

University of Chester Assistance Dog Policy

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Assistance Dog Policy

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Author: – R Miller Disability Services Manager

Any queries or comments please contact either the author or:
Disability and Inclusion Service University of Chester Parkgate Road
Chester Cheshire CH1 4BJ

1. Introduction

The University of Chester is committed to providing an inclusive environment for all staff and students. This policy has been developed to provide clarity or set a standard regarding Assistance Dogs on University premises. This is to ensure that no member of staff or student is denied equitable access to services based on their reliance on mobility aids, as well as ensuring the University meets its legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010.

2. Assistance Dog Accreditation

An Assistance Dog is one which has been specifically trained to complete specific tasks or duties to aid a person with a disability. Accreditation in the UK is usually completed through a recognised organisation such as Assistance Dogs UK (www.assistancedogs.org.uk). Such Assistance Dogs have formal identification and are permitted to accompany their owners at all times and places within the UK, unless there is a genuine health and safety risk (e.g. hospital areas such as operating theatres). There are currently 7 registered organisations who are members of Assistance Dogs UK. These are as follows:

- Canine Partners
- Dog A.I.D
- Dogs for Good
- Guide Dogs
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

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- Medical Detention Dogs
- Support Dogs

Requests which fall outside of the Assistance Dogs UK accreditation route require careful consideration to ensure that the University is meeting its legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010, as well as being satisfied that the appropriate checks and criteria have been met to ensure the health and safety of staff and students within its premises. Please note, this review is not about the health and safety of students when an accredited assistance dog is on the premises, but determining that that dog itself is suitably trained, and or qualified, to be classed as an assistance dog.

Regarding the assistance dog being owner trained and having access to University premises, the University of Chester would require clear evidence of the following:

- That the dog meets the standards and criteria required of an assistance dog
- Confirmation regarding the types of tasks the assistance dog is trained to provide
- Confirmation that there is a need for an assistance dog. This would be provided in the form of medical evidence confirming your diagnosis, in which the University will then be able to review the reasonable adjustments required.

In addition, the Assistance Dog Owner would be required to comply with the responsibilities set out in section 5 of this policy.

It would also be helpful to understand why the individual has decided to go through the route of owner training their assistance dog as oppose to going through Assistance Dogs UK Accreditation, which is designed to be supportive in nature. We are aware that through Assistance Dogs UK Accreditation, the partnership between assistances dogs and their owners is periodically checked to ensure there are maintaining the standards under which the dog achieved accreditation. Therefore to best review your application, please provide further information as to how you would undertake these checks independently.

It should be noted that the University will not accept any requests from staff or students for therapy or family pets on campus, due to them not meeting the standards set out by Assistance Dogs (UK), as well as the requirement as set out in the University Standard for the Management of Hazards and Risks to Health and Safety - Animals on Campus / in University Premises, of which a copy of can be provided upon request.

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3. Policy Aims

This policy aims to outline:

- The roles and responsibilities of the University in relation to Assistance Dogs
- The roles and responsibilities of Assistance Dog owners when on University property
- The processes and procedures for managing complaints or conflict situations
- For controlled organised events that the University conducts in collaboration with charities and organisations, please refer to the Management of Hazards and Risks to Health and Safety - Animals on Campus/ in University Premises. This policy is specific to the use of Assistance Dogs as a reasonable adjustment under The Equality Act 2010.

4. Responsibilities of the University

The University recognises that a dog accompanying a disabled person (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) for the purpose of enabling that person to carry out their day to day activities will require fair access to the University's grounds, buildings and University-owned student accommodation.

The University has the following responsibilities:

- To ensure that access requirements involving assistance dogs are legitimate and pre-agreed with Disability and Inclusion within Student Services
- 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.

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5. Responsibilities of the Assistance Dog Owner

Whilst Assistance Dogs are on University premises, their owners must comply with the following responsibilities:

- Assistance Dog Owners are required to have valid formal identification about the Assistance Dog, its owner and details of the training organisation, which should be visible to staff and students at all times. Assistance Dog Owners must also be able to provide information about their dog, its tasks and duties, if reasonably requested to do so by University staff
- Assistance Dog Owners must request permission from the University's Disability and Inclusion team to bring their Assistance Dog into University premises at the start of their year 1 studies. This is to ensure any anticipatory arrangements can be made prior to arrival
- 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.

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- on an outdoors areas of a University campus, the owner must report this to the Facilities Helpdesk to request a sanitisation of the area.

The University reserves the right to decline or remove Assistance Dogs from campus for the following reasons:

- The Assistance Dog has not been specifically trained and qualified by a member of Assistance Dogs (UK)
- It cannot be determined that the assistance dog is suitably trained, and or qualified, to be classed as an Assistance Dog.
- The Assistance Dog Owner does not act in accordance with the criteria set out above.

6. Complaint or conflict situations

- An allergy of other persons, to dogs could be given as a reason for refusal of access to assistance dogs within a specific area of the University, but only where a clear allergy risk to a specific individual can be objectively identified. In such a situation, steps will be taken to reduce this risk with reasonable adjustments (e.g. avoiding close physical contact with the dog). The University will not refuse access for an assistance dog based on the possibility that other people may be allergic as this would not be a proportionate response.
- If a student or member of staff wishes to make a complaint relating to an Assistance Dog, or if an Assistance Dog Owner wishes to make a complaint about the treatment of themselves or their dog, the complaint should be raised within the Faculty / Department in which the problem originally occurred with the view to resolving the conflict informally.

Any other complaints or conflict that cannot be resolved informally should be raised in accordance with the University's Complaints procedure.

Questions regarding this policy, should be directed to disability@chester.ac.uk.

Contact Information

Disability and Inclusion

- Email

studentservices@chester.ac.uk

- Telephone

[01244 511550](tel:01244 511550)