



University of  
Chester

## Professional Services

### Student Assistance Dog Policy

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Contact:	<a href="mailto:Disability@chester.ac.uk">Disability@chester.ac.uk</a>
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## 1. Introduction

The University of Chester is committed to providing an inclusive environment for all attendees to its sites. The University aims to achieve this through removing barriers to access and participation for disabled students, creating equality of opportunity through universal design principles, reasonable adjustments, and student support.

The University of Chester recognises the vital role that assistance dogs play in supporting disabled students to carry out everyday activities and fully participate in student life on campus.

This policy is intended for students who wish to bring an assistance dog onto any of the University of Chester's campuses. It outlines:

- The University's definition of assistance dogs
- The procedures students must follow to request to bring an assistance dog to campus
- The standards expected of assistance dogs while on University premises

This policy should be read alongside the University's Disability Policy – for Reasonable Adjustments and Inclusive Practice.

## 2. Scope of This Policy

2.1 This policy is intended for students who wish to bring an assistance dog onto any of the University of Chester's campuses.

## 3. Assistance Dog Definition

3.1 The University of Chester defines assistance dogs in accordance with the Equality Act 2010:

- A dog which has been trained to guide a blind person.
- A dog which has been trained to assist a deaf person.
- A dog which 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 lift, carry, or otherwise move everyday objects.
- A dog 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.

## 4. Assistance Dogs on Site – Requirements

4.1 As part of the request to bring an assistance dog to campus, the student must provide:

- Documented evidence completed by an appropriate medical practitioner confirming the disability-related need, beyond emotional support, for the assistance dog.
  - Documented evidence of public liability insurance to the value of £2 million.
- Students must also sign a Code of Conduct for Assistance Dog Owners outlining expectations and accepting full responsibility for the behaviour and welfare of the dog.
- Documented evidence of assistance dog training and accreditation from an organisation registered with Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK), the International Guide Dogs Federation (IGDF), or Assistance Dogs International (ADI). Evidence must confirm the disability-related task the dog has been trained to perform.
  - Students with assistance dogs outside the ADUK, IGDF, or ADI accreditation route should seek advice from the Disability and Inclusion Team ([disability@chester.ac.uk](mailto:disability@chester.ac.uk)) on alternative routes to accreditation.
  - All documents should be sent to [disability@chester.ac.uk](mailto:disability@chester.ac.uk) for review. A Disability Support Officer will then arrange the next steps, including an induction briefing and an introduction to campus protocols (e.g., designated spending areas).
  - If bringing an assistance dog to campus may influence a decision to accept an offer, students must apply and receive confirmation before accepting a place to allow adequate processing time.

### 4.2 Access Restrictions

The University may restrict assistance dog access to certain areas for health and safety reasons, including:

- Research laboratories
- Medical facilities
- Boiler rooms
- Areas requiring protective clothing

Exceptions will be reviewed case-by-case, and reasonable adjustments offered where access is restricted.

## 5. Emotional Support Animals (ESA)

5.1 The University of Chester recognises that Emotional Support Animals may provide therapeutic benefits to individuals with long-term mental health conditions. However, ESAs are not considered a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010 and are not permitted on campus or in student accommodation.

5.2 ESAs are defined as:

“Animals that provide an owner with comfort and companionship, for which no specialist training is required.”

While ESAs may have some behavioural training, they are not trained to perform specific disability-related tasks and therefore do not have legal recognition to accompany their owner in public spaces.

5.3 ESAs are not referenced in UK law and are not classified as Assistance Animals, distinguishing them from legally recognised assistance dogs.

## 6. Animals on Campus – Considerations for the University Community

6.1 The University recognises potential challenges arising from the presence of animals on campus, including:

- Fear or anxiety around animals
- Allergic reactions
- Religious beliefs restricting animal contact
- Potential disruption to recognised assistance dogs performing essential tasks
- Disruption from interactions between multiple animals in confined spaces

6.2 Only formally trained assistance dogs meeting required behaviour and training standards are accepted.

6.3 Emotional support animals, lacking such specialist training, are not permitted to maintain a safe, inclusive, and accessible environment for all.

