPU Tech future
- xvi. Numerous sidewalk curb let downs to enhance access from parking areas at Surrey and Langley
- xvii. Tim Hortons renovations include accessible features
- xviii. Installation of an adult changing table with a power operated lift in a single occupancy washroom in Fir main floor on the Surrey campus
- xix. Surrey, Birch building washroom improvements to enhance UAD (under construction)
- xx. Richmond 2nd and 3rd floor central washroom improvements to enhance UAD features (in design)
- xxi. Replacement of drinking fountains at all campuses; accessible height and bottle fillers
- xxii. Barrier free & accessible height menstrual products in all washrooms (in progress)
- xxiii. The Facilities Leadership team and the staff responsible for projects at KPU attended a training session created specifically for KPU by the Rick Hansen Foundation
- xxiv. Seeking funding to conduct RHF audits of all remaining KPU buildings
- xxv. Planning to install grab bars at men's urinals at all campuses (initial discussions and planning to start)

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## ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES AT KPU, CONTINUED

### **B. Furniture and Work Space Enhancements:**

- i. Surrey, Spruce – Chemistry Lab 108 and 110 – updated millwork and countertops include accessible height stations
- ii. Workstation Refresh – The office furniture in KPU International (Cedar 1145) and Facilities Services (Surrey Main 250) were refreshed with new open-concept workstations and ergonomic chairs.
- iii. Departmental Refreshes: The Psychology Lab (Fir 214), Creative Writing Faculty Office (Fir 330), and the Sociology Faculty Pod (Main 3850) were upgraded with new furniture.
- iv. Accessibility and Equity checklist created to support event planning
- v. Supporting the development of a fully accessible classroom pilot project, Surrey, Main bldg.
- vi. Surrey Cedar Boardroom redesign including various accessibility improvements including hearing loop and power operated blinds

## **12. Office of Planning & Accountability**

- A.** Has modified the Student Satisfaction Survey to include a focus on the experiences of students with disabilities.



# Executive Summary

Kwantlen Polytechnic University's (KPU's) first-ever Accessibility Plan seeks to address identified barriers and challenges to disability justice and inclusion through a series of recommendations to enhance accessibility, equity, and inclusion for our campus community. The plan is informed by the direct experience of students and employees with disabilities who serve on KPU's Accessibility Committee in addition to a synthesis of data from various sources, including recent surveys of students and employees. This plan identifies barriers across several categories and provides recommendations aligned with KPU's Vision 2026 themes.

The report identifies barriers to inclusion and accessibility for individuals with disabilities at KPU across seven categories: 1) Behaviours, Assumptions, Attitudes, and Perception; 2) Teaching and Learning; 3) Organizational Barriers; 4) KPU Community and Safety; 5) Financial Barriers; 6) Physical and Architectural Barriers; and 7) Information and Communication. The data analyzed in developing this plan and supported by insights into the lived experiences of members of KPU's Accessibility Committee, describe how barriers in each of these categories negatively impact students and employees with disabilities by hindering their educational experiences, professional growth, and overall well-being.

The recommendations in this plan aim to mitigate identified barriers and promote a more accessible and inclusive environment at KPU. Recommended actions align with KPU's Vision 2026 and its values, emphasizing equity and diverse perspectives. Recommendations are categorized under three key themes from KPU's Vision 2026: Student and Employee Experience; Creativity – innovation, teaching excellence, scholarship and research; and Justice.

**Experience** - The plan suggests enhancing the experiences of students and employees. Recommendations include cultural safety training, improved accessibility of course materials, flexible course offerings, and better navigation of admissions processes for students with disabilities. Employee-related recommendations involve revising accommodation policies and procedures, enhancing HR training, and improving workplace support for employees with disabilities.

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## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONTINUED***

**Creativity** - To promote teaching excellence and innovation, the plan proposes training on accessible curriculum design, ensuring accessible course materials, investing in technology for hybrid learning, and providing tools for faculty to support student accommodations. The plan also emphasizes the importance of disability-centered research, promoting the hiring of students with disabilities as research assistants, and ensuring funding opportunities for disability-focused research.

**Justice** - The plan aims to build a more just society through recommendations that support equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. Proposed actions include creating a specialized position for disability justice, collecting data on experiences of individuals with disabilities, offering education and training on disability history, and destigmatizing the term “disability.” The plan also emphasizes the need for physical accessibility audits, the promotion of accessible events, and the review of all policies with an accessibility lens.

While KPU’s Accessibility Plan provides a comprehensive overview of barriers faced by individuals with disabilities in our university community, this plan also acknowledges many progressive initiatives that are already underway. By addressing barriers identified in this plan we seek to create a more supportive and accessible environment, in line with KPU’s goals in Vision 2026. Implementing these recommendations will contribute to a more equitable and inclusive experience for all members of the KPU community, ensuring that individuals with disabilities can fully participate and thrive in all aspects of university life.

