Who Let the Dogs Out In?

Service Animals in College

DISABILITY SERVICES INFORMATION SESSION
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Your Presenters

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• B 215

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**You can always check in B 209 to see our availability or make an appointment**
Participants will learn:

- What a service animal is
- What service animals do
- Types of service animals
- Rules regarding service animals
- Where they can go
- Service animal confusion
- Animals on campus
- Service animal fraud
What is a service animal?
The ADA definition is:

“...a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person’s disability.”

--US Dept. of Justice, Civil Rights Division
Let’s break it down; Service animals are:

**Dogs**
- Any size or type of breed
- No other animals; miniature horse rare possibility

**Trained**
- By handler (person with disability)
- By anyone else
- No need to be professionally trained

**Do work or perform tasks**
- Must take specific action
- Whenever required
- To assist the person

**Individual with a disability**
- Visibly obvious
- Not visibly obvious
Examples of service dogs and their work

Guide dog:
• trained to provide travel assistance for individuals who are blind

Hearing or signal dog:
• trained to alert a deaf person about sounds

Psychiatric service dog:
• trained to remind handler to take medication; provide safety checks or room searches; turn on lights in a dark room; interrupt self-mutilation

SSigDog (sensory signal dog for individuals with Autism):
• Trained to alert the handler to distracting repetitive movements, ideally to get person to stop them

Seizure alert or response dog:
• Trained to alert person so he can lie down; to stand guard during seizure; to get help
Rules of use

Handler needs to:
• supervise the animal
• control the animal (leash, harness)
  o exception—if handler is not physically able to hold a leash, can be under voice control
• not allow disruptive behavior
• remove animal if it is aggressive, growling, etc.
• assure that dog is housebroken
• keep dog licensed and vaccinated according to local laws

Handler does NOT need to:
• put a vest, ID tag, or specific harness on the dog
Where can service dogs go?

Public accommodations:
- Restaurants (including the salad bar), theatres, stores, hotels, libraries, schools, colleges, health care facilities, businesses, state and local government locations, voting booth, etc.
- Generally in all areas of any facility where the public is normally allowed to go

Exceptions:
- Decided on case-by-case basis
- Maybe not operating rooms, burn units, chemistry lab
Service animals?
Service animals?
Service animals?
Animal confusion

Emotional support animals (ESA):
• OK in housing (including residence halls)
• Fair Housing Act
• Documentation of need required

ESA or service dog on plane:
• Air Carrier Access Act
• Documentation of need required for ESA and Psychiatric support animals

Comfort animal: generic term

Therapy dogs:
• Oversight by American Kennel Club
• Volunteers
• Access with permission of school, hospital, nursing home, etc.
• Do not have same access as service dogs
If you see an animal on campus

If it’s *obviously* a service dog: leave the dog and handler alone

Smile and be polite to the dog’s *handler*, but most of all:

• Do not pet the service dog
• Do not distract the dog in any way
• Ignore the dog entirely. You’re not being rude if you don’t acknowledge the dog’s presence.
• Know the dog is working, even if it appears as though it is not.
• Distracting a Service Dog by making noises, offering food, water, toys or petting may be dangerous to the dog’s disabled handler, especially if the dog is a medical alert dog or mobility support dog.
• Many handlers have “invisible disabilities,” such as diabetes, hearing loss or other symptoms not readily apparent, and if a service dog is paying attention to someone who’s distracting her, she’s not doing her job for her handler.
If you see an animal on campus

If it’s any animal other than a dog:
• You may tell the person that only service dogs are allowed on campus
• You may ask the person to leave, especially if animal is disruptive, distracting

If a dog is *not obviously* a service dog:
• You may ask TWO questions
• Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
• What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?
• Staff cannot ask about the person’s disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.
Animals on campus

Colleges:
- Can ask a student with a dog to voluntarily register as a student with a disability
- Cannot require documentation about training of dog
- Cannot require dog wear a vest, etc.
- Can have a Service Animal policy or guidelines (see RACC’s)
- Can ask for proof of license and vaccinations according to state or local laws
- Must deal with “dueling disabilities” if there’s a dog in a class and another student or instructor is allergic. If allergy rises to level of disability, both must be accommodated
- Can ask a handler to remove a dog if it is aggressive, not housebroken, or not under control, or barking excessively
Service animal?

ADA says no to Service Dogs in training in public accommodations
State of PA says yes
RACC still says no to adhere to Service Animal guidelines
Service animal fraud

THERE IS NO SERVICE ANIMAL REGISTRY!

Online, you can find:
• Organizations that sell service animal certifications
• “Registry” for service animals—for a fee
• Vests and ID tags for service animals—for a fee
• Advice about how to get others to think your pet is a service animal

**NONE OF THESE ARE LEGITIMATE!**
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References

Frequently Asked Questions about Service Animals and the ADA:
https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_qa.html

Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals (ADA National Network):

FAQs about Service Animals and the ADA (US Dept. of Justice):
https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_qa.html