

Accessibility Survey

The Accessibility Survey was conducted from October 28 to November 14, 2024, to ask students, staff, and faculty about their understanding of accessibility barriers and concerns at Langara College. Throughout the survey, there were five long-response questions:

- *“Question 4. I have additional comments or suggestions to share regarding attitudinal barriers at Langara College. Please comment below.”*
- *“Question 8. I have additional comments or suggestions to share regarding physical and architectural barriers at Langara College. Please comment below.”*
- *“Question 12. I have additional comments or suggestions to share regarding informational and communications related barriers at Langara College. Please comment below.”*
- *“Question 16. I have additional comments or suggestions to share regarding technological barriers at Langara College. Please comment below.”*
- *“Question 20. I have additional comments or suggestions to share regarding systemic barriers including any specific policies or procedures at Langara College. Please comment below.”*

Out of 822 total completed surveys, the total number of respondents for each of the long-response question were 87, 139, 75, 67 and 123 respectively. This document provides a high-level thematic analysis of these long responses. The following paragraph shows the themes emerged from each of these questions individually. Then, each relevant theme is briefly explained and exemplified by excerpts from the survey responses.

Here are key themes that emerged from the responses from each question:

Themes in question 4:

- 1) Concerns about interactions between students with disabilities and instructors.
- 2) Concerns about accommodation.
- 3) Concerns about training.

Themes in question 8:

- 4) Concerns about doors and elevators.
- 5) Concerns about classroom space.
- 6) Concerns about washrooms.

Themes in question 12:

- 6) Concerns about visually impaired people.
- 7) Concerns navigating the campus.

Themes in question 16:

- 8) Concerns with video lectures and screen readers
- 9) Concerns with the Langara website for visually impaired users

Theme in question 20:

- 10) Concerns with Accessibility Services

Below are some specific examples of these topics and relevant excerpts from the survey responses for each of the questions asked.

Question 4 - I have additional comments or suggestions to share regarding attitudinal barriers at Langara College. Please comment below:

Concerns about interactions between students with disabilities and instructors

There were 19 comments related to how instructors interact with students with disabilities. Some expressed concerns about stereotyping, direct pushback from faculty and lack of support. Most urged for more awareness and training regarding the different challenges faced by students with disabilities.

“Some instructors do not want students with barriers from a safety prospective.”

“I feel that the lack of accommodation for assignment extensions for students with [disability] is somewhat based on an assumption that generalizes the individual experiences of those with this learning disability.”

“Students have shared with me (instructor) that other instructors have belittled them for their accommodation letters and/or requests”

Concerns about accommodations

The response to awareness of attitudinal barriers was somewhat mixed. Some respondents indicated that they were aware of barriers but did not believe they were significantly affecting the Langara community:

“I think that the College does a good job of being accessible, for the most part”

“I am very grateful to the Langara College Team and especially [instructor’s name] our instructor always empowered and supported.”

There were, however, several respondents who indicated the opposite. 38 comments stated that these barriers were significant, especially when it comes to attitudes from staff and faculty regarding accommodation:

“I emailed a request for accommodation and was sent an automatic reply back. There was no follow-up by phone or email”

“Some lecture rooms have narrow seat and stairs that may makes people with disabilities have trouble to move around and ask lecturer questions in class.”

“I think our Langara community could do a much better job at listening rather than judging when it comes to dealing with students with disabilities”

“Nothing happens when these instances are reported”

Concerns about training

Respondents indicated they believe Langara could do more in educating the general community in ways that raise awareness to barriers in accessibility.

“Training/workshop on attitudinal barriers should be organized and conducted during PD at Langara”

“I believe there should be more education about etiquette toward [disability] on campus”

“Langara as whole needs to be more educated and proactive in helping [accessibility issues] students especially those who have [barriers]”

Question 8. I have additional comments or suggestions to share regarding physical and architectural barriers at Langara College. Please comment below:

Concerns about doors and elevators

In this question, respondents were prompted to think about physical and architectural barriers on campus. In total, there were 34 responses indicating trouble with doors, elevators and mobility in the campus. This includes parts of campus being inaccessible to people with limited mobility and heavy doors.

“I wish the elevators worked better or were bigger”

“There is only one elevator in B Block. If it's out of service, like it was last week, then people with physical disabilities aren't able to access the different floors.”

“Sometimes the automatic doors don't open and the doors are quite heavy”

“The top floor of B building is inaccessible for those with impaired mobility when the elevator is out of service, which is quite a frequent occurrence.”

“Many doors with "push-button" or "hand-waving" technology to open the doors, do not work, or do not work consistently. For example, the hand-waving door going in to A-building near the IT department, and the east-facing door into T-building from the pond, have both been broken forever.”

"I'm aware of a physical access issue, which has previously been reported to Facilities, with the button placement for the automatic doors in the NE corner of T-Building. The button is located in a place where a student who is using a wheelchair would not be able to access it due to the placement above the radiator."

Concerns about classroom space

The second most cited concern has to do with accessibility and mobility in classrooms. There were 18 responses that indicated problems with mobility in the classroom. Some common themes are not enough space for wheelchairs, desks being too small, and narrow spaces to navigate.

"Classroom chairs and desks are extremely small and this makes it difficult to take notes, chairs are very uncomfortable ."

"Limited space between desks for mobility restricted individuals."

