

Eastern Connecticut State University Service Animal Policy

Service animals are animals trained to assist people with disabilities in the activities of independent living. Service animals are not pets. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) defines a service animal as any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. If an animal meets this broad definition, it is considered a service animal. In accordance with the ADA and Connecticut General Statute 46a-64(a)(3), Eastern Connecticut State University permits the use of service animals on campus. The following guidelines apply to service animals, their owners/handlers, and the campus community.

Eligibility

Students wishing to use a service animal on campus are required to submit documentation to verify eligibility under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA. This documentation must adequately verify the nature and extent of the disability in accordance with current professional standards and techniques. The documentation must also clearly substantiate the need for all of the student's specific accommodation requests, including the specific need for a service animal. This documentation should accompany a written request to have a service animal on campus and should be submitted to the Office of AccessAbility Services prior to bringing the animal to campus.

Supervision

The animal must be supervised by the owner/handler who is responsible for maintaining full control of the animal at all times.

Training

Provided that all other documentation has been received and approved by the Office of AccessAbility Services, no specific certification or proof of training is necessary for the animal to be on campus.

Identification

While working, all service animals on campus are required to wear a leash, harness, cape, or other gear that readily and visibly identifies it as a service animal. This gear is only to be worn while the animal is working and must be removed when the animal is on campus but not serving in the capacity of a service animal.

Animal Health

The animal must be in good health and should have its hygienic needs met on a regular basis. Animals to be housed in campus housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. The animal must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. Dogs must have had the general maintenance vaccine series and wear a rabies vaccination tag. All vaccinations must be current. All proof of animal maintenance is to be kept in the owner's file in the Office of AccessAbility Services.

Waste Cleanup Rule

Cleaning up after the animal is the sole responsibility of the animal's owner. In the event that the animal's owner is not physically able to clean up after the animal, it is then the responsibility of the owner to hire someone capable of cleaning up after the animal. The person cleaning up after the animal should abide by the following guidelines:

- Always carry equipment sufficient to clean up the animal's feces whenever the animal is on campus.
- Properly dispose of waste and/or litter in appropriate containers.
- Contact staff if arrangements are needed to assist with cleanup. Any cost incurred for doing so is the sole responsibility of the animal's owner.

Requirements for Faculty, Staff, and Students

- Allow a service animal to accompany its owner/handler at all times and everywhere on campus. Due to the working relationship between the service animal and its owner, it is critical that no one attempts to separate the owner/handler from his or her service animal.
- Do not pet a service animal; petting a service animal when the animal is working distracts the animal from its duties.
- Do not feed a service animal. The service animal may have specific dietary requirements. Unusual food or food at an unexpected time may cause the animal to become ill.
- Do not deliberately startle a service animal.
- Avoid initiating conversation about the service animal, the person's disabilities or other service animals one has known. Be aware that many people with disabilities do not wish to share personal details.
- Not all disabilities are visible. The nature of a person's disability is a private matter and you are not entitled to inquire for details about their disability or the nature of the animal's duties.
- No owner/handler may be charged any type of fee for having a service animal on campus. The owner/handler, however, is responsible for any actual costs incurred for damage done by the animal to any university property and for all costs incurred during the removal of the animal when applicable.

Removal of a Service Animal

When a service animal is unruly or disruptive (jumping on people, biting, or other harmful behavior), the animal is not acting in the capacity of a service animal and may be removed from the area. In the event that it becomes necessary to remove a service animal from any area of campus, the owner/handler may not be excluded from that activity.

Any incident that requires the removal of a service animal is to be reported, by the owner/handler and the person responsible for the request for removal, to the Office of AccessAbility Services within 24 hours. For each incident of unruly behavior, the owner will be notified with a warning from the Office of AccessAbility Service which will include the campus' policy of animal removal. The owner/handler may appeal this warning in writing within 72 hours to the Coordinator of the Office of AccessAbility Services or the Vice President for the Division of Student Affairs.

If the animal's behavior causes possible danger to other people or occurs repeatedly, the Office of AccessAbility Services may, at the discretion of the Coordinator, require that the animal be removed from campus until significant steps have been taken to mitigate the behavior. Mitigation may include refresher training for both the animal and the owner/handler. When a determination to remove an animal from campus is made, the owner/handler will be notified in writing and

required to sign a contract of conditional removal. The contract of conditional removal will state the conditions under which the animal is to be removed and under which the animal may return. This contract will also allow the owner/handler to state any objections to the animal's removal. Appeals of decisions made by the Coordinator of the Office of AccessAbility Services should be directed to the Vice President for the Division of Student Affairs.

Documentation specifically stating the corrective measures taken must be submitted to the Office of AccessAbility Services with a written request for reevaluation of the animal's status before the animal may return to campus. When a request for reevaluation of an animal's status is received, the Coordinator of the Office of AccessAbility Services will determine if the documentation supports the animal's return to campus.

Questions

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Office of Accessibility Services for clarification.