



**Continuing Education in the
School of the Built Environment**

**Accessibility
Auditing Programme**

Accessibility Auditing Programme

Aims

The Accessibility Auditing Programme will enable candidates to undertake Accessibility Audits of existing and proposed buildings and landscapes by combining current knowledge of the technical, legislative and social environments with the principles of Universal Design and Universal Accessibility.

What is Universal Accessibility?

Universal Accessibility has become a key concept in building and landscape design. The intent is to simplify life for everyone of all ages, sizes, and abilities by making the existing and future built environment, communications, components and products usable by more people.

It is estimated that one third of the European population are elderly and have some degree of disability whether in height, weight, strength, speed of movement or degree of dexterity-everyone therefore is different. Those involved in creating or adjusting, operating within, and maintaining the built environment have to be aware of these differences and the consequences implied for providing and enabling accessibility to everyone. Integrating all of the potential users needs into one design is the purpose of Universal Accessibility.

What is an Accessibility Audit?

The purpose of an access audit is to establish how well a particular building or environment performs in terms of access and ease of use by a wide range of potential users, including disabled people, and to recommend access improvements. The process involves a thorough site inspection, an assessment of the management and use of the building or environment and the preparation of a report that identifies accessible user-friendly features as well as access problems. The report should recommend access improvements, prioritise action and indicate where improvements can be made through the building's maintenance programme and by altering management procedures.

Why Carry out an Audit?

An access audit will give a picture of the level of accessibility in a building or external environment, identify points of good or bad access, identify areas of need that are not catered for and is a first step in the process of improving accessibility.

The Legislation & Regulations

Recent and new legislation gives disabled people new rights in employment; obtaining goods and services; and buying or renting land or property. Accordingly a person has a disability if they have a physical, sensory

or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The Law requires employers and goods/service providers to make reasonable adjustments to mitigate barriers to accessibility which carry implications such as effectiveness, practicability and financial cost. Lawyers advise that employers and service providers should be undertaking the development and adaptation of premises to ensure that accessibility is achieved on an all abilities basis.

Entry Requirements

Technical knowledge of the built environment is considered to be helpful, but not essential:

- a qualification in a construction related discipline
OR
- involvement with access issues in the built environment

Course Structure

The programme delivery is four days 9.00 am – 5.00 pm. The first three days will consist of lectures, group activities and practical team based exercises and tutorials. Delegates will then carry out an individual accessibility audit of a building or external landscape of their choice. The last day will be in the form of presentations, tutorials and feedback on the audits.

Course Award

Delegates will be assessed by the Course Tutors on their audit and presentation. Successful delegates will be awarded a Certificate of Competence in Accessibility Auditing from the University of Ulster.

This course is limited to 16 participants. Places will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a database and notified of future Universal Accessibility Auditing Programme courses.

CPD

This course will benefit professionals who wish to participate in Continuing Professional Development. The course will account for 28 hours of CPD and certificates will be issued on completion of the course.

Content of Four Day Course

DAY 1

The Principles of Universal Design

The Principles of Universal Design as a response to the Social Context and Legislative framework for Disability Access

The Legislation and the Implications.

Deals with the new and recent regulations and the implications for properties, landscapes, as well as the vulnerability of the owner, service providers and their advisors.

Living with Sensory Impairment

Highlighting the difficulties faced by people who are blind or visually impaired: are deaf or hard of hearing: suggesting various forms of mitigation including management training, equipment and procedures aimed at achieving equitable solutions.

Identifying the Barriers

Defining the Appraisal process within the total context of auditing in identifying barriers to accessibility their effects and significance.

Coursework Briefing: Appraisal Stage

Explains the various coursework assignments to be completed by each candidate either individually or in teams, in class or at home.

DAY 2

Accessibility Auditing

Examines the essential components of an Accessibility Audit with reference to practical audit tools, structure and organisation of the audit, layout of the audit, audit checklists, content, framework and methodology. This lecture also deals with the best practice guidance manuals that are available to assist the auditor.