# KPU's Accessibility Action Plan 2023

## BARRIERS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Barriers

The Accessibility Action Plan barriers and recommendations were created out of a synthesis of the following:

- » Results of the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion: KPU: 2021 Diversity Census and Inclusion Survey
- » Results of the KPU's Student Satisfaction Survey 2022
- » Discussions of the KPU's Accessibility Committee
- » KPU's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Recommendations for Institutional Change (Draft 2023)
- » Review of the following:
  - » Accessible British Columbia Act
  - » Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee Final Recommendations (2022).
  - » City of Vancouver Accessibility Plan Phase 1 (2022).
  - » The Accessibility Standard for Information and Communication. Manitoba Accessibility Office.
  - » Low income among persons with a Disability in Canada. Statistics Canada. 2017.

Barriers were identified and grouped into the following categories:

1. Behaviours, Assumptions, Attitudes, and Perception
2. Teaching and Learning

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## ***BARRIERS, CONTINUED***

- 3. Organizational Barriers**
- 4. KPU Community and Safety**
- 5. Financial Barriers**
- 6. Physical and Architectural Barriers**
- 7. Information and Communication**

Lists of barriers and recommendations in each of the categories are given in no particular order. The Accessibility Committee chose not to attempt prioritization of these lists as doing so might not be equitable for people with a variety of disabilities.

### **1. Behaviours, Assumptions, Attitudes, and Perception**

The medical model frames the way that people understand disability. This understanding sees the person with the disability as a problem that needs to be cured. This further creates the belief that people with disabilities are not normal, cannot learn, and cannot be valuable, productive members of society. This has led to many people seeing the word disability as having negative connotations and the use of euphemisms to avoid the word altogether. The Accessibility Committee is not shy about using the word disability as our belief is that the word should not be seen as stigmatizing. The stigma associated with disability is part of the reason our society has yet to become fully accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities.

Negative attitudes about disability may contribute to the fact that KPU employees who identified as persons with a disability have higher rates of representation in more precarious and lower paid positions such as sessional faculty and part-time temporary roles than their overall representation at KPU (CCDI, 2021).

In the CCDI Survey, employees were asked to rank their agreement to the following baseline inclusion indicators:

- (1) KPU is committed to and supports diversity;

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## BARRIERS, CONTINUED

(2) At KPU I am treated fairly and with respect;

(3) At KPU my unique value is known and appreciated;

(4) At KPU, I feel included;

(5) I feel that KPU supports me in maintaining my overall physical and mental well-being.

Employees who identified as persons with a disability reported the lowest agreements in all five indicators. Women who identified as having a disability reported the lowest agreement for 3/5 baseline inclusion indicators (indicators 1, 3, 5) while men with a disability reported the lowest agreement in all 5 (CCDI).

