

Accessible Media Policy

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PURPOSE

This policy establishes guidelines and procedures for ensuring all media resources, including audio-visual, audio-only and print materials are accessible to and inclusive of the diverse learning and teaching needs of all students and employees of the college.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the college as well as volunteers, guest speakers and any others, including third parties, who design, adopt, or procure educational materials and resources including, but not limited to: audio-visual media, audio recordings, print materials, e-books, course packs, e-learning platforms, online networking or conferencing platforms, interactive and instructional online management systems. Media produced by students as part of course requirements is not governed by this policy; however, students are strongly encouraged to follow universal design best practices to produce accessible and inclusive media. George Brown College’s Accessible Media Policy will govern how accessibility will be achieved through meeting and exceeding the requirements referred to in the *O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11*.

DEFINITIONS

This section includes an explanation of terms and abbreviations used within this document.

Word/Term	Definition
Accessible Media	Communication in the form of live or pre-recorded audio-visual media, audio recordings or live events designed to be inclusive of users’ diverse range of abilities with closed captioning, described video, transcript or live captioning
Audio Recording	Digital or physical media containing a voice recording (i.e. podcast)
Blackboard Collaborate Live Captioning	Available for Blackboard Collaborate online sessions, remote caption writers provide live, synchronous closed captioning during the session.
CART (Communication Access Real-time Translation)	A service provided by a caption writer either in person or remotely for a live event (i.e.) convocation ceremony. Captioning is projected on a screen for the audience to read in real-time with the dialogue.
Closed Captioning	Audio-visual media that has the option to display on-screen the verbatim, synchronized text of the dialogue and other auditory information. Typically indicated by this symbol 
Described Video	Narrated voice-over description of a program’s key visual elements necessary to provide context, such as setting, body language and costumes. Typically indicated by this symbol 
E-text	An accessible, electronic file version of traditional print material (textbooks, course packs) that can be converted or adapted to the users’ needs such as Braille, audio, large print and compatible with adaptive technology
OCR Optical character recognition	A technology that enables the conversion of different types of documents into editable and searchable data. OCR software is required to extract and re-purpose data from scanned documents, camera images or image-only PDFs, so that the original document can be accessed and edited.

POLICY

1.1 Background

George Brown College is dedicated to the fundamental principles of equity and accessibility by supporting an inclusive and universally designed learning and working environment that provides all students, employees and members of the community equitable access to print materials, audio-visual media, audio recordings and live events made available on various applications and platforms. Since 2005, the college has taken a leadership role with accessible media, exceeding the requirements and timelines of the AODA by establishing and implementing a universal design approach to reducing and removing barriers to an inclusive and equitable teaching, learning and working environment.

1.2 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The AODA became law on June 13, 2005. Under this landmark legislation, the government of Ontario developed mandatory accessibility standards that identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. Effective July 1, 2016, the *Information and Communications Standards* (which came into effect on January 1, 2008), have been consolidated with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards* into one regulation, the *O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards (under Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11)*.

Relevant sections from the *Integrated Accessibility Standards* include:

- Section 17 (1), (2) which stipulates that producers of educational or training textbooks for educational or training institutions will, upon request, make accessible or conversion ready versions of textbooks; and producers of print-based educational or training supplementary learning resources for educational or training institutions will, upon request, make accessible or conversion ready versions of the printed materials available to the institutions.
- Section 18 (1) which requires libraries of educational and training institutions to provide, procure or acquire an accessible or conversion ready format of print, digital or multimedia resources or materials for a person with a disability, upon request.

1.3 College Policy

In accordance with George Brown College policy, all audio-visual media and all print materials purchased, produced, or used by employees or any materials published on any college platform (websites, social media, intranets, etc.), must be available in an accessible format. The college's [Accessible Media Co-ordinator](#) facilitates accessible media services by request, such as closed captioning, described video and transcription services, as required. They are also responsible for collaborating with all employees in the review, selection and quality assurance of accessible educational materials, resources and platforms in advance of use, publication or adoption.

All audio-visual media, audio recordings and live events produced, presented or procured by the college must be accessible with closed captioning, described video, transcripts or real-time captioning and must comply with the accessibility standards as approved by the college's [Accessible Media Co-ordinator](#).

All print materials produced or provided by employees of the college must be available in an accessible, OCR electronic format, compatible with adaptive technology. This includes: promotional materials, textbooks, course packs, course outlines, reading lists, assignments, articles, tests, examinations, notes and any other handouts, pamphlets or materials distributed or assigned to students.

This policy will provide clear guidelines on the process for requesting accessible services for media (including pre-recorded and real-time audio-visual) and for print materials.

1.4 Compliance

The college's Accessible Media policy is not a replacement or substitution for the requirements established under the Human Rights Code, nor does it limit any obligations owed to persons with disabilities under any other legislation (O. Reg. 191/11, s.1 (2)).

George Brown College will ensure compliance with all related college policies and all other applicable legislation, including:

- *Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19*
- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11*
- *O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards*

If any such laws conflict, the provision that provides the highest level of accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services or accommodations is the law that will be followed (*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11, s.38*).

1.5 Budgetary Requirements

As part of the commitment to accessibility and inclusion, George Brown College will allocate a centralized budget for accessible media services including closed captioning, described video, transcription, live captioning and CART.

