Accessibility Services

Survey Report Summary - 2023

Statement of Acknowledgement of Traditional Land

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

This Statement of Acknowledgement of Traditional Land serves as an expression of thanks for the privilege of having Indigenous community members inform the work of Accessibility Services and for the opportunity to work on this land that many hold sacred. This acknowledgement should also encourage Accessibility Services staff to recognize the historical and current contexts that intersect with our work and influence the experiences of our students and colleagues, especially our Indigenous students and colleagues.

The intersection of Indigeneity and Disability presents a very specific reality that Accessibility Services needs to work with collaboratively and with great cultural humility if we are to undertake the decolonization of the service. Our office recognizes its obligation to continuously improve. We are working on ways to provide more culturally appropriate support and to reimagine our space to invite creativity, differences and authenticity.

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Introduction

This report analyzes survey results of the Accessibility Services Student Experience Surveys between 2019 and 2022. These surveys explore students' experiences with Accessibility Services including registration, developing/navigating accommodations, resources/supports accessed, and communication.

Each annual survey contains themed questions that are unique to that year. Themes have included the on-location accessibility advisor model (2019), community and loneliness (2020), experiences with online learning (2021), and use of technology in various learning settings (2022).

The surveys were designed so that students could submit their responses anonymously, either online or through a PDF version upon request. The results of these surveys have directly informed the work of Accessibility Services to improve services for students with disabilities.

Respondents

Since the creation of the survey, the total number of respondents has hovered around 900-1,400. The table below illustrates the fluctuations in the number of respondents between 2019 and 2022.

YEAR	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
2019	1073
2020	1386
2021	1259
2022	910

Figure 1: Number of Survey Respondents between 2019-2022.

Disability type

The data indicates that in all four years, mental health was the most common type of disability reported, followed by neurological disabilities (e.g. learning disabilities, ADHD, ASD, etc.), health-related disabilities, mobility-related disabilities, then sensory disabilities. This is proportionality consistent with the general population of students registered with Accessibility Services.

YEAR	MENTAL HEALTH	NEUROLOGICAL	HEALTH	SENSORY	MOBILITY	I DO NOT KNOW THE NATURE OF MY DISABILITY/ I AM CURRENTLY IN THE PROCESS OF REGISTERING/ COMPLETING AN ASSESSMENT
2019	52.1%	29.2%	11.0%	3.5%	4.4%	
2020	52.4%	26.3%	11.8%	4.3%	5.2%	
2021	51.4%	29.7%	11.2%	3.1%	4.0%	0.5%
2022	50.4%	32.4%	10.1%	3.3%	3.3%	0.4%

Figure 2: Primary disability types of survey respondents between 2019-2022.

Demographic data

The survey began collecting demographic data in 2020. Some of the terms used to collect data are outdated and/or change with every iteration of the survey. This report has made an effort to specify the year in which a term was used to collect data.

At Accessibility Services, we recognize that language is fluid and ever evolving. These terms are not meant to be prescriptive and are used to reflect current data collection standards of the University, Statistics Canada, and in consultation with campus partners at the time of release of each survey iteration. Recent versions of the survey have made an effort to align with language and questions in the Student Equity Census, particularly those around gender identity, sexual orientation, Indigenous identity, and ethno-cultural identity. The Accessibility Services Experience Survey will continue to be reviewed so that it reflects the most current and cognizant language.

In each of these demographic questions, respondents were allowed to select as many options as they saw fit. As a result, some data sets have a respondent rate sum above 100%. The percentages displayed in this section indicate the percentage of respondents who selected that specific answer, although each respondent may have also selected another answer.

Gender identity

Gender Identity of Respondents (2020)

70.9%

22.0%

1.1%   4.2%   2.2%   0.8%   0.2%   2.4%   2.1%

Gender Identities

- Agender, 1.1%
- Genderqueer or gender fluid, 4.2%
- Man/male, 22.0%
- Questioning or not sure, 2.2%
- Trans man, 0.8%
- Trans woman, 0.2%
- Woman/female, 70.9%
- Another gender identity, 2.4%
- Prefer not to answer, 2.1%
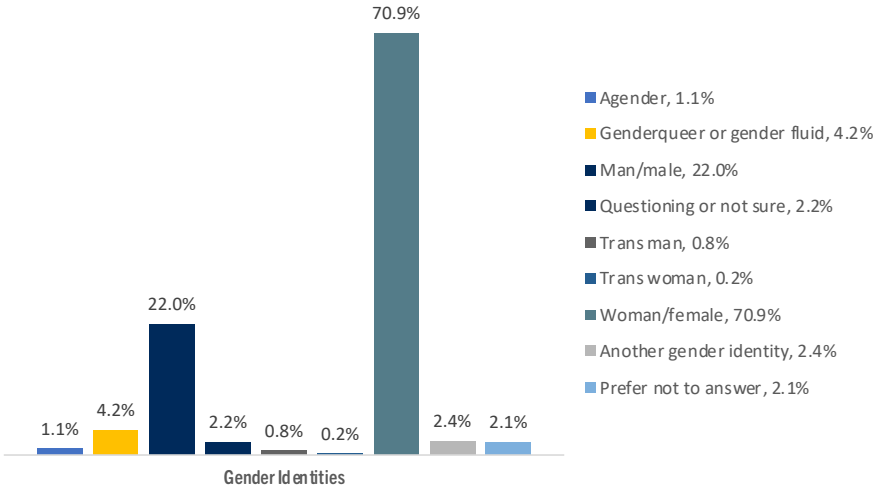
Figure 3: Gender Identities of Survey Respondents in 2020.