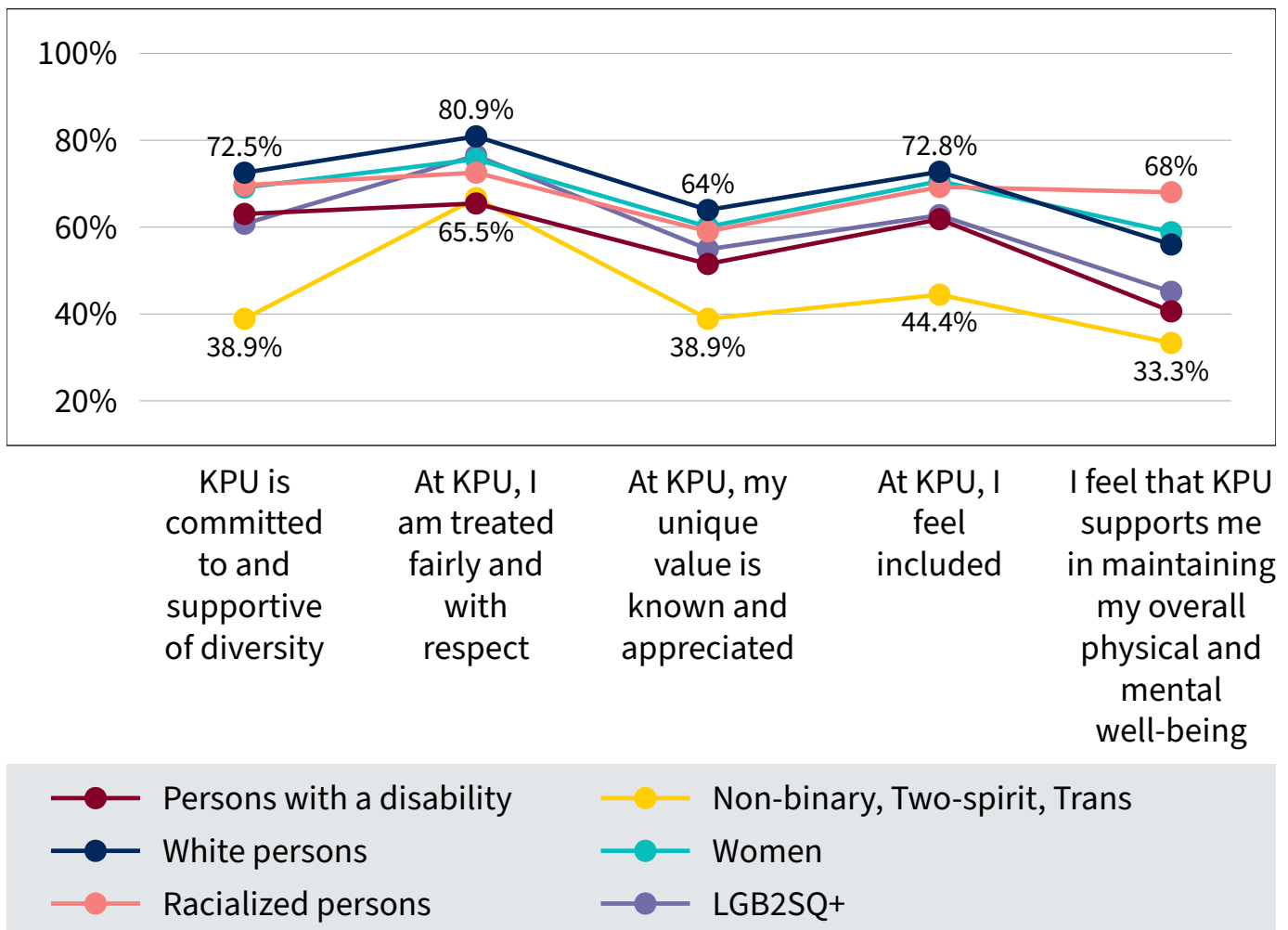


Figure 1: Inclusion indicators for Typically Underrepresented groups in the workplace (CCDI Figure 8)

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## ***BARRIERS, CONTINUED***

In the 2022 *KPU Student Satisfaction Survey*, students with a disability or ongoing medical condition were less likely (77%) to say they are satisfied with their overall educational experience at KPU compared to other students (84%). Students who identified as having a disability had a higher rate of disagreement to the statement “I am treated fairly at KPU regardless of my ability (e.g., physical, cognitive, sensory)”.

Similarly to both the EDI Action Plan and Task Force on Anti-Racism Report, education and training will be embedded within each barrier area.

### **Barriers:**

1. Stigma and negative attitudes about disability
2. Lack of understanding and/or willingness to understand disability issues
3. Lack of equal access for students with disabilities
4. Lack of equitable course load requirements for students with disabilities
5. Negative assumptions about the potential for relevant employment options for students with disabilities

## **2. Teaching and Learning**

KPU is a teaching focused institution and is committed to creating teaching and learning strategies that promote student success. However, students who identified as having a disability had markedly lower rates of agreement to

- (1) being satisfied with their educational experience at KPU,
- (2) that instructors create a climate supportive of diversity, and
- (3) culturally diverse viewpoints are explored in courses (SSS, 2022).

### **Barriers:**

1. Little access/transparency to course outlines/presentations before start of term

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## ***BARRIERS, CONTINUED***

- 2.** Inaccessible course documents
- 3.** Little faculty awareness of accommodation processes and options, including testing centre processes
- 4.** Lack of institutional support to ensure faculty provide accommodations
- 5.** Concerns regarding intellectual property mean few faculty openly share lecture notes or recorded lectures
- 6.** Insufficient technology to implement high-quality hybrid/hyflex options
- 7.** Insufficient understanding of available accessibility technology (i.e., to support high-quality/hyflex options, screen readers, text to speech/voice over, videos, etc.)
- 8.** Lack of training for and access to universally (or very easily) accessible adaptive equipment and software
- 9.** Difficult provisioning note takers
- 10.** Classroom spaces lack accessibility features for students and instructors
- 11.** Lack of part time options for some programs

### **3. Organizational Barriers**

Organizational barriers occur in accessing university wide services, including student admissions and accommodations, in hiring, and in employee accommodations.

The denial or delay in the provision of needed accommodations can be the biggest organizational barrier for both employees and students with disabilities. According to the most recent *Canadian Survey on Disability: Workplace Accommodations for Employees with Disabilities* (2017), 37% of employees with disabilities required at least one workplace accommodation (WPA) in order to be able to do their work. 59% of those employees had all their needs met, 40% still had at least one unmet need for WPA, while 20% of those had none of their needs met. Notably, 25% of employees with disabilities who have an unmet need for WPA actually made the request to their employer or supervisor for it.

