Accessible Admissions

Fostering Equitable, Accessible, and Inclusive Admissions Through Disability Justice

Prepared for BCCAT by Dr. Jennifer Hardwick and Dr. Fiona Whittington-Walsh
(Research Assistants: Zafreen Jaffer and Katelyn Watson)

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BC COUNCIL ON ADMISSIONS & TRANSFER

info@bccat.ca | bccat.ca | bctransferguide.ca

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to an urgent need to address equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in post-secondary admissions, EDI work has been undertaken by many universities and colleges in Canada to eliminate barriers for students and employees. Access is foundational to EDI, and accessible post-secondary admissions play an important role in supporting EDI goals; indeed, Universities Canada (2017) has committed "to taking action to provide equity of access and opportunity" as part of its engagement with EDI (p. 47).

Re-envisioning admissions processes through a lens of inclusion and disability justice has the potential to transform admissions in ways that broadly support EDI work. Disability impacts people of all races, genders, sexualities, socioeconomic classes, cultures, and religions. Additionally, accessibility is informed by overlapping systems of oppression such as historical and ongoing colonization, racism, and heteropatriarchy; therefore, a lack of accessibility impacts different communities in unique ways based on the identities of the community members.

> Re-envisioning admissions processes through a lens of inclusion and disability justice has the potential to transform admissions in ways that broadly support EDI work. Disability impacts people of all races, genders, sexualities, socio-economic classes, cultures, and religions.

With these overlapping and intersecting structures in mind, our research team applies an intersectional EDI lens with a particular focus on disability justice and accessibility in examining admissions policies and processes at BC Transfer System member institutions. Our study seeks to identify and explain the barriers in post-secondary admissions processes faced by students with disabilities; to make recommendations for how to improve equity and inclusion in admissions based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), accessible design, and disability justice principles; and to suggest further avenues for study. It also seeks to identify accessible admissions practices and processes that are currently in place, and to provide examples that can be used as models. It is our hope that this study will deepen knowledge of what accessible admissions requirements look like, what short-term and long-term changes are possible, and how transforming admissions can meaningfully support equity, diversity, and inclusion in British Columbia's post-secondary education system.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Due to an urgent need to address equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in post-secondary admissions, EDI work has been undertaken by many universities and colleges in Canada to eliminate barriers for students and employees. Accessibility is foundational to EDI, and post-secondary admissions play an important role in supporting EDI goals; indeed, Universities Canada (2017) has committed "to taking action to provide equity of access and opportunity" as part of its engagement with EDI (p. 47).

Re-envisioning admissions processes through a lens of inclusion and disability justice has the potential to transform admissions in ways that broadly support EDI work. A 2018 report by the National Educational Association of Disabled Students, Canada's only national organization that advocates with and for postsecondary students with disabilities (NEADS, 2018), identified the tension that exists in EDI initiatives, particularly between diversity measures and inclusion:

In essence, a diverse environment does not imply an inclusive one, and vice versa. An emphasis on diversity measures encourages an emphasis on intake and recruitment programming. Meanwhile, an emphasis on inclusion measurement encourages – and potentially rewards – a holistic commitment to a fully accessible and universally designed environment, a commitment that recognizes that full inclusion comes from removal of barriers to entry and transition within post-secondary, as well as removal of 'environmental' barriers within programs and the student experience. (NEADS, p. 10)

Nevertheless, considering diversity and inclusion simultaneously is important. Disability impacts people of all races, genders, sexualities, socioeconomic classes, cultures, and religions and can be experienced as permanent, episodic, and/or temporary. Additionally, scholars have noted that inclusive design – including Universal Design (UD) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – can support anti-racism (Fitzgerald, 2020), 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion (Daniels & Geiger, 2010), and ethical engagement with Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies (Fovet, 2020). These frameworks acknowledge that all learners are diverse, and that learning environments - including physical and digital spaces, curriculum, and learning supports - need to be specifically designed to support variability and diversity. UD and UDL are often thought of as "disability-focused" frameworks, but acknowledging, celebrating, and designing for diversity supports learners of all kinds, because variability and diversity do not just stem from disability. Planning and designing for accessibility and diversity creates the opportunity to consider all the potential barriers students face, including those that come from systems of oppression other than disability.

However, despite the significance of disability and the important role that UDL and disability justice frameworks (the terms are defined in Appendix A) can play in supporting inclusion, disability has received limited attention within EDI discourses. Wolbring and Lillywhite (2021) found in their extensive review of existing global EDI studies that there is not only a lack of academic engagement with disabled[1] students, non-academic and academic staff, but also that disability is seen through what Wolbring and Lillywhite call an "ability bias." The medical model of disability dominates the way that disability is understood in our society and frames the way that people with disabilities receive services, including education. The medical model situates the person with the disability as a problem that requires specialists and/or create special services to manage. Disability is understood as something that limits the person's ability to be 'normal', i.e., non-disabled. Wolbring and Lillywhite note that "it is a problem that EDI documents in many places follows a deficiency language of disabled people on the identity level of the body (body deficient by default), but also on the identity level of who causes the problem (the deficient person causes the problem)" (p. 19).

Challenging and changing ability bias in post-secondary is important, as disabled learners are a substantial and growing population that is currently underserved. One in five Canadians over the age of 15 has a disability and 13% of Canadian youth (aged 15-24) are disabled (Statistics Canada, 2018a). 14.3% of Canadians with disabilities over the age of 15 are members of a visible minority (Statistics Canada, 2020). Disabilities are also more prevalent in Indigenous communities, with 30 to 35% of Indigenous people in Canada aged 15 and older reporting at least one disability, versus 22% of non-Indigenous people (Indigenous Disability Canada/ British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society [IDC/BCANDS], 2022; Hahmann et al., 2019). Approximately 15% of youth with "milder"[2] disabilities are not in school nor employed, and these rates increase to 31% for youth with more "severe" disabilities. Low levels of education and unemployment predictably lead to high rates of poverty. 28% of people with severe disabilities and 14% of people with milder disabilities were living below the poverty line, in comparison with 10% of those without disabilities (Statistics Canada, 2018a).

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[1] This report will use "people with disabilities" and "disabled" interchangeably in acknowledgement of the disability community's diverse preferences when it comes to person-first vs. identity-first language. Appendix A contains a list of definitions.

[2] While we do not advocate the use of linear descriptors for disability such as "mild", "severe" or others terms, these are the descriptors used by Statistics Canada in breaking down the data. Neuro Divergent Rebel (2023) provides discussion on non-linear approaches to terminology: https://neurodivergentrebel.substack.com/p/askingautistics-what-do-you-wish.

In British Columbia, 24.7% of the total population and 13.4% of youth are disabled, and 70% of British Columbians who have a disability report having more than one disability (Statistics Canada, 2018b). Disability is also on the rise among students in BC; in the 2021-2022 school year, there were 82,786 K-12 students labelled as having "special needs" in the province, an increase of 4,484 from the previous year (Government of British Columbia, 2022a). The special needs categorization includes Physical Disability; Physically Dependent; Deafblind; Moderate to profound Intellectual Disability; Physical Disability; Chronic Health Impairment; Visual Impairment; Deaf or Hard of Hearing; Intensive Behaviour Interventions; Severe Mental Illness; Mild Intellectual Disability; Gifted; Learning Disability; and Chronic Health Impairment (BC Teachers Federation, 2019).

> Learners with disabilities face challenges in BC's current educational system. A recent study (Lloyd & Baumbusch, 2019) examining the completion rates for K-12 students with special needs categorization in BC found that only 3% of students with a "moderate to profound" intellectual disability graduated with a high school diploma, while 70% received an Evergreen certificate of completion.