Gender Identity of Respondents (2021)

63.6%

32.4%

23.1%

7.7%   3.3%   2.2%   0.2%   0.9%

Gender Identities

- Cisgender, 32.4%
- Man, 23.1%
- Nonbinary (Agender, Genderqueer or gender fluid), 7.7%
- Questioning or unsure, 3.3%
- Trans, 2.2%
- Two-Spirit, 0.2%
- Woman, 63.6%
- Another gender identity, 0.9%
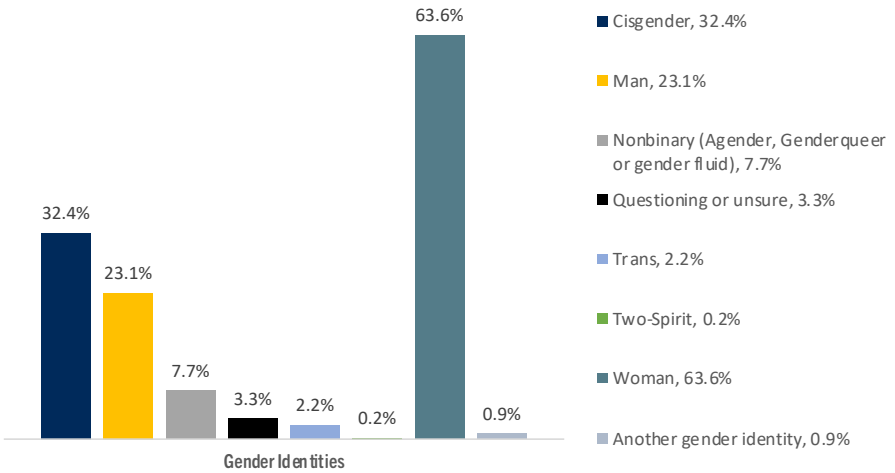
Figure 4: Gender Identities of Survey Respondents in 2021.

Gender Identity of Respondents (2022)

60.6%

19.0%

11.4%

3.9%   4.5%   4.0%   4.8%
                                    0.5%

Gender Identities

- Genderqueer, 3.9%
- Genderfluid, 4.5%
- Man (cis/trans), 19.0%
- Nonbinary, 11.4%
- Questioning, 4.0%
- Two-Spirit, 0.5%
- Woman (cis/trans), 60.8%
- An identity not listed, 4.8%
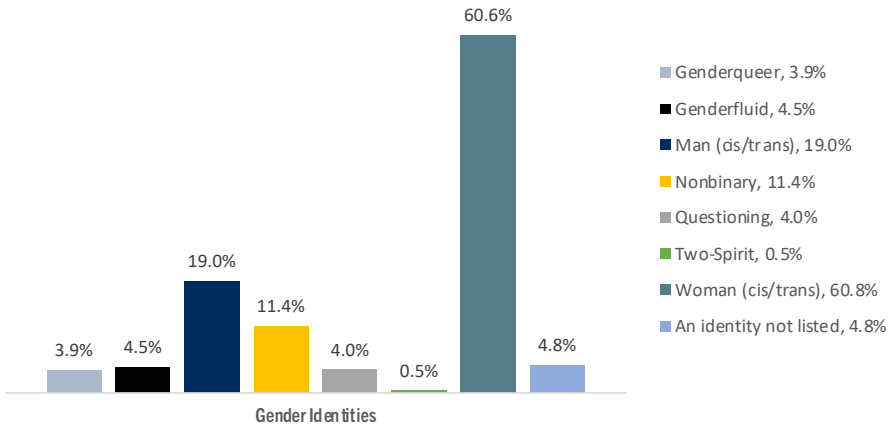
Figure 5: Gender Identities of Survey Respondents in 2022.

Percentage of Respondents Who Identify as Part of the Trans Community (2022)

83.0%

7.4%   5.4%   4.6%

Answers

- Yes, 7.4%
- No, 83.0%
- Not sure, 5.4%
- Prefer not to answer, 4.6%
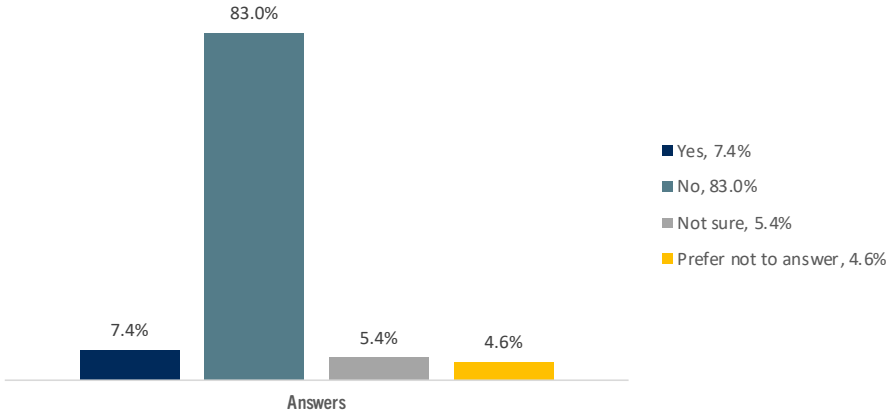
Figure 6: Percentage of respondents who identify as part of the trans community (2022).