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## ***BARRIERS, CONTINUED***

According to the results of the CCDI survey (2021), only 42.86% of KPU employees with disabilities receiving accommodations felt that KPU supported them in maintaining their overall physical and mental wellbeing in comparison to 64% of employees who do not have a disability. Only 39.71% of employees with disabilities who do not receive accommodations responded positively for that question. Further, when asked if they felt the person they report to promotes a respectful and inclusive workplace, 82% of employees without disabilities agreed, 76% of employees with disabilities who do not require accommodations agreed, but only 57% of employees with a disability requiring accommodations agreed.

Of students with a disability or ongoing medical condition who interacted with Accessibility Services, the vast majority were satisfied, however, 10% were dissatisfied (SSS, 2022). Of the students who requested accommodations, 22% reported not receiving the accommodations they requested and 26% felt that the accommodations received didn't meet their needs.

### **Barriers:**

- 1.** Accommodation policy for employees is based on the medical model that sees disability as a deficit, and HR is using a third party provider to adjudicate accommodation requests based solely on medical information.
- 2.** HR staff are not always educated on how to effectively implement an Accommodation Plan
- 3.** Lack of consistency with learning specialists and HR staff
- 4.** Lack of knowledge around accommodation process
- 5.** Lack of support in navigating systems for applying and registering for students with disabilities
- 6.** Lack of accessibility features on KPU websites, as well as many broken or outdated links
- 7.** Some web-based systems are not fully accessible, e.g., Taleo and Time/Pay Reporting

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## ***BARRIERS, CONTINUED***

8. Few job ads are inclusive for people with disabilities
9. Lack of disability representation in senior administration positions
10. Lack of flexible work options

### **4. KPU Community and Safety**

Students with disabilities report extremely low percentages of feeling part of the KPU community in comparison to their non-disabled peers. In particular, students who identified as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) had an agreement frequency of only 40%, while students who identified as being on the Autism Spectrum, having a learning disability, or physical disability, had agreement frequencies of 44-45%. Students without disabilities had agreement frequencies between 65-70%.

#### **Barriers:**

1. University-wide events are not fully accessible
2. Lack of knowledge regarding how to make events accessible
3. Lack of training regarding service animals
4. Lack of training for KPU's first responders regarding appropriate interactions with neurodivergent individuals
5. Inequitable safety provisions
  - A. No evacuation and emergency planning standards for people with disabilities
  - B. No evacuation chairs
  - C. Lack of knowledge on where safe zones are
  - D. Little awareness of emergency training with respect to disability, e.g., Earthquake training day - not everyone can drop etc.

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## BARRIERS, CONTINUED

### 5. Financial Barriers

People with disabilities experience lower rates of pay, up to 25% lower than their non-disabled peers. 23% of people with disabilities who are employed experience low income, compared with 9% of those without a disability. Further, despite being 18% of the overall population in Canada, people with disabilities make up 41% of the low-income population<sup>1</sup>.

The results of the SSS (2022) show that students with disabilities are concerned about their finances and are experiencing food insecurity. 76% of students with disabilities at KPU said they were anxious about their finances in comparison to 65% of students without disabilities (SSS, 2022). Further, only 48% of students with disabilities said they can always pay for their education and basic living expenses in comparison to 70% of students without disabilities (SSS, 2022). 53% of students with disabilities experience some level of food insecurity, compared to 40% of students without disabilities (SSS, 2022).