2.1 Accessible Media

2.2 Materials Selection

All employees at George Brown College have obligations related to principles of accommodation and accessible resources, including the selection and procurement of materials:

- All audio-visual media purchased, produced or used by an employee of the college for such purposes as instruction, information, marketing and promotion must be closed captioned; or permission to caption must be granted by the copyright owner prior to procuring or using.
- When selecting materials, please be advised that transcripts are not a substitute for the closed captioning of audio-visual media and service providers such as American Sign Language interpreters and computerized notetakers. They do not translate or transcribe audio-visual media as a substitute for closed captioning.
- All media available through the college library collection is either closed captioned or can be closed captioned upon request. Library resources provide many options for the selection of accessible materials, including: [traditional, streamed and subscription-based media](#).
- The consideration or utilization of applications and platforms containing audio-visual media for use, purchase or subscription must have closed captioning and must be evaluated by the [Accessible Media Co-ordinator](#) prior to procurement to ensure compliance with accessibility standards, in advance.

2.3 Roles and Responsibilities

All employees at George Brown College are responsible for ensuring they are providing access to accessible audio-visual media that is purchased, produced, published or used at the college.

2.4 Accessible Media Services

The college offers several services that support accessible media, as outlined below.

2.3.1. Closed Captioning

Closed captioning is required for all audio-visual media used by employees of the college for such purposes as instruction, information, marketing and promotion. It is the employee's responsibility to provide the media to the [Accessible Media Co-ordinator](#) to facilitate this service.

2.3.2 Described Video

This service is provided upon request by an employee of the college or on behalf of a student with an accommodation plan. When described video is required, it is the employee's responsibility to provide the media to the [Accessible Media Co-ordinator](#) to facilitate this service.

2.3.3 Transcription

This service is provided for media with an audio-only component (i.e. podcast). For such audio recordings, a verbatim transcript of the dialogue must accompany the recording. When transcription is required, it is the employee's responsibility to provide the media to the [Accessible Media Co-ordinator](#) to facilitate this service.

2.3.4 Blackboard Collaborate Live Captioning

This service provides live captioning for online course sessions. Requests for live captioning must be made to the [Accessible Media Co-ordinator](#).

2.3.5 CART

This service is available upon request for college-wide events (i.e. convocation ceremony) and facilitated by the [Accessible Learning Services](#).

3.1 Accessible Print Materials

3.2 Materials Selection

All employees at George Brown College have obligations related to principles of accommodation and accessible resources, including the selection of materials. All printed materials selected, produced or provided by employees of the college must be available in an accessible, OCR conversion-ready format, compatible with adaptive technologies. This includes textbooks, course packs, promotional materials, course outlines, reading lists, assignments, articles, tests, examinations, notes and any other handouts distributed or assigned to students.

3.3 Roles and Responsibilities

The college offers several services that support accessible print materials and facilitate the provision of print materials in accessible, electronic formats, in accordance with the following roles and responsibilities:

- The [college bookstore](#) and [copyright clearance vendor](#) are responsible for reviewing print material to determine availability of textbooks and course packs in accessible, electronic formats and compliance with copyright regulations.
- The college's [liaison librarians](#) are available to consult on alternatives to printed course packs using electronic library materials. Links to library journal articles, eBooks, streamed audio-visual media, can be integrated within the course management system.
- [Accessible Learning Services](#) is responsible for advising faculty on accessible course materials to ensure compliance with accessibility standards and provide conversion-ready accessible materials in multiple formats, as required.
- [E-Learning and Innovation](#) is responsible for the college's course management system. Integrated with this system is Ally, a software that automatically evaluates uploaded documents for compliance with accessibility standards and provides guidance on improving document accessibility.
- [Employee Learning & Development](#) and the Teaching and Learning Exchange offer sessions that support principles of universal design for learning as well as training for creating accessible documents. Additional teaching and learning support and resources can be found on the [college website](#).

NON-COMPLIANCE IMPLICATIONS

This policy has been sanctioned by the Board of Governors, requiring compliance across the college.

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, George Brown College is also subject to the administrative penalties outlined in the GBC AODA Accessibility Policy, if deemed non-compliant by the Director of the Accessibility Directorate.

All employees are expected to abide by the relevant Employee Code of Conduct and operational policies of the college.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendix 1: Procedures under this Policy

RELATED POLICIES

The following policies, procedures and resources can be located on the George Brown College Policies page or on the college's intranet site:

- Accessible Learning Policy
- AODA Accessibility Policy
- Copyright Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct – Academic Staff
- Employee Code of Conduct – Administrative Staff
- Employee Code of Conduct – Support Staff
- Human Rights Discrimination and Harassment Policy

APPENDIX 1: PROCEDURES

Actions and Responsibilities for Accessible Services

	<u>Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Timeline for Requesting Service</u>
1	Closed captioning for pre-recorded media	Accessible Media Co-ordinator, Academic Services & Learning Resources	1 to 2 weeks in advance. Expedited service is available.
2	Described video for pre-recorded media	Accessible Media Co-ordinator, Academic Services & Learning Resources	3 to 4 weeks in advance. This service is only available for students with an accommodation plan or for employees upon request.
3	Transcription for audio recordings, (i.e.) podcasts	Accessible Media Co-ordinator, Academic Services & Learning Resources	1 week in advance. Expedited service is available.
4	Blackboard Collaborate live captioning for online course sessions	Accessible Media Co-ordinator, Academic Services & Learning Resources	2 business days in advance of session. This service is only available for students with an accommodation plan or for employees upon request.
5	CART for college events (i.e.) convocation ceremony	ASL Interpreter for GBC Employees	2 weeks in advance
6	Textbooks and accessible course packs in electronic format	Manager, Business Services Student Experience and Business Services	4 months in advance
7	Convert textbooks and accessible course materials into alternative formats (Braille, large print, audio)	Adaptive Technologist, Accessible Learning Services	2 to 4 weeks, depending on format requested.