Gender identity

Sexual Orientation of Respondents (2020-2022)

	2020	2021	2022
Asexual/nonsexual	3.7%	5.4%	7.0%
Bisexual	17.2%	19.7%	24.3%
Gay	4.4%	5.2%	4.3%
Heterosexual/Straight	61.0%	58.6%	48.2%
Lesbian	4.4%	4.3%	4.0%
Pansexual	4.2%	6.1%	7.0%
Queer	9.9%	9.9%	15.0%
Questioning or not certain	6.0%	4.5%	5.9%
Two-Spirit		0.0%	0.8%
Another sexual orientation	1.3%	1.4%	2.3%
Prefer not to answer	5.5%	7.9%	9.6%

Year
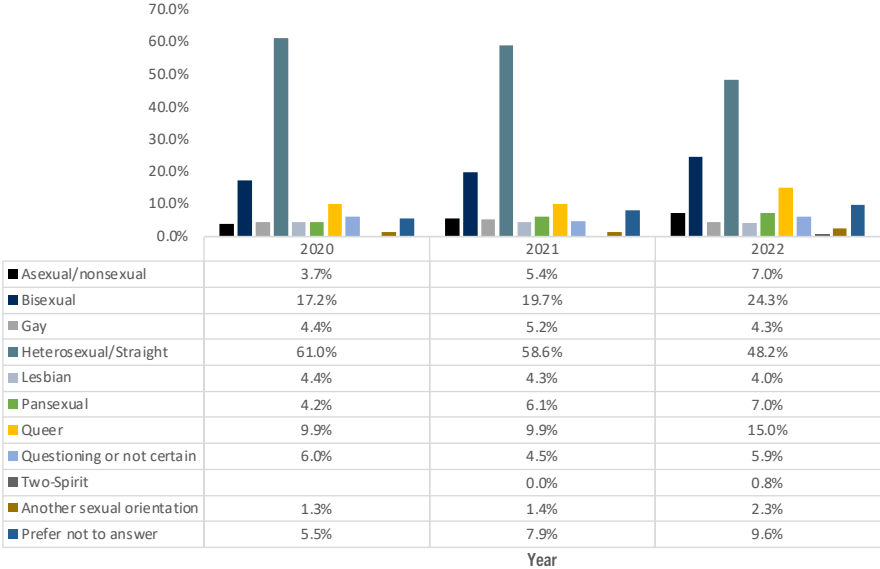
Figure 7: Sexual orientation of survey respondents between 2020-2022.

Ethno-cultural identity

The surveys from 2020 to 2022 each provided different options around ethno-cultural identity for students to select.

Ethno-Cultural Identity of Respondents (2020)

Category	Percentage
Asian	30.7%
Black	7.7%
Latin/Hispanic	7.2%
Middle Eastern	8.0%
White	53.0%
I identify in a way not described above	6.2%
Prefer not to answer	2.9%
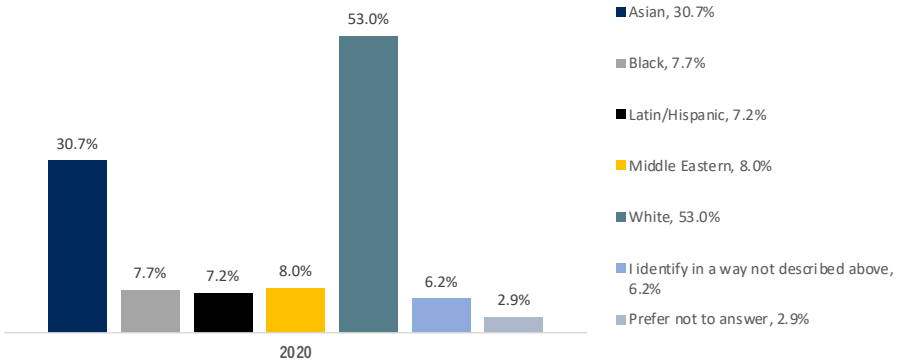
Figure 8: Ethno-cultural identity of survey respondents in 2020.

Ethno-Cultural Identity of Respondents (2021)

