

PAFC Position Statement

The Postsecondary Alternate Format Committee (PAFC) is committed to providing Ontario's publicly funded postsecondary institutions with advice and best practice in the provision of services regarding alternate format text based material to students with perceptual disabilities as defined in the Canadian Copyright Act as follows:

"perceptual disability" means a disability that prevents or inhibits a person from reading or hearing a literary, musical, dramatic or artistic work in its original format, and includes such a disability resulting from:

(a) severe or total impairment of sight or hearing or the inability to focus or move one's eyes,

(b) the inability to hold or manipulate a book, or

(c) an impairment relating to comprehension;

(Copyright Act., R.S., c. C-30, s. 1.)

The committee feels that textbook publishers have a major role to play in assisting us in providing a quality service to our students. Currently, some publishing companies are providing us with electronic copies of the textbooks in a number of different formats upon request. We encourage them to continue to provide us with electronic copies of textbooks in a variety of formats, preferably, accessible PDF, Word, XML and Plain Text and to remain open to further suggestions regarding formats as technology changes. We would also like to see such publishers actively promoting to their peers in the industry the importance of this supplied service, and to actively encourage cooperation.

We also encourage publishing companies to provide us with electronic texts in a more timely fashion so that students with perceptual disabilities have access to their textbooks in a time frame similar to their non-disabled peers.

PAFC is committed to working cooperatively with the publishing industry and remain open to amending this statement as technology evolves.