Learners with disabilities face challenges in BC's current educational system. A recent study (Lloyd & Baumbusch, 2019) examining the completion rates for K-12 students with special needs categorization in BC found that only 3% of students with a "moderate to profound" intellectual disability graduated with a high school diploma, while 70% received an Evergreen certificate of completion. Additionally, 80% of "physically dependent" and 50% of students with a "moderate" intellectual disability receive an Evergreen.The Evergreen certificate of completion is not a graduation credential — it is a way of acknowledging that students with special needs categorization have completed individual education goals (Government of British Columbia, 2022e). As such, students who receive an Evergreen usually do not meet the admission requirements for full-credit academic programming at post-secondary institutions in British Columbia. Students who receive their Evergreen must upgrade their academic qualifications or attend life skills and access programs, which are not credential-granting. Only 5.6% of high school non-graduates (including students who receive their Evergreen) receive a post-secondary credential within 10 years, and nearly 50% of those students receive a developmental credential, such as an upgrading certificate (Heslop, 2016). All of the above suggests serious gaps in post-secondary access and completion for students with disabilities — and particularly students deemed to be physically dependent or to have an intellectual disability.

Review of Legislation

Governments in Canada have been implementing legislation to address the many barriers experienced by people with disabilities. In order to address these barriers, several provinces and the federal government have passed legislation that mandate the creation of accessibility standards. Provinces that have passed provincial legislation include Quebec (1978; 2004), Ontario (2005), Manitoba (2013), Nova Scotia (2017), Newfoundland and Labrador (2021) and British Columbia (2021) (McKay-Panos, 2021). Saskatchewan introduced an Accessibility Bill in November 2022 (Government of Saskatchewan), while Alberta's disability policy "exists in a patchwork of legislation" (McKay-Panos, 2021). The federal Accessible Canada Act (ACA) (2019) was designed to "enhance the full and equal participation of all persons, especially persons with disabilities, in society." It mandates accessibility standards for organizations under federal jurisdiction.

When the BC Government announced its intentions to develop accessibility legislation, the goal was to make BC the "most progressive province in Canada for people with disabilities" (Government of British Columbia, 2014). In April 2022, the BC government announced new accessibility requirements for the public sector, including post-secondary institutions (Government of British Columbia, 2022c).

While the new accessibility standards for post-secondary institutions have yet to be created in BC, both Ontario and Nova Scotia have created Accessibility Frameworks with recommendations for the standards. The *Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) came into force in 2005, making it one of the longest-standing pieces of accessibility legislation in Canada. In 2021, Ontario's Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee (PESDC) published an extensive framework to help guide the development of the postsecondary education standards (PESDC, 2021). While BC may adopt a different approach, the PESDC framework provides a clear overview of what post-secondary institutions could, and arguably should, model in BC. Most significantly, the first recommendation is that publicly funded post-secondary institutions in Ontario will implement internal strategies that "recogniz[e] disability as a critical aspect of the education sector's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion that creates policies, procedures and guidelines through an intersectional accessibility lens" (Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee, 2021).

The philosophical foundation for all Canadian accessibility legislation is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Canada ratified the UNCRPD in 2010 and acceded to the Optional Protocol in 2018, giving additional recourse for persons with disabilities if they believe their rights under the convention have been violated. Article 24 of the Convention outlines how signatories "recognize the rights of persons with disabilities to education…without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity. State Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels…" (United Nations, 2006: 24).

In 2019, the United Nations special rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Catalina Devandas-Aguilar, performed a review of Canada's implementation of UNCRPD. Devandas-Aguilar concluded her review by articulating concerns regarding access to inclusive education in Canada. Most significantly, she noted that "children with disabilities in segregated classes or those that have followed some kind of individualized education plan may receive a different certification or diploma than other children, which limits their opportunities for enrolling in education at higher levels" (Devandes-Aguilar, 2019).

A recent case highlights discriminatory educational processes and the UN's recognition of a state's responsibility to ensure equitable access. On April 28, 2023, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities found that Mexico had "failed to ensure access" to inclusive post-secondary education for a woman with an intellectual disability who failed an admissions test for a Visual Arts Undergraduate program (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2023). Committee member Markus Schefer summarized the finding:

> This case is not about lowering admission standards but about appropriate modifications and adjustments in assessing applications from people with disabilities during the admission process…While it is undisputed that there are preconditions concerning the knowledge and skills needed to gain admission to [post-secondary] education, admission procedures must take into account the specific requirements of candidates with disabilities (Ibid).

Mexico is responsible for ensuring that the complainant has her rights guaranteed by making the admissions process fully accessible "at an institution of her choice" (Ibid). The Committee also recommended that Mexico needs to "establish complaint mechanisms for cases of violations of the right to education" (Ibid). This finding is a reminder to State parties, such as Canada, that they must ensure that the "right of people with disabilities" to inclusive education "at all levels" is experienced "without discrimination" (United Nations, 2006). This right starts with admissions.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

WHAT MAKES POST-SECONDARY ADMISSIONS ACCESSIBLE?

Prospective students have diverse needs, which means an accessible and inclusive admissions process requires multiple simultaneous considerations. Accessibility standards are evolving out of legislation, and currently there are few Canadian studies and resources that specifically address accessible and inclusive admissions requirements. However, students, disability justice scholars and activists, and admissions experts all point to several elements that are necessary to ensure that admissions policies and processes are inclusive. We reviewed several reports examining what accessible admissions should involve, with a particular focus on Canadian resources. These sources include recommendations for post-secondary education standards from an established provincial accessibility legislation, reports focusing specifically on accessible admissions, and accessible design resources, as well as reports from students with disabilities themselves. These sources included:

- The National Association for Disabled Students (NEADS) (2018), *Landscape of Accessibility and Accommodation in Post-Secondary for Students with Disabilities*;

- The Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee[3] (PESDC) (2021) for the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) *Initial Recommendations Report*; and

- Kira Talent (2021), *The Higher Education Admissions Report*. Kira Talent is a "holistic admission solutions" company that has supported the transformation of the admissions process in over 700 programs worldwide and has worked with Canadian universities including McMaster, University of Toronto, and Dalhousie. In using Kira Talent's report, we are by no means advocating for the use of Kira Talent platforms or services. However, their report on accessibility is one of the few Canadian reports on admissions accessibility standards, and it consolidates web accessibility guidelines, student experiences of admissions, and recommendations clearly and succinctly, making it a useful resource for thinking about inclusive admissions. The report is available for free.

While the reports named above were written within different contexts with different audiences and purposes in mind, there was a great deal of overlap in their recommendations. Collectively, scholars and advocates agree that inclusive admissions processes require accessible design; clear policies, processes, and definitions; multiple means to assess applicants; and transparent supports. These recommendations are discussed in the following sections.

Use of Accessible Design

Accessible design requirements are a starting point for increasing the accessibility of institutional policies and websites. Additionally, accessible design aligns with both UDL and disability justice frameworks. All of these require that design should start from the perspective of people with disabilities so that accessibility is built right into the space, whether the space is physical, virtual, or textual. This makes the 'space' accessible to everyone. Universal Design for Learning also emphasizes the importance of providing information in multiple ways, to reach the maximum number of people and provide options for engagement. The following are several standards recommended for accessibility (NEADS, 2018; PESDC, 2021; Kira Talent, 2021; Harvard University, 2023).

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[3] PESDC started working on their proposed Postsecondary Education Standards in 2017 and have the goal of full implementation across the province by January 01, 2025.

Screen reader accessible. It is important that institutions audit their websites, application portals, policies, and procedures to ensure they are readable with a screen reader. Large print and braille copies of print materials should be made available. Accessibility requirements for screen readers include elements such as Alt text for images, clear headings, and the use of accessible formatting.

Written in plain language. Websites, application portals, policies, and procedures should use plain language and avoid unexplained jargon and acronyms whenever possible.

Multimodal. Important information should be shared in multiple ways, i.e.: audio, visual, textual. The inclusion of audio clips, images with Alt text, and/or videos with accurate captions improve access and understanding for applicants. Accessibility guidelines differ regarding the need to describe all images, particularly images or videos that are 'decorative' or aesthetic. When adding Alt text to images, educational platforms and social media often offer the choice to provide the Alt text or mark the image as decorative or aesthetic. It can be argued that a person with a visual disability has the right to be able to 'imagine' images by having them described, even if the images are there for decoration.

According to PESDC, application processes, admission tests, admission screening, and all other forms, must meet the following standards to comply with the AODA (*Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act*) and be deemed accessible:

- Applications, application instructions and information about pre- and post-testing or screening processes will state that accommodations are available and how to access those accommodations.

