

Assistance Animals Policy

1. Introduction and Scope

Plymouth Marjon University is committed to providing an inclusive environment and recognises the importance of Assistance Dogs to enable disabled individuals to access university/ the workplace.

The University wishes to provide a welcoming and safe environment for assistance dogs and their owners, and it is with this in mind that the policy of the University is that no animal shall be brought into the campus buildings unless they are specifically authorised.

This procedure sets out which animals can be authorised; the conditions under which permission is given and what to do if you wish to bring an Assistance Dog onto the campus.

In assessing which animals can be authorised, the University will refer to information from the Equality Act 2010, the Equality and Human Rights Commission guide to assistance dogs and information available from Assistance Dogs International (ADI) (see section 2 below).

This policy applies throughout the whole University – to staff, students and to visitors.

2. Assistance Dogs Definition

The Equality Act 2010 clearly states that assistance dogs that have been ***specifically trained to carry out specific duties for a disabled person*** are legally permitted to accompany their owner, partner or handler in all places.

The Equality Act 2010 defines Assistance Dogs as:

- a) A dog trained to guide a person with visual impairment.
- b) A dog trained to assist a person with hearing impairment.
- c) A dog 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.
- d) A dog of a prescribed category which has been highly trained to assist a person who has a disability (other than one falling within paragraph (c)) of a prescribed kind.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission guide to assistance dogs' states:

- Assistance dogs are not pets or emotional support animals.
- Assistance dogs are: -
 - o Highly trained.
 - o Will not wander freely around the premises.
 - o Will sit or lie quietly on the floor next to their owner.
 - o Are trained to go to the toilet on command and so are unlikely to foul in a public place.

- Most are instantly recognisable by the harness or identifying coat they wear.

Assistance Dogs International (ADI) guidance helps us to understand further the term 'Assistance Dogs' as a term for :-

“a guide, hearing or service dog specifically trained to do three or more tasks to mitigate the effects of an individual’s disability. The presence of a dog for protection, personal defence or comfort does not qualify that dog as an assistance dog”.

Dogs that have been trained and registered with one of the accredited member organisation's listed by Assistance Dogs International (ADI) or Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) and qualify as 'Assistance Dogs' as per the ADI definition will be easy to identify and can be provided with access to all the University's premises, provided their owners follow the instructions and conditions as set out below in section 3.

The organisation's currently (October 2024) accepted as members by ADI or ADUK are: -

- Autism Dogs Charity
- Bravehound
- Canine Partners
- Darwin Dogs
- Dog A.I.D
- Dogs Assistance in Disability
- Dogs for Autism
- Dogs for Good
- Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
- Medical Detection Dogs
- Service Dogs UK
- Support Dogs
- The Seeing Dogs Alliance
- Veterans with Dogs

To find more about the ADI and ADUK accepted accredited organisations and for the most up to date member list, please see here: [Member Search - Assistance Dogs International](#) and [Find an Assistance Dog Charity - ADUK \(assistedogs.org.uk\)](#)

It is not a legal requirement for Assistance Dogs to be trained by one of the organisations above. However, it is imperative that owners share information about the organisation that has supported them to train and register their animal to the level required, and be able to evidence that the level of training reached and the tasks their dog undertakes for them are appropriate for their dog to be considered a highly trained assistance dog (this will include the Public Access test which meets Assistance Dog standards). When owners can satisfy those requirements, and provided their owners follow the instructions and conditions as set out in this policy and complete the Assistance Dogs Risk Assessment, they will be provided with access to all the University's premises.

Assistance Dogs that are still undertaking their training will also be authorised to visit the campus to enable them to complete training. This would normally be at an advanced stage of their specialist training when they meet the standards required to work in public.

3. Assistance Dogs Requirements

A requirement of this policy is that Assistance Dog owners complete the '[Assistance Animal Request Questionnaire](#)' and send it with the appropriate evidence either to disability@marjon.ac.uk (for students and prospective students) or to their Line Manager (for staff).

On receipt of a questionnaire, staff will confirm if they have all the information to approve the request (or will alternatively ask for further evidence). Staff should respond to completed questionnaires within a reasonable timeframe (within 5 working days where possible) so that the individual is able to progress their application to work or study at the University.

Please note if you wish to have an Assistance Dog living with you on campus, you should complete the questionnaire before applying for University accommodation.

