



Assistance Animals (Students)

POLICY COVER SHEET

Purpose of Policy:	This policy has been created to provide information and guidance regarding assistance animals on the University campus
Applicable to:	Students
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POLICY ON ASSISTANCE ANIMALS (STUDENTS)

1. Introduction

1.1 The University of Lincoln values the diversity of its staff and student body, and it is committed to providing an environment which is welcoming for all. The University recognises the valuable role played by assistance animals for people with disabilities. This policy has been created to provide information and guidance regarding assistance animals on the University campus. It should be noted that for advice on assistance animals within University owned and managed accommodation should be referred to the relevant accommodation policy, as this policy relates strictly to assistance animals in University owned buildings and on campus.

1.2 This policy will outline the following key areas:

- The definition and types of assistance animals.
- Equality and Human Rights Commission advice on assistance dogs.
- The practical arrangements on campus.
- The responsibilities of the University.
- The responsibilities of the owner.
- Dealing with complaints or concerns.

2. Definition and types of assistance animals

2.1 For the purpose of this policy, an assistance animal is defined as an animal which has been specifically trained to assist those with disabilities, including physical and/or psychological disabilities and has been duly accredited by the appropriate organisation. For example, an assistance dog will be accredited by one of the organisations registered as a member of Assistance Dogs (UK) or an equivalent organisation in another country.

2.2 Types of assistance dogs include:

Guide Dogs – assist people who are blind or visually impaired.

Hearing Dogs – assist people who are deaf or hearing impaired.

Support Dogs/Dogs for the Disabled – a Support Dog can be trained in a wide variety of practical tasks which their owner may find difficult or impossible.

There may be situations when other animals, including cats, are used to provide therapeutic support. This tends to be in terms of the benefits of their companionship and/or helping to alleviate depression and anxiety. The University of Lincoln will consider requests for other assistance

animals on a case-by-case basis, ensuring appropriate Health & Safety Risk Assessments are undertaken where necessary.

2.3 Assistance dogs need to have been identified by a doctor or therapist as appropriate and positive. They also need to be third party insured with a certificate that can be presented when needed. The assistance dog must have received formal training and received a certification, and they must also be wearing a formal identifying lead or harness including some description of their role such as “working dog” or “assistance dog”.

2.4 In the interests of health and safety the University reserves the right to refuse access to a dog that:

- is not qualified by one of the five membership organisations of Assistance Dogs (UK); or
- is from another nation, which does not meet the full membership criteria of the established international assistance dog organisations – Assistance Dogs International, Assistance Dogs Europe, International Guide Dog Federation – or other such international bodies as may from time to time be recognised.

2.5 For reference notes on appropriate interaction with assistance dogs can be found in **Appendix 1.**

3. Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) advice

3.1 The EHRC describes assistance dogs as ‘auxiliary aids’ and states they are highly trained meaning they will not wander freely around the premises, will sit quietly with their owner and are unlikely to foul in a public place.

3.2 The EHRC state that disabled people who use assistance dogs quite often experience discrimination that prevents them from doing everyday things other people take for granted. As defined by the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful for a service provider to discriminate against a disabled person either directly or indirectly.

3.3 As disabled people rely on their assistance dogs to assist them with everyday tasks and would find it hard to manage without them it would be unlawful to refuse access to a disabled person accompanied by an assistance dog except in the most exceptional circumstances.

4. Practical arrangements on campus

4.1 The aim is to provide a welcoming and safe environment for assistance animals and their owners while ensuring the wellbeing and comfort of all staff, students and visitors. As such, for the purpose of assistance dogs, the university makes the following arrangements:

4.1.1 Toileting:

Brayford Campus - including the provision of a designated 'dog toilet' on campus and waste bins for the toilet needs of assistance dogs. Assistance dogs must be trained to use these facilities only. In the unlikely event of a dog fouling elsewhere it is the owner's responsibility to remove the waste.

4.1.2 Dining/Café areas: Disabled people accompanied by their assistance dogs have full access to all dining/café areas on all campuses. Assistance dogs are trained to lie quietly at their owner's feet when they sit down to eat. The chartered Institute of Environmental Health has determined the assistance dogs are unlikely to present a risk to hygiene.