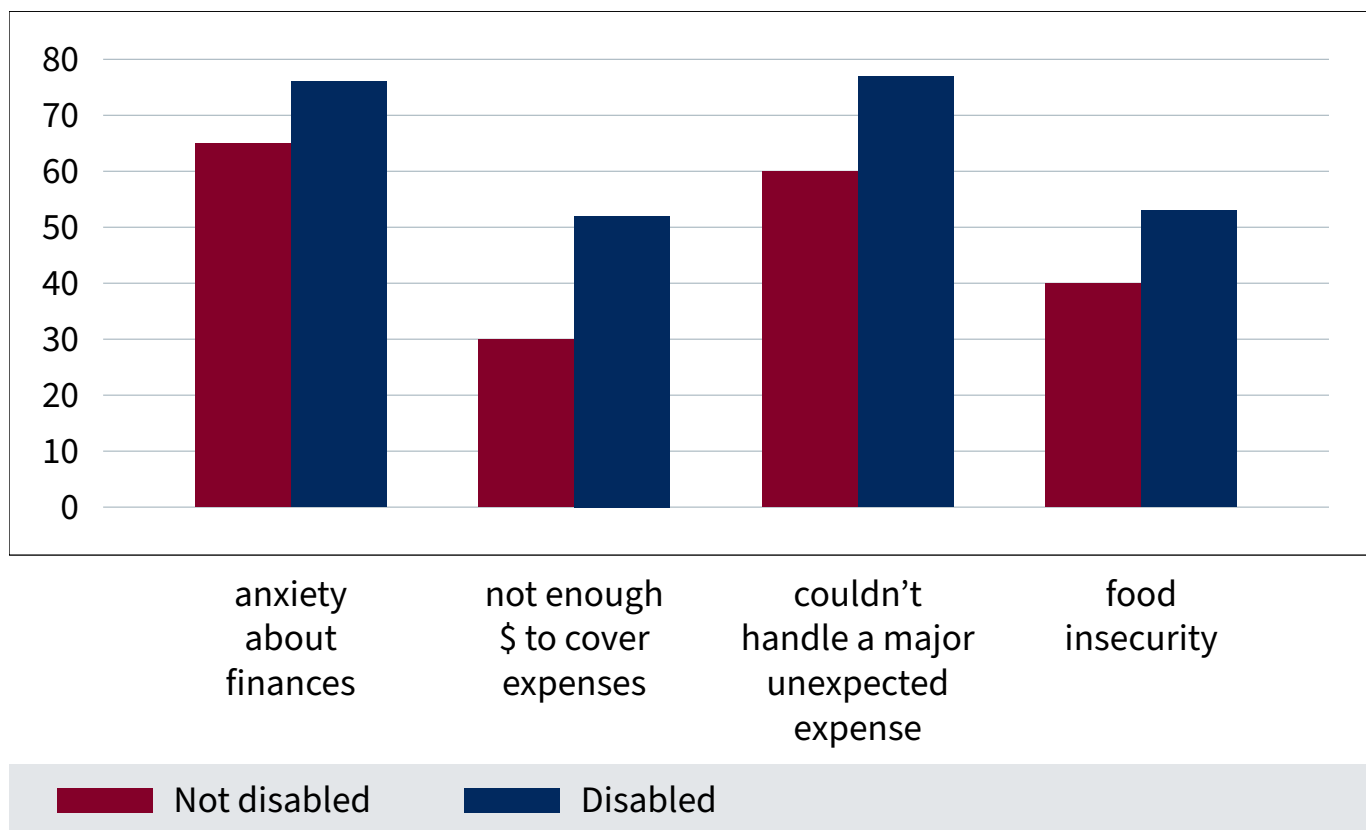


Figure 2: Financial barriers are higher for students with disabilities (SSS, 2022)

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<sup>1</sup><https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2017001/article/54854-eng.pdf>

## ***BARRIERS, CONTINUED***

KPU employees who identified as persons with a disability have higher rates of representation amongst sessional faculty and part-time temporary roles than their overall representation at KPU (CCDI, 2021).

### **Barriers:**

- 1.** Unequal access to scholarships for students with disabilities
- 2.** Information about Student Aid BC's policy for those with permanent disabilities not easily accessible
- 3.** High cost of psychoeducational testing
- 4.** PD allocations and requirements not always equitable for the needs of employees with disabilities
- 5.** Lack of assistance with Adult Upgrading Grant funding applications
- 6.** Lack of proportional representation of people with disabilities in permanent full-time positions

## **6. Physical and Architecture Barriers**

The Accessibility Committee identified numerous physical barriers from their own lived experiences. There has not been a comprehensive university-wide assessment of physical barriers. One of our recommendations is for KPU to perform accessibility audits on all campuses as well as within our information and communications systems.

### **Barriers:**

- 1.** Lack of accessible offices for student services: accessibility services, advising and counselling
- 2.** Physical interfacing service environment is not fully accessible (e.g., cafeteria, Tim Hortons, bookstore, etc.)
- 3.** Physical deterioration of old infrastructure causes inaccessibility, e.g., trip hazards

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## ***BARRIERS, CONTINUED***

- 4.** Most meeting room doors aren't automatic
- 5.** Elevators are not all fully accessible
- 6.** Not all washrooms have automatic door openers, rails etc.
- 7.** Lack of contrast and clear signage on glass doors
- 8.** Lack of van-accessible parking spaces
- 9.** Accessible parking spots do not have full signage information

### **7. Information and Communication**

There has not been a comprehensive university-wide assessment of communication barriers. The committee identified numerous barriers from their own lived experiences. One of our recommendations is for KPU to perform audits of our information and communications systems.

