

# Coast Mountain College Accessibility Plan

2023 - 2026

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# Table of Contents

- Acknowledgements** ..... 4
- Introduction** ..... 5
  - About Coast Mountain College ..... 6
  - British Columbia Accessibility Act ..... 6
  - CMTN Accessibility Advisory Committee ..... 7
  - Terms and Explanations ..... 8
- Consultation** ..... 11
- Areas of Focus 2023-2026** ..... 12
  - Area of Focus One: The Built Environment ..... 12
  - Area of Focus Two: Education ..... 13
  - Area of Focus Three: Information and Communications ..... 14
  - Area of Focus Four: Employment Practices ..... 15
- Monitoring, Evaluation, and Feedback Mechanisms** ..... 16

# Acknowledgements

Coast Mountain College (CMTN) region is within the traditional territories of six distinct First Nations: Nisga'a, Ts'msyen, Gitksan, Witsuwit'en, Haisla, and Haida. Within the six nations are 21 Indigenous communities with separate governing bodies.

CMTN also acknowledges our close neighbors, the Tahltan Nation, as well as the Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada.

Along with the beautiful territories upon which we live, work and play, we would like to acknowledge the time, expertise, and support of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Members of the advisory committee contributed diverse perspectives as community members and CMTN employees. They provided valuable input to our work supporting persons with disabilities:

Saša Loggin (Executive Director, Skeena Diversity Society, Terrace)

Angela Hamel (CMTN Library Clerk, Terrace)

Andy Klimach (CMTN Manager, Community and Inclusion, Prince Rupert)

Jeremy Bissett (CMTN Learning Assistance Specialist, Terrace)

Jordan Linteris (CMTN Director, Facilities, Terrace)

Kezia Sinkewicz (CMTN Accessibility Coordinator, Terrace)

Kimberly McIntyre (CMTN Chair of Access Education, Terrace)

Lucy Stanford (CMTN Communications Coordinator, Terrace)

Michael Rauschenberger (CMTN Librarian, Prince Rupert)

Patricia Pryce (CMTN Director, President's Office, Terrace)

Persephone McNair (CMTN Website Analyst, Terrace)

Renee Jordan (Administrative Coordinator, CMTN Foundation, Terrace)

Stefanie Pellegrino (CMTN Acting Director, Human Resources, Terrace)

Tracey Hoffos (CMTN Enrollment Management Coordinator, Terrace)

# Introduction

## About Coast Mountain College

Coast Mountain College is an accredited post-secondary institution. CMTN serves the rich and diverse communities and learners of BC's beautiful Northwest Region.

Established in 1975 in Terrace, BC, CMTN has five regional campuses serving 34 communities, 21 of which are First Nations communities. The College provides students with innovative programs that lead to sustainable careers for people in the North. Our campuses are in Hazelton, Haida Gwaii, Smithers, Prince Rupert, and Terrace.

CMTN offers college access programs, health and human services programs, online programs, university credit programs, and trades foundation and apprenticeship programs. CMTN also offers innovative and flexible mobile training, reaching communities beyond its campuses.

CMTN aims to be the college of choice for experiential, place-based learning (EPBL). EPBL allows students to learn both in the classroom and in the spectacular outdoor spaces that are so unique to this part of Canada.

## CMTN's Core Purpose

To create adventurous pathways to transform lives. This purpose drives CMTN's big hairy audacious goal to be the college of choice for experiential, place-based learning by 2027.

## CMTN's Values

Adventure, Transformation, and Integrity. Each core value will be strengthened as we integrate our accessibility vision and statement of commitment into all that we do at CMTN. The accessibility plan will support an evolving awareness of how to ensure experiential, place-based learning is transformational and adventurous, while being implemented with integrity to ensure inclusion and accessibility.



# CMTN's Accessibility Vision

We support persons with disabilities to meaningfully participate in all activities at Coast Mountain College<sup>1</sup>.

## CMTN's Statement of Commitment

CMTN supports a community that is inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible. We identify and remove barriers that hinder participation in any area of campus life. The opinions, perspectives and lived experiences of advocates for and persons with disabilities will help to shape our objectives and commitments to support accessibility at all campuses.

