



Assistance Animals (Dogs) Policy

Purpose of Policy

The policy clarifies the University's legal position, provides guidance on the definition of an Assistance Animal/Dog and defines our responsibilities as a public sector body.

Overview

The University recognises that Assistance Dogs for disabled people who need them, must be able to access the University Estate and that relevant facilities should be provided for the animals and their handlers.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

All staff, students and visitors to the University who have an Assistance Animal.

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Document control

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Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	University Secretary's Group				
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	N/A				
UK Quality Code	UK Quality Code for Higher Education				
Policies superseded by this policy	N/A				
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 651 4490.				
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1. Introduction

The University of Edinburgh generally prohibits individuals from bringing animals inside any University owned, leased or controlled buildings, vehicles or structures.

However, the University recognises that a dog kept and used by a disabled person (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) wholly or mainly for the purpose of assisting that person to carry out day to day activities (an “**Assistance Dog**”), will require access to the University’s estate, relevant buildings and University-owned student accommodation.

2. Assistance Dogs

Assistance Dogs are trained by members of Assistance Dogs (UK) (<http://www.assistedogs.org.uk/>) or by an equivalent organisation in another country.

Assistance Dogs (UK) is a coalition of Assistance Dog organisations, individual members of which are listed below, and the Assistance Dogs are required to have:

- a formal identification in the form of branded jackets or lead slips.
- a yellow ID booklet from the Assistance Dogs (UK) member organisation. This ID book contains information about the Assistance Dog and its owner, and details of the training organisation who trained the Assistance Dog.

Assistance Dog owners should therefore be in a position to evidence that their dogs are certificated Assistance Dogs – and NOT pets with a therapeutic purpose. See section 5.

There are eight registered charities that form Assistance Dogs (UK). These are:

1. [Canine Partners](#)
2. [Dog A.I.D. \(Assistance in Disability\)](#)
3. [Dogs for Good](#)
4. [The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association](#)
5. [The Seeing Dogs Alliance](#)
6. [Hearing Dogs for Deaf People](#)
7. [Medical Detection Dogs](#)
8. [Support Dogs](#)

Assistance Dogs have formal identification and are permitted to accompany their owners at all times and in all places within the United Kingdom (unless there is a genuine health and safety risk).

Please note that Assistance Dogs are highly trained working dogs, performing tasks to assist disabled persons.

Members of the University community should not:

- touch or feed an Assistance Dog, unless invited to do so by their owner;
- deliberately distract or startle an Assistance Dog; or
- separate or attempt to separate an Assistance Dog from the person using the Assistance Dog's service.

3. Assistance Dogs on University premises

Assistance Dogs are permitted to access all University premises under the control of their handlers (or where necessary in order to control the Assistance Dog for a short period of time, someone other than the handler), who may be students, staff members or visitors to the University.

When Assistance Dogs are in University properties, their owners must comply with the following guidelines:

A. Information

Assistance Dog owners shall provide information about the animal and its tasks/duties, if reasonably requested by University staff.

B. Identification

Assistance Dog owners must ensure that their Assistance Dogs are clearly identifiable by the use of special collars, harnesses and/or ID tags when on duty.

C. Insurance

Assistance dog owners are responsible for ensuring that their assistance dogs are covered by full liability insurance.

D. Access restrictions

Assistance dog owners must respect access restrictions established by the University on grounds of health and safety. Assistance dog owners must ensure that Assistance Dogs do not enter staff and students' privately assigned spaces, such as bedrooms and flats within residences, without permission.

E. Animal misbehaviour

Preventing and correcting Assistance Dogs' misbehaviour is the owner's responsibility. Assistance Dog owners must make sure that their Assistance Dogs do not cause harm or injury to others and damage to University property.

F. Cleanliness

Registered blind people are not required to clean up after their Assistance Dogs but they are expected to have received the appropriate training to avoid dog waste on campus. Assistance Dog owners must take responsibility for the clean-up of the animal's waste, consistent with reasonable capacity. Assistance Dog owners shall use reasonable endeavours to use the designated spending (toileting) areas identified by the University.

In the unlikely event that the Assistance Dog does spend outside of these designated areas, the Assistance Dog owner must report this to **the Estates Helpdesk** (estates.helpdesk@ed.ac.uk or 0131 650 2494 x 502494) who will make arrangements for the area to be cleaned and sanitised.

G. Animal care and supervision

Animal care is primarily the Assistance Dog owner's responsibility. The owner ensures regular health checks, vaccination and an adequate standard of grooming of the Assistance Dog. Assistance Dog owners must ensure the Assistance Dog has its requirements in relation to feeding, watering and toileting fully met. Owners must ensure that Assistance Dogs are kept on a lead at all times when walking around the University's estate or are safely restrained when unsupervised for short periods of time.

In order to support Assistance Dogs owners who are students or staff, the University will provide toileting facilities in an appropriate location for the Assistance Dog owner, as soon as is practical, once a need has been identified and communicated to the University.

Contact should be made with the University's Director of Estates Operations, Tommy Angus, via the Estates Helpdesk estates.helpdesk@ed.ac.uk.

H. Animal training

Assistance Dog owners are responsible for any additional training needs for their assistance dogs and for the correct and safe performance of their duties.

4. Assistance Dogs from other countries

There may be occasions where students, staff members or visitors to the University from other countries request that their Assistance Dog accompanies them. As long as the dog is trained by an organisation equivalent to one of the member organisations of Assistance Dogs (UK), this is acceptable.

5. Therapy and Support Animals

Therapy and support animals are different to Assistance Dogs and will only be permitted in University premises on a case-by-case basis, with the prior written agreement of the University.

6. Pets

This policy deals explicitly with Assistance Dogs, and not pets. A student shall only be permitted to bring his/her pet to University premises if separate policy (specific to such premises) allows this.

7. Conflict Situations

Removal of Assistance Dog

The University reserves the right to remove or bar entry to an Assistance Dog when it poses a direct threat to the health & safety of others. Unresolved animal misbehaviour may also provide grounds for removal, after all reasonable measures have been taken to address this.

Damage

Assistance Dog owners are responsible for any damage to persons or University property.

Restricted access

The University may restrict access of Assistance Dogs to certain areas for health and safety reasons. Restricted areas may include research laboratories, medical facilities, areas where protective clothing is required, boiler rooms, etc. Applications for exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Conflicting disabilities

Where an Assistance Dog poses adverse health risk to an/other student/s, the University will seek medical documentation from the affected party/parties to determine suitable alternative and equitable arrangements for either or both parties.

Religious or cultural conflicts

Religious or cultural beliefs cannot be used to prohibit access to Assistance Dogs and their owners.

Complaints

Any issues in relation to assistance dogs on University premises that cannot be resolved informally should be raised in accordance with the University's complaints handling procedure.

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