#### **Barriers:**

- 1.** Most KPU websites, including SharePoint sites, don't meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)
- 2.** Not all KPU online platforms work with Voice Over/Jaws and other screen readers
- 3.** Lack of accessible electronic equipment in classrooms
- 4.** Material is not often presented using multiple formats, and print material not always accessible
- 5.** Lack of Plain language documents and too many unexplained acronyms
- 6.** Difficulty finding the right/current information because of so much outdated materials accessed through search on the KPU website

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# Recommendations

The committee's recommendations to remove these barriers are presented in alignment with KPU's Vision 2026. One of the key Values identified in Vision 2026 is that of Equity:

*We strive to offer opportunities, supports and resources for all students and employees of equity-denied groups to ensure that they thrive and succeed. We do this by actively seeking out and considering diverse perspectives and experiences when making decisions, raising awareness and understanding of equity issues, and addressing and correcting systemic barriers that may exist for equity-denied groups (pg2).*

These recommendations are made with the understanding that any kind of accessibility measure is beneficial to everyone, not just people with disabilities. All of the recommendations will support KPU in satisfying the goals in Vision 2026.

Vision 2026 is organized around the following interconnected themes:

- 1. Experience:** Students and employees enjoy rich, engaging and supportive educational and working experiences
- 2. Sustainability:** Cultural, social, environmental and institutional sustainability are advanced
- 3. Creativity:** KPU's innovation, teaching excellence, scholarship and research benefit KPU, its students and society
- 4. Justice:** KPU will build on its history of openness and innovation to help build a more just society
- 5. Quality:** Continuous improvement builds confidence and reputation.

**A. Experience: Students and employees enjoy rich, engaging and supportive educational and working experiences.**

**A1. Goal: We will enhance the experience of our students**

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# RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED

## A1. Recommendations:

1. Investigate impact of admissions, registration, and fee deadlines on students with disabilities.
2. Provide cultural safety training regarding history of disability and accessibility.
3. Ensure there is greater understanding of what full time/part time education looks like for students with disabilities and investigate its impact on scholarships etc.
4. Offer more flexible course offerings.
5. Provide on-campus Braille printers with training for faculty, staff and students.
6. Investigate and implement alternatives for full-time cohort programs e.g., half-time cohort models.
7. Provide technological advancements in classrooms and train faculty to use the new technologies.
8. Provide trained people to support students with disabilities navigating the admissions process and registration, and accessing services to support them.
9. Provide clear navigation in admissions process by having information in multiple formats: e.g. video, website, audio, support person.
10. Ensure faculty are trained and supported with how to effectively implement a student's accommodation plan.
11. Complete revision of existing ST 14 Academic Accommodation Policy and Procedure, ensuring it is person centred and inclusive and that students are engaged with all stages regarding their accommodations.
12. Ensure all offices for student services and public interfacing services are accessible.
13. Provide more accessible equipment in classrooms e.g., ergonomic chairs, adjustable tables, flexible space.
14. Improve access to scholarships and awards for students with disabilities.
15. Provide additional resources for student services so that they can increase their services offerings (i.e. Accessibility Services, Testing Centre, Counsellors).

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# RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED

## **A2. Goal: We will enrich the experience of our employees**

### **A2. Recommendations:**

- 1.** Develop training for faculty and staff on disability, accessibility, and ableism.
- 2.** Revise existing Accommodation Policy and Process (HR 18) to be person centred and more inclusive. Employees need to be directly involved in the planning of and ultimate decisions regarding their accommodations.
- 3.** Increase investment in accessible technologies and training.
- 4.** Ensure that HR staff are fully trained on how to effectively design and implement an accommodation plan.
- 5.** Provide a separate university-wide budget for employee accommodations in order to provide timely accommodations.
- 6.** Improve accessibility in recruitment, hiring, and search committees in order to attract candidates with disabilities.
- 7.** Develop a guide in support of EDI and disability justice practices in recruitment, hiring, and onboarding for use by search committees, hiring managers, and HR representatives.
- 8.** Improve access to options for working from home for employees with disabilities (including casual service contracts) and for employees who provide care for disabled family members.
- 9.** Ensure all HR documents and forms are fully accessible.
- 10.** Ensure employees with disabilities have proportional representation in full time positions and executive administrative positions.

## **A3. Goal: We will support the health and wellness of our students and employees**

### **A3. Recommendations:**

- 1.** Develop a university wide Accessibility Policy.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED

2. Develop and implement evacuation and emergency planning and training for all employees e.g., investment in evacuation chairs, creation of and clearly identifying safe zones.
3. Ensure all KPU first responders receive training on de-escalation and inclusive, supportive interactions.
4. Develop a policy for Guide Dogs and service animals.
5. Revise HR 18 Accommodation Policy and Process for employees to be person centred and less about medical diagnosis. Employees need to be involved in the decisions to make sure they receive the supports they need.
6. Improve the extended health benefits packages for all employees from an equity and disability justice lens with a particular attention to offering flexible benefits packages and a broader range of professional services and benefits.
7. Complete revision of existing ST 14 Academic Accommodation Policy and Procedure, ensuring it is person centred and inclusive and that students are engaged with all stages regarding their accommodations.