- All admissions documents, including applications and tests, will be readable using assistive technology and all multimedia materials related to the admissions process will be closed captioned, and/or include American Sign Language, Langue des signes québécoise, and Described and Integrated Described Video where possible and appropriate (French and English). Where these are not available, this will be noted, and alternative options will be offered.

- Alternative options for accessibility will be readily available as required, including, but not limited to, Braille, large print texts, or reading information aloud to applicants/students (PESDC, 2021).

The ability to access materials must be considered foundational; without access, all other policies and processes are of little consequence because disabled applicants are not able to engage with them.

Provide Clear Policies, Processes, and Definitions

Clarity is an important element of accessibility. Unclear, vague, or implied policies, definitions, and/or standards create confusion and anxiety, and make it difficult for applicants to understand processes and requirements. PESDC (2021) explains that to be accessible, post-secondary institutions must "provide the public and all applicants for admission with easily located, timely and effective information in accessible formats about the available services, programs and supports for students with disabilities and how to access them." Institutions should also explicitly outline their admissions categories, including any categories with specialized admissions standards, and the specialized supports.

It is also important for institutions to provide a clear definition of "disability" and transparent guidelines on how to qualify for supports and accommodations. Kira Talent notes that it is also important to use language that is recognizable to diverse – including international – audiences for such terms as "disability" and "accommodations'" One applicant interviewed by Kira Talent noted that "In my home country we use the term 'disability', so even when I saw the note saying 'contact us if you need accommodations' I didn't know that it applied to me" (Kira Talent, 2021).

Use Multiple Means to Assess Applicants

High and competitive admissions standards may pose a barrier for many students with disabilities, and these standards may not even be an accurate measure of success. Few studies have examined admissions criteria as a predictor of success for students with disabilities in Canada. A recent study conducted in Israel suggests that "entrance criteria are a weak predictor of the achievements of undergraduates with LD [learning disability]" and that factors such as access to supports are much more important. (Sarid et al., 2020; p. 71). While a fulsome examination of the relationships between student success and admissions policies in BC is beyond the scope of this report, the Israeli study suggests competitive entrance requirements may pose unnecessary barriers for students with disabilities, and that different (and supported) pathways to post-secondary admission are necessary for different learners.

> High and competitive admissions standards may pose a barrier for many students with disabilities, and these standards may not even be an accurate measure of success. Few studies have examined admissions criteria as a predictor of success for students with disabilities in Canada.

This suggestion is supported by Canada's National Association for Disabled Students (NEADS), which has also advocated for additional pathways and supports related to admissions. NEADS (2018) found that "[s]ignificant transition barriers into, between, and out of levels of post-secondary remain, with particular challenges faced by students transitioning into post-secondary, and from post-secondary into the labour market" (p. 2). The Kira Talent (2021) report maintains that offering both asynchronous assessments and in-person interviews allows students multiple ways to demonstrate their talents, and also provides institutions with different ways to assess candidates. Developing different pathways into an institution, including pathways for equity-deserving learners such as disabled students, and providing applicants with options for sharing their knowledge and meeting requirements is an opportunity to uphold, rather than marginalize or stigmatize different ways of knowing and learning. Developing multiple admissions pathways is also consistent with NEADS' (2018) recommendation that post-secondary institutes should adopt Universal Design principles throughout their operations, including admissions.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a flexible framework which encourages multiple means of sharing information and assessing knowledge (CAST, 2023a; Fovet 2020; NEADS, 2018). A UDL approach to admissions would, at minimum, require multiple pathways for applicants to show that they meet admissions requirements. Ideally, it would also create multiple admissions requirements, such as grades, interviews, community service, lived experience, and/or personal statements, so that applicants are being assessed on multiple, rather than singular, data points. Many post-secondary institutions have already started relying on multiple criteria for admission.

Offer Supports

Accessible admissions requirements also encourage institutions to provide in-person and online supports and accommodations for any required testing processes. These supports and accommodations should be clearly labelled for the students they are aimed at, and they should be available to applicants before they become students. NEADS (2018) argues that admissions staff should include trained disability advisors who understand the "intersection among essential requirements, disability and accommodations and have experience with students with disabilities" (p. 128). The Kira Talent report (2021) also maintains that admissions websites should provide definitions, examples of accommodations, and clear links to support services. There should also be a clear link to a fully accessible resource page. A clearly defined accessible resource page will help to "reduce the stigma around accessibility requests" and let students know that such requests "will not negatively impact an individual's application."

METHODOLOGY

This project employed an intersectional EDI lens, which considers interplay between different identity factors (age, gender, etc.) but places particular focus on disability justice and accessibility, to examine existing admissions requirements and procedures, identify barriers, and propose recommendations. Our team began with a literature review of the trajectories of disabled learners, inclusive educational practices, and accessible admissions standards at post-secondary institutions in multiple jurisdictions. From our review of these resources, we created a list of accessibility criteria in order to evaluate the policies and processes at the post-secondary institutions in the BC Transfer System:

1. **Accessible Design**
   - Plain language
   - Materials are fully accessible and in multiple formats
   - Ease of navigation

2. **Clear Policies, Processes, and Definitions**
   - Legal and Plain language definitions of disability
   - Resource page with all information for applicants with disabilities
   - Admission deferral options

3. **Use Multiple Means to Assess Applicants**
   - Special admissions categories
   - Multiple criteria for assessment

4. **Offer Supports**
   - Interview flexibility (including in-person and online options)
   - A support /help button
   - Personal support options for applications
   - Extra time for admissions tests
   - Accessible tests

We then reviewed websites of 38 BC Transfer System institutions looking at admissions processes and provisions for students with disabilities based on this accessibility requirement list.

While we reviewed admissions and Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (and sometimes Decolonization) (EDID) policies at institutions in order to understand broad trends, we primarily focused our data collection on public-facing post-secondary websites (Appendix B). These sites often act as an introduction to an institution and are usually how applicants engage with admissions policies and processes. If the sites are not accessible, this can have a significant impact on potential students. Between November 2022 and February 2023, the research team reviewed each site looking for application guidelines for students with disabilities and to availability of appropriate supports. For each institution we usually had to navigate multiple sites, including admissions, accessibility/disability services, student services, program-specific requirements, and institutional calendars, as we followed pathways to figure out admissions requirements, how disability was defined, who qualified for supports, what supports were available during and after application, whether deferrals were possible, and who an applicant with a disability should contact for support.

It is important to note that our evaluation was not exhaustive and not meant to be perfect or static. Institutional websites are unique, multifaceted, and continuously updated, which means that it was not uncommon to see changes in navigation tabs,

media such as pictures and videos, and text-based instructions. Additionally, it was common for websites to partially meet standards in ways that were not easily or simply categorized, i.e., a video overview of application processes without captions, or a support/help button that did not clarify who qualified for supports or what the supports were. Siloes, lack of consistency, continuous changes, and complex back-end systems of overlapping policies, procedures, and processes made it very difficult to navigate sites, and to cleanly consolidate and illustrate how much variability there was. For this reason, an institution-by-institution detailed overview of information was beyond the scope of this project or the ability of the research team. Each institution's site would require hours of analysis and several pages of descriptive details to acknowledge the nuances. Instead, the research team scanned institutional websites to identify common trends, gaps, and patterns that we used to develop recommendations.

In addition to our literature review, our analysis was informed by our lived experiences as people with disabilities who have navigated post-secondary systems in Canada. Our research team members—two faculty researchers and two undergraduate research assistants—are all disabled, and we all have diverse intersecting identities that inform our experiences in institutions.

Our work is further guided by theories of disability justice and intersectionality, which informed our understanding of what accessibility, inclusion, and equity do and do not look like.

In addition to our literature review, our analysis was informed by our lived experiences as people with disabilities who have navigated post-secondary systems in Canada. Our research team members — two faculty researchers and two undergraduate research assistants — are all disabled, and we all have diverse intersecting identities that inform our experiences in institutions. Our work is further guided by theories of disability justice and intersectionality, which informed our understanding of what accessibility, inclusion, and equity do and do not look like. This philosophy follows the teachings of disability activist and theorist Patty Berne (2015):

> A Disability Justice framework understands that all bodies are unique and essential, that all bodies have strengths and needs that must be met. We know that we are powerful not despite the complexities of our bodies, but because of them. We understand that all bodies are caught in these bindings of ability, race, gender, sexuality, class, nation state and imperialism, and that we cannot separate them (para. 12).

