

Background

Under the Americans with Disability Act, Amended (ADAA, 2009) a “Service Animal” is a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. In some cases, a miniature horse may qualify as a Service Animal. Other animals, whether wild or domestic, do not qualify as Service Animals. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with a mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (“PTSD”) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service Animals are working animals, not pets. Animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as Service Animals.

Under Maryland law, a Service Animal trainer may be accompanied by an animal that is being trained as a Service Animal in any place where an individual with a disability or a parent of a minor child with a disability has the right to be accompanied by a Service Animal. For purposes of these guidelines, Service Animal, includes Service Animals in training as set forth under Maryland law.

Permitting Service Animals on Campus

Generally, Service Animals are allowed on campus in all areas where members of the public, participants in services, programs or activities, or invitees are allowed to go, despite any “No Pet” policy that may be effective. A campus administrator may ask a person with a Service Animal (1) whether the service animal is required because of a disability; and (2) what work or tasks has the animal been trained to perform.

Guidelines for Service Animals on Campus

- A Service Animal’s handler is responsible for all aspects of caring for and controlling the Service Animal. A Service Animal must be supervised and the handler must retain full control of the animal at all times. The Service Animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered while in public places unless these devices interfere with the Service Animal’s work or the person’s disability prevents use of these devices. In that case, the person must use voice, signal, or other effective means to maintain control of the animal.
- The handler is responsible for all costs related to damages created by the Service Animal. Costs can include fees for cleanup and disposal of animal waste or replacement and repair of University property.
- The University will permit a Service Animal to accompany the individual with a disability to all areas of the campus where members of the public, participants in services, programs or activities, or invitees are allowed to go unless its presence or behavior creates a fundamental alteration or direct threat to safety. Service Animals are not required to be identified by a vest.

- The University will require removal of a Service Animal if (1) the Service Animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it; or (2) the Service Animal is not housebroken. If the Service Animal is removed, the individual with a disability shall be given the opportunity to participate in the service, program or activity without the Service Animal.
- Persons other than the Service Animal's handler are prohibited from touching and distracting the Service Animal. Petting a Service Animal while the Service Animal is working distracts the Service Animal from the task at hand.
- Persons other than the Service Animal's handler are prohibited from feeding the Service Animal. The Service Animal may have dietary restrictions and unusual food or food at an unexpected time may cause the Service Animal to become ill.
- Startling a Service Animal or trying to separate a Service Animal from its handler is prohibited.
- If a student has a disability that prevents them from being in the presence of an animal and is affected by the presence of a Service Animal on campus, the student should contact Disability Access Services at (410) 837-4755. If an employee has a disability that prevents them from being in the presence of an animal and is affected by the presence of a Service Animal on campus, the employee should contact the Office of Human Resources at (410) 837-5410. The University will attempt to accommodate both persons in such a situation.

For more information, please contact Disability and Access Services at (410) 837-4755.