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**Assistance Dogs Policy**

# Overview

Assistance Dogs are highly trained to support disabled people in a variety of ways. A member of staff or a student may rely on an Assistance Dog to help them with their day-to-day activities., Assistance Dogs may carry out a variety of practical tasks to assist a disabled person with, for example, mobility, dexterity, physical co-ordination and thereby also provide them independence and confidence. This guidance provides information for all staff and students in relation to Assistance Dogs and confirms the process to follow if a member of staff or a student wishes to bring an Assistance Dog onto the University’s premises.

All staff and students are advised that the University does not usually permit animals on campus other than authorised Assistance Dogs (as defined by the Equality Act 2010 s173) accompanying a disabled person for the purpose of enabling that person to carry out their day-to-day activities.

Please note that pets **are not** allowed on campus or in University accommodation. Student Services will sometimes bring dogs from “Pets as Therapy” onto campus for specific events, subject to arrangements between the University and the charity.

1. **Definitions in this Guidance**

**Assistance Dog** (Equality Act 2010 s173)– a dog which:

1. has been trained to guide a blind person;
2. has been trained to assist a deaf person;
3. has been trained by a prescribed charity to assist a disabled person who has a disability that consists of epilepsy or otherwise affects the person’s mobility, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination or ability to life, carry or otherwise move everyday objects;
4. is of a prescribed\* category which has been trained to assist a disabled person who has a disability (other than one falling within paragraph (c)) of a prescribed kind).

\*“Prescribed” in this context means “prescribed by law”, e.g. future regulations made under the Equality Act setting out specific categories of dogs that shall be considered “assistance dogs” for the purposes of the Act.

**Therapy/Emotional Support Animal (“ESA”)** – a dog or other animal that provides emotional support to help alleviate identified symptoms or effects of disability. A therapy animal does not necessarily aid with mobility and does not assist with a person with a disability with practical daily tasks, nor does it necessarily accompany a person with a disability at all times.

As the behaviour of ESAs is harder to guarantee than that of Assistance Dogs, we do not anticipate that such animals would meet the standards of control expected except in very rare, limited circumstances. It is necessary to consider the needs of the animal itself and their wellbeing and welfare, noting that the environment may be unsuitable for them. We also need to consider the impact on other students and staff in shared environments – there will be occasions when an individual has an allergy or anxiety in relation to an animal.

For these reasons, requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with this guidance and on receipt of appropriate evidence of need, which may include professional medical advice. It will also need to be demonstrated that the animal has been trained to a sufficiently high standard so that the University is satisfied that it will not interfere with students’ learning and other forms of participation in the student experience, poses no risk of harm to others, and must be covered by full public liability insurance.

# Assistance Dog Training and Accreditation

An Assistance Dog is one which has been specifically trained to complete specific tasks or duties to aid a person with a disability. The Assistance Dog will be trained to remain close to their owner and their owner will have received training in how to handle their dog, ensuring that the dog is always under their control. The dog will be fully toilet trained and will be subject to regular health checks to make sure that they do not present a health risk.

Whilst many Assistance Dogs are recognisable by a harness or a jacket, the law does not require Assistance Dogs to wear anything to identify them as an Assistance Dog.

Many Assistance Dogs will have received expert training through a member organisation of Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) ([www.assistancedogs.org.uk](http://www.assistancedogs.org.uk)). Some, but not all, Assistance Dogs will carry an ID book which provides information about the dog and the training organisation. However, it is not a legal requirement for an Assistance Dog user to have an ID book.

It is the University’s preference that Assistance Dogs have been trained by an organisation that is a member of ADUK or international equivalent. A list of ADUK members can be found at: <https://www.assistancedogs.org.uk/about-aduk>. The University recognises that Assistance Dogs may be trained by other organisations or charities or even be owner-trained, however Assistance Dogs trained through these alternative channels must be trained to the same high standards as those trained by ADUK members.

# Bringing an Assistance Dog on to the University’s premises

Staff and students should follow the processes outlined below in advance of bringing an Assistance Dog on to the University’s premises. By following this process the University can consider each case on an individual basis in order to provide the most appropriate support.

In advance of an Assistance Dog being brought on to the University’s premises, the University will be seeking assurance that the Assistance Dog and their owner have undertaken appropriate training for a sufficient time period, that the Assistance Dog is well prepared for the University environment and has been exposed to a range of environments and situations.

Staff and Students are responsible for the behaviour of their Assistance Dog. The University reserves the right to exclude an Assistance Dog from a facility or, in extreme circumstances, from the campus, if the Assistance Dog poses a threat to the health and safety of other people and to revoke permission if a conduct agreement is breached.

# Process for Students

Students who wish to bring an Assistance Dog on campus are required to:

1. Register the Assistance Dog with the Disability and Dyslexia Service, this will also provide an opportunity to discuss the behaviour agreement (Appendix 1) and agree arrangements for bringing the dog onto campus.
2. Provide details on the Assistance Dog’s registration with ADUK, if applicable, or provide evidence that dog and owner have completed appropriate training.
3. Complete a suitable risk assessment in conjunction with the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager.
4. Provide an updated Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) if this is required.
5. Provide evidence of public liability insurance.
6. Inform the accommodation office accommodation@worc.ac.uk if living in halls of residence.

The Disability and Dyslexia Service will include this information on the student’s Reasonable Adjustment Plan.

**Process for Staff**

Staff who wish to bring an Assistance Dog on campus are required to:

1. Arrange to meet with their line manager/Head of School. This will provide an opportunity to discuss the behaviour agreement (Appendix 2) and to agree arrangements for bringing the dog onto campus.
2. Provide details on the dog’s registration with ADUK, if applicable, or provide evidence that dog and owner have completed appropriate training.
3. Complete a suitable risk assessment, in conjunction with the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager.
4. Provide an updated Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) if this is required.
5. Provide evidence of public liability insurance.

**Note for all staff and students:**

It is important to note that Assistance Dogs are working animals and are not pets. Please be mindful of the following advice:

* talk to the owner, not the Assistance Dog
* do not feed, pet, or distract the Assistance Dog
* do not try to separate an Assistance Dog from the owner

Please note that seizure alert dogs are trained to behave differently when they detect a potential seizure, and they can appear to be misbehaving.

# Raising a concern regarding an Assistance Dog.

Issues and concerns about an Assistance Dog’s behaviour should be raised with the owner in the first instance. If this is not possible, issues can be raised with the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager by contacting [safety@worc.ac.uk](mailto:safety@worc.ac.uk).

Concerns relating to a fear of, or allergies to, dogs or other animals can be raised with the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager by contacting [safety@worc.ac.uk](mailto:safety@worc.ac.uk).

If the issue cannot be resolved informally it should be escalated and dealt with through the existing formal complaints process, but it should be noted that the rights of an Assistance Dog and their owner are legally protected.

The University reserves the right to remove or prohibit entry to an assistance dog if it poses a threat to the health & safety of others, for example where the Assistance Dog is aggressive, where unresolved Assistance Dog misbehaviour continues, or where it is established the Assistance Dog does not meet the criteria for an Assistance Dog outlined above in this document.

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