Owners of Assistance Dogs will continue to have access to all University premises provided that the owners continue to comply with the conditions set out in this policy (and in the Assistance Animal Request Questionnaire) including the following:-

- The assistance dog is the responsibility of the owner alone and they must not leave the dog unattended at any point on the campus (including in vehicles). The animal must not be allowed to roam freely at any time within any University buildings and should only be exercised within agreed areas.
- The owner should present information regarding the dogs training and qualification as an assistance dog, vaccinations and proof of up-to-date insurance, including public liability cover with a minimum of £2,000,000, on a yearly basis (initially through the [Assistance Animal Request Questionnaire](#)). In subsequent years, individuals will need to share updated documents such as the insurance renewal/vaccinations with (for students) DIAS – Disability and Inclusion Advice Service - disability@marjon.ac.uk , or (for staff) with their Line Manager.
- The owner must ensure that the dog is kept in a healthy state with up-to-date vaccinations and flea/worm treatment to ensure that they do not introduce parasites to university premises.
- Within University accommodation, owners must ensure that in relation to their assistance dog, high standards of hygiene are maintained at all times. This applies to bedding, food and water dishes.

- The owner must ensure that their dog does not cause injury, ill-health, nuisance, or distress to students or members of staff.
- The owner must ensure that their dog does not cause damage to university premises including not fouling areas of campus other than within the Assistance Dog spend area (where previously agreed).
- Should there be any complaint arising from the dog's presence on campus, the owner must be prepared to discuss these with university staff to mitigate any effects wherever possible (for example, if there are appropriate ways to avoid others with allergies or phobias).
- Should placement opportunities be restricted as a result of the presence of an assistance dog, the owner must be prepared to discuss these with university staff to ensure that the experience and knowledge gained in these settings is maximised without compromising spaces where the presence of a dog needs to be managed more carefully.
- The owner will be responsible for the clean-up of their dog's waste (so far as they are physically able to). If, on occasion, an owner is unable to clean up the dog's waste, they should report this immediately to a member of Estates staff (email: estates@marjon.ac.uk) so that the area can be cleaned and sanitised as soon as possible.
- Assistance dogs will be kept on a lead/harness within campus buildings and public spaces.
- Assistance dogs will be easily identifiable when carrying out its working role (eg through the use of an appropriate jacket, tabard, or harness).
- Assistance dog owners will have received full training on how to manage their animal and will share evidence of that training as appropriate.
- The animal's welfare is given priority when deciding whether the animal should be brought onto campus.
- If to be housed within on campus accommodation, the owner should confirm with the organisation who have registered the assistance dog that accommodation meets the needs of the animal prior to an accommodation contract being offered OR be able to confirm that the accommodation will meet the dog's needs.
- Guidance should be followed as set out by the animal welfare act 2006, covering the responsibility for animals and the duty of persons responsible for an animal.
- The University may restrict access of Assistance Dogs to certain areas for health and safety reasons (for example laboratory facilities, medical facilities, cooking facilities etc).

This policy is made available publicly to ensure that all Assistance Dog owners know their responsibilities. Additionally (prospective) students are advised to contact the DIAS team at disability@marjon.ac.uk for a copy of the policy and/or to arrange a familiarisation visit.

We reserve the right to revoke permission to grant access to any animal when the owner is in breach of these guidelines.

4. Therapy and Emotional Support Animals

Although there is a rise in the use of animals to comfort and support people with conditions such as mental ill health and autism spectrum conditions, ***they are not trained to carry out specific duties for a disabled person, therefore there is no legal requirement to permit them to university premises.***

The University will not authorise therapy animals, emotional support animals or pets within campus buildings, or within its accommodation as all campus accommodation is shared (except where prior authorisation was gained before this policy was published). Students are encouraged to discuss their disability support needs with the Disability and Inclusion Advice Service who may be able to offer them alternative reasonable adjustments for support during their studies (email: disability@marjon.ac.uk).

5. Exceptions

There will be circumstances such as marketing and other events where permission will be granted for animals that are not assistance dogs to be permitted on certain areas of campus (for example a teaching facility) for a limited amount of time. In these circumstances, prior approval must be sought, warning must be given to those occupying the spaces involved (to enable time to check for phobias and allergy risks) and owners will need to agree to abide by the conditions set out below.