Category	Percentage
Arab	3.6%
Black	5.6%
Chinese	15.0%
Filipino	2.4%
Indigenous	2.5%
Japanese	1.0%
Korean	2.0%
Latin American	5.1%
Mixed/Bi-racial/multi-racial	6.7%
South Asian	13.0%
Southeast Asian	2.4%
West Asian	2.8%
White	45.9%
Prefer to self-identify	8.5%
Prefer not to answer	4.9%
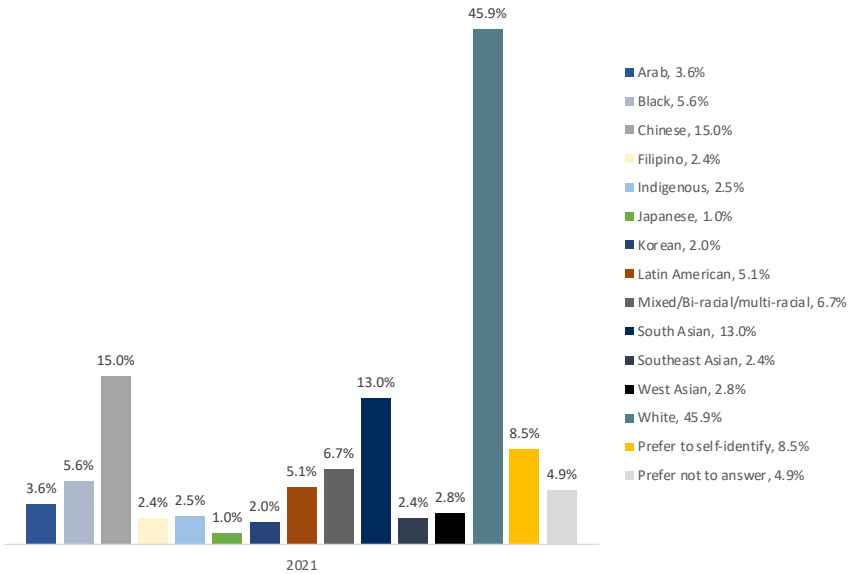
Figure 9: Ethno-cultural identity of survey respondents in 2021.

Ethno-Cultural Identity of Respondents (2022)

Legend:
- Arab, 5.4%
- Black, 8.3%
- Chinese, 12.7%
- Filipino, 1.5%
- Indigenous, 2.8%
- Japanese, 1.2%
- Jewish, 6.1%
- Korean, 1.5%
- Latin American, 4.9%
- Mixed/Bi-racial/multi-racial, 7.7%
- South Asian, 11.6%
- Southeast Asian, 3.8%
- West Asian, 3.5%
- White, 47.2%
- Prefer to self-identify, 4.8%
- Prefer not to answer, 6.0%

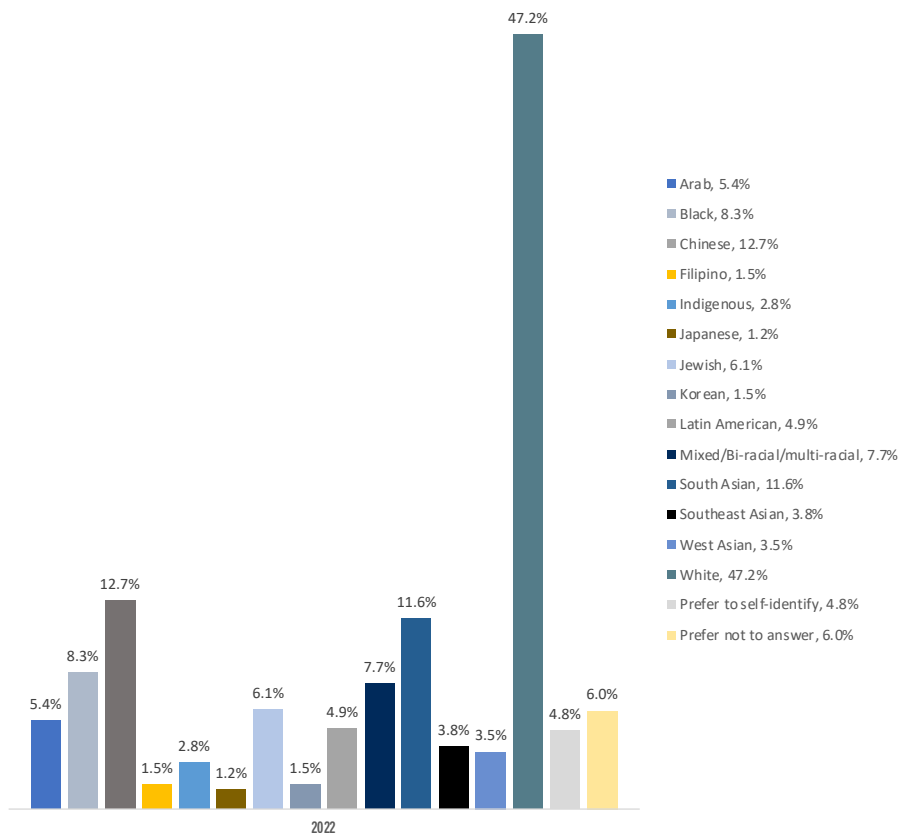*Figure 10: Ethno-cultural identity of survey respondents in 2022.*

Indigenous identity

Beginning in 2020, the survey asked respondents whether they identified as an Indigenous or Aboriginal person. Based on definitions used in the U of T Student Equity Census, an Indigenous or Aboriginal person from Turtle Island is First Nations (status or non-status; treaty or non-treaty), Inuk (Inuit), Métis, Alaska Native, Native American or Native Hawaiian.

Between 2020 and 2022, a total of 63 survey respondents identified themselves as Indigenous. The small sample size in the data may not accurately represent the diversity of Indigenous identities of students registered with Accessibility Services, or the actual number of Indigenous students registered with Accessibility Services.

