

Assistance Animals on Campus

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Contents

Introduction

Definitions

Policy Statement

Exceptions and Exclusions to General Rules Applying to Assistance Animals on Campus

Legal References

Resources

Introduction

Iowa State University is committed to assuring that its programs are free from discrimination and harassment based upon protected classes, including physical or mental disability. Discrimination and harassment impede the realization of the university's mission of distinction in education, scholarship, and service, and diminish the whole community. See the Discrimination and Harassment policy (see [Resources](#) below).

This policy explains Iowa State University's (ISU) general guidelines and permitted uses of assistance animals, as defined and described below, in providing disability accommodations to students, faculty, staff, and visitors in university buildings and on university property.

This policy does not pertain to pets, animals being used for teaching or research, or animals receiving treatment at the Veterinary Medical Center or College of Veterinary Medicine. For information about such animals on campus, see the Animals on Campus policy (see [Resources](#) below). [top](#)

Definitions

Pursuant to applicable state and federal law, the following definitions have been adopted and apply to this policy:

Assistance Animal: A general term referring to any animal providing accommodations to individuals with disabilities. As used within this policy, an assistance animal may be either a service animal or an emotional support animal. For purposes of this policy, Assistance Animals are not considered pets.

Service Animal: A service animal is individually trained, or in the process of being trained under the auspices of a recognized training facility, to do specific work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, including but not limited to physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disabilities. The specific work or tasks performed by the service animal for the benefit of the individual must be directly related to the individual's disability. As defined in this policy: 1) the mere provision of emotional support, well-being, or comfort does not constitute work or tasks performed by service animals; and 2) service animals in training (i.e., service animals that do not yet perform specific work or tasks for a person with a disability, but are being trained to do so) are not considered service animals.

Emotional Support Animal: Any animal providing emotional support, well-being, or comfort that eases one or more identified symptoms or effects of a disability. Emotional support animals may also be referred to as a comfort or therapy animals. Unlike service animals, emotional support animals are not individually trained to perform specific work or tasks.

Resident: ISU students residing in university housing and/or paying guests registered for university guest or conference housing operated by the Department of Residence (DOR).

Pet: Any animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. For purposes of this policy, service animals and emotional support animals (collectively termed “assistance animals”) are not considered pets. [top](#)

Policy Statement

Assistance animals are permitted on campus subject to the conditions and restrictions outlined within this policy.

Assistance animal accommodation requests made by students and overnight visitors will be reviewed and assessed by Student Accessibility Services (SAS) consistent with applicable laws and policies. All assistance animal accommodation requests made by employees will be reviewed by University Human Resources Employee Relations/Labor Relations (UHR ER/LR). ISU reserves the ability to make special modifications, within the confines of applicable law, to its policies to reasonably accommodate the person requesting the accommodation.

Emotional Support Animals on Campus

Only residents who have complied with this policy are permitted to have emotional support animals in their assigned university housing units. Residents wanting emotional support animals to reside in university housing must seek and receive approval pursuant to the Procedures and Guidance - Assistance Animals on Campus (see [Resources](#) below) prior to the emotional support animal entering university housing. Only one emotional support animal will be permitted per resident and generally only one emotional support animal will be assigned per university housing unit. Emotional support animals are restricted to residential areas and are not otherwise permitted inside other university buildings, including, but not limited to classrooms, dining facilities, recreational buildings, employment areas, libraries, sporting events, and research laboratories. Because emotional support animals are not trained to provide specific work or tasks, visitors and students not residing in university housing, faculty, and staff are generally not permitted to have emotional support animals on campus as a part of any disability accommodation. [top](#)

Service Animals on Campus

Service animals are generally permitted to accompany people with disabilities on all university properties where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are allowed, in buildings/facilities. A service animal's access to certain areas on campus may need to be limited should the service animal's presence create an undue hardship to the university. See the section on Exceptions and Exclusions below. Any such circumstances will be reviewed by SDR (for students and visitors) or UHR ER/LR (for employees) on a case-by-case basis.

All service animals must be housebroken (i.e., trained so that it controls its waste elimination, absent illness or accident) and must be kept under control by a harness, leash, or other tether unless the person is unable to hold those, or such use would interfere with the service animal's performance of work or tasks. In such instances, the service animal must be kept under control by voice, signals, or other effective means.