From time to time, the University may also grant permission for animals to be on campus (that are not Assistance Dogs) to provide a source of comfort to students who perhaps are missing their own animals whilst away from home. If this happens, those animals will remain under the control of their owners (Chaplaincy staff) working within the Octagon building. The Octagon should communicate which animals are present within the Octagon building so that those who wish to avoid animals can easily do so (notice at the building's entrance). If these include animals that need exercise outside of the Octagon space, they must be kept on a lead when exercising and are not permitted into teaching and other building spaces. If wishing to attend a university event with their animal in a space other than the Octagon/outside, their owner should seek prior permission to do so. This is to ensure that members of the community who need to avoid animals are reasonably able to do so. The owners must abide by the conditions set out in this policy and will be asked to sign an agreement (see appendix B) stating their agreeance with the following: -

- The owner will ensure that their animal does not cause injury, ill-health, nuisance, or distress to other members of staff or students.
- The owner will ensure that their animal does not cause damage or introduce parasites to university premises.
- The owner will ensure that their animal is covered by full public liability insurance with a minimum of £2,000,000.

- The owner is responsible for the animal and this responsibility cannot be delegated to others without ensuring they are adequately trained and understand the conditions of approval in this section.
- The owner is responsible for ensuring that the animal does not roam freely at any time within any University building or externally within the University Estate (this includes not leaving the animal within vehicles on campus or tied up outside university buildings).
- The animal does not foul areas of campus.
- Should there be any complaint arising from the dog's presence on campus, the owner must be prepared to discuss these with university staff to mitigate any effects wherever possible (for example, if there are appropriate ways to avoid others with allergies or phobias).
- The animal is only exercised in agreed areas (the Octagon and the perimeter of the campus) and dogs must be on leads when exercised.
- The animal is always under the control of their owner or designated trained individual.
- The animal's welfare is given priority when deciding whether the animal should be brought onto campus.
- Guidance should be followed as set out by the animal welfare act 2006, covering the responsibility for animals and the duty of persons responsible for an animal.

We reserve the right to revoke permission to grant access to any animal when the owner is in breach of these guidelines.

References

Assistance Dogs International (ADI) - [Who We Are - Assistance Dogs International](#)

Equality Act 2010 - [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK](#)

Equality and Human Rights Commission Guide (2017) - [Assistance dogs: a guide for all businesses | EHRC](#)

Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2022). Animal Welfare Legislation: Protecting Pets Guidance.

Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs / CFSG (2017). Code of practice for the welfare of dogs.

Appendices

Appendix A

Assistance Animal Request Questionnaire

The current request questionnaire which outlines the information needed from Assistance Dog owners can be found here: -

[Assistance Animal Request Questionnaire \(risk assessment\) February 2025.docx](#)

Appendix B

Conditions – Agreement document for all animal owners with approval for onsite visits

I agree to abide by the conditions set out in the Assistance Animals Policy (section 5 – exceptions) which include: -

- The owner will ensure that their animal does not cause injury, ill-health, nuisance, or distress to other members of staff or students.
- The owner will ensure that their animal does not cause damage or introduce parasites to university premises.
- The owner will ensure that their animal is covered by full public liability insurance with a minimum of £2,000,000.
- The owner is responsible for the animal and this responsibility cannot be delegated to others without ensuring they are adequately trained and understand the conditions of approval in this section.
- The owner is responsible for ensuring that the animal does not roam freely at any time within any University building or externally within the University Estate (this includes not leaving the animal within vehicles on campus or tied up outside university buildings).
- The animal does not foul areas of campus.
- Should there be any complaint arising from the dog's presence on campus, the owner must be prepared to discuss these with university staff to mitigate any effects wherever possible (for example, if there are appropriate ways to avoid others with allergies or phobias).
- The animal is only exercised in agreed areas (the Octagon and externally) and dogs must be on lead when exercising.
- The animal is always under the control of their owner or designated trained individual.
- The animal's welfare is given priority when deciding whether the animal should be brought onto campus.
- Guidance should be followed as set out by the animal welfare act 2006, covering the responsibility for animals and the duty of persons responsible for an animal.

Name: Signed:

Dated:

Approval granted by (name): Signed:

Job Title: Dated:

Document Reference Grid

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