The current report is informed by a belief that all people deserve not only access to post-secondary education but the supports necessary to succeed. As Berne notes, all people have strengths, challenges, and inherent worth. To become just and inclusive, institutions must find ways to support different ways of knowing and being. Additionally, we acknowledge that accessibility is informed by overlapping systems of oppression such as historical and ongoing colonization, racism, and heteropatriarchy; that a lack of accessibility impacts different communities in unique ways based on their identities; and that accessibility is the beginning rather than the end of justice, equity, and inclusion. These understandings helped us engage critically and ethically with different facets of inclusion and accessibility in admissions.

In formulating our analysis and recommendations we endeavour to be clear, ambitious, and pragmatic. Envisioning new pathways forward requires time, resources, collaboration, and imagination, and it will not happen all at once. As such, we see this project as a starting place that will: a) allow more individuals to access post-secondary education; and b) help post-secondary institutions chart effective admissions pathways towards equity and inclusion.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Our analysis of admissions information and guidelines on websites at BC Transfer System institutions reveals numerous barriers for applicants seeking information, accommodation, and/or support in accessing postsecondary education. These barriers range from small and easy to fix (e.g., lack of Alt text on website images) to complex and systemic (e.g., unclear or non-existent communication between units, or inaccessible admissions requirements). Additionally, some barriers are beyond the scope of admissions (e.g., a lack of accessible housing on campus). However, all barriers can impact potential students' decisions and abilities to apply for post-secondary education. Given that accessibility and inclusion are holistic and systemic, it is necessary to consider admissions in a holistic way.

Below are our key findings regarding admissions accessibility trends at BC Transfer System institutions. We acknowledge that our analysis is limited in scope, that institutional policies and websites are regularly being updated, and that our categories for analysis are overlapping and nuanced. This review is not meant to be all-encompassing; rather, it is meant to identify patterns, gaps, and trends.

Accessible Design: Website, Portal, and Document Accessibility

Website, portal, and document accessibility is necessary to ensure people with disabilities can apply to postsecondary institutions. While a full accessibility audit with assistive technologies such as screen readers was beyond the scope of this study, the research team did assess admissions and accessibility/disability service sites for the following key accessibility elements:

- use of plain language;
- accessible materials offered in multiple formats; and
- clear navigation.

Currently, all BC Transfer System member institutions use plain language on their websites, which is an excellent way to support diverse learners. However, websites often lack basic accessibility elements. Several institutions have videos introducing students to the university, specific programs, or specific admissions pathways. These videos illustrate complex processes and improve comprehension for many applicants. However, it is common for institutional videos to have no or inaccurate closed captions – including using subtitles (which transcribe only dialogue) instead of accessible closed captioning (which provides a textual transcript of sound effects and music in addition to dialogue) (Wallace, 2023), no image descriptions (which are also necessary for described video), and/or inconsistent sound. These oversights can create barriers for students.

Many institutional websites also had large blocks of texts, images without descriptions or Alt text, unclear and inaccessible drop-down menus, and layouts that may be difficult for screen readers or low vision readers to navigate. Much more needs to be done to ensure website accessibility. Further, at the time of our analysis, approximately 35% of institutional websites had substantial navigation issues such as broken links, unclear labelling, and/or circular links that led students back and forth between sites without providing the promised information.

While videos promoting institutions are common, few B.C. post-secondary institutional websites include multiple ways of accessing admissions information, such as audio or video guide. The Fairleigh Dickinson University website (https://www.fdu.edu/campuses/vancouver-campus/admissions/undergraduate-admissions/canadian-students/) offers an excellent example of providing information on how to apply using multiple formats. FDU is a US-based institution and as such is probably following the requirements of the US Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition to providing plain language throughout their admissions website, the site also offers a subtitled video that goes through the entire application process. While the video has poor sound quality in some places and uses subtitles instead of closed captioning, it still serves as an example of multimodal engagement.

## *Locating Information: Clear Policies, Processes, and Definitions*

Policies, requirements, and processes differ widely across BC Transfer System institutions, and the information applicants need is often spread over different locations on institutional websites. If a prospective student wants to know about application require-ments, application supports, academic accommodation requirements (including part-time and deferral procedures), and acces-sibility on campus (including housing, food options, and washroom access), they will often have to locate each piece of informa-tion separately on different website pages. These pages are rarely linked to one another, consolidated, and properly labelled. As a result, applicants regularly have to search through dozens of sections and policies to find the necessary information if an institution is accessible (Figure 1). These sections include admissions, accessibility services, program specific sites, policies, and student service sites. As noted above, an additional barrier is that websites, portals, and documents are often inaccessible.

