

Assistance Dogs Policy

Information for applicants, students, staff, and visitors to Solent University.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Solent University is committed to providing a welcoming and inclusive environment and values the diversity of its staff and students. Some disabled staff, students and visitors will need to use a trained Assistance Dog, and under the Equality Act 2010, Assistance Dogs are welcome on Solent University premises, provided this policy is followed.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all Solent University campus buildings including Warsash Maritime School facilities and Solent University Halls of Residence. Employers, placement providers and external organisations will have their own policies regarding Assistance Dogs. If Assistance Dog Users are required to attend external venues not controlled by Solent University, Assistance Dog Users must comply with the policies and terms and conditions required by that venue.
- 1.3 Any animals allowed to access University premises must have been appropriately trained in accordance with this policy and access must be discussed by the appropriate team within the University.
- 1.4 Solent University does not allow animals on to University premises, with the exception of:
 - a) Assistance Dogs;
 - b) Working Dogs; and
 - c) Occasional visiting animals such as a farm petting zoo.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Assistance Dog.** As defined by the Equality Act 2010, an Assistance Dog is:
- A dog which has been trained to guide a blind person;
 - A dog which has been trained to assist a deaf person;
 - A dog which has been trained by a prescribed charity to assist a disabled person who has a disability that consists of epilepsy or otherwise affects the person's mobility, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination or ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects;
 - A dog of a prescribed category which has been trained to assist a disabled person who has a disability (other than one falling within paragraph (c)) of a prescribed kind.
- 2.2 It is Solent University's preference that Assistance Dogs have been trained by an organisation that is a member of Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) or an international equivalent. A list of ADUK members can be found at: <https://www.assistancedogs.org.uk/about-aduk>.
- 2.3 Solent University recognises that Assistance Dogs may be trained by other organisations or charities, or even be owner-trained, however Assistance Dogs trained through these alternative channels must be trained to the same high standards as Assistance Dogs trained by ADUK members.
- 2.4 **Assistance Dog User.** The person who is using and is responsible for the Assistance Dog on University premises. This might not be the same person who is the legal owner of the Assistance Dog. The Assistance Dog User may be required to provide medical evidence of their condition which the Assistance Dog is supporting.
- 2.5 **Therapy Animal.** A dog or other animal owned and provided by a therapist as part of a treatment programme. Therapy Animals are not Assistance Dogs. Therapy Animals are not permitted on University premises.
- 2.6 **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 Assistance Dogs. Emotional Support Animals are not permitted on University premises.
- 2.7 **Working Dogs.** A dog which provides other services, such as assisting with law enforcement. Such animals are permitted on University premises with the consent of the University.

3. Conditions and further detail

- 3.1 The University must be satisfied that the Assistance Dog has been trained to the appropriate standard expected of Assistance Dogs under the Equality Act. Where an Assistance Dog has been trained by a member of ADUK, a copy of the yellow ID booklet from the ADUK member organisation should be provided at enrolment. For staff a copy of the ID booklet should be provided to your manager.
- 3.2 For the purposes of this policy, an Assistance Dog will demonstrate the following behaviours and characteristics:
- Does not freely wander around University premises;
 - Sits or lies quietly on the floor next to their Assistance Dog User;
 - Is unlikely to foul in a public place;
 - Does not cause nuisance to others.

4. Responsibilities of Assistance Dog User

4.1 Assistance Dog Users must agree to abide by the responsibilities below.

4.2 Assistance Dog Users must:

- a) Notify the University as early as possible in the admissions process if they have a disability which requires use of an Assistance Dog. This must be done as soon as possible as offers are conditional upon the University being able to implement the specific reasonable adjustments needed for students to complete their course. Appropriately trained Assistance Dogs will be allowed on campus. Further guidance relating to applicants and students can be found in the 'Applicants and Students' section below.
- b) If they are an employee of University, liaise with their manager in accordance with the staff reasonable adjustment policy.
- c) If they are a visitor to the University, liaise with the persons(s) responsible for their visit.
- d) Be able to confirm training has been completed to ADUK standards.

4.3 Assistance dog Users must ensure their dog:

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) Wears identification at all times when working, usually in the form of a collar or harness/jacket. Assistance Dogs should be kept on a lead or in a harness at all times when on University premises.
- d) Is under control at all times.

4.4 Assistance Dog Users are required to inform Solent University as soon as reasonably possible of any changes relating to their Assistance Dog.

4.5 Assistance Dog Users are fully responsible for the behaviour of their Assistance Dog while on University premises and are responsible and liable for any losses or damage to persons or University property arising from a breach of this policy.

4.6 Unless directly related to the emergency assistance of the Assistance Dog Users (for example, in the event of a seizure or to raise the alarm), noise and erratic behaviour of an Assistance Dog is not acceptable on campus.