4.1.3 Canine behaviour: Assistance dogs are specially selected for their temperament and undergo lengthy training to ensure they are always under the control of their owner and will not cause a nuisance to anyone. Their owners also receive full training to ensure that they can handle their dogs appropriately.

4.1.4 Allergy concerns/fear of dogs: The Equality Act (2010) states that organisations must make reasonable adjustments to policies to accommodate disabled people. This includes amending any 'no dogs' and 'no pets' policies to allow access for assistance dogs, and means it is permissible for assistance dogs to accompany their owners anywhere on campus, including all lectures and seminars. This may not be possible within the laboratory environments due to cross contamination. If a person is identified as having an allergy to, or extreme fear of dogs, every effort will be made to ensure that the person has minimal or no exposure to any assistance dogs.

5. University responsibilities

5.1 The Student Wellbeing Team will provide advice and guidance for students with assistance dogs and will, where necessary, provide students with a copy of this policy so they are fully aware of all procedures and responsibilities. The Student Wellbeing Team will liaise with all University stakeholders, including Estates and Academic departments as appropriate and will be the first point of contact should any issues arise.

6. Owner responsibilities

6.1 The assistance dog, or other animal, is the responsibility of its owner at all times. In the case of assistance dogs, the owner must ensure that the assistance dog is:

- With the owner and kept on a lead at all times when within University premises.
- Brayford Campus - Uses the designated 'dog toilet' provided for all toileting needs and does not foul the grounds.

- Has all its requirements met in respect of toileting, feeding, watering and veterinary attention;
- Is well-behaved at all times and causes no disruption;
- Wears a harness or other identifier, to clearly distinguish that the animal is working.

6.2 The assistance dog owner must also be able to evacuate in the event of a fire or emergency alarm safely and take their dog with them.

7. Dealing with complaints or concerns

7.1 As stated within the Equality and Human Rights Commission concerns raised regarding religious or cultural beliefs cannot be used as a defence against non-compliance and service providers should permit access to assistance dogs. However, it is understood that this is a sensitive issue and it is worth noting if any staff or students have a fear of dogs or a cultural fear/dislike of dogs, that the owner concerned will need to respond promptly and politely to any reasonable request to remove the dog from the area.

7.2 Concerns raised regarding denying access to people with assistance dogs because other people 'might' be allergic to dogs is likely to be seen as unlawful disability discrimination. The Equality Act 2010 states that service providers must make reasonable adjustments to policies for disabled people. However, if there is an identifiable person with an allergy to dogs then reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that there is minimal or no contact with dogs.

7.3 Anyone wishing to make a complaint should raise the concern with the Student Support Centre where this will be discussed and investigated, making every effort to resolve the matter informally. In the event that it cannot be resolved informally, the issue will be escalated and dealt with through the University Complaints Procedure.

7.4 Complaints about the operation of this policy should be made using the procedures set out in the University Complaints Procedure.

8 Related Policies and Guides

8.1 Student Accommodation Assistance Animals Policy

Appendix 1

Guidance on interacting appropriately with assistance dogs

Please bear the following points in mind when interacting with a person and their assistance dog:

1. It is polite to greet the owner first and very important to ask permission before petting/talking to the dog. Remember that the dog is working and it is vital that its attention is focussed on its owner as it can potentially be very dangerous for the owner if their dog is distracted.
2. Bear in mind that the owner is likely to be out for a reason and may not have time, or want, to engage in conversation about their dog. Positive comments are always welcome though.
3. Do not feed the dog - many assistance dogs are on very specific diets to help keep their working lives longer. They should only ever receive food and treats from their owner.
4. Be wary of giving the dog praise in passing. Praise is a reward for service animals and is provided by owners/handlers in a specific manner. If a person in passing says, "what a good dog", for example, they may have rewarded the dog unintentionally at an appropriate moment. When admiring a service/assistance dog, the guidance is to keep eyes averted, comments directed to the owner, and voice appropriately moderated i.e. avoid speaking in a tone of voice which could attract the dog's attention.

For further information and guidance, please contact the Student Wellbeing Team on 01522 886400 or email studentwellbeing@lincoln.ac.uk