

For Immediate Release

Expanded Accessibility Training Options Available to Professionals Across Canada thanks to New Partnership between Rick Hansen Foundation and the University of Alberta

November 7, 2023, Traditional territory of the x̄w̄m̄ə̄θkw̄əȳ ʼəm (Musqueam) First Nation / Richmond, B.C.— More professionals across Canada will have the skills to improve accessibility and inclusion for employees, visitors and customers of all ages and abilities thanks to a new signature partnership between the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) and the University of Alberta (UofA) who will deliver an expanded suite of one of a kind accessibility training options via a new digital infrastructure.

Thanks in part to funding from the Government of Canada’s Sectoral Initiatives Program, the new professional development training options will be offered in both English and French and equip employers with in-house knowledge to go above and beyond when it comes to meaningful accessibility from the perspective of people with varying disabilities:

- A new online **RHFAC Fundamentals** course for professionals interested in increasing their knowledge of meaningful accessibility and Universal Design.
- An updated version of the award-winning **Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) Professional Training** course for individuals who want the skills to rate buildings using RHFAC methodology. Recommended for those who’ve taken RHFAC Fundamentals and/or have the required pre-requisites.
- New online **Inclusion and Accessibility Training** for organizations looking to promote inclusion in the workplace, with additional customized in-person follow-up sessions also available.

“We are grateful to work with the University of Alberta to expedite the shift in design and management culture needed to improve meaningful access for people of all ages and abilities.” said Brad McCannell, VP Access and Inclusion, Rick Hansen Foundation. “Owners and operators are recognizing that accessibility is the key to delivering diversity, equity and inclusion programs at a practical level. These new course options will enable professionals to not only prepare for accessibility legislation, but go above and beyond to benefit from the return on investment that becomes available with informed design.”

Almost 50 per cent of Canadian adults have or have experienced a permanent or temporary disability or live with someone who has¹. And the Conference Board of Canada indicates workplace accessibility improvements could allow 550,000 Canadians with disabilities to work more, increasing GDP by 16.8 billion by 2030².

¹ Angus Reid Institute, Accessibility a source of future anxiety and significant consideration for Canadian consumers today, January 22, 2019. <https://www.rickhansen.com/news-stories/disability-information>

² Conference Board of Canada, The Business Case to Build Physically Accessible Environments, February 23, 2018. <https://www.rickhansen.com/news-stories/disability-information>

“We are excited to partner with the Rick Hansen Foundation in equipping Canadians to enhance their knowledge and awareness of accessibility, while showing how the University of Alberta is reimagining the way people learn online,” said Verna Yiu, Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) adding, “The University of Alberta is pleased to be a part of the Rick Hansen Foundation’s important work in creating a world where everyone can go everywhere.”

“The training courses have been designed with a human-centered approach for a modern and dynamic online learning experience. Participants can expect interactivity, enriched multimedia, and impactful storytelling in accessible modalities to broaden knowledge and develop new skills,” said Kristin Mulligan, Director of Online Learning, University of Alberta.

To-date over 1000 individuals have taken RHFAC Training with 320 taking the subsequent exam to achieve their RHFAC Professional designation, enabling them to rate buildings for meaningful access using common language and consistent, people-centric methodology that considers the perspective of those with varying disabilities.

Learn more about RHF accessibility and inclusion training options at [RickHansen.com/Courses](https://rickhansen.com/courses).

RHF Inclusion and Accessibility Training is open for registration. RHFAC Fundamentals and RHFAC Professional Training will be offered in 2024 through RHF’s post secondary partners across the country, which currently includes Athabasca University, Carleton University, George Brown College, Laurentian University, Nova Scotia Community College, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, Toronto Metropolitan University, University of Alberta, and Vancouver Community College.

Residents of Ontario, thanks to funding from the Government of Ontario, as well as persons with disabilities across Canada, are welcome to apply for a tuition grant to take RHFAC Professionals Training at [RickHansen.com/Tuition-Grants](https://rickhansen.com/tuition-grants).

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About the Rick Hansen Foundation

The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) was established in 1988, following the completion of Rick Hansen’s Man In Motion World Tour. For nearly 30 years, RHF has worked to raise awareness, change attitudes, and remove barriers for people with disabilities. Visit www.rickhansen.com to learn more.

About the University of Alberta

The University of Alberta in Edmonton is one of Canada’s top teaching and research universities, with an international reputation for excellence across the humanities, sciences, creative arts, business, engineering, and health sciences. The U of A is investing in the creation of online courses and programs in distinct areas of strength – rooted in innovative digital pedagogies, world-class faculty, exceptional design and a championed student experience.

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