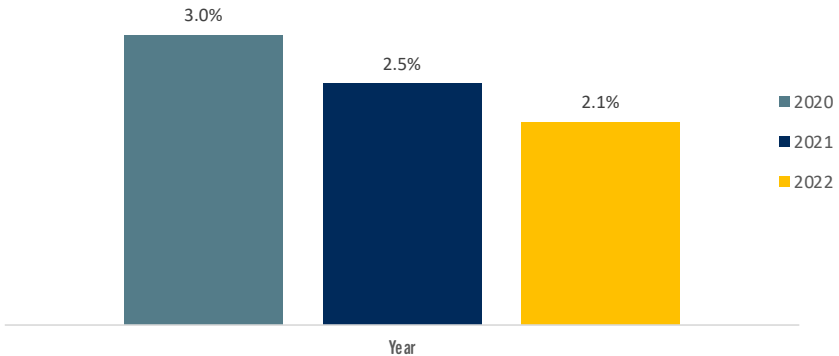### Percent of Respondents Who Identified as Indigenous (2020-2022)

Figure 11: Percentage of respondents who identified as Indigenous between 2020-2022.

Experiences with Accessibility Services

Primary reason for registration with Accessibility Services

From 2019 to 2022, the survey asked respondents their primary reason for registering with Accessibility Services. The main reasons for students registering with Accessibility Services from 2019 to 2022 were due to a disability or struggling at U of T and believing that an accommodation would help.

Reasons for Registering with Accessibility Services (2019-2022)

	2019	2020	2021	2022
■ I have a disability	55.5%	38.2%	37.4%	49.3%
■ I received an accommodation(s) in high school/post-secondary institution and wanted to continue using accommodations at U of T	12.4%	18.3%	18.8%	13.7%
■ I was struggling at U of T and believed an accommodation would help me	15.1%	29.2%	26.8%	22.7%
■ I registered due to impacts related to COVID-19			2.8%	0.9%
■ I had an additional (temporary) diagnosis/diagnoses that required accommodations (e.g. Concussion, broken bone)	12.7%	8.5%	5.2%	2.8%
■ I suspected I had a disability	0.0%	0.0%	4.9%	7.1%
■ I started registration for another reason	4.3%	5.9%	4.0%	3.5%

Figure 12: Reasons for Registering with Accessibility Services by Year (2019-2022).

Hearing about Accessibility Services

In 2021 and 2022, the survey asked respondents where they had heard about Accessibility Services.

How Respondents Learned About Accessibility Services
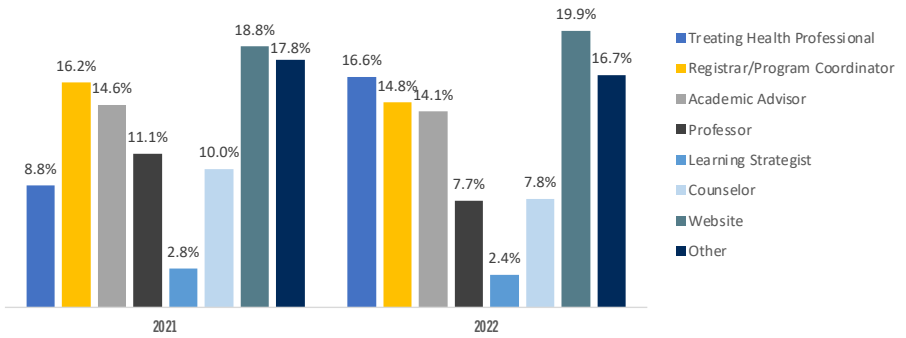
Figure 13: How respondents learned about Accessibility Services between 2020-2022.

Learning skills development

In 2021 and 2022, student were asked what their biggest concerns were about the upcoming year from a learning perspective. It is important to note that these concerns may be reflective of a specific time period where all postsecondary educations shifted from in-person to virtual learning.

Learning Areas of Concern About the Upcoming Academic Year (2021-2022)
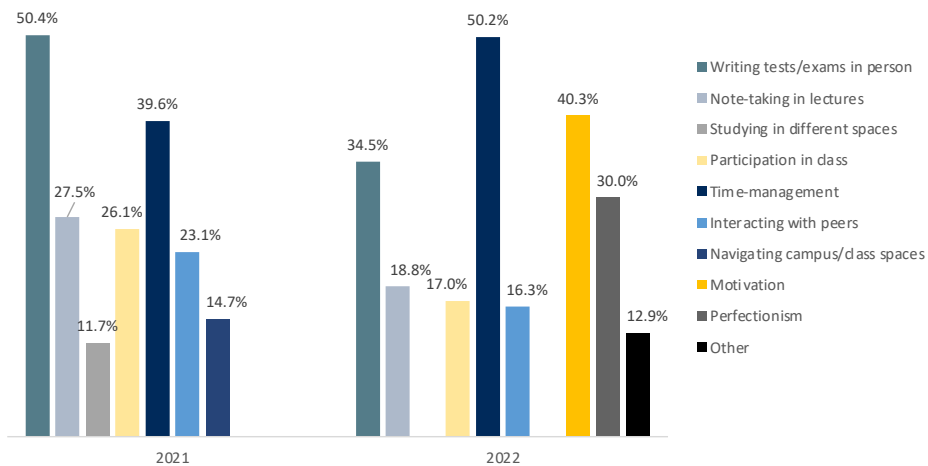
Figure 14: Respondents' biggest learning areas of concern about the upcoming academic year (2021-2022)

Community and belonging

In 2021, the survey asked students about a sense of belonging they felt since registering with Accessibility Services. Students were asked to share how strongly they agreed/disagreed with the several statements community, loneliness and the impact of disability.

