

Accessibility Plan Report

Summary of feedback received on the draft plan | June-July 2023

On June 1, 2023—during national AccessAbility Week—the co-chairs of UVic’s Accessibility Committee shared UVic’s inaugural Accessibility Plan as a draft for community review and feedback ahead of the Sept. 1, 2023 launch.

From June 1 to July 31, faculty, staff, students and community members used the online feedback form or emailed accessibility@uvic.ca to share their feedback, suggestions and concerns. We thank all members of the community who took the time to review the draft plan, and to everyone who provided constructive and thoughtful feedback throughout the process.

Much of the community’s feedback related to UVic’s built environment. Individuals raised specific concerns about the Clearihue Building, Cornett Building, McKinnon Building, and parking lots. We also received feedback related to curriculum, instruction and academic accommodations—including an informative email from an experienced faculty member detailing his experience that the Deputy Provost followed-up on directly.

Examples of feedback received

Examples of positive feedback included:

- “I am very glad to see this effort.” – *Faculty member*
- “Looks great. Thanks for all your hard work!” – *Staff member*
- “I appreciate the clear language and visuals.” – *Anonymous*
- “Appreciate the principles and consultation that was engaged in.” – *Staff member*
- “Love that you are continuing to gather input and that this is intended to be an evolving, responsive plan.” – *Staff member*
- “I really like the 'take action' section. It shares responsibility in a really nice way, and has given me some things to think about.” – *Community member*

Examples of negative feedback included:

- “I’m unconvinced that the focus needs to be on doing more needs research when we haven’t implemented the Rick Hansen Accessibility Commitments and I wasn’t able to find any mention of them in the plan.” – *Staff member*
- “I don’t love a manage and collect feedback form without transparency of the kinds of requests we’re getting.” – *Staff member*
- “UVic needs to include accessible courses in their action plan.” – *Student*

- “This accessibility plan does not outline concrete steps for changing physical and evident accessibility issues, nor does it take adequate responsibility for the ongoing problems that UVic has with inaccessibility.” – *UVic staff member and alumni*

Actions taken to address feedback

In response to the feedback, and ahead of the Sept. 1 launch, we updated the Accessibility Plan to be more transparent and explicit about what we will do with feedback received, including on an ongoing basis. We committed to an annual summary, to be posted on the Accessibility Plan website and shared with the Accessibility Committee.

To address physical barriers, developing a priority list of buildings for retrofitting is an integral part of the annual Facilities Management (FMGT) renewals work. FMGT will skill up members of their planning team to implement an “accessibility lens” on all new builds and renovations. Their goal, through new infrastructure projects, is to meet or exceed Rick Hansen standards. Wayfinding is another way through which FMGT can develop a more accessible campus, aligned with the Indigenous Plan, the Campus Plan, and the Equity Action Plan. FMGT will continue to update the “Accessibility” section of their website to keep campus updated on efforts taken to improve the built environment, and we will showcase major initiatives and advancements through the Accessibility Plan as well.

On the academic side, we are encouraging instructors to incorporate [universal design](#) in their courses and assessments. Recognizing that it will take time for instructors to do this well, we are focusing on education, resources and communications for 2023/24, with an expectation that instructors will work to update their courses for 2024/25. The Division of Teaching and Learning Support and Innovation is a great resource for instructors and is working to demonstrate the benefit of universal design for all.

We also received some editorial suggestions that we gratefully incorporated.

For future consideration

Suggestions for consideration going forward, based on feedback received to date, include:

- “A shuttle would be a great idea!” – *Anonymous*
- “Synesthesia seems to be greatly overlooked in the world of ‘accommodation.’” – *Staff member*
- “I am wondering if you will be preparing a plain language summary and/or an ASL summary? I am engaged with self advocate communities where plain language inclusion is a major emphasis.” – *Community member*
- “[Suggestion to have] something like a 'site map' that shows what is under each of the plan nav bar sections (priorities, process, take action, resources).” – *Community member*
- “I would appreciate if the committee could include Exam Scheduling principles, the need for clear and reliable advice from CAL, and the particular challenges associated with large-

enrolment classes as topic to consider as you create and refine the Accessibility Plan.” – *Faculty member*

- “I would like to suggest adding some foundational training [for leaders and staff] on accessibility as part of their actions.” – *Staff member*
- “The barriers definition could be edited to emphasise that these barriers are due to society/communities rather than individual deficits.” – *Anonymous*
- “Reporting should be straightforward and easy to do either by phone or online (not just one or the other).” – *UVic staff member and alumni*

Thank you again to all members of our community for providing feedback, and to everyone who participated in earlier consultations and committee work.

As part of our commitment to accountability and transparency, the Accessibility Committee co-chairs aim to publish the next summary of feedback and steps taken to address feedback in 2024.