UVic Accessibility Committee

Terms of Reference | September 2023

About the Accessibility Committee

Compliance with the *Accessible British Columbia Act* is a foundational focus for the Accessibility Committee ("the committee") and, where possible, members will consider inclusive practices that extend beyond a state of *Act* compliance.

Mandate

- Be a champion for accessibility.
- Draft and update the university's Accessibility Plan (AP), including goals, targets, and priorities for implementation of the *Accessible British Columbia* Act requirements and provide this draft to UVic Executive for approval.
- Provide advice to UVic Executive on necessary updates to the AP and support the renewal of the AP at least once every 3 years.
- Make recommendations to UVic Executive regarding tasks/initiatives to inform the AP, including policies and institutional change, and suggested members of Working Groups and/or sub-committees.
- Serve as a resource to UVic on issues related to accessibility.
- Work in collaboration with and build upon the work done in various other related University committees and initiatives, such as those associated with the Academic Advisory Committee on Equity and Diversity, the Sustainability Advisory Committee and other interested stakeholder groups.
- Establish a process for receiving and managing comments from the university community on:
    - (a) the Accessibility Plan, and
    - (b) barriers to individuals in or interacting with the University.
- Advise the UVic Executive on how to remove and prevent barriers to individuals studying at, working for, or interacting with the university.

Membership

The committee will have a maximum of 15 members.

As required by the *Accessible British Columbia Act,* committee members must be selected in accordance with the following values:

- Be drawn from the UVic community and include student, faculty and staff representation;
- At least 50 per cent individuals with lived experience as a person with a disability or individuals who support or are from UVic organizations that support persons with disabilities;
- At least one member must be Indigenous; and

- Should reflect the diversity of persons in British Columbia.

The committee will have two Co-chairs, of which one will be named via appointment by UVic Executive, and one will be selected from and appointed by the Accessibility Committee through a democratic process. Committee Co-chairs will each hold a one-year term which may be renewed for up to two additional terms.

The committee will include an administrative resource person.

Appointment Procedures and Terms

All members of the committee are appointed by the Executive Council of the University of Victoria, which consists of all university Vice-Presidents, the University Secretary and the University President.

The committee should include faculty or staff representation from the following units that are responsible for understanding and enhancing disability inclusion and justice issues and/or supporting persons with disabilities:

- CanAssist
- Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL)
- Division of Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation (LTSI)
- Equity and Human Rights (EQHR)
- Facilities Management (FMGT)
- Human Resources (HR)
- University Systems (SYST)

Appointed members who are in positions serving persons with disabilities will hold a two-year term and may be renewed for additional two-year terms. Appointed members who do not hold a position serving persons with disabilities will hold a one-year term and may be renewed for up to two additional one-year terms.

The UVic Students' Society (UVSS), the Graduate Student Society (GSS), and the Society for Students with a Disability (SSD) will each appoint a member with the requisite office and/or lived experience to contribute effectively to the committee. UVSS, GSS, and SSD representatives will hold one-year non-renewable terms.

An open call for at-large members will be circulated to the UVic community inviting students, faculty, and staff to submit an online expression of interest that includes an opportunity to share relevant academic, professional, community, and/or lived experiences to fill any remaining seats on the committee. Executive will select nominees with an aim to meet the four required compositional diversity goals outlined above. Executive may elect to appoint members directly to the committee if required to meet the compositional diversity goals required by the *Accessible British Columbia Act*. At-large members will hold a one-year term and may be renewed for up to two additional one-year terms.

Diversity of Committee Membership

All appointees, nominees, and candidates expressing interest in membership will be invited to complete a voluntary self-identification questionnaire. The results of this questionnaire will be made available to UVic Executive for the purpose of ensuring the diversity of the committee as required under Section 9(2) of the *Accessible British Columbia Act*.

In addition, data analysts within EQHR will use the data to prepare anonymized aggregate reporting to the committee.

Membership Expectations

Members are expected to:

- Exercise due diligence and be prepared for meetings and discussions;
- Be prepared to articulate independent views and provide respectful feedback in an effective manner;
- Bring their own experience, wisdom, judgement and influence to bear constructively on issues;
- Be respectful of, and remain open to, the views and perspectives of others;
- Disclose any information that could be considered material to discussion at hand;
- Maintain confidentiality and not disclose information discussed in confidence;
- Attend and engage in meetings to the best of their ability and advise the Chair(s) in the event they will be absent.

Working Groups and Special Sub-committees

From time to time, the committee may assemble working groups or special sub-committees to receive feedback from communities, conduct research into a specific topic, undertake a particular piece of work, or provide specific guidance or expertise in decision-making.

The committee will develop appropriate terms of reference and other documentation to frame the composition, scope of work, timelines, and roles and responsibilities of these working groups and sub-committees.

Accessibility Steering Committee

The committee will assemble a Steering Committee prior to its first meeting. The Steering Committee will be chaired by the Co-chairs, the appointed member representing EQHR, two other members of the committee selected by the Co-chairs to serve a one-year term renewable for up to two terms, and the administrative resource for the committee.

The Steering Committee is responsible for assembling meeting agendas, preparing minutes and other materials for the committee to review, and preparing reports for the committee as required to discharge their duties as identified in the committee mandate.

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

Members must respect the confidentiality of all materials and information provided to members. The onus for identifying confidential material presented to committee is on the

person presenting the information at which point members must respect the request for confidentiality.

Members must avoid any conflict of interest that might impair or impugn the independence, integrity or impartiality of the committee. There must be no apprehension of bias, based on the perception of a reasonable person. Members who are in any doubt must disclose their circumstances and consult with the Chair(s).

Meeting Frequency

Meetings will be at least twice per term, or as necessary. Working groups will meet as often as necessary to carry out its mandate. Meetings may be in-person, virtual, or hybrid (e.g., over Zoom or Teams). The Co-chairs will develop the agenda for the meeting in consultation with committee members. Requests from members to place an item on the agenda may be submitted to the Co-chairs, ideally at least one week ahead of the meeting.

Meeting minutes will be prepared by the Steering Committee with support from the administrative resource, circulated to the committee members via email, and approved at a subsequent meeting.

Quorum

Quorum shall be six members. If required for quorum, any member who is not in attendance at a meeting can vote via tele/videoconference. If quorum is not present within 30 minutes, attendance will be called, and the names of the members present will be recorded. The meeting may continue in an informal setting with any proposed motions or actions to be tabled at the subsequent Accessibility Committee meeting.

Decision Making and Voting

From time to time, it is expected that the committee will make reports, which may include recommendations, to bring forward to decision makers in the university. When forming these reports:

The committee will make every effort to operate on a consensus model.

When consensus is not attainable, the committee will follow a democratic process, with a simple majority requirement for making recommendations. Each member of the committee has a vote, including the Co-chairs. A decision presented to committee will pass with straight majority vote (50%+1) of members in attendance. Members may cast a vote remotely at the discretion of the Co-chair(s).

Members will recuse themselves from decision-making processes in the event a perceived or actual conflict of interest arises.

It is understood that recommendations of the committee remain subject to normal University of Victoria policies and approval processes.

Approval of all major revisions to the Accessibility Plan go to the Sponsors—the Vice-President Finance and Operations and Vice-President Academic and Provost—who will provide feedback and preliminary approval and who will bring major changes forward to UVic Executive for final approval.

Revision of the Terms of Reference

The committee is convened by the UVic Executive, and these Terms of Reference are issued by the UVic Executive. These Terms of Reference will be reviewed at the conclusion of the inaugural year of operation and at least once every four years. The function of the committee should be adapted to reflect evolving needs and circumstances.