Community and a Sense of Belonging on Campus (2021).

	"Since registering with Accessibility Services, I have felt a sense of community/ belonging within Accessibility Services"	"Registering with Accessibility Services has helped me find or maintain a sense of belonging/ community within University of Toronto"	"Beyond Accessibility Services, I have the services/ supports available to help you learn effectively at U of T"	"I experienced loneliness within the last year because of COVID-19 (e.g. online learning, different living situation, quarantine)"
Strongly Disagree	7.3%	7.0%	6.2%	1.8%
Disagree	22.1%	22.3%	14.2%	7.1%
Neutral	39.4%	39.9%	32.4%	8.2%
Agree	24.2%	23.5%	36.9%	30.6%
Strongly agree	7.0%	7.3%	10.3%	52.3%

"I experienced disability-related impacts/ an increase in disability-related issues from my disability due to COVID-19 (e.g. changes to healthcare, treatment moved online, gaps in care, etc.)"	"In the last year, I have found or maintained a sense of community/ belonging within Accessibility Services."	"In the last year, I have found or maintained a sense of belonging/ community within the University of Toronto."	"Beyond Accessibility Services, I feel that I have the services/ supports available to help you learn effectively at U of T."	"I experienced loneliness within the last year because of COVID-19 (e.g. online learning, different living situation, quarantine)."	"I experienced disability-related impacts/ an increase in disability-related issues from my disability due to COVID-19 (e.g. changes to healthcare, treatment moved online, gaps in care, etc.)."
3.8%	19.2%	18.5%	11.0%	4.1%	2.9%
4.7%	25.1%	25.4%	18.8%	5.8%	9.9%
13.7%	37.8%	26.9%	28.9%	11.4%	12.9%
28.3%	13.8%	23.0%	32.7%	28.4%	28.3%
49.5%	4.1%	6.2%	8.6%	50.3%	46.0%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Satisfaction with Accessibility Services

Communication

Between 2020 and 2022, students were asked to rate how satisfied they were with communication response time, frequency and overall efforts with Accessibility Services.
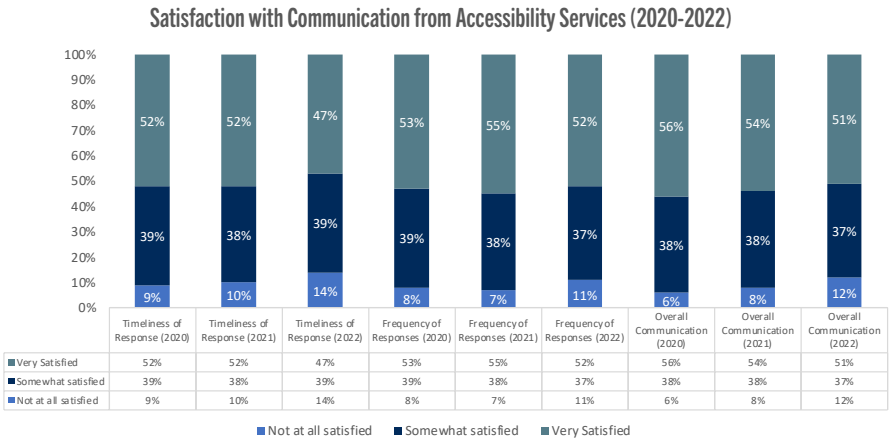
Satisfaction with Communication from Accessibility Services (2020-2022)

	Timeliness of Response (2020)	Timeliness of Response (2021)	Timeliness of Response (2022)	Frequency of Responses (2020)	Frequency of Responses (2021)	Frequency of Responses (2022)	Overall Communication (2020)	Overall Communication (2021)	Overall Communication (2022)
Very Satisfied	52%	52%	47%	53%	55%	52%	56%	54%	51%
Somewhat satisfied	39%	38%	39%	39%	38%	37%	38%	38%	37%
Not at all satisfied	9%	10%	14%	8%	7%	11%	6%	8%	12%

■ Not at all satisfied ■ Somewhat satisfied ■ Very Satisfied

Figure 16: Respondents' satisfaction with communication response time, frequency, and overall efforts with Accessibility Services (2020-2022)

Overall support

Between 2020 and 2022, students were asked to rate how strongly agreed/ disagreed with the following statement: "Accessibility Services, as an office, has been supportive in helping me navigating academic concerns related to my disability/disabilities."

Support with Navigating Disability-Related Academic Concerns (2020-2022)

