

Student Spaces Accessibility Audit

September 8, 2023

Prepared for UASU Executive Committee by
Department of Research and Advocacy



Overview

In Winter 2019, UASU Planning Analyst Cooper Csorba produced two major research reports focused on accessibility on North Campus (['Campus Accessibility: A Case for Universal Design at the University of Alberta'](#) and ['Student Spaces: Best Practices'](#)).

These efforts included, among other things, interviews and tours with disabled community members, and extensive discussions with experts. The latter report evaluated 17 student/public spaces on North Campus according to a rubric informed by a literature review, municipal policy documents, and interviews with professionals. To support an advocacy policy revitalization effort related to accessibility, UASU Research Analyst Shakur Zein applied Csorba's original rubric to the same 17 spaces, evaluating change over four years.

Rubric

As Csorba's rubric was broad and detailed, Zein was instructed to focus only on the Universal Accessibility portion (nine criteria, each with a positive or negative point value).

Physical and Sensory Access

- There are no conflict points in the space: 1 point
- Each throughway is clear of obstruction: 1 point
- The site can be used with minimum fatigue: 1 point
- Flooring has noticeable glare and induces slipping: -1 point
- Flooring tile pattern is not conducive for wheeling: -1 point
- A pathway or entrance is below standards: -1 point
- There is no wheel access into the space: -2 points

Signage/Wayfinding and Cognitive Access

- Overall, is the wayfinding system minimalistic, clear on what the user is supposed to do, and is offered at key decision points: 1 point
- The space is recognizable and differentiated through distinguishable facades, door plates, and/or a floor pattern: 1 point

Zein also used Csorba's grading instructions and tolerance thresholds, as found in Appendix A of 'Student Spaces: Best Practices'. The only exceptions were in areas where wheelchair access was more restricted than the original report recognized, or where Zein looked more widely at the access routes adjacent to the space. Note that Zein 'started fresh': he did not work from Csorba's ratings for these spaces, only used the original rubrics to reevaluate the spaces.

Ratings

SPACE (See 'Student Spaces: Best Practices' report for definitions and photos)	2019 grade out of 5	2023 grade out of 5	2023 notes
Agriculture Forestry Centre Atrium	3	1	Conflict points, site cannot be used with minimum fatigue, wayfinding shortfalls, and a lounge area with confined entry and elevation issues.
Arts & Convocation Hall Lounge & 3rd Floor	0.5	-1	Conflict points, site cannot be used with minimum fatigue, no wheel access, doorways into lounge and 3rd floor are small and inaccessible.
Central Academic Building Pedway	2	2	Conflict points and obstructions, site cannot be used with minimum fatigue, walkway steep in Chemistry/CAB throughway.
CCIS Central & Surrounding	5	3	Conflict points, site cannot be used with minimum fatigue.
CCIS & Biological Sciences Landing	4.5	1	Conflict points, no wheel access from lower floor or from area facing Saskatchewan Drive, non-functional wheelchair ramp (slope of 1 in 9).
Chemistry Upper & Lower	3	3	Conflict points and obstructions.
Computer Science Centre Lounge	4	3	Conflict points, wayfinding shortfalls.
ECERF	4.5	5	No issues noted.
ECHA Cafeteria & Surrounding	4.5	3	Conflict points and obstructions (areas between seating in cafeteria are tight, especially during busy hours and for someone using a wheelchair or other mobility aid).

ETLC Cafeteria	4	4	Site cannot be used with minimum fatigue.
Education Student Lounge	4	3	Obstructions in throughway, wayfinding issues (no signs on main floor leading to student lounge).
Fine Arts Building Student Spaces	-1	1	Conflict points, site cannot be used with minimum fatigue, very inaccessible for wheels, elevator is separated from student spaces, multiple steps into student spaces.
General Services Building 2nd Floor	5	4	Some wheel access issues. (Access from main floor to the second floor has easy wheel access, but pedway towards Agriculture may be steep; Overall there is wheel access into second floor GSB.)
HUB Mall Lounges & Central	-2	-2	Conflict points and throughway obstructions, site cannot be used with minimal fatigue, no wheel access especially to upper lounges, space not differentiated, wayfinding signs are small and tucked away.
Humanities Student Spaces	2	4	Conflict points, wheel access issue (while student lounge areas on lower floors have elevator access, one area with two steps has no wheel access).
Tory & Business Atrium	2	N/A	Space not available due to construction.
Van Vliet GSA Lounge & Surrounding	4.5	1	Conflict points, site cannot be used with minimum fatigue, steep ramp nearby as an access route.
Average	2.9	2.2	