6.4 Students seeking alternative support options should contact the Disability & Inclusion Team to explore reasonable adjustments.

## 7. Appeals and Complaints

7.1 Students disputing decisions about assistance dog applications must first seek informal resolution before making a formal appeal.

- Informal resolution – Raise the issue with the Disability & Inclusion Team at [disability@chester.ac.uk](mailto:disability@chester.ac.uk)
- Appeal – If unresolved, contact the Student Services Directorate at [studentservices@chester.ac.uk](mailto:studentservices@chester.ac.uk)

## 8. Further Information

8.1 The University reserves the right to decline assistance dogs where:

Appropriate training has not been completed by:

- An ADUK-registered organisation meeting IGDF or ADI standards
- A private trainer
- An owner-trainer
- The dog fails to meet required criteria or documentation is missing as per Section 3.1

8.2 The University may revoke permission for assistance dogs where there are justified concerns for the safety, welfare, or health of the University community, the public, or the dog itself.

8.3 Expected behaviour standards exclude:

- Uncontrolled behaviour (e.g., barking, lunging, jumping, pulling) unless as part of an alert task
- Aggressive or fearful temperament (e.g., growling, cowering)
- Poor hygiene or lack of toilet training

8.4 The University reserves the right to amend this policy at any time without notice. For guidance or alternative formats, contact [disability@chester.ac.uk](mailto:disability@chester.ac.uk).

## Appendices

### Appendix 1:

#### **Responsibilities of the University**

The University has the following responsibilities:

- To ensure that access requirements involving assistance dogs are clear and effectively support the disabled student. The student is required to work with Disability & Inclusion to establish shared expectations, ensuring the assistance dog is safe, well-behaved, and well cared for.
- To carry out appropriate consultation or notification with all concerned Departmental Faculties as well as Residential Living, before the assistance dog is permitted on campus
- If appropriate, and in consultation with Disability and Inclusion and Health and Safety Advisory Services, to ensure that a safe and suitable Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is in place
- To identify and communicate to the assistance dog Owner, the location of an appropriate spending area for use by the assistance dog
- To set out processes and procedures for adverse events due to the presence of an assistance dog such as allergic reactions, fear of animal presence, religious objections or animal misbehaviour or damage to University property
- To notify the relevant staff, students or partners who are either living, or working in close proximity to the assistance dog.

### Appendix 2:

#### **Code of Conduct for the Assistance Dog Owner:**

Whilst assistance dogs are on University premises, their owners must comply with the following Code of Conduct:

- Assistance dog owners must, whenever possible, display valid formal identification regarding the dog, its owner, and the training organisation, ensuring it is visible to staff and students at all times. Additionally, owners must provide information about the dog's tasks and duties if reasonably requested to do so by University staff.
- To ensure any anticipatory arrangements can be made prior to arrival we request Assistance dog owners must complete the registration process with the University's Disability and Inclusion team before the start of their year 1 studies.
- Assistance dog owners must ensure that their assistance dog is kept on a lead at all times when walking round the University premises

- Assistance dog owners must ensure that their assistance dogs are covered by full liability insurance and provide a copy to the Disability and Inclusion team
- Assistance dog owners are required to ensure that their assistance dog is relevantly vaccinated
- Preventing and rectifying the misbehaviour of an assistance dog is the owner's responsibility. Assistance dog owners are responsible for any harm or injury caused to others, their property or University property by their assistance dog
- Assistance dog owners are responsible in ensuring that their assistance dog is not ill, in poor health, unclean or unkempt. If these standards are not met, the owner may be required to remove the dog from the University premises
- Assistance dog owners must adhere to access restrictions established by the University on the grounds of Health and Safety
- Registered blind people are not required to clean up after their assistance dogs but are expected to have received appropriate training to avoid dog waste on campus. Assistance dog owners must take responsibility for the clean-up of their dog's waste in so far as they are able and, as far as reasonably possible, make use of the designated spending area identified by the University. In the event that an assistance dog fouls:
  - inside a University building, the owner must report this to the Hospitality and Residential Services Department to request a sanitisation of the area.
  - on an outdoors area of a University campus, the owner must report this to the Facilities Helpdesk to request a sanitisation of the area.