Figure 1: How an applicant must navigate through post-secondary admissions
(Diagram designed by Zafreen Jaffer and Jennifer Hardwick.)
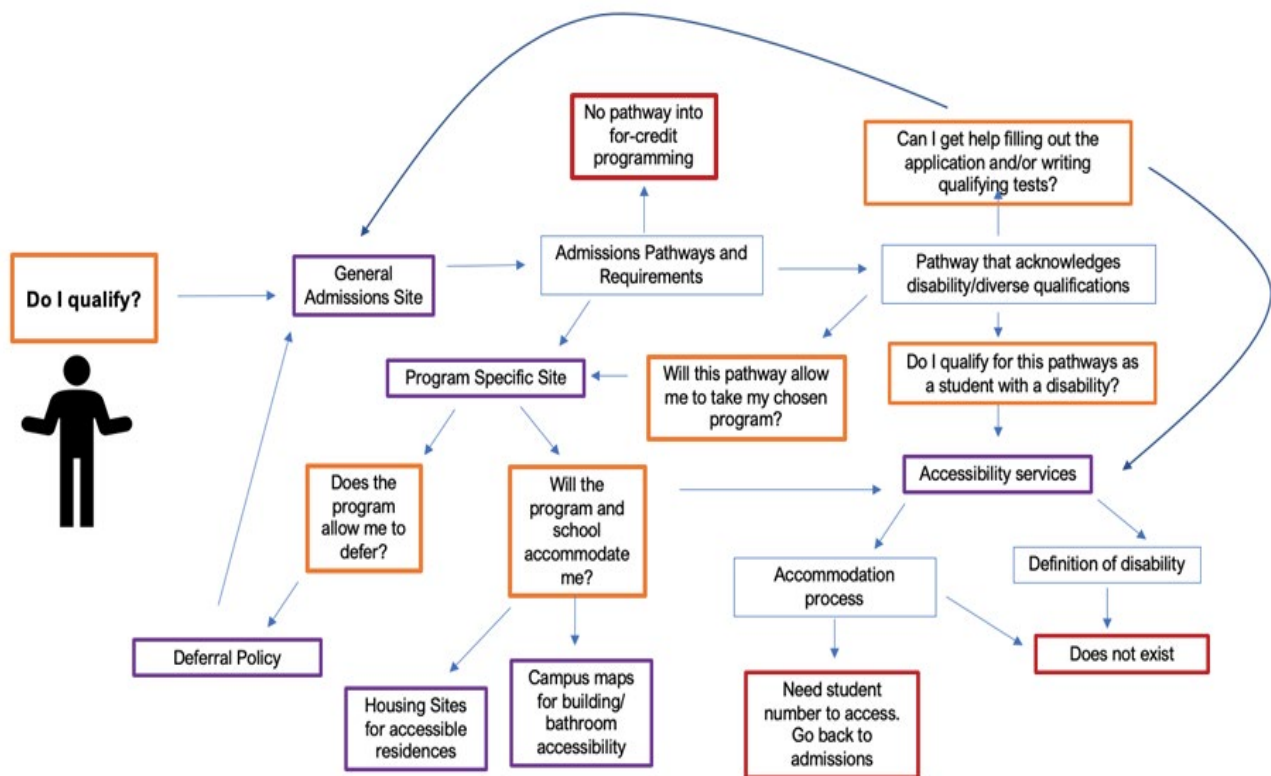
Students might also have difficulty figuring out if they qualify for supports or accommodations during the application process, or only after they receive acceptance to a post-secondary institution. Many BC Transfer System member institutions do not provide clear definitions of disability, and others use vague language around support and accommodation. For example, it is common for institutional websites to say that accommodation will be provided "when reasonable," without clearly explaining criteria that will be used or who will decide what "reasonable" means. A lack of clarity about disability leaves some applicants unsure about whether they qualify for accommodations, certain admissions pathways, and/or supports. However, some institutions, such as Royal Roads University (https://www.royalroads.ca/current-students/counselling-accessibility-wellness/accessibility), provide clear definitions and house all information about accessibility in a single section, greatly improving navigability (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Examples from Royal Roads University Accessibility website section
(Used with permission.)
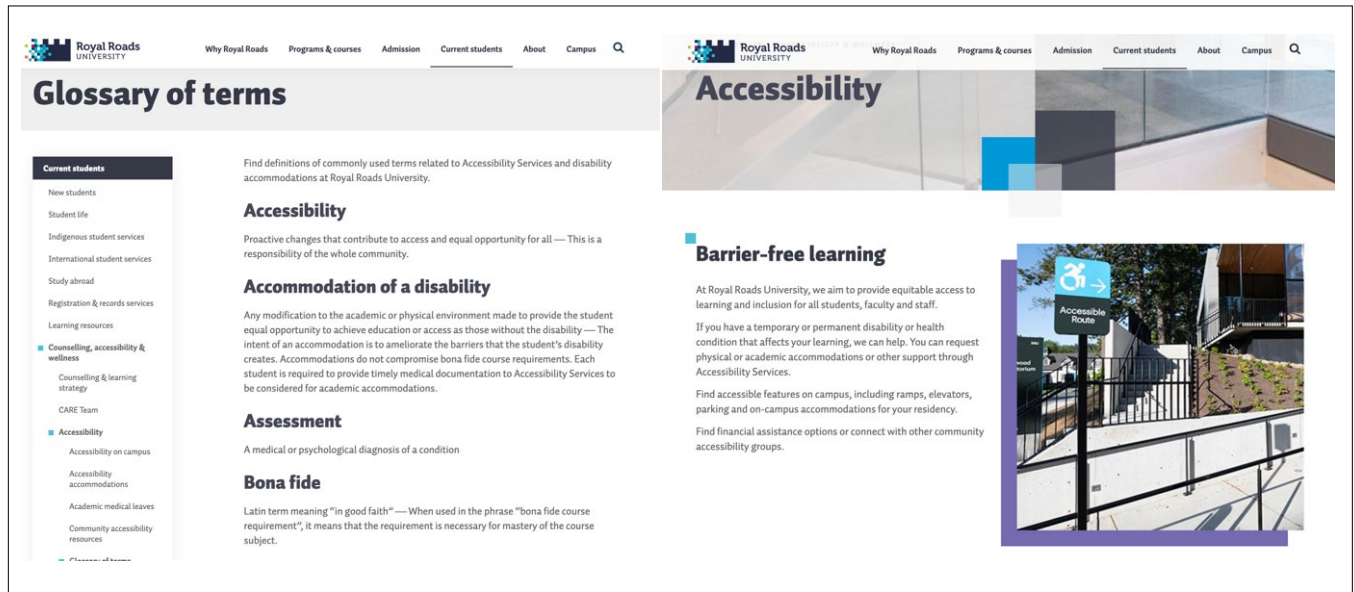
While accessibility and disability service sites are important sources of information for applicants, many institutions require applicants to apply and receive a student number before accessing disability support services. This means applicants with disabilities must pay application fees and go through the application process before they know whether they will have the supports they need to be successful. This can be a substantial financial and logistical barrier.

Multiple Pathways/Data Points

Many BC Transfer System member institutions have specialized pathways for equity-deserving applicants and/or other applicants who face barriers. For example, the majority of institutions have an Indigenous applicant category, and many institutions offer an application category for youth transitioning out of care. Additionally, several have a pathway for disabled applicants who wish to access life skills and upgrading programs, but not for-credit offerings. While all of these categories are important for improving accessibility, few institutions use a Universal Design approach that creates multiple pathways to meeting general admissions standards for for-credit programming. Using a singular pathway, often with one data point (i.e., grades), fails to acknowledge different ways of knowing and learning and presents a substantial barrier for potential students. The current structure might also force applicants with disabilities into segregated or not-for-credit programming when they wish to be part of inclusive for-credit programming that allows them to earn credentials alongside their peers.

There are shifts in the right direction, though. The few institutions that do provide multiple pathways are noteworthy, as they offer examples of how postsecondary schools can make use of multiple data points and uphold different ways of knowing while assessing applicants. For example, the University of Northern British Columbia has a Diverse Qualifications pathway (https://www2.unbc. ca/calendar/undergraduate/other-admissions), which

> recognizes the diversity of experience that students can bring to the university environment. This admissions route takes into account applicants who demonstrate life experience, excellence in other endeavours, and/or who have succeeded despite difficult circumstances. UNBC welcomes applications from anyone who can demonstrate academic potential but does not meet the requirements of the regular admissions routes (2023).

Similarly, Royal Roads University offers a "holistic and student-centered" Flexible Admissions Policy (https://www.royalroads.ca/admission/admission-requirements/flexible-admission) that considers personal statements, work experience, education, and references. It is beyond the scope of this project to track how successful these pathways are in terms of admitting and supporting applicants with disabilities. However, these examples do show that it is possible for institutions to have dynamic and flexible policies that provide students with options for sharing their knowledge in different ways to meet admissions requirements. Multiple post-secondary institutions have been using multi-factor application assessment. There is room for expanding and refining these admissions options.

Accessing Supports

While many post-secondary institutions in British Columbia have accessibility policies that indicate a commitment to reducing barriers and supporting access, it can be difficult for applicants to locate and make use of services before they are admitted to an institution. At the time of data collection and analysis, very few post-secondary institutions provided a clear pathway to ask for support during the application process. Camosun College's website, for example, provides clear links to Admission Advisors, Indigenous Advisors, International Advisors, and the Centre for Accessible Learning at the bottom of its central admissions page (https://camosun.ca/apply), making it easy for applicants to find help for their specific needs (Figure 3).

During the analysis phase of this project, nearly a quarter of BC Transfer System member institutions were coded as providing partial support because their websites pointed to general support for applicants but did not explicitly state there were supports for applicants with disabilities. Other institutions do not make it clear how to access supports during the application process at all, leaving potential students with disabilities without the help they may need.

While many applications ask if applicants wish to declare a disability, it is often unclear what self-declaration will do. Without clear definitions to guide them, applicants may not know if the postsecondary institution will consider them as disabled. Additionally, there is a lack of clarity about who will see the declaration, how it will be logged, and who will follow up with applicants. This may create anxiety for prospective students and discourage them from self-declaring. It might also create expectations for applicants that they will be contacted and offered supports if they declare. That is not always the case, as institutional accommodation processes often require medical documentation and an additional declaration after an applicant is admitted.