"There are classrooms where tables/desks are so tightly packed as to be difficult for wheelchairs or other challenged individuals to access"

"The chairs that have a desk attached are too small. The desk is too small which has lead to someone taking my accessibility seating because they said they needed the space for their laptop and papers during an exam. Those chairs are not meant for adults and especially not someone who is on the heavier side."

"The desks in A building (with chairs attached to desks) are too small, and I don't fit properly. Because of this it makes my classes highly uncomfortable, and not conducive to learning."

Concerns about washrooms

The next most significant theme in the responses was accessibility to washrooms. There were 11 responses directly citing difficulties finding accessible washrooms.

"I have witnessed a disabled person in a wheelchair stuck in a stairwell in A building because the doors lock when the fire alarm goes off. I'm also aware that the buildings I selected as problematic due to physical barriers need washrooms that are gender inclusive and accessible."

"Washrooms for a wheelchair are very challenging to enter and maneuver into the stalls alone."

"More large, single-room washrooms are needed to accommodate large wheelchairs/scooters and a support person, and to support those who require privacy. Accessing the North entrance to the L building from 49th is still an issue as there is no ramp - individuals must navigate through all of the T building doors or go around the pond."

"there are very few washrooms available that have space for a support worker to help if needed. We were not able to find any washrooms with lifts."

Question 12. I have additional comments or suggestions to share regarding informational and communications related barriers at Langara College. Please comment below.

Concerns about visually impaired people

Several respondents indicated concern regarding difficulties faced by visually impaired people at Langara. There were comments bringing attention to obstacles in identifying location, inadequate or insufficient signage, and lack of braille in signs.

“Students with visual impairments, have a lack of appropriate signage. “

“Using the cafeteria as a visually-impaired person would be extremely difficult. Also the signage in A Building is notoriously difficult to navigate and is hanging and not at eye-level at all.

“Lack of braille on campus.”

“on-site campus maps have no information to help visual impaired people. Directional signage are up high and have no lower signage to help visual impaired people find their classrooms

“The college style of black text on an orange background is low contrast, and for some people this can be very difficult to read.

“The font on the signs are often too small to read from a distance. The college website has too many bright colours.”

“The langara colours do not prioritize accessibility”

Concerns navigating the campus.

The second most common theme in this question relates to general difficulties in navigating the campus. 10 respondents stated that they find it difficult to find their way around on campus and could benefit from better signage indicating rooms.

“The wayfinding in the A Building is really bad. It is tough enough to find a classroom as it is, without the added consideration of a cognitive or physical disability.”

“The A building is extremely difficult to navigate. The room numbers do not make any sense or follow a logical pattern.”

*“there should be a campus app that people can check to see if elevators or doors or washrooms are out of order so that they do not waste time and energy arriving at an elevator that doesn't work, for instance
Also for last question - the pathways out of T building for a chair user are bumpy and indirect.”*

“The new signage might improve how to find rooms at Langara but I frequently find people wandering around, looking lost. More maps are needed and digital maps should be provided to send with emails when we invite people to our campus.”

Question 16. I have additional comments or suggestions to share regarding technological barriers at Langara College. Please comment below:

Concerns with video lectures and screen readers

A total of 15 respondents stated issues with technology used to access classes. Particularly issues regarding video lectures, the accessibility of recordings, screen readers and closed captioning or subtitles. Respondents also pointed out that some computers on campus are not working properly.

“Sometimes teachers will post image-only files that can't be read by a screen reader; some teachers post instructional videos that would be difficult to understand for someone with sight impairment.”

“The current windows 11 lab environments are difficult to use for someone with a visual impairment.”

“I have heard from blind students that sometimes course materials were not available to them in a timely manner or that the software they used to access course materials was not working properly.”

“Computers don't have audio. Perhaps langara can buy headsets?”

“The MacLabs are underserved, not sufficient IT personal that actually knows how to solve Mac problems. Students have to go several times to IT and instructors deal with issues for weeks.”

Concerns with the Langara website for visually impaired users

Respondents also pointed out that the website could be better designed to accommodate individuals with visual disabilities. Six responses focused on how the website could be better designed and easier to navigate.

“VoiceOver on website won't recognize some elements or it will recite the same element over and over”

“Images on the website may have alt text but few of them have full image descriptions.”

“The Langara College website is very clunky and difficult to navigate. Further it often takes a long time for it to be updated.”

Question 20. I have additional comments or suggestions to share regarding systemic barriers including any specific policies or procedures at Langara College. Please comment below:

Concerns with Accessibility Services

The last question garnered a range of responses, with many comments revisiting topics already addressed in earlier questions within the survey. Additionally, several respondents took the opportunity to express their satisfaction with Langara's ongoing efforts to enhance campus accessibility.

“My family member with multiple, complex disabilities has been consistently well cared for and supported as a student.”

“Everything was fine at Langara”

However, 13 respondents identified challenges and suggested improvements related to Accessibility Service's assistance and policies.

“Delays in students accessing services through Accessibility services. Not all services needed for students with disabilities are available when needed.”

“The Accessibility Center should accommodate students from the day their accommodation is approved, and not download the responsibility to instructors.”

“Ability to register with Accessibility Services partway through term. E.g., for someone newly diagnosed or someone who struggles with these exact types of tasks (paperwork completed prior to the start of term).”

“People with accessibility issues find registering with this department extremely challenging.”

“Please start an accessible advisory committee.”