

## Assistance dogs: Information for applicants and students

### Introduction

Solent University does not allow animals on to University premises, with the exception of:

- assistance dogs
- working dogs
- occasional visiting animals such as a farm petting zoo.

This policy applies to Solent University campus buildings including Solent halls of residence. Employers, placement providers and external organisations will have their own policies regarding assistance dogs. Students should consider these when enrolling on a course in terms of visits, placements and other compulsory or voluntary elements of their course. Assistance dog owners and staff are expected to refer and adhere to these policies when planning off-site activities.

### Definitions

**Assistance dog** - A dog who has been professionally trained and provided by an organisation that is part of Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) or an international equivalent to provide assistance to an individual with a disability.

**Therapy animal** - A dog or other animal owned and provided by a therapist as part of a treatment programme. A therapy animal is not an assistance animal as it does not assist with activities of daily living and does not need to accompany the person at all times.

**Emotional support animals (ESAs)** - A dog or other animal registered with the Emotional Support Animals Registry UK (ESAUK), following the provision of a medical letter and registration fee. ESAs are not legally recognised as assistance animals. ESAs are owned and trained by the owner.

**Working dogs** - A dog which provides other services, such as assisting with law enforcement. Such animals are permitted within University premises with the consent of the University.

### Conditions and further detail

Assistance dogs must be trained and accredited by a member of Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK, a coalition of Assistance Dog organisations which are listed below), or an equivalent organisation in another country, and have the yellow ID booklet from the ADUK member organisation. This ID booklet contains information about the owner and their dog, details of the training organisation who trained the dog and its owner. There are eight registered charities that form ADUK, these are:

- Canine Partners
- Dog A.I.D.
- Dogs for the Disabled
- Guide Dogs
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
- Medical Detection Dogs
- Support Dogs

- The Seeing Dogs Alliance

The University accepts owner-trained dogs if they have been assessed and accredited by either Dog A.I.D or the Assistance Dog Assessment Association. Owners are responsible for the cost of assessments.

Assistance dogs must have a formal identification in the form of branded jackets or lead slips.

The University must be satisfied that the animal is a registered assistance dog and relevant training has been provided. A copy of the yellow ID booklet from the ADUK member organisation must be provided to the University at enrolment and annually.

The owner must agree to abide by the assistance dog owner responsibilities below.

For further information on assistance dogs, see [Assistance Dogs UK](#)

### **Responsibilities of assistance dog owners**

Alongside the requirement of the Assistance Dog being accredited by ADUK, the owners must agree to take the following responsibilities:

- Owners must request permission from Solent University to bring their animal on to campus. In advance of enrolling at the University the owner must register the assistance dog with Access Solent.
- Owners must ensure that their assistance dog:
  - Has evidence of certification as an Assistance Dog by Assistance Dogs (UK) (<http://www.assistedogs.org.uk/>) or by an equivalent organisation in another country. Evidence of certification must be provided to the University at enrolment and annually;
  - is covered by full public liability insurance with an appropriate level of cover Evidence of insurance must be provided to the University at enrolment and annually;
  - is vaccinated and has health records certified by a registered vet. Certified health and vaccination records must be provided to the University at enrolment and annually.
- Assistance dogs must wear identification at all times when working, usually in the form of a collar or harness/jacket provided by the organisation/charity. Assistance dogs should be kept on a lead or in a harness at all times when on University premises. The dog must be under the owner's control at all times
- Owners are fully responsible for the behaviour of their dog on University premises, including not causing injury or damage to property or persons on University premises. Assistance dog owners are responsible and liable for any losses or damage to persons or University property arising from this policy.

