

Accessible Education User Testing Group – Terms of Reference

Purpose

Based on the principle that accessible education is better education, UW envisions a post-secondary education experience for learners where accessibility is at the forefront of what we do. Leveraging the AODA's post-secondary education standard recommendations that were written by experts with disability lived experience in post-secondary education sector, the Teaching Innovation Incubator (the “Incubator”) is supporting the [Accessible Education project](#) to ensure that the University of Waterloo is a leader in promoting accessibility in our teaching and learning. Part of this work includes developing resources and processes for use across campus to enhance accessible education for instructors and students alike.

To ensure that these resources and processes address and reflect our community’s needs, the Incubator is seeking support from University of Waterloo faculty, staff, and students who have an interest in providing feedback and enhancing their knowledge about accessible education by participating in an Accessible Education User Testing Group (the “User Testing Group”).

Statement on Incorporating Disabled Voices

The work proposed in the User Testing Group will directly impact the experiences of our disabled learners and UW community. We acknowledge that our work cannot be done without robust consultation and relationship building with our disabled community. In an effort to ensure no one needs to disclose their disability should they choose not to, disabled members of our UW community will not be **directly** solicited to join this project; rather, disabled voices will be prominent and given priority to provide input and feedback throughout the project’s lifecycle. Mechanisms to do so include establishing an open-membership *Disability Trust* that comprises individuals who have willingly self-declared their disability and want to be part of conversations about making teaching and learning at UW fully accessible. A province-wide group of disabled voices is always being considered to ensure post-secondary institutions have a group of willing voices to receive feedback from on accessibility that are not contextualized around a given institution’s culture.

For the purposes of the User Testing Group, members will be given the opportunity to identify as a person with a disability, but are not required to do so, and participation in the User Testing Group will not be impacted by their choice.

Objectives

The following are core objectives of this work:

- Trial various resources and processes developed by Accessible Education project teams and their partners.
- Share feedback and insight through various modalities (email, focus groups, collaborative documents, etc.).

Membership

Two separate User Testing Groups will be developed:

- one student-oriented
- one faculty/staff-oriented

Students and faculty representing all six faculties and staff representing a variety of ASUs will be sought after.

There are no specific limits on membership. Each group will be comprised of any number of individuals who are able to trial resources and share feedback. During periods of feedback provision or resource trialing, a minimum of five members from each group will be requested to participate.

Student participants in the User Testing Group can expect to receive equitable compensation for their time spent reviewing the artifacts produced by the accessible education project. Faculty and staff can and should acknowledge their contributions to this important work as going beyond what happens in the classroom or the types of teaching and learning that they support in their role.

Roles & Time Investment

Faculty, staff, and students are all busy, so participation in the User Testing Group is not intended to be an extraordinary time investment. Due to the nature of the Accessible Education project and the resources and processes being developed, there will be no standard period of time during which members of the User Testing Group will be asked to be available.

Rather, when there is a deliverable that is ready for feedback, members of the User Testing Groups will be asked to confirm their availability. A subset of each group will be identified by the Incubator to engage in user testing and provide feedback (either synchronously or asynchronously, depending on the task and the individual's capacity), taking into account department/unit and role diversity. Time investment will therefore vary, but User Testing Group members can likely expect at most one request per term for participation.

The User Testing Groups will be facilitated by the Incubator and the Research Coordinator for the Accessible Education project. Members of the User Testing Group will be invited to act as user testers and share thoughts, feedback and insight through various channels as coordinated by the Research Coordinator.

Due to the multi-year nature of this work, commitment to participate throughout the entirety of this project is not required. User Testing Group members may establish upfront how long they can participate in the User Testing Group, and at any point in time ask to step away from this work. Members can direct their notice that they will be stepping away from the User Testing Group by reaching out to Kyle Scholz, Interim Managing Director of the Incubator.

Timeline

The Accessible Education project is a multi-year project that began in early 2023 and is expected to be completed within three to four years. User testing is expected to begin in Spring 2024.