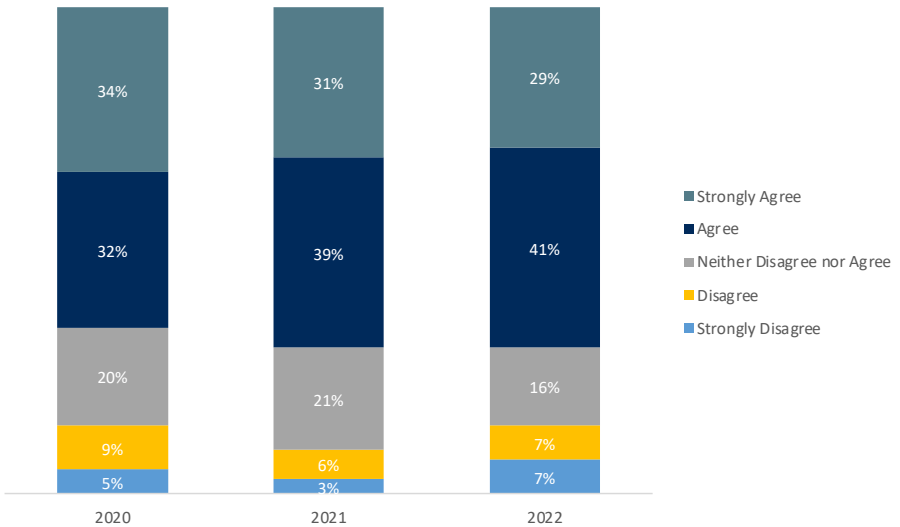|	2020	2021	2022
Strongly Agree	34%	31%	29%
Agree	32%	39%	41%
Neither Disagree nor Agree	20%	21%	16%
Disagree	9%	6%	7%
Strongly Disagree	5%	3%	7%

Figure 17: The graph above shows how strongly respondents agreed/disagreed with the statement: "Accessibility Services, as an office, has been supportive in helping me navigating academic concerns related to my disability/disabilities." (2020-2021)

Programming

Awareness and attendance

In 2022, the survey asked students whether they were aware of and have used/attended various supports/programs.

These supports and programs include:

• Accessibility Services Indigenous Liaison
• Accessibility Dialogues
• Group Learning Strategy Sessions
• Peer Advisor Drop-In Sessions
• ASD Peer Connections for Women & Trans Students
• Learning Skills Workshops
• Virtual Accountability Check-ins
• Access Us Peer Mentorship Program
• Social Association for Students with ASD
• ADHD Peer Connections

Respondent Use and Awareness of Accessibility Services Programs (2022)

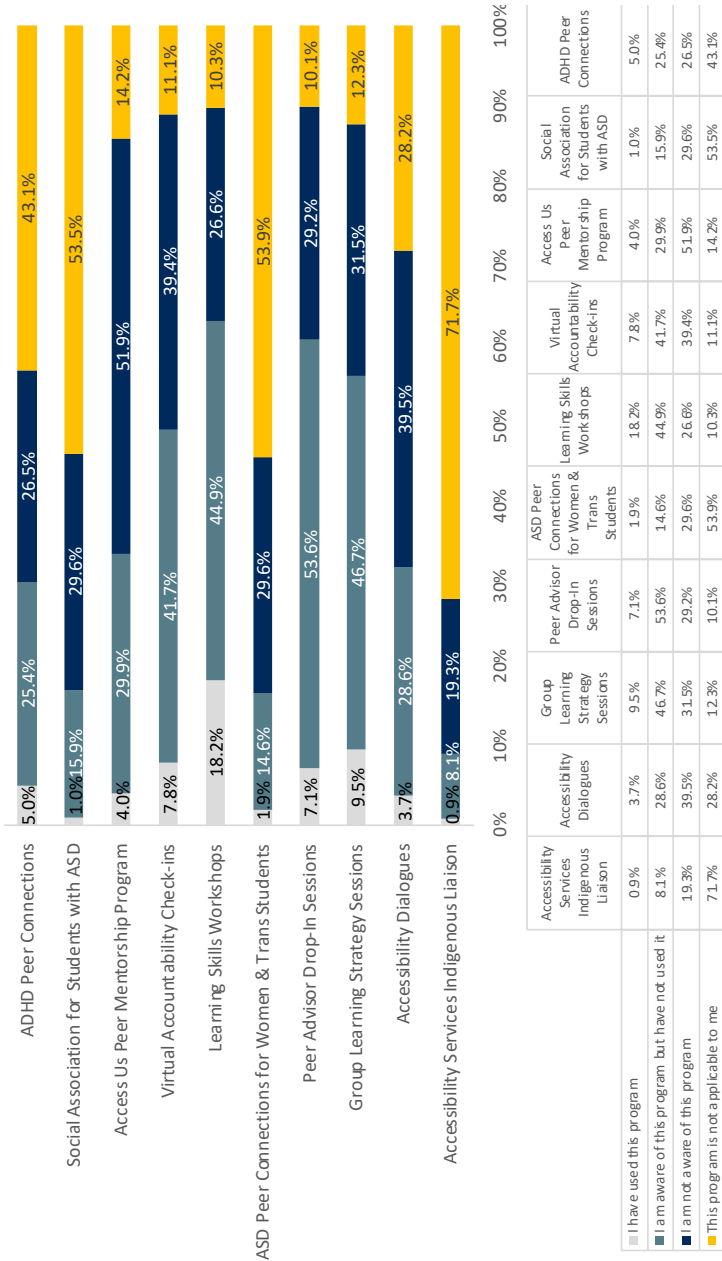|	Accessibility Services Indigenous Liaison	Accessibility Dialogues	Group Learning Strategy Sessions	Peer Advisor Drop-In Sessions	ASD Peer Connections for Women & Trans Students	Learning Skills Workshops	Virtual Accountability Check-ins	Access Us Peer Mentorship Program	Social Association for Students with ASD	ADHD Peer Connections
I have used this program	0.9%	3.7%	9.5%	7.1%	1.9%	18.2%	7.8%	4.0%	1.0%	5.0%
I am aware of this program but have not used it	8.1%	28.6%	46.7%	53.6%	14.6%	44.9%	41.7%	29.9%	15.9%	25.4%
I am not aware of this program	19.3%	39.5%	31.5%	29.2%	29.6%	26.6%	39.4%	51.9%	29.6%	26.5%
This program is not applicable to me	71.7%	28.2%	12.3%	10.1%	53.9%	10.3%	11.1%	14.2%	53.5%	43.1%

Figure 18: Respondent use and awareness of Accessibility Services Programs (2022).