- Unless it is directly related to the emergency assistance of their owner (for example, in the event of a seizure or to raise the alarm), noise and erratic behaviour (as perceived by the University) of an assistance dog is not acceptable on campus.
- Animal care is the owner's responsibility. In addition to regular health checks, and vaccinations the dog should be treated for fleas, ticks and worms. The dog should be neutered/spayed. The owner is responsible for cleanliness/grooming, feeding, watering, toileting and exercise. High standards of hygiene, in relation the assistance dog and associated waste must be maintained. Assistance dogs are expected to toilet in designated areas. Dog waste is to be disposed of appropriately. 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 are responsible for the clean-up of the animal's waste, consistent with reasonable capacity. In the unlikely event that the dog does foul outside of these designated areas, the owner must immediately report this to the Estates and Facilities helpdesk who will make arrangements for the area to be cleaned.
- Owners are responsible for all training needs of their assistance dogs and for the correct and safe performance of the assistance dog duties.
- Assistance dog owners must respect access restrictions established by the University on grounds of health and safety. Owners must ensure that assistance dogs do not enter staff and students' privately assigned spaces without permission.
- Preventing and correcting assistance dog's misbehaviour is the owner's responsibility. Owners must make sure that their assistance dogs do not cause harm or injury to others and damage to University property.

### **Working with Access Solent**

Applicants with a disability who utilise an assistance dog should contact Access Solent (the University disability service) prior to enrolling at the University. This will help applicants to prepare for university life and begin transition activities and to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for them, their assistance dog and other members of the campus community.

Applicants will need to register their dog with Access Solent. Owners will need to be able to provide information relating to the animal and its tasks/duties. Documentation must be provided to evidence the training completed by the animal and the training provider, health records, vaccination records and ongoing support/training by the assistance animal provider/organisation.

Applicants and their assistance dog should complete a pre-arrival site orientation with Access Solent, including a dog route safety check and a check on classrooms to be used during the course. This is to ensure there are no hazards and obstructions and that there is sufficient space for the assistance dog to remain within reach of owner. Reasonable adjustments to achieve this can be made. Site orientation also includes familiarization with the designated spending pens or relief area/s for the toilet needs of assistance dogs.

Owners are required to work with Solent University staff to share information with relevant parties in relation to the assistance dog being on University premises. This includes course teams and peers being notified of an assistance dog and key information relating to supporting the dog in its duties,

for example, by not distracting/petting/feeding it. Owners are required to inform Solent University as soon as reasonably possible, of any changes relating to their assistance dog.

### **Responsibilities of Solent University**

- Solent University accepts no responsibility for the ill health, loss or death of an assistance dog.
- Assistance dogs that are ill, in poor health, excessively unclean or unkempt may be required to be removed from University premises by their owner.
- Solent University will provide a designated area with a spending pen, for assistance dogs to use. This areas will be maintained by the University.
- Solent University assesses requests to bring an assistance dog onto University premises on a case by case basis.
- Solent University will regularly review assistance animals and the arrangements for them being on premises. This is to ensure the ongoing wellbeing of dogs, staff and students.

### **Conflict Situations**

#### **Removal of Assistance Dog**

The University reserves the right to remove or bar entry to an assistance dog when the University considers it poses a threat to the health & safety of others. Unresolved animal misbehaviour may also provide grounds for removal of the dog, after all reasonable measures have been taken to address this. Owners not complying with the removal of the dog will be in breach of the policy and subject to further action within University procedures.

#### **Restricted access**

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

#### **Conflicting disabilities**

Where an assistance dog poses adverse health risk to a/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 and appeals procedures.

### **Additional information**

The main hazards and concerns associated with having animals inside University premises include but are not limited to:

- Stalled or delayed evacuation of a building in an emergency situation
- Aggressive behaviour of animals
- Allergic reactions and transmission of disease
- Zoophobia - phobia of animals that causes distress/dysfunction in an individual's everyday life
- Slips, trips and falls
- Animal waste
- Damage to University property

It is acknowledged that these hazards also apply to University grounds, albeit to a lesser extent.

In order to minimise these risks:

- No animals should be left in parked vehicles on campus.
- Animals must not be brought onto campus or tied up outside buildings.

### **Assistance dogs from abroad**

There may be occasions where students 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 ADUK, this is acceptable.

### **Exclusions**

The University recognises the positive impact animals have on wellbeing and in providing emotional assistance, however, there is currently no recognised accreditation of emotional support animals to provide sufficient assurances for their inclusion in this guidance.