CMTN's Accessibility Plan is based on a social model, which helps us understand accessibility and disability better. The social model of disability believes that disability is not solely caused by an individual's impairments, but by how our society is organized. It aims to remove barriers for people with disabilities that limit the independence, choice, and control in their lives. These barriers can be physical, like inaccessible environments, or attitudinal, like negative perceptions towards people with disabilities. According to this model, society should adapt and become more inclusive to accommodate people's disabilities, rather than expecting individuals to change to fit into an inaccessible world.

## British Columbia Accessibility Act

The Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA) was enacted in June 2021. On September 1, 2022, the Accessible British Columbia Regulation came into force, identifying post-secondary institutions as accessible organizations that are to have the following in place by September 1, 2023:

1. an accessibility committee
2. an accessibility plan
3. a feedback mechanism.



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<sup>1</sup> For consistency, this document refers to persons with disabilities in persons-first language. CMTN recognizes that some persons may prefer identity first language. We acknowledge that asking for one's preference is a matter of interpersonal practice.

Accessible organizations are tasked to identify accessibility barriers in the following areas of focus as defined by ABCA:

- employment
- delivery of service
- built environment
- education
- information and communications
- transportation
- procurement.

The core principles driving the development of the accessibility plan as defined by ABCA are:

- inclusion
- diversity
- adaptability
- collaboration
- self-determination
- universal design.

## **CMTN Accessibility Advisory Committee**

The CMTN Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is responsible for developing the accessibility plan in compliance with the Province of British Columbia's 2022 accessibility legislation. The AAC is also responsible for monitoring feedback processes and the progress of commitments identified in the Plan.

The AAC's task is to support CMTN to identify barriers to individuals with disabilities accessing the organization and to advise how to best prevent and address these barriers. Selection of the committee's members must, to the degree possible, fulfill the following criteria:

- At least half the members are persons with disabilities or individuals who support or are from organizations that support persons with disabilities.
- Members reflect a diversity of persons with disabilities.
- At least one member is Indigenous.
- Members reflect the diversity of persons in BC.

## CMTN Accessibility Advisory Committee (continued)

Membership for the CMTN AAC is made up of CMTN employees representing Facilities, Information Technology, Marketing and Communications, Library Services, the Foundation, Student Services, Faculty, Human Resources, and Administration. Community members on the committee provide valuable perspectives through representation of an organization serving persons with diverse needs. CMTN is also a member of the City of Terrace’s Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee. This committee includes local prescribed organizations and community members who have a disability or have lived experience supporting persons with disabilities.

### Statement of Commitment by Accessibility Advisory Committee

As members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee we are committed to supporting an inclusive working and learning environment. Working with our community, we identify barriers to full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life at CMTN and recommend strategies to remove these barriers. Our role is to support Coast Mountain College in fulfilling its accessibility commitments.

### Terms and Explanations

Term	Explanation
Accessible	A person with a disability has the opportunity to access the same information, engage in the same interactions and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and integrated manner, with similar ease of use. A person with a disability must be able to get information as fully and independently as a person without a disability, offering equal opportunity to access education. <sup>1</sup>
Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)	An official group established by one or more prescribed organizations in collaboration with people with disabilities to develop an accessibility plan and feedback mechanism. <sup>2</sup>
Accessibility Plan	A plan, developed by an AAC that identifies accessibility challenges and solutions for addressing those challenges. <sup>3</sup>

1 Retrieved June 2023: [Case Western Reserve University](#)

2 Retrieved June 2023: [BC Accessibility Hub](#)

3 Retrieved June 2023: [BC Accessibility Hub](#)



## Terms and Explanations (continued)

Term	Explanation
Adaptability	Accessibility plans should reflect that disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology, and attitudes change. <sup>1</sup>
Assistive Device	Any device that is designed, made, or adapted to assist a person to perform a particular task. <sup>2</sup>
Barrier	Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with a disability: a) caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, or technologies and b) affected by intersecting forms of discrimination. <sup>3</sup>
Collaboration	Promoting accessible communities is a shared responsibility and everyone has a role to play. Accessibility plans should create opportunities for organizations and communities to work together to promote access and inclusion. <sup>4</sup>
Disability	An impairment, whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society. <sup>5</sup>
Diversity	People with disabilities are individuals with varied backgrounds. Individual characteristics including race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and lived experience greatly inform the experiences of the individual. Accessibility plans acknowledge the principle of intersectionality and diversity within the disability community. <sup>6</sup>
Impairment	Includes physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, and/or cognitive barriers, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic. <sup>7</sup>