4.7 Animal care is the Assistant Dog User's responsibility. In addition to regular health checks, and vaccinations Assistance Dogs should be treated for fleas, ticks and worms and other pests that pose a risk to human health. Assistance Dogs should be neutered/spayed. Assistant Dog Users must ensure that their Assistance Dog does not introduce parasites to University premises and may be liable for any costs in dealing with any resulting infestation should such an incident occur.

4.8 Assistance Dog Users are responsible for cleanliness/hygiene, feeding, watering, toileting, and exercise of their Assistance Dogs. Assistance Dog Users of Assistance Dogs that are ill, in poor health or excessively unclean may be required to remove their Assistance Dog from the premises.

4.9 Assistance Dogs are expected to toilet in designated areas. Assistance Dog waste is to be disposed of appropriately. Registered blind people are not required to clean up after their Assistance Dogs but their Assistance Dogs are expected to have received the appropriate training to avoid fouling on campus. Otherwise, Assistance Dog owners are responsible for the clean-up of their Assistance Dog's waste, consistent with reasonable capacity. In the unlikely event that the Assistance Dog does foul

outside of designated areas, the Assistance Dog Users must immediately report this to the Estates and Facilities helpdesk who will make arrangements for the area to be cleaned.

- 4.10 Assistance Dog Users are responsible for all training needs of their Assistance Dogs and for the correct and safe performance of their duties.
- 4.11 Assistance Dog Users must respect reasonable access restrictions established by the University on grounds of health and safety.

5. Applicants and students

- 5.1 Student applicants will need to register their Assistance Dog with Access Solent.
- 5.2 Applicants and their Assistance Dogs 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 the Assistance Dog User. Reasonable adjustments to achieve this can be made. Site orientation also includes familiarisation with the designated spending pens or relief area/s for the toilet needs of Assistance Dogs.

6. Responsibilities of Solent University

- 6.1 Solent University accepts no responsibility for the ill health, loss or death or other damage to an Assistance Dog unless caused by Solent University's negligence.
- 6.2 Solent University will share information with relevant parties in relation to the presence of the Assistance Dog on University premises. This includes notifying relevant course teams and peers of the Assistance Dog and providing key information relating to supporting the dog in its duties.
- 6.3 Solent University will provide a designated area with a spending pen, for Assistance Dogs to use. These areas will be maintained by the University.
- 6.4 Solent University will allow any persons to bring appropriately trained Assistance Dogs onto University premises.
- 6.5 Solent University will maintain a central record of Assistance Dog Users and their Assistance Dogs and will ensure that relevant teaching and non-teaching staff are informed.
- 6.6 Solent University will provide all reasonable support to Assistance Dog Users who are required to attend external venues as part of their course or employment duties to ensure that those venues are accessible for the Assistance Dog.

7. Responsibilities of the Solent University Community

- 7.1 Assistance Dogs are not pets and members of the University community should not:
 - a) Feed, pet or praise Assistance Dogs.
 - b) Distract or startle an Assistance Dog.
 - c) Interfere with the Assistance Dog's duties.
- 7.2 Failure to uphold these responsibilities may result in disciplinary action.

8. Conflict situations

8.1 Removal of an Assistance Dog.

- a) The University reserves the right to remove or bar entry to an Assistance Dog where the University considers it poses a threat to the health and safety of others. Unresolved animal misbehaviour may provide grounds for the removal of an Assistance Dog, after all reasonable measures have been taken to address this. Assistance Dog Users who fail to comply with this policy could be subject to further action within [University disciplinary procedures](#).

8.2 Restricted Access.

- a) The University may restrict the access of Assistance Dogs to certain areas for health and safety reasons. Restricted areas may include for example 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.

8.3 Conflict Disabilities.

- a) 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.

8.4 Religious or Cultural Conflicts.

- a) Religious or cultural beliefs cannot be used to prohibit Assistance Dogs and their Assistance Dog Users.

8.5 Complaints.

- a) Any concerns 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.

8.6 Appeals.

- a) Should an Assistance Dog User be refused permission to be accompanied by an Assistance Dog (or have approval subsequently withdrawn), the Assistance Dog User can appeal by following the University's complaints and appeals procedures.

9. Additional Information

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

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

9.2 It is acknowledged that these hazards also apply to University grounds, albeit to a lesser extent. To minimise these risks:

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

10. Assistance Dogs from Abroad

10.1 There may be occasions where students from other countries request that their Assistance Dog accompanies them. As long as the Assistance Dog is trained by a standard similar to that of one of the member organisations of ADUK, this is acceptable.

11. Exclusions

11.1 The University recognises the positive impact animals have on wellbeing and in providing emotional assistance. However, **currently only Assistance Dogs are expressly recognised** under equality legislation. ESAs and Therapy Animals, as well as assistance animals other than dogs, are **not** and therefore do not have the same access rights as Assistance Dogs.

12. Version control

Version No.	Comments	Author, Job Title, Department	Date
1.0	Initial draft, for approval by Equality and Wellbeing Committee.	Deputy Head Student Experience (Wellbeing), Student Experience	June 2023 (initial draft)