

Assistance Dog Policy

**Policy Owner:** Estate Management

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# 1. Policy Statement

The University of Chichester is committed to ensuring that all students have as equitable an academic experience as possible, and therefore endeavours to work with disabled students to support them during their time on campus and in residences.

Staff and students whose access to work and student services is facilitated by the use of mobility aids should not be refused entry on the basis of their disability or reliance on mobility aids, including assistance dogs.

In partnership with the Universities Disability Advisory Service and in line with the Equality Act 2010 (England, Wales and Scotland) and the Disability Discrimination Act (Northern Ireland), Estate Management will work with disabled students to identify support needs and make reasonable adjustments in order to provide a safe and welcoming environment, in which access to study facilities and student programmes & services is equal for all.

# 2. Purpose

The University recognises that assistance dogs play an important role in the safety and well-being of disabled people and this Policy has been designed with specific guidelines concerning the safe and acceptable use of assistance dogs on campus and in residences and buildings for the benefit of all: assistance dogs, the owners of assistance dogs, staff, students, and members of the public.

The University allows access to assistance and working dogs and is prepared to make reasonable adjustments for their safe access and conduct of duties.

Any request by a student or member of staff to be accompanied on campus by an unregistered therapy animal will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by Estate Management. Student Support and Wellbeing will be consulted and permission will not be unreasonably withheld.

**Pets and other animals that are not approved as assistance animals are strictly prohibited from entering University buildings including Halls of Residence except when such animals are permitted for events as authorised by Estate Management.**

This Policy document specifically relates to Assistance Dogs and applies within all University premises. This includes but is not limited to residences, faculty buildings, administrative offices, and maintained grounds

Under this provision, the University requires that:

* Access requirements involving assistance dogs are legitimate and pre-agreed with the Disability Advisory Team and Estate Management.
* Suitable arrangements for the animals’ safe access to and conduct of work in the University are made
* All concerned parties (co-workers, classmates, other residents, etc.) are consulted and advised on safe practice and appropriate behaviour
* The assistance dog owner agrees to the terms and conditions of use of assistance dogs within the University

This policy document addresses:

* Organisational and physical arrangements provided by Estate Management to safely and comfortably accommodate assistance dogs and their owners
* The University’s role and responsibilities in relation to assistance dogs
* Assistance Dogs owners’ responsibilities
* Processes and procedures in the event of conflict situations

# 3. Key Definitions

**University premises** – Property that is owned, operated, or maintained by the University of Chichester.

**Disability** – applies to a person if they have a physical or mental impairment which is having a substantial, adverse and long-term (lasting or likely to last 12 months or more) effect on their ability to perform normal day to day activities (Equality Act 2010)

**Reasonable adjustments** – changes offered at University expense, where needed, and where disabled users would otherwise be at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled people without. What is reasonable will be decided on a case by case basis.

**Assistance dogs**  – an animal specially trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. Guide dogs are the most common type of assistance dog, used by individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Other medical conditions may require the use of assistance dogs: hearing loss, mental health conditions, physical impairments, epilepsy or seizure-related disorders, autism spectrum conditions. A pet or a therapy/emotional support animal is not an assistance dog.

**Therapy animal** – an animal prescribed to an individual as part of a treatment process for a physical or mental condition. Unlike an assistance dog, a therapy animal does not facilitate mobility for its owner or user or assist on daily tasks, and need not accompany its owner at all times.

**Working animal** – an animal, usually a dog, that provides other services within the University, such as assisting in law enforcement.

**Pets** – any animal other than a registered assistance dog or therapy animal that has been approved by Estate Management.

# 4. Organisational and Physical Arrangements

The University of Chichester offers the following arrangements to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for assistance dogs, their owners, and other members of the residential and campus community:

1. Support and advisory services from the University’s Student Support and Wellbeing department (the Disability Advisory Team)
2. A mutually agreed Plan that sets out any reasonable adjustments required.
3. Pre entry information visit to assess potential works to the estate
4. Arrival or pre-arrival site orientation
5. Visits by the assistance dogs trainer are encouraged in the early settling-in days, and then annually thereafter.
6. Service animal route safety check (for hazards and obstructions)
7. Issue of Assistance Dog Guidelines for staff and students
8. Provision or identification of designated spending pens or relief area/s for the toilet needs of assistance dogs on the premises or off-site, within (state maximum distance from site perimeter)
9. Within rooms and enclosed spaces on University premises, to ensure there is sufficient space for assistance dogs within reach of owner (under a table or in a corner)
10. Provision of water bowls, if requested
11. Provision of a sighted guide when required, or in circumstances when the assistance dog is unable to carry out its duty
12. Setting out processes and procedures for adverse incidents in relation to the presence or admittance of assistance dogs, such as allergies, fear of animal presence, religious objections, and animal misbehaviour
13. Setting out processes and procedures for the care and handling of assistance dogs and their owners in emergency situations.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

* This policy is owned by Estate Management.
* The Lead Officer of the Policy is the Head of Campus and Residential Services
* Student Support and Wellbeing have an integral role within this Policy
* Estate Management, in close consultation with Student Support and Wellbeing, will have the final decision in any request for an Assistance dog or other animal to be on University premises or residing within University halls of residence.

**Compliance, Awareness and Training**

* Estate Management, in consultation with Student Support and Wellbeing, will ensure that staff, students and other members of the University community are provided with adequate training to respond to the needs of the assistance dog, its owner, and all those in contact with the assistance dog.
* Lead Officer to ensure that practice reviewed annually and conforms to current legislation.