Figure 3: An example from Camosun College Admissions page (Used with permission.)
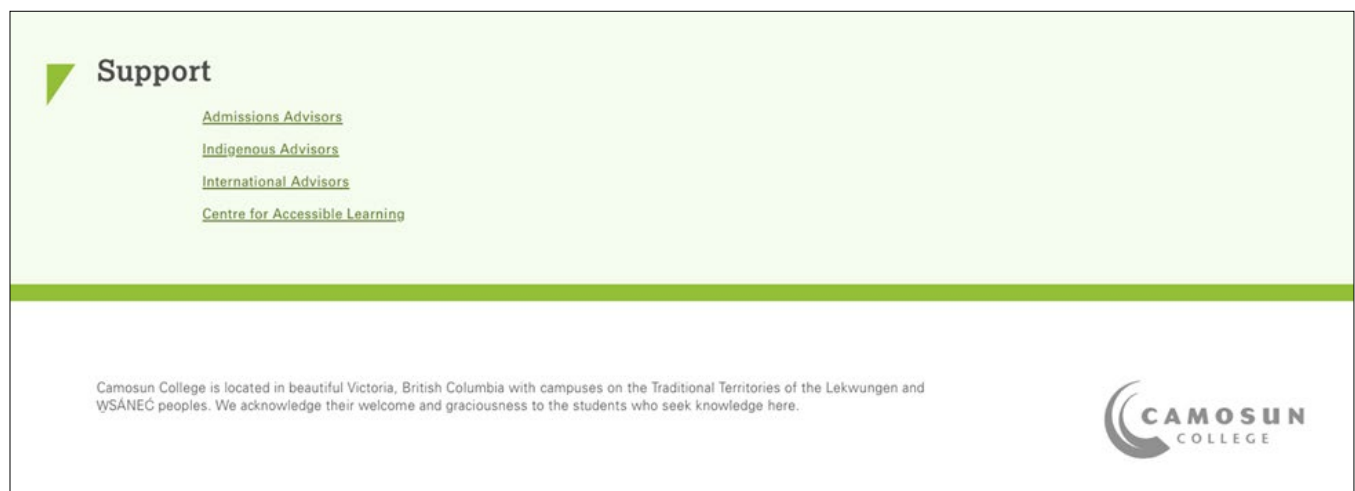
RECOMMENDATIONS

Now is a good time for post-secondary institutions in British Columbia to make accessibility a priority and align with the *Accessible BC Act* (2022) which requires organizations to "develop a plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization" (ABCA) and ensure that their plans address:

> (a) inclusion;
> (b) adaptability;
> (c) diversity;
> (d) collaboration;
> (e) self-determination; and
> (f) universal design (ABCA, 2022).

An analysis of admissions in BC post-secondary institutions reveals a need for this transformation. Applicants and students face multiple barriers that make it difficult to pursue their education.

Making admissions equitable, inclusive, and accessible will be a long-term process that will require engagement from across institutions. It will necessitate examining the impact of institutional silos and structures on students and applicants, the relationships between admissions standards and student successes; the alignment of institutional policies and procedures; and the ways that accessibility is funded and enacted in different units.

While we acknowledge that this work will be ongoing and that there are many challenges (including, but not limited to, government funding, institutional structures, staffing, and training), there are several things that post-secondary institutions can do immediately to make admissions more accessible. With this in mind, we have organized our recommendations around short-term recommendations which require limited funding, policy or program changes, or restructuring; long-term recommendations which require policy changes, changes to admissions requirements, and/or institutional and funding restructuring; and transformative recommendations which require a radical re-imagining of post-secondary structures and processes. The goal of these recommendations is to guide institutions as they progress towards just and inclusive admissions policies.

Short-Term Recommendations

1. *Include Accessibility Officers in admissions offices* to train staff, develop and oversee accessible admissions processes, support applicants, and liaise with other institutional units (i.e., Accessibility/Disability services, housing, facilities, Indigenous services, international services, etc.) that impact accessibility.

2. *Make accessible design a requirement for all admissions information sites, application portals, and policies. Audit (with internal or external experts) institutional websites* for accessibility and re-design as appropriate. All application and admissions materials (including entrance exam and assessment materials) should be provided in multiple formats, including screen-reader friendly, Braille, and ASL versions.

3. *Ensure accommodation is offered during the application process (including entrance exams), not just after acceptance.* All applicants should have access to supports during the application process. List examples of the supports available to potential students to ensure clarity and to encourage applicants with accommodations that are not listed. Examples of accommodations could include assistance filling out forms, materials in multiple formats (including multimedia, Braille, ASL), and in-person or online interviews.

*4. **Create sites with all information necessary for students with disabilities.*** Have a singular site that brings together all information necessary for students with disabilities, including information about admissions, academic accommodations, deferrals, housing, definitions, accessibility on campus, important policies, and available health, well-being, academic, and social supports. Include clear legal and plain language definitions of disability and accommodation, and materials should be available in multiple formats whenever possible. Include a link to this site on all admissions pages, along with links to Indigenous and international student supports.

*5. **Ensure public-facing processes make it clear how students can locate support.*** Offer information on all admissions websites about how students can request additional in-person and online supports. Buttons or links on admissions sites to request supports is highly recommended.

Long-Term Recommendations

*1. **Create multiple admissions pathways*** that allow for multiple data points in admissions standards. Applicants are diverse, which means there should be diverse ways for them to show that they can meet institutional requirements. Institutions should seek ways to use multiple data points (i.e., interviews, portfolios, grades, work and co-curricular experience, cultural knowledge) so that admissions are based on holistic overviews rather than a single factor (i.e., grades), or continue to do so, if the admissions assessment beyond grades is already in place.

Institutions need to recognize that nearly all options and singular pathways can both increase and reduce barriers, depending on the applicant. For this reason, it is important not to simply replace one data point (e.g., grades) with another (e.g., volunteer experience).

*2. **Create multiple pathways through programs.*** This is beyond the scope of admissions. However, program structures can have a large impact on whether applicants decide to apply to an institution or not. Increasing options for learning such as online, hybrid, part-time, cohort, and self-paced will allow applicants and students to pursue education in ways that work for them. While we recognize that funding, staffing, and pedagogical concerns mean that not all options can be available for all programs, options should be provided whenever possible.

*3. **Ensure international student admissions processes include information about accessibility and accommodation.*** While we recognize that international applicants and students are not government-funded, their tuition fees include their full participation and inclusion in post-secondary institutions. As such, they should be fully supported if they need accommodations to apply and they should be informed about academic accommodations, including how to transfer over any necessary diagnostic and support materials from their home countries.

*4. **Provide opportunities for admission deferral, and be clear about deferral policies.*** The ability to defer acceptance to an institution is an important factor for students who face barriers. Clearly state deferral policies (or link to them) on admissions pages. Deferrals should be available whenever possible.

*5. **Clarify policy language and establish clear and flexible standards for accommodation that align with provincial requirements.*** All admissions, accessibility, and accommodation websites and policies should contain legal and plain language definitions of disability, and provide clarity about how to receive an accommodation. Clarify who decides whether an accommodation is reasonable, how long the accommodations process can take, and what kind of accommodations and supports are available. While we recognize the importance of institutional autonomy and academic freedom, harmonization of definitions and rubrics would improve mobility and ease transitions for students and applicants with disabilities.

6. Ensure all institutional policies are written with accessibility and disability justice in mind. While we recognize that this is beyond the scope of admissions, all post-secondary institutional policies impact disabled individuals' ability to apply to, attend, and succeed at an institution. Making admissions inclusive is not enough; if the institution is filled with barriers potential students may avoid applying. As such, all policies need to be examined with a disability lens as they are created and/or revised.

Transformative Recommendations

Shift to a social model of disability. The currently used medical model of disability, which requires individuals to receive a medical diagnosis and submit private information in hopes of being deemed "disabled enough" to receive accommodation, creates numerous barriers for applicants, students, and institutions. It forces individuals to seek out complex and often expensive diagnosis, leaves applicants uncertain about whether they qualify for supports, and results in institutions becoming the arbiters of who deserves supports. A social model of disability encourages institutions to 'normalize' disability and different ways of knowing and to build accessibility into every facet of operations so that accommodations are rarely needed.

Universal Design for Learning practitioners often talk about designing for or teaching to "the margins" (CAST, 2023b); the idea is to build our courses, curriculums, and institutions in ways that centre learners who have historically been marginalized. When people hear the phrase, they often envision a small margin of disabled learners outside of a big centre of "normalcy". However, "the margins" is a complex and fluid concept, and as Figure 4 indicates, many (if not the vast majority) of learners will face systemic and individual challenges, inequities, and barriers at some point in their educational journey. In Figure 4, a circle with a large margin that lists examples of systemic and individual barriers to education including ableism, racism, colonization, homophobia/transphobia, patriarchy, language, trauma, employment, technology access, caregiving, and poverty. This does not provide an exhaustive list of potential barriers. There is a tiny centre.