Future programming

In the 2021 and 2022 surveys, respondents were asked what programming they would like to see offered at Accessibility Services.
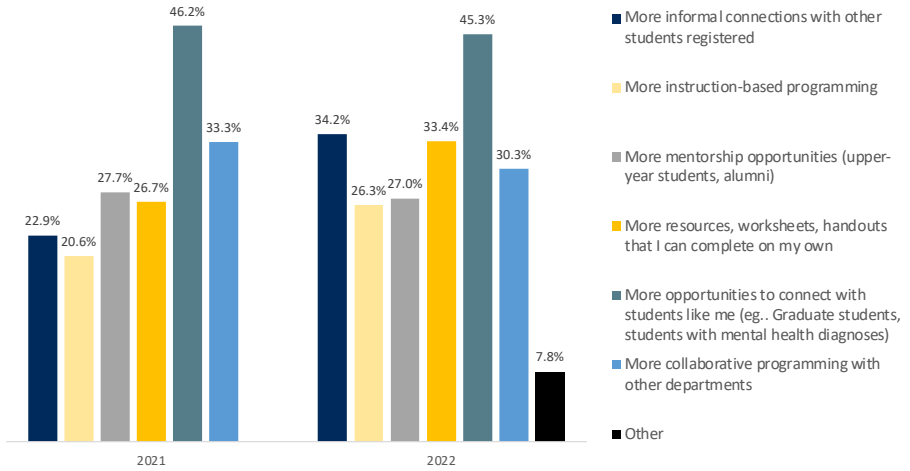
Programming Suggestions (2021-2022)

Legend:
- More informal connections with other students registered
- More instruction-based programming
- More mentorship opportunities (upper-year students, alumni)
- More resources, worksheets, handouts that I can complete on my own
- More opportunities to connect with students like me (eg.. Graduate students, students with mental health diagnoses)
- More collaborative programming with other departments
- Other

2021: 22.9%, 20.6%, 27.7%, 26.7%, 46.2%, 33.3%
2022: 34.2%, 26.3%, 27.0%, 33.4%, 45.3%, 30.3%, 7.8%

Figure 19: Programming suggestions from the respondents in 2021 and 2022.

Data-informed programming and support

As a result of the rich data offered by students through these surveys, Accessibility Services has created a number of new roles to support students including:

- Indigenous accessibility advisor
- Indigenous peer guide
- Experiential learning accommodations coordinator
- ASD support coordinator
- Additional accessibility advisors, learning strategists, adaptive technologists, accommodations coordinators, and administrative and front desk staff.
- Additional Work Study positions including the peer lead position, Indigenous peer guide, more peer advisors, more peer mentors and peer facilitators.

Accessibility Services has developed several new programs and resources to support students including:

- Strengthening accessibility & inclusion within professional programs
- Transition to in-person learning series
- Peer connections and dialogue events for 2SLGBTQ+ students with a disability, BIPOC students with a disability, students with ADHD, students with mental health diagnoses, women and trans students with ASD, students with low vision/blindness/vision-related disabilities, students with mobility/physical disabilities, and students who are deaf/deaf/deafened/hard of hearing
- MSW intern program & partnership with Gerstein Centre
- Talking To New People, a program for students to practice relationship-building tools and strategies to make connections
- Disclosure and Accommodation Strategies for the Workplace guide and workshop
- Graduate Student Handbook & Updated Undergraduate Student Handbook

Accessibility Services has made a commitment to continually improve its office and programming spaces to be more inclusive and accessible and to better support students. Some of these developments include:

- Acquisition of a new programming space.
- Naming of this programming space to the Nanda-Gikendan Room, which means "learning" or "seeking to learn" in Ojibwe, to invite students to show up as their whole, embodied selves and to appreciate that learning transpires in a multitude of diverse ways.
- Technology for dual delivery/hybrid programming including moveable television screens, moveable desks, moveable chairs, the Owl Labs meeting camera, whiteboards, a smart board, speakers and microphones.
- Adaptive furniture including sit-to-stand desks, ergonomic chairs, and lamps with variable brightness and colours for the Nanda-Gikendan Room.
- Installation of "Gift of the Stars", an artwork by Nyle Miigzi Johnston that uses light and Anishinaabek Storytelling to engage the viewer in Indigenous outlooks on the gifts we are born with.
- New waiting area with additional furniture and lighting options.
- Sound dampeners near the front desk to reduce noise.

Conclusion

This report has summarized key findings from the Accessibility Services Student Experience Survey between 2019 and 2022. An analysis of these results has illustrated the need for intersectional, tailored supports for students with disabilities. This report has also highlighted how Accessibility Services has used this data to introduce new roles, create programs and supports, and improve office spaces to meet these needs.