1 Retrieved June 2023: [British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation](#)

2 Retrieved June 2023: [BC Accessibility Hub](#)

3 Retrieved June 2023: [BC Accessibility Hub](#)

4 Retrieved June 2023: [British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation](#)

5 Retrieved June 2023: [Government of Canada Justice Laws Website](#)

6 Retrieved June 2023: [British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation](#)

7 Retrieved June 2023: [BC Accessibility Hub](#)

## Terms and Explanations (continued)

Term	Explanation
Inclusion	All British Columbians, including persons with disabilities, should be able to participate fully and equally in their communities. <sup>1</sup>
Intersectionality	The ways in which systems of inequity based on gender identity/ expression, race, ethnicity, Indigeneity, sexual orientation, disability, class, and other forms of discrimination “intersect” to create unique dynamics and effects. <sup>2</sup>
Indigenous Peoples	The same meaning as in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (from the Constitution Act) includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada. <sup>3</sup>
Prescribed Organization	An organization designated by the British Columbia Accessibility Regulation to be compliant with the British Columbia Accessibility Act. <sup>4</sup>
Self-Determination	Accessibility plans seek to empower people with disabilities to make their own choices and pursue the lives they wish to live. <sup>5</sup>
Service Animal	Licensed guide dogs, service dogs, and service-dogs-in-training as defined by the <i>BC Guide Dog and Service Dog Act</i> . <sup>6</sup>
Support Person	In relation to a person with a disability, a support person is another person who accompanies the person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or access to goods, services, or facilities. <sup>7</sup>
Universal Design	The process of refining and developing services and environments so they can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by people with all abilities, disabilities, and intersectional barriers. Universal design aims to meet the needs of all who wish to interact with the organization. <sup>8</sup>

1 Retrieved June 2023: [British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation](#)

2 Retrieved June 2023: [BC Campus Intersectional Sexualized Violence Project](#)

3 Retrieved June 2023: [BC Accessibility Hub](#)

4 Retrieved June 2023: [BC Accessibility Hub](#)

5 Retrieved June 2023: [British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation](#)

6 Retrieved June 2023: [BC Guide Dog and Service Dog Act](#)

7 Retrieved June 2023: [BC Accessibility Hub](#)

8 Retrieved June 2023: [BC Accessibility Hub](#)

# Consultation Process

In 2023, members of the Advisory Committee joined working groups to identify barriers to accessibility aligned with their areas of expertise at the college. CMTN also reached out to employees, students, and regional communities through digital and paper-based surveys to generate feedback that informed the development of key goals outlined in this plan. Aligning with the principle of “nothing for us without us,” central to our inquiry during the summer of 2023 was receiving feedback from persons with disabilities and organizations who support persons with disabilities. Consultations will continue in order to ensure the voices of those most affected by the outcomes of the accessibility plan are informing our direction forward.

Advisory Committee Working Group assessment identified the following areas on which to focus initially:

- CMTN digital communication, both internal (email etiquette and SharePoint) and external (website, publications) require accessibility lens with respect to font size, layout, screen readability, and readability scores.
- Employee recruitment and onboarding practices need improvement around addressing inclusion and accessibility.
- Some CMTN infrastructure is not accessible for specific disabilities (e.g., braille signage, automated doors, emergency exit signage, visual cues for changes in elevation for ramp edges and stair edges, and outdated elevators).

The key themes from survey were:

- Campus signage was flagged as creating problems for individuals trying to find services at Terrace campus.
- Braille signage missing in most buildings.
- Website is not user friendly for persons with visual impairments
- Employees need more training in awareness of persons with disabilities’ lived experiences
- Policy language needs to be more inclusive and plain language versions of relevant student policies made available.
- Sidewalks are jagged and difficult to navigate for persons with mobility challenges.
- The process for accessing bursaries and financial aid has built in barriers for persons with diverse/mixed abilities.
- Eliminate the word “handicap” at every campus.