Access, Egress, Security, Health and Safety

Examines to relationships and tensions between the, often competing, interests of Universal Accessibility and security in the context of health, safety and emergency egress.

Accessibility Audit Case Studies

Presents various case studies where the Principles of Universal Design have been applied in the Accessibility Audit process. A key feature of this session is the opportunity for the delegates to view innovative and creative solutions to barriers derived from live audits. Examples of drawings and plans are included.

Facilities Planning

Deals specifically with sanitary accommodation in buildings and the key design considerations.

Route Appraisal Exercise

An exercise to be carried out either individually or in teams appraising the accessibility of a building or other environment.

DAY 3

Feedback Session on Route Appraisal

Delegates are required to report back to the group on the Route Appraisal Exercise. Tutors to provide feedback.

Streetscape Accessibility

Provides an overview of the barriers to pedestrian accessibility encountered in the external streetscape environment. This lecture also deals with the best practice guidance manuals that are available to assist the auditor.

Desktop Audit Exercise

Delegates are provided with a selection of audits derived from previous Accessibility Auditing Programme participants. This exercise enables the delegates to establish the key components of an Accessibility Audit with particular emphasis on structure and organisation, layout and content. Followed by class discussion and Q&A session.

Accessibility Audit Exercise Briefing

Delegates are briefed on their assignment to carry out an Accessibility Audit on a building, streetscape or landscape which fulfils certain established criteria, and produce a written audit report. Delegates collectively agree on an audit submission deadline and oral presentation date. (Usually 8-10 weeks later).

DAY 4

Oral Presentation

Delegates provide an oral PowerPoint presentation of their Accessibility Audit to their peers and tutors.

The course delivers a number of practical exercises and educational DVDs not detailed in the Contents.

Content may change due to future development of the course.

Course Presenters

Dominic McLarnon

Dominic is Programme Manager of the Universal Accessibility Auditing Programme (UAAP) and also a past participant of the programme. He is a member of the Institute of Engineers of Ireland and holds a Masters of Science in Computer Aided Mechanical Engineering Design from Queens University Belfast and Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Engineering from the University of Ulster at Jordanstown. He spent 7 years in a research role at the Centre for Sustainable Technologies at UUJ and 4 years as a Design for Environment Specialist and Mechanical Design Team Manager at Nortel Networks in Belfast. Dominic is an Accessibility Consultant and undertakes accessibility audits, training and consultancy throughout Ireland for both local authority and private sector clients. His scope covers buildings and external environments including playgrounds, landscapes and streetscapes.

Ken Ewart

Ken is a founder member of the Centre. He is a Chartered Builder with experience in civil and mechanical engineering. For nine years until 1997 he was Senior Access Officer at Disability Action and is presently Chairman of Adapt NI, an organisation devoted to making the Arts, and Arts venues, accessible to people with disabilities. His consultancy practice, Ken Ewart & Associates, undertakes Planning Supervision, Accessibility Auditing, and other Occupational Health & Safety assignments: mainly on construction and facilities management projects. Ken is a visiting lecturer at Queen's University Belfast, Glasgow Caledonian University, and CITB. He was the Training Programme Leader for The Barcelona Declaration Project (in Ireland) on behalf of The Institute for Design and Disability (IDD). He is a keen advocate of Design for All and an acknowledged leader in emergency evaluation planning for people with disabilities. Ken recently completed an MSc in Occupational Health & Safety at QUB and is now a member of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).

Brian O'Connell

Brian is an Architect in practice and Barrister at Law he is also a Fellow and Past President of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects and an Unattached Expert Advisor to the European Commission and has acted as Delegate General to the Architects Council of Europe. Brian has lectured on construction law on the NUI Professional Practice Module, and has delivered the module on disability law in Ireland on the University of Ulster Accessibility Auditing Programme in recent years. Brian also lectures on Universal Design and Legislation in the Republic of Ireland focus on the objectives and methods envisaged in current Irish legislation as a basis for an appropriate professional response to the obligations on designers under the provision of the Equal Status Act 2000, Disability Act 2005 and the Building Control Act 2007.

Do you require in-house training?

For further information contact

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