Figure 4: Designing for the Margins in Theory and in Reality (Figure designed by Jennifer Hardwick.)
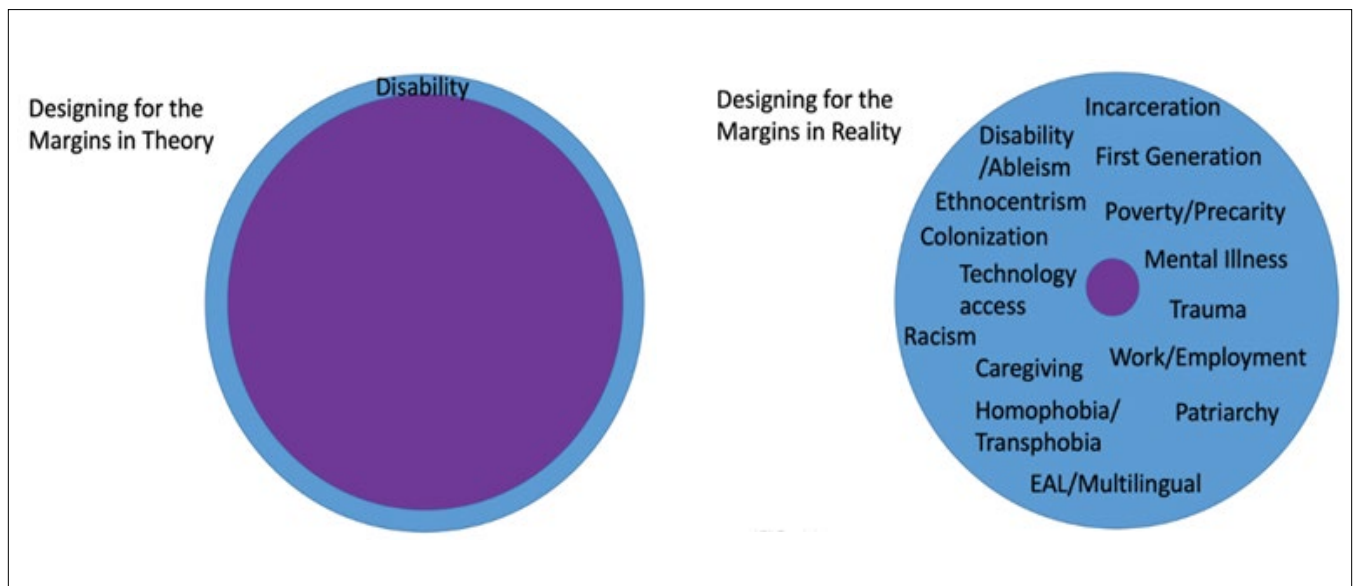
Designing for the margins reminds how few learners are at the center we imagine, and makes it clear that mobilizing EDI and disability justice frameworks (including UDL) to improve accessibility, clarify processes, offer supports, and address systemic oppression will benefit all learners.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This project opened several avenues for further research. Due to time and technology restraints, it was not possible to test all admissions and institutional sites for screen-reader accessibility. This is an important avenue for further exploration. As noted in Short-Term Recommendation 2, a proper audit would ensure that all sites and portals are accessible. Additionally, given the scope and timelines of our research, we were unable to perform a full examination of institutions' financial commitments to accessibility, the impact of institutional structures and siloes on accessibility, or the relationship between admissions requirements and students' success. All of these areas are deserving of further attention and analysis.

There are also additional avenues for study regarding admissions and EDI policies. While we did look at policies and procedures for overarching themes, mapping all BC Transfer System institutions admissions and EDI policies and procedures for their engagement with disability and admissions standards was beyond our scope and time. Instead, we chose to focus on the public-facing documents and processes that are most used by applicants (i.e., websites and portals). Analyzing these policies and procedures (including their success in admitting and supporting students) in the future would be an excellent way to see which institutions are addressing inclusion and disability justice, and to expand on work that is already being done.

CONCLUSION

Addressing accessibility in postsecondary admissions is an important way to support equity, diversity, and inclusion and address systemic inequities. Currently, applicants and students face numerous barriers that make it more difficult to achieve a post-secondary education. It is both necessary and possible to address these barriers.

Institutions across Canada have already begun this work, and the ABCA will soon require post-secondary institutions in British Columbia to have accessibility plans and committees. If post-secondary institutions want to remain at the forefront of innovation and be active in their pursuits of justice, now is the time to start addressing accessibility and inclusion.

Post-secondary institutions can begin with simple steps such as revamping materials and hiring accessibility experts into admissions offices, and then work slowly towards the complex, systematic transformation that is required.

This work will be ongoing, and it will not be easy, but it is integral to the pursuit of equitable, inclusive, and just education systems that uphold, celebrate, acknowledge, and integrate different ways of knowing.

Post-secondary institutions can begin with simple steps such as revamping materials and hiring accessibility experts into admissions offices, and then work slowly towards the complex, systemic transformation that is required. This work will be ongoing, and it will not be easy, but it is integral to the pursuit of equitable, inclusive, and just education systems that uphold, celebrate, acknowledge, and integrate different ways of knowing.

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APPENDIX A: Glossary of Key Terms and Principles

2SLGBTQIA+ refers to Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and additional sexual orientations and gender identities (Government of Canada, 2022).

Ableism, or disability oppression, is the "pervasive system that oppresses people with disabilities while privileging people who do not currently have disabilities. Like other systems of oppression, ableism operates on many levels, including institutional policy and practice, cultural norms and representations, and individual beliefs and behaviours" (Ostinguy, Peters & Shlasko, as quoted in Robertson & Larson, 2016, p. 4). As with all ways of thinking that reinforce inequalities, ableism is systemic, and not always conscious or intentional.

Alt Text provides a concise textual description of a picture or image. "Alt Text is meant to convey the "why" of the image as it relates to the content of a document or webpage. It is read aloud to users by screen reader software, and it is indexed by search engines" (Harvard University, 2023).

American Sign Language (ASL) "is a complete, natural language that has the same linguistic properties as spoken languages, with grammar that differs from English. ASL is expressed by movements of the hands and face. It is the primary language of many North Americans who are deaf and hard of hearing and is used by some hearing people as well" (National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, 2021).

A **Barrier** "is anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment. Barriers can be: (a) caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications or technologies, and (b) affected by intersecting forms of discrimination" (Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA), 2021)

Colonization "is not only a process of taking political control over Indigenous lands, but also a system designed to maintain power and influence (e.g., imposition of colonial institutions of education, health care and law)" (Diaz et al., 2023, p. 39).

Closed captioning is a textual version of something that is spoken in a visual medium. Closed captioning is commonly used on television, films, video clips, and audiovisual presentations. "Captions allow people who can't hear a video's soundtrack to have access to a text version of the information provided in the audio" (Harvard University, 2023)

Decolonization is "the dismantling of the process by which one nation asserts and establishes its domination and control over another nation's land, people and culture. It is the framework through which we are working toward undoing the oppression and subjugation of Indigenous peoples in what is now known as British Columbia and unlearning colonial ways of thinking and being" (BC Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, N.d.a.).

Described video, sometimes called video description or transcription, is an audio description of visual elements of a video. "Audio description (AD) is a narration of meaningful visual information in a video to provide context, clarify speakers, and articulate visual elements. (Similar to alternative text for videos.)" (Harvard University, 2023).

Disability "is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and mind and features of the society in which they live. A disability can occur at any time in a person's life; some people are born with a disability, while others develop a disability later in life. It can be permanent, temporary, or episodic. Disability can steadily worsen, remain the same, or

improve. It can be very mild to very severe. The social model approach views disability as a natural part of society, where attitudes, stigma and prejudices present barriers to people with disabilities, and prevent or hinder their participation in mainstream society" (Government of Canada, 2013). We recognize that there is an ongoing debate within community and academia, regarding using person-first language (people with disabilities) and identity-first language (disabled people) (Rodriguez, 2022). In recognition of that debate, we will be using both terms intermittently throughout this report.

Disability Justice "focuses on the goal of disability activism not on inclusion in normative ableist social relations but instead on contesting those relations entirely. As Mia Mingus (2011) puts it, 'we don't just want to join the ranks of the privileged; we want to dismantle those ranks and the systems that maintain them'" (Fritsch et al., 2022, p. 32).

