



MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2021 – 2022 PROGRESS REPORT

“Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious. And however difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at.”

~ Stephen Hawking



PERIMETER  INSTITUTE FOR THEORETICAL PHYSICS

ACCESSIBILITY WORK GROUP

Perimeter's Accessibility Working Group is made up of key Perimeter residents who provide their skills and expertise on a voluntary basis. The group endeavours to identify and remove or mitigate potential barriers to accessibility, develop additional resources for those with accessibility needs, and support internal programs.

Angela Woods, Senior Business Partner, People and Culture

Dan Wohns, Assistant Director, Academic Programs

Dustin Windibank, Associate Director, Software and Data Services

Lee Smolin, Faculty

Jen Giller, Digital Marketing Manager

Charlotte Prong, Senior Writer/Editor, Reporting Lead

Amy Patterson, Facilities/Space Planning Coordinator

Angela Hovdestad, Program Manager, Academic Programs

Dustin Lang, Computational Scientist

Emma Nichols, Educational Outreach Program Manager

Caroline Lima, Resident PhD Student

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the spirit of understanding and learning from what has come before, Perimeter respectfully acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron, Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. In particular, we acknowledge that the Institute is located on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to the Six Nations of the Grand River and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

As settlers, we thank all the generations of people who have taken care of this land for thousands of years. We commit collectively to making the promise and the challenge of Truth and Reconciliation real in our community.

REPORT DETAILS

Included in this report is a summary of the progress made towards the five key areas identified in Perimeter's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to improve accessibility. The Accessibility Working Group, in partnership with the Institute, continues to identify areas for improvement while working towards a shared goal to increase inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility in our community.

UPDATE 2021 – 2022:

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

GOALS:

Over the next several years, Perimeter will develop and deliver accessibility training specific to programs, systems, and platforms used to conduct research and business within the Institute. Additional web accessibility training will be provided to teams and individual content managers who manage content on our websites. Internal and external experts will be consulted in the development of training materials.

UPDATE:

2022 – Accessible learning moments were introduced to Administrative Town Hall meetings, providing learning opportunities and ways to integrate accessible practices into daily work and research activity. Informative ‘how to’ and ‘tips and tricks’ resources have been shared on Perimeter’s intranet, including resources for Zoom meetings and presentations, hybrid meetings, PowerPoint, Google Docs and Slides and Slack. All residents are encouraged to incorporate these practices into their work and research. In this way we are working together to provide an inclusive experience for all.

ACCOMMODATION

GOALS:

Program managers and Visitor Services will direct all inquiries related to accommodation to the People & Culture team for consideration. A centralized process will ensure consistent quality of support and service across the Institute. People & Culture will work with the individual to determine appropriate accommodation.

UPDATE:

2021 – In partnership with the People and Culture team, program managers and Visitor Services were consulted to gain a deeper understanding of their onboarding processes and interactions with those they serve. Throughout this consultative process the group worked to understand areas of importance and impact. Additional opportunities to bring awareness to Perimeter’s accessibility program were identified and implemented, including ongoing opportunities to communicate the option to request accommodation. All inquiries and questions moving forward are directed to People and Culture to ensure all individuals receive equitable support and to recognise patterns or areas for improvement in our practices and processes. The centralized process also maintains the confidentiality of those involved. As each case is unique, People and Culture works closely with the individual to establish a support plan that enables them to meaningfully participate in their work/research. With an established central contact email, accessibility@pitp.ca, applicants, visitors, employees, students, and community members may reach out for support and with general inquiries.

INTERNAL CONTRIBUTORS

GOALS:

The Accessibility Working Group will survey the Institute for individuals with special skill sets or knowledge related to accessibility who are willing to share their skill set with others. These individuals may be called on for support or to share their expertise as needed. We all have a shared responsibility to provide an inclusive environment and celebrate the special skills our residents bring to the Institute.

UPDATE:

2021 – In support of a respectful and inclusive environment, Perimeter residents participated in an internal Skills and Experience survey. Several unique skill sets were identified; additional languages spoken, American Sign Language communication, accessibility design certification, lived experience assisting an individual with a disability, and accessible formatting experience for specific systems. The Accessibility Working Group worked closely with the People and Culture team to ensure privacy for those responding to the Institute-wide survey. Respondents elected whether they were comfortable lending their expertise on an as-needed basis to those who may require immediate support. 73% of respondents who identified a special skill set were willing to lend their expertise to assist a PI resident or visitor should there be a need for immediate support.

FACILITIES

GOALS:

Perimeter's Facilities team will review the building and re-assess the overall physical accessibility in the coming year. Recommendations for improvement will be put forth to the senior leadership team for review.

UPDATE:

2021 - Perimeter prides itself on the contributions made by its community members and the expertise they provide. In order to accurately assess and improve our physical space, Perimeter invested in certifying a key member of the Accessibility Working Group, the Facilities/Space Planning Coordinator, in Accessible Spaces 101. PowerED partnered with the Rick Hansen Foundation to deliver this course which examines the impact of social and physical environment on people with disabilities and introduces the application of universal design for creating meaningful access. An understanding of how people with disabilities interact with the built environment is foundational to the course. An understanding of how to apply universal design principles to designing, operating, and delivering services in physical spaces is explored in depth.

2022 – Following the certification of Perimeter's Facilities/Space Planning Coordinator in Accessible Spaces 101, an accessibility space review was undertaken. Perimeter's physical space was reviewed in depth, following criteria developed by the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Program. This assessment covered 10 different sections with 8 of those being relevant to Perimeter. Overall, Perimeter scored average with areas of improvement. The results were translated into a spreadsheet with priority ratings (high, medium, low) based on the actions' overall impact to Perimeter. This spreadsheet was shared with the committee. From here, the Facilities/Space Planning Coordinator will work with the Facilities Manager to complete high priority items over the course of the next few years.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

GOALS:

Perimeter will meet or exceed industry standards for accessibility in future teacher guides and videos. Existing materials will be converted into fully accessible formats as needed, taking into account the accessibility needs of the person with a disability.

UPDATE:

2022 - Perimeter's Educational Outreach team, who work with editors and designers, continues to develop new accessible content. All newly developed digital resources are AODA compliant. Each document is put through a PDF Accessibility Checker (PAC) to ensure compliance. In addition to this, online course videos have closed captions. This ensures all teachers and students can navigate our resources and materials in an accessible way.

NEXT STEPS

Perimeter recognizes the measures and practices individual departments have established to increase accessibility for all who interact with the Institute. The 2021 - 2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan has set ambitious goals to help the Institute continue to move forward, building on what we learn along the way. As we make progress towards our goals, we continue to assess opportunities for continued improvement and build in supports to promote inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility in our community.



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