

**OPERATIONAL POLICY - Accessible Customer Service: Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities  
(APPROVED AUGUST 27, 2021)**

**Preamble**

The UTMSU is committed to providing a barrier-free environment for our members, clients/customers, patients, students, employees, job applicants, suppliers, visitors, and other stakeholders who enter our premises, access our information, or use our transportation services. As an organization, we respect and uphold the requirements set forth under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), Customer Service Standard, and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation for Information and Communications, Employment, and Transportation, and eventually, for the Built Environment.

**Scope**

The UTMSU's commitment to being accessible to all includes the integration of accessibility legislation with our policies, procedures, programs, events, campaigns, and training. These accessibility policies apply to the entire UTM community, including members, board members, staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors, and guests.

The full definition of disability, as stated in the Ontario Human Rights Code, is:

- a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- c) a learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) a mental disorder; or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

**Accessible Customer Service**

Communication

The UTMSU will strive to communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

### Assistive devices

Persons with disabilities are permitted to use personal assistive devices to access goods and services offered by the UTMSU.

An assistive device is any device that is used, designed, made or adapted to assist a person in performing a particular task. Assistive devices enable persons with disabilities to do everyday tasks such as moving, communicating, reading or lifting.

Examples of assistive devices include, but are not limited to the following:

- Wheelchairs
- Canes
- Walkers
- Assistive listening devices (FM systems)
- Laptops with screen-reading software or communicating capabilities
- Smart phones (i.e. wireless handheld devices)
- Hearing aids
- Global positioning system (GPS) devices
- Digital audio players
- Teletypewriters (TTY)
- Portable oxygen tanks
- Personal digital assistants
- Communication devices, such as voice-output systems or pictures/symbols

### Service Animals

Persons with disabilities are permitted to use service animals to access goods and services offered by the UTMSU.

A service animal is any guide dog or animal individually trained to assist a person with a disability. An animal is a service animal if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by a person for reasons relating to his or her disability or if the person has a letter from a physician verifying that the animal is required for reasons relating to his or her disability.

Service animals are permitted in all areas of the Students' Union premises to which students, staff, faculty and the public normally have access.

There are only a few exceptions where a service animal would be excluded by law, as in these examples.

- The Health Protection and Promotion Act(1990) does not allow animals in places where food is manufactured, prepared, processed, handled, served, displayed, stored, sold or offered for sale.

However, the Act does contain specific exemptions for service dogs only, allowing them to accompany their owners into areas where food is normally served, sold or offered for sale.

- Should municipal by-laws restrict certain breeds of animals or dogs from the municipality and these by-laws apply even if the animal is acting as a service animal.
- In unique situations where the presence of the animal presents a significant risk for another person (e.g. severe allergies), the university is required to meet the needs of both persons in these situations and must devise an accommodation plan that enables both persons to access services and goods accordingly.

### Support Persons

Persons with disabilities are permitted to use support persons to access goods and services offered by the UTMSU. When a support person accompanies a person with a disability to a UTMSU event for which there is an admission fee, the support person will not be charged admission.

A support person is someone either hired or chosen to help a person with a disability. A support person can be a personal support worker, a volunteer, a family member or spouse or a friend of the person with the disability. The UTMSU believes that a support person, in some cases, does not necessarily need to have special training or qualifications.

Support persons may provide one or more types of assistance.

- Transportation
- Guiding a person with a vision loss
- Adaptive communication (e.g., Intervener for someone who is deaf/blind)
- Interpretation (e.g., ASL/English interpreter, LSQ/French interpreter)
- Note-taking, scribe or reading services (usually coordinated by disability or library services offices)
- Personal care assistance
- Support persons in the event of a seizure (e.g., protect from falls)
- Interpret and speak on behalf of someone with a speech disability

### Notice of Service Disruptions

#### **Planned Service Disruptions:**

The University of Toronto Mississauga will provide notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The UTMSU will coordinate with the University to distribute the information to our members.

#### **Unplanned Service Disruptions:**

In the event of an unplanned service disruption, the University of Toronto Mississauga will send a notification to the University community as soon as possible, in order for the details to be forwarded to self-registered persons with disabilities.

When unplanned service disruptions occur to UTMSU services or the Student Centre, notice will be provided in visible places, on UTMSU social media or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as reasonably possible.

### Training

The UTMSU will deliver training to all persons to whom this policy applies as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. The amount and format of training given will be tailored to suit each person's interactions with the customer and their involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person

### Feedback Process

The UTMSU is committed to providing high quality goods and services to all members. Feedback is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements.

Feedback about the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods.

Information about the feedback process will be readily available to the public and notice of the process will be posted on the UTMSU website and/or in other appropriate locations.

### Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

The UTMSU shall, upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities.

This will be done in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.