**Notification**

* Student Support and Wellbeing will provide prior notice to Estate Management, staff, students and University partners living or working in close proximity to the assistance dog. Notification of residential students will be undertaken by the Accommodation Office.
* Consultation and advisory services will be offered to all affected parties.
* Student residents with allergies or otherwise concerns about sharing living space with an authorised Assistance Dog will be offered to change their room allocation free of charge. The Accommodation Office will work with affected students to find comparable accommodation.

**Infrastructure**

* Estate Management will co-ordinate the identification and, if necessary, installation of appropriate relief areas such as spending pens.
* Estate Management will manage the upkeep of spending pens, including the regular provision of refuse bins.
* Estate Management will ensure entrances (including internal passages) are clearly signed for blind and visually impaired.
* Estate Management will ensure access routes are clear and easy to navigate and obstructions removed or are identified as a potential hazard.

**Emergency Evacuation**

* The University sets out a safe and suitable emergency evacuation plan for assistance dogs and their owners.
* Estate Management/Department Heads/ Health & Safety to brief assistance dog owners on emergency evacuation procedures.
* Department Heads to make information on emergency evacuation available for reference in accessible formats.
* Department Heads to ensure that emergency responders are trained to make reasonable efforts to keep assistance dogs with their owners in the event of an emergency situation. However, the emergency responder’s priority should be toward the safety of the owner.

**Orientation**

* Estate Management/Disability Advisory Team to conduct pre-arrival and arrival site orientation.
* Disability Advisory Team to organise guided assistance in the event of route variations, relocation, or when access to specific areas are restricted.

# 5. Assistance Dogs Owners’ Responsibilities

**Information**

Assistance dog owners must request permission from the University to bring assistance dogs into the estate in advance of arrival on University premises. They should be able to provide information about the animal and its tasks/duties, when requested by University staff.

**Identification**

Assistance dog owners must ensure that their assistance dogs are clearly identifiable by the use of special collars and/or harnesses when on duty.

**Insurance**

Owners are responsible for ensuring that their assistance dogs are covered by full liability insurance and provide a copy to the University.

**Vaccinations**

Owners are responsible for ensuring that their assistance dogs have received all relevant vaccinations.

**Access restrictions**

Assistance dog owners must respect access restrictions established by the University on grounds of health and safety.

Owners must ensure that assistance dogs do not enter staff and students’ privately assigned spaces, such as bedrooms and flats within residences, without permission.

**Animal misbehaviour**

Preventing and correcting assistance dog’s misbehaviour is the owner’s responsibility. Owners must make sure that their assistance dogs do not cause harm or injury to others and damage to University property.

**Cleanliness**

Registered blind people are not required to clean up after their guide dogs and these are expected to have received the appropriate training to avoid dog waste on campus. Assistance dog users share responsibility for the clean-up of the animal’s waste, consistent with reasonable capacity.

Assistance dogs must use the spending pens or designated areas identified by the University. In the unlikely event that the dog does foul outside of these designated areas, the owner must report this to an appropriate staff member to make arrangements for the cleaning and sanitization of the area.

**Animal care and supervision**

Animal care is the owner’s responsibility. The owner ensures regular health checks, vaccination, adequate standard of grooming, and the supply of food and drink at all times.

Owners must ensure that assistance dogs are kept on a lead at all times when walking around the University estate or safely harnessed when unsupervised for short periods of time.

Owners must ensure the assistance dog has its requirements in relation to toileting and feeding met.

Assistance dogs that are ill, in poor health, excessively unclean or unkempt may be required to be removed from University premises.

The University is not responsible for the loss, ill health, or death of any assistance dog.

**Animal training**

Assistance dogs undergo intensive training before commencing duty. They also receive further training throughout their working lives, especially in the event of change in work location or work pattern. Owners are responsible for the training needs of their assistance dogs, for the correct and safe performance of their duties. A copy of the relevant certification should be provided to the University.

# 6. Conflict Situations

**Removal of assistance dog**

The University reserves the right to remove or bar entry to an assistance dog when it poses a direct threat to the health & safety of others. Unresolved animal misbehaviour may also provide grounds for removal, after all reasonable measures have been taken to address this.

**Damage**

Assistance dog owners are responsible for any damage to persons or University property.

**Restricted access**

The University may restrict access of assistance dogs to certain areas for health and safety reasons. Restricted areas may include research laboratories, medical facilities, areas where protective clothing is required, boiler rooms, etc. Applications for exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

**Conflicting disabilities**

Where an assistance dog poses adverse health risk to other students, the University will seek medical documentation from the affected person(s) to determine suitable alternative arrangements for either or both parties.

**Religious or cultural conflicts**

Religious or cultural beliefs cannot be used to prohibit access to assistance dogs and their owners.

**Complaints**

Any issues in relation to assistance dogs on University premises that cannot be resolved informally should be raised in accordance to the University’s standardised complaints procedure.

# 7. Additional Information

**Guide Dogs**

[www.guidedogs.org.uk](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk)

0845 241 2178

**Assistance Dogs UK**

[www.assistancedogs.org.uk](http://www.assistancedogs.org.uk)

01844 348 100

**Canine Partners**

[www.caninepartners.co.uk](http://www.caninepartners.co.uk)

08456 580 480

**Dogs for the Disabled**

[www.dogsforthedisabled.org](http://www.dogsforthedisabled.org)

**Hearing Dogs for Deaf People**

[www.hearing-dogs.co.uk](http://www.hearing-dogs.co.uk)

info@hearingdogs.org.uk

**Support Dogs**

[www.support-dogs.org.uk](http://www.support-dogs.org.uk)

0870 609 3476

**The Royal National Institute of Blind People**

[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

0303 123 999

08700 776 600