### **C. Creativity: KPU's innovation, teaching excellence, scholarship and research benefit KPU, its students and society**

#### **C1. Goal: We will foster teaching excellence and expand innovation in teaching, learning and curriculum**

##### **C1. Recommendations:**

1. Develop training on design of accessible curriculum, documents, and course content. Training needs to include Universal Design for Learning and Inclusive Pedagogy.
2. Ensure that all curriculum development and course reviews include an accessibility section that demonstrates how accessibility is factored into the design.
3. Ensure that course syllabi are available in advance of term so that students and

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## RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED

accessibility services can plan accommodations.

4. Create a training tool for faculty to be able to understand and support student accommodations including Testing Centre process.
5. Significant investment in technology to implement high-quality hybrid/hyflex options.
6. Investigate and implement alternatives for providing course materials to students unable to attend class due to disability.
7. Develop the ability to seamlessly access text to speech/Voice Over on all learning materials.

### **C2. Goal: We will expand activity, funding, intensity and impact of research, scholarship and innovation partnerships**

#### **C2. Recommendations:**

1. Encourage the hiring of students with disabilities for work-study, student assistant and co-op positions.
2. Encourage the hiring of students with disabilities as research assistants.
3. Ensure that grants and other funding options for research recognize disability centred research.
4. Ensure that faculty with disabilities are supported with their research and supported with applications for research funding.
5. Maintain collaborations and relationships with disability organizations and encourage the development of new ones.
6. Develop training on designing accessible research methodology.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED

### **C3. Goal: We will embolden creative problem solving across KPU's operations**

#### **C3. Recommendations:**

1. Ensure all online platforms work with Voice Over/Jaws and other readers.
2. Ensure that all communications and documents are fully accessible including using Plain language and that all acronyms are fully explained.
3. Ensure all information on websites is regularly updated for accuracy.
4. Perform website accessibility audits and ensure all university websites including library, SharePoint, Taleo, etc. are fully accessible and meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
5. Develop an Accessible Meeting Guide.
6. Install automatic doors for meeting rooms and classrooms.
7. Ensure all renovation plans or new building designs increase accessibility.
8. Install EV charges in disabled parking spaces.
9. Provide van-accessible parking stalls with appropriate signage.
10. Make sure all wayfinding is fully accessible.

### **D. Justice: KPU will build on its history of openness and innovation to help build a more just society.**

### **D3. Goal: We will advance equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility across KPU**

#### **D3. Recommendations:**

1. Create a position in the office of the new VP Equity and Inclusive Communities specializing in disability justice and anti-ableism.

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## *RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED*

- 2.** Ensure that data is collected annually regarding the experiences of employees and students with disabilities while recognizing that people with disabilities have intersectional overlapping identities.
- 3.** Develop or resource available education and training on disability history and ableism for all employees and students.
- 4.** Develop a culture at the university that destigmatizes the use of the word disability.
- 5.** Develop a resource list for disability issues.
- 6.** Perform accessibility audits of physical and architectural environments on all campuses.
- 7.** Promote awareness and increase utilization of the Accessible Events Guide.
- 8.** Plan fully accessible events to promote disability justice for National AccessAbility Week.
- 9.** Ensure all policies are reviewed with an accessibility lens to meet current best practices.
- 10.** Ensure that all people hired through the procurement of goods and services are fully trained in accessibility and adhere to KPU's Vision.
- 11.** Create quiet spaces on all campuses and comfortable rooms for resting to support our neurodivergent population and individuals with disabilities.
- 12.** Maintain collaborations and relationships with disability justice organizations and encourage the development of new ones.

# Give Feedback on Accessibility

One of KPU's obligations under the Accessible BC Act (<https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/21019>) is to establish a process for receiving comments from the public on

- (a) the organization's accessibility plan, and
- (b) barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization. To that end, KPU has published a website with an online form for the submission of disability feedback comments (URL?). The website also has information regarding alternative methods for providing disability feedback. Below is a summary of what will be found on KPU's disability feedback website.

## Feedback form

Accessing services or working at Kwantlen Polytechnic University? Help us understand barriers faced at KPU by completing this online form or using one of the alternative contact methods listed below. Responses will be handled with discretion.

The form may be completed anonymously, and if completed this way we will not be able to contact you. If you choose to share your contact information, you may get a follow up request to understand your experience better.

## Ways to provide feedback

Make sure to include:

- » What you were trying to access or complete.
- » Where the barrier happened and what the barrier was.
- » Any recommendations to reduce or remove the barrier.

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# GIVE FEEDBACK ON ACCESSIBILITY, CONTINUED

## Online form

Submit your feedback through our online form.

You can attach files to help explain the barrier you faced in the form, such as

- » A video
- » A voice recording
- » Photos

Please do not include images or recordings of other people without their permission.