Students needing a service animal are encouraged to work with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) prior to bringing the service animal to campus to ensure reasonable accommodations are appropriately provided to the student. Students wishing to have their service animal reside with them in university housing will need to comply with this policy and the 'Procedures and Guidance' reference (see [Resources](#) below).

Faculty and staff (or applicants for employment positions) needing a service animal are encouraged to contact UHR ER/LR prior to bringing the service animal to campus to ensure the disability accommodation request process is followed and reasonable accommodations are appropriately provided to the employee or applicant.

Visitors with inquiries pertaining to service animals may contact either SDR or UHR ER/LR. Visitors may consult the SDR and/or UHR ER/LR websites for additional details relating to process steps. [top](#)

Exceptions and Exclusions to General Rules Applying to Assistance Animals on Campus

ISU may impose some restrictions on, and may even exclude or ban, an assistance animal in certain instances. Restrictions or exclusions will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with applicable laws. Access to university property may be restricted or revoked under the following circumstances.

Assistance Animal Creates a Direct Threat

The assistance animal may be denied access to or banned from campus if it poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by reasonable modifications. An example of this would be an assistance animal that exhibits aggression or has injured a person or another animal. In considering whether an assistance animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, ISU will make an individualized assessment based on reasonable judgment, current medical knowledge, or the best available objective evidence to determine 1) the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; 2) the probability that the potential injury will actually occur; and 3) whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk.

Assistance Animal is Uncontrolled

An assistance animal may have its access to university property restricted or revoked if the assistance animal is out of control and the owner does not take effective action to gain and maintain control. An example of this may be an assistance animal that repeatedly gets loose and runs at large, even if it does not physically injure a person or another assistance animal.

Property Damage or Injury Caused by Assistance Animal

The owner of an assistance animal is responsible for any damage to Iowa State University's or personal property and any injuries to individuals caused by their animal. [top](#)

Improper/Inadequate Care for Assistance Animal

Failure to properly care for an assistance animal may result in the animal's access to university property being restricted or revoked. Additionally, if it appears that anyone has abused or neglected an assistance animal, the university may report the animal abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities, in addition to any other campus remedies (i.e., Student Code of Conduct if the perpetrator is a student; discipline if the perpetrator is an employee).

Assistance Animal is Not Housebroken or Maintained in a Healthy, Clean Manner

Any individual utilizing an assistance animal on campus must ensure the animal is properly housebroken and/or trained. They must also ensure that the animal, and its environment, are maintained in a healthy, clean manner.

Service Animal Fundamentally Alters the Nature of an Educational Program

Students may be denied the accommodation of a service animal in an academic setting if the animal's presence fundamentally alters the nature of the educational program. An example of this may be a lab course that requires a sterile/clean working environment and the service animal's presence would compromise the sanitation/operational standards for the lab. Another example may be a lab course involving the use of lab animals and the service animal's presence will be disruptive to the lab animals. Clarifying note: This exception applies only to service animals, since emotional support animals are generally not permitted to accompany students to class (or to on-campus jobs).

Service Animal Creates Undue Hardship in Employee Accommodation Requests

Employees may be denied the accommodation of having a service animal if the service animal creates an undue hardship on the department or in the area where the employee works. An example of an undue hardship may be an employee working in a lab or area that requires a sterile/clean working environment and the service animal's presence compromises the sanitation/operational standards for the lab. Another example of an undue hardship may be if the service animal's presence jeopardizes the health or safety of another co-worker (e.g., the service animal's presence triggers a co-worker's severe allergies). Clarifying note: This exception applies only to service animals, since employees are generally not entitled to emotional support animals as a disability accommodation. [top](#)

Legal References

- [Americans with Disabilities Act, Title I, Employment](#)
- [Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II, State and Local Governments](#)
- [Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504](#)
- [Civil Rights Act of 1968, Title VIII, Fair Housing Act](#)
- [Iowa Code Section 216.8A](#)
- [Iowa Administrative Code, 681 IAC 13.18, Animals on Campus](#)
- [Ames Municipal Code, Sections 3.107 \(Rabies Vaccination\) and 3.110 \(Rabies Tags\)](#)

Resources

Links

- [Procedures and Guidance - Assistance Animals on Campus](#)
- [Assistance Animals website](#)
- [Animals at Events](#)
- [Animals on Campus policy](#)
- [Discrimination and Harassment policy](#)
- [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#)
- [Office of Equal Opportunity](#)
- [Employee Management, University Human Resources](#)
- [Environmental Health and Safety](#)
- [Department of Residence](#)