

Service Animal Guidelines

Willamette University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, which states, “No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States...shall, solely on the basis of a disability, be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity provided by any institution receiving federal assistance.” Willamette University intends to provide the broadest possible access to service animals in all of its public areas.

Students with disabilities who require the use of service animals are permitted to bring such animals on campus provided they do not pose a substantial and direct threat to health or safety of others, and provided that the presence of the animal does not constitute a fundamental alteration to the nature of Willamette’s policies, practices, or procedures, including Willamette’s academic requirements. The University may place other reasonable conditions or restrictions on a service or assistance animal depending on the nature or characteristics of the animal.

A dog being trained has the same rights as a fully trained dog when accompanied by a trainer and identified as such in any place of public accommodation (as defined in ORS 659A. 400). Handler of service dogs in training must also adhere to the requirements for service animals and are subject to the removal policies as outlined in this policy.

I. Definition of Service Animal:

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a service animal as “a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.”¹ The task(s) performed must be directly related to the person’s disability. In some cases, miniature horses may be service animals. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. Emotional Support Animals are not considered service animals.

II. Guidelines for Service Animals at Willamette University:

1. A service animal may be excluded from a facility, including a classroom, if that animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
2. A service animal may be excluded from a facility, including a classroom, if that animal’s behavior, such as barking, is disruptive to the other participants within the facility.
3. All owners or handlers of service animals are responsible to clean up after and properly dispose of their animal’s feces while on campus.
4. Service animals must be kept on a leash or under the control of the handler at all times.

III. Service Animals in University Housing

Students wishing to utilize a service animal in campus housing are encouraged to contact the Housing Office at 503-370-6212 to register their animal prior to arrival. We also encourage those students to contact the office of Accessible Education Services at 503-375-6737. View the [Service Animal Owner Responsibilities in Campus Residences](#) to learn about expectations of animal owners at Willamette. This information can also be accessed by contacting Housing.

¹ https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm

IV. Areas Off Limits to Service Animals

Generally, service animals are allowed to accompany persons with disabilities in all areas of campus where the public is normally allowed to go. Certain areas on campus may be off-limits to service animals, including some food preparation areas, rooms with heavy machinery, custodial closets, areas where protective clothing is required, and areas that may pose a safety risk to the animal.

V. Exclusion of a Service Animal

Consistent with federal and state law, Willamette University may exclude or remove a service animal if:

- the animal is not housebroken
- the animal is out of control or presents a direct threat to others and the handler does not take effective action to control it

If the animal is excluded or removed, the University will give the handler the option of returning to the University activity without the animal.

VI. Responsibilities of Faculty, Staff, Students, and Other Members of the University Community regarding Service Animals

Members of the Willamette University community are required to abide by the following practices:

- Allow a person to be accompanied by a service animal at all times and in all places on campus, except where animals are specifically prohibited.
- Do not inquire for details about the person's disability. The nature of a person's disability is a private matter.
- Do not pet a service animal. It distracts the animal from the task at hand and service animals may react in a protective manner.
- Do not ask the service animal to demonstrate its ability to perform the work.
- Do not separate or attempt to separate a person from his or her service animal.

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, the University may ask two questions:

1. Is the animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

VII. Conflicting Disabilities and/or Medical Conditions

A student with a disability and/or medical condition that is affected by animals should contact Accessible Education Services with any health or safety-related concerns about exposure to a service animal. The person asserting the conflicting disability and/or medical condition must provide appropriate medical documentation that identifies the condition(s) and the need for an accommodation. Appropriate action under federal and state law will be taken to consider the needs of all persons involved and to resolve the conflict as efficiently and effectively as possible.

VIII. Decision Review Process

If you feel that you were denied this accommodation, a request for a decision review can be made by following the [Decision Review procedures](#) available on the Accessible Education Services website and in the main office in Smullin 155. If you have further questions, please contact the Director of Accessible Education Services at 503-370-6737.

References

[ADA Requirements Service Animals](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions about Service Animals and the ADA \(Department of Justice, July 2015\)](#)

[Americans with Disabilities Act Title II Regulations \(August 2016\)](#)

[Oregon Revised Statutes \(ORS\) 659A. 400](#)