If American Sign Language (ASL) is the best way for you to communicate, you can upload a video of yourself using ASL into the form.

**Complete the form.**

## Email

Email your feedback to [disabilityfeedback@kpu.ca](mailto:disabilityfeedback@kpu.ca)

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# Frequently Asked Questions

## What will be done with my feedback?

The Office of Equity and Inclusive Communities will receive feedback. In order to address a barrier, the Vice-President Equity and Inclusive Communities will discretely share necessary information from the feedback with the relevant KPU team who can address the barrier.

Your feedback may influence:

- » Future KPU Accessibility plans
- » KPU policies and procedures
- » The physical environment at KPU
- » What we do to prevent barriers in the future

## How will I know if my feedback has been addressed?

As required by the [Accessible British Columbia Act](#), KPU will publish an Annual Report which describes the actions taken in the previous fiscal year to implement the Act. Part of this report will include how feedback is being addressed.

## Why are we asking for feedback on accessibility?

Barriers make it difficult for people with disabilities to experience full and equal participation at KPU, negatively impacting their feeling of inclusion and belonging. The lived experiences of our KPU community informs decisions and actions to addressing barriers people face. We are asking for feedback on KPU's programs and services to improve accessibility.

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, CONTINUED

### What do you mean by “accessibility”, “disability” and “barrier”?

Please see the definitions section of KPU’s Accessibility Plan below.

### Who can provide feedback?

We want feedback from anyone at KPU who:

- » Experiences a barrier
- » Witnesses someone experiencing a barrier

### What kind of feedback can I provide?

We want to know the specific barriers people face when they are trying to:

- » Access a program, location or information we offer
- » Receive a service or support
- » Apply for employment at KPU

We’re seeking:

- » Descriptions of experiences and how they impact you
- » Recommendations for how barriers can be removed

Some examples of barriers you could report:

- » Problems with physical access
- » A person that uses language that is degrading, harmful or inconsiderate of your disability
- » Forms that are not available in an accessible different format
- » Important videos without captioning or ASL alternatives

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, CONTINUED

### How will my privacy be protected?

The questions in the feedback survey are optional, including the contact information questions. If you do not share your name and contact information, your identity will be not known by the people who access the online form. What you share will never be held against you.

The questions in the feedback survey are there to help you provide us with information about barriers. You can share as much or as little as you want.

Any personal details you share will be kept safe as required under section 26(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. We will make every effort to protect privacy but can't guarantee total anonymity.

If you have questions about the collection, use and disclosure of your information, please contact Office of Equity and Inclusive Communities or [disabilityfeedback@kpu.ca](mailto:disabilityfeedback@kpu.ca)



# Accessibility Committee

## Definitions

### Accessibility

Accessibility means ensuring that environments (physical and virtual), information and communications, services, programs, activities, and opportunities are easy to understand, and barrier-free.

### Barrier

A barrier is anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with a disability. A barrier may be physical (including natural and/or built environment), technological, attitudinal, based on information or communications, or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice.

### Disability

“Disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person’s body and mind and features of the society in which they live. A disability can occur at any time in a person’s life; some people are born with a disability, while others develop a disability later in life. It can be permanent, temporary or episodic. Disability can steadily worsen, remain the same, or improve. It can be very mild to very severe. It can be the cause, as well as the result, of disease, illness, injury, or substance abuse... The social

model approach views disability as a natural part of society, where attitudes, stigma and prejudices present barriers to people with disabilities, and prevent or hinder their participation in mainstream society.”

**Source: Federal Disability Reference Guide (2013). Pg. 2.** [https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/esdc-edsc/migration/documents/eng/disability/arc/reference\\_guide.pdf](https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/esdc-edsc/migration/documents/eng/disability/arc/reference_guide.pdf)

### Inclusion

Inclusion is a universal human right and its objective is to accept, welcome and embrace all people. Inclusion consists of the efforts and practices to ensure groups or individuals are culturally and socially accepted, and treated equitably.

### Intersectionality

KPU recognizes the multi-dimensional nature of identity and the ways in which overlapping forms of oppression can impact individuals. KPU recognizes that when supporting diversity on our campuses and ensuring accessibility, it is important to support the multifaceted identities of members of our communities.



KWANTLEN  
POLYTECHNIC  
UNIVERSITY

## **KPU Civic Plaza**

13485 Central Ave  
Surrey, BC

## **KPU Langley**

20901 Langley Bypass  
Langley, BC

## **KPU Richmond**

8771 Lansdowne Rd  
Richmond, BC

## **KPU Surrey**

12666 72 Ave  
Surrey, BC

## **KPU Tech**

5500 180 St  
Surrey, BC

 [kpu.ca](https://www.kpu.ca)