Diversity refers to a "wide range of qualities and attributes within a person, group or community. When we celebrate diversity, communities and workplaces become richer as they draw upon the variety of experiences, perspectives and skills that people can contribute" (City of Ottawa (2018), as quoted in Diaz et al., 2023).

Equity: "The condition that would be achieved if one's identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares" (BC Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, N.d.b.).

Heteropatriarchy refers to "social, political, cultural, and economic systems that privilege and afford dominance to white, straight-identified men. Within these systems, heterosexual males are assumed to have power and legitimacy over all people who are not heterosexual and male" (Harris, 2011, as quoted in Woodson, 2016, p. 59).

Impairment "includes a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual or cognitive impairment, whether permanent, temporary or episodic" (Accessible BC Act).

Inclusion is when everyone has "the same access to opportunities to lead a regular, fulfilled life: grow up at home with your family; be included in school with friends and peers; immerse in a hobby or sport; have a career; travel; make friends; find a soulmate; have a home of your own; and contribute to your community" (Inclusion Canada, 2020).

The **"Medical model of disability"** sees the person with the disability as a problem which requires 'experts' and 'special' services to minimize. It pathologizes the individual without addressing social and cultural systems and structures (Wolbring & Lillywhite, 2021).

Plain Language refers to language written without any jargon, using words that the general public can understand. The Government of Canada "adopted a plain language policy for communications in 1988" (National Literacy Secretariat, 1994, p. 4).

Racism "is the belief that one group of people, identified by physical characteristics of shared ancestry (such as skin colour), is superior to another group of people that look different from themselves. Racism occurs when individuals or groups are disadvantaged or mistreated based on their perceived race and/or ethnicity either through individualistic or systemic racism" (Government of British Columbia, 2022b).

Social model of disability: a model that "recognizes the vast diversity in bodies and minds and that "it is society that disables certain people who are excluded from participating as equals due to environmental, political, and attitudinal barriers" (Nario-Redmond, 2020, p. 96)

Special Needs Categories: "defines the various kinds of students who have special needs and the essential elements that should be included in programs for them and the criteria that must be met for supplemental funding" (Government of British Columbia, 2022c). Special needs categories include: physical disability; Physically Dependent; Deafblind; Moderate to profound Intellectual Disability; Physical Disability; Chronic Health Impairment; Visual Impairment; Deaf or Hard of Hearing; Intensive Behaviour Interventions; Severe Mental Illness; Mild Intellectual Disability; Gifted; Learning Disability; Chronic Health Impairment (BC Teachers Federation, 2019).

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): a flexible framework for teaching and learning that recognizes and supports diverse learners by encouraging multiple means of sharing information, multiple means of engagement, and multiple means action and expression (CAST, 2023a; Fovet, 2020).

APPENDIX B:
List of Post-Secondary Institutions Analyzed

The following links are to centralized, public-facing admissions and disability/accessibility support sites that applicants with disabilities are likely to encounter. It is important to note that many institutions offer multiple admissions sites (including but not limited to undergraduate, graduate, upgrading, and program-specific sites) and multiple sites devoted to accessibility, inclusion, and/or student support that may be important to applicants with disabilities. This list is not exhaustive; these sites were merely starting places for our analysis.

The links were assessed in Fall 2022 and Winter 2023, and the pages or/and their content may change with time.

Institution	Admissions Site	Accessibility/Disability Services Site
Acsenda School of Management	https://acsenda.com/apply/	Could not find
Alexander College	https://alexandercollege.ca/admissions-and-registration/admission-requirements/	https://alexandercollege.ca/student-success/office-of-student-affairs/accommodation/
Athabasca University	https://www.athabascau.ca/admissions/index.html	https://www.athabascau.ca/support-services/accessibility-services/index.html
BCIT	https://www.bcit.ca/admission/	https://www.bcit.ca/accessibility/
Camosun College	https://camosun.ca/apply	https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning
Capilano University	https://www.capilanou.ca/admissions/	https://www.capilanou.ca/student-services/accessibility-services/
Coast Mountain College	https://www.coastmountaincollege.ca/admissions/apply-to-cmtn	https://www.coastmountaincollege.ca/student-services/student-support/accessibility-services
College of New Caledonia	https://cnc.bc.ca/admissions	https://cnc.bc.ca/services/accessibility
College of the Rockies	https://cotr.bc.ca/apply/	https://cotr.bc.ca/student-services/student-support/accessibility-services/
Columbia College	https://www.columbiacollege.ca/future-students/how-to-apply/	Could not find
Coquitlam College	https://www.coquitlamcollege.com/admissions/	Could not find
Corpus Christi College	https://corpuschristi.ca/admissions/	https://corpuschristi.ca/student-resource-centre/
Douglas College	https://www.douglascollege.ca/future-students/apply-douglas	https://www.douglascollege.ca/student-services/student-support/accessibility-services
Emily Carr	https://www.ecuad.ca/admissions/application-info	https://www.ecuad.ca/student-life/student-services/accessibility-services
Fairleigh Dickinson University	https://www.fdu.edu/admissions/	https://www.fdu.edu/campuses/metropolitan-campus/student-services/student-health-services/accommodations/
Fraser International College	https://www.fraseric.ca/admissions/	Could not find
Justice Institute of BC	https://www.jibc.ca/registration	https://www.jibc.ca/student-services/student-support/disability-services
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	https://www.kpu.ca/admission	https://www.kpu.ca/access
Langara College	https://langara.ca/admissions/	https://langara.ca/student-services/accessibility-services/index.html

Institution	Admissions Site	Accessibility/Disability Services Site
LaSalle College	https://www.lasallecollegevancouver.com/admission/information	https://www.lasallecollegevancouver.com/student-resources/student-services [includes disability services]
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	https://www.nvit.ca/registration/admission.htm	https://www.nvit.ca/services/disability.htm
North Island College	https://www.nic.bc.ca/admissions/	https://www.nic.bc.ca/student-life-support-services/academic-supports/accessible-learning-services/
Northern Lights College	https://www.nlc.bc.ca/Admissions	https://www.nlc.bc.ca/Services/Access-Service
Okanagan College	https://www.okanagan.bc.ca/apply	https://www.okanagan.bc.ca/accessibility-services
Quest University	N/A	N/A
Royal Roads University	https://www.royalroads.ca/admission	https://www.royalroads.ca/current-students/counselling-accessibility-wellness/accessibility
Selkirk College	https://selkirk.ca/apply-register/apply	https://selkirk.ca/student-life-support/student-supports/accessibility-services
Simon Fraser University	https://www.sfu.ca/admission	https://www.sfu.ca/students/accessible-learning.html
Thompson Rivers University	https://www.tru.ca/future/admissions.html	https://www.tru.ca/current/academic-supports/as.html
Trinity Western University	https://www.twu.ca/admissions-aid	https://www.twu.ca/learning-commons/centre-accessible-learning/accessibility-services
University of British Columbia	https://www.ubc.ca/admissions/	https://you.ubc.ca/ubc-life/campus-community/students-disabilities/
University of the Fraser Valley	https://www.ufv.ca/admissions/	https://www.ufv.ca/accessibility/
University of Northern British Columbia	https://www2.unbc.ca/admissions	https://www2.unbc.ca/access-resource-centre
University of Victoria	https://www.uvic.ca/admissions/uvic-admissions/index.php	https://www.uvic.ca/accessible-learning/
Vancouver Community College	https://www.vcc.ca/applying/registration-services/admissions-and-registration/welcome/	https://www.vcc.ca/services/services-for-students/disability-services/
Vancouver Island University	https://connect.viu.ca/how-become-viu-student	https://services.viu.ca/accessibility-services
Yorkville University	https://www.yorkvilleu.ca/admissions/	https://success.yorkvilleu.ca/accessibility
Yukon University	https://www.yukonu.ca/future-students/apply	https://www.yukonu.ca/current-students/learning-matters/accessibility-services

BCCAT

info@bccat.ca

www.bccat.ca
www.bctransferguide.ca

@bccat_org
@bctransferguide

bc-council-on-
admissions-&-transfer

@bccat_org