# Areas of Focus 2023-2026

## Area of Focus One: The Built Environment

### Coast Mountain College's Objectives:

Meet or exceed standards of accessibility through a review of existing built environments, and ensuring new built environments are compliant with provincial building code standards for accessibility.

Increase knowledge, skills, and attitudes of CMTN employees regarding identifying barriers to accessibility in our built environment and advocating for strategies to remove these barriers.

### CMTN's Commitments:

1. Identify through community feedback and internal facilities review, all areas where CMTN campuses are not to code for accessibility standards.
2. Create a prioritized list of action items based on review findings, and set completion dates for year 1, year 2, and year 3. Actions will be informed by accessibility legislation and CMTN capacity.
3. Align work with information and communications, and education initiatives to ensure physical and technical needs of students with disabilities are at or above recommended standards.





## Area of Focus Two: Education

### Coast Mountain College's Objective:

Develop our curricula and experiential learning opportunities to be accessible and supportive of alternate pathways to learning and personal transformation that are inclusive of persons with disabilities.

### CMTN's Commitments:

1. Develop and implement a working checklist with Education Council (EdCo) and Program Review to evaluate accessibility standards in all course curricula and delivery modalities. For example, ensure integration of universal design for learning, enhance accessibility to experiential place-based learning, utilize accessibility features in digital learning platforms.
2. Support regular and ongoing training and resource access for faculty and staff around accessibility awareness and sensitivity both in the classroom and beyond.
3. Align work with information and communications and built environment initiatives to ensure physical and technical needs of students with disabilities are at or above recommended standards.



## Area of Focus Three: Information and Communications\*

### Coast Mountain College's Objectives:

Meet or exceed standards of accessibility through a review of existing information and communication content, and ensure new systems are accessible for all employees, students, and external users.

Increase knowledge, skills, and attitudes of CMTN employees regarding accessibility information, communication barriers and assistive technologies.

Meet or exceed standards of accessibility by implementing Universal Design for Learning into our marketing and communications production practices.

\*Information and Communications includes hardware, software, documents, events, and websites.

### CMTN's Commitments:

1. Audit areas of priority focus such as content, navigation, and readability to ensure suitability for all members of the community. Audit will include internal and external community.
2. Establish guidelines and best practice resources for all content being created for the purpose of sharing internally or externally.
3. Work with the Centre of Learning Transformation (COLT) to source and develop two digital training resources for faculty and staff on supporting individuals with accessibility needs.
4. Bring CMTN website up to base standards of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

# Area of Focus Four: Employment Practices

## Coast Mountain College's Objective:

Provide equitable access to jobs and long-term careers for persons with disabilities at Coast Mountain College.

## CMTN's Commitments:

1. Review all recruitment and hiring practices to ensure they are transparent, barrier-free, and inclusive of persons with disabilities
2. Support career success of persons with disabilities by improving onboarding, training, accommodation planning, and mentoring practices to reflect informed universal design practices and inclusive attitudes.
3. Support management and employees to develop skills that model a culture of diversity and inclusion.



## Monitoring, Evaluation, and Feedback

Monitoring and Evaluation: The Advisory Committee will regularly monitor progress toward fulfilling the commitments of each area of focus in the Accessibility Plan, as well as information shared through feedback mechanisms. Annual progress reports will be compiled documenting areas of compliance and evaluating feedback received and ways in which feedback has been integrated into the plan.

The Director, President's Office will provide the college community with bi-annual updates on CMTN's progress through internal communication pathways.

Information and Feedback Mechanisms: As required by legislation, CMTN has developed feedback mechanisms to allow employees, students, and the public to provide input on barriers to accessibility at any of CMTN's campuses. This feedback may be provided anonymously if desired. The primary information seeking and feedback mechanisms are:

**Feedback link:** [CMTN Accessibility Survey](#)

### Questions or feedback by mail:

Director, President's Office  
5331 McConnell Avenue  
Terrace, BC  
V8G 4X2

**Questions or feedback by email:** [accessibility@coastmountaincollege.ca](mailto:accessibility@coastmountaincollege.ca)

**Questions or feedback by phone:** 1-250-635-6511 ext. 5238

**Questions or feedback by toll-free phone:** 1-877-277-2288 ext. 5238

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[coastmountaincollege.ca](http://coastmountaincollege.ca)

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