Westminster College Disability Services
Policy and Procedures for Service Animal

BACKGROUND

Service animals are animals trained to assist people with disabilities in the activities of normal living. The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) definition of service animals is “…any…animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items”. If an animal meets this definition, it is considered a service animal regardless of whether it has been licensed or certified by a state or local government or a training program.

The ADA and Westminster College administration allow service animals accompanying persons with disabilities to be on the Westminster College campus. A service animal must be permitted to accompany a person with a disability everywhere on campus. However, there are some places on campus that are not safe for service animals; these areas are discussed in greater detail on page 4.

This policy differentiates “service animals” from “pets and therapy animals”, describes types of service dogs, denotes campus locations that are off-limits to service animals, and sets behavioral guidelines for service animals.

Resources on service animals are listed at the end of this document.

DEFINITIONS

Laboratory Director: A person who is in charge of a laboratory. This person makes decisions on the nature of research, funding and laboratory related issues. A person who is managing a laboratory or who is in charge of a laboratory for a day is not a director.

Partner/Handler: A person with a service or therapy animal. A person with a disability is called a partner; a person without a disability is called a handler.

Pet: A domestic animal kept for companionship or pleasure. Pets are not permitted in college facilities. Under special circumstances, permission may be granted by a professor/instructor, dean or administrator for a pet to be in a campus facility for a specific reason at a specific time.

Service Animal: Any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. Service animals are usually dogs, but a few other animals have been presented as service animals (ex. monkeys). A service animal is sometimes called an assistance animal.

Team: A person with a disability, or a handler, and his or her service animal. The twosome works as a cohesive team in accomplishing the tasks of everyday living.

Therapy Animal: An animal with good temperament and disposition, and who has reliable, predictable behavior, selected to visit people with disabilities or people who are experiencing the frailties of aging as a therapy tool. The animal may be incorporated as an integral part of a treatment process. A therapy

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animal does not assist an individual with a disability in the activities of daily living. The therapy animal does not accompany a person with a disability all the time, unlike a service animal that is always with its partner. Thus, a therapy animal is not covered by laws protecting service animals and giving rights to service animals.

**Trainee**: An animal undergoing training to become a service animal. A trainee will be housebroken and fully socialized. To be fully socialized means the animal will not, except under rare occasions, bark, yip, growl, or make disruptive noises; will have a good temperament and disposition; will not show fear; will not be upset or agitated when it sees another animal; and will not be aggressive. A trainee will be under the control of the handler, who may or may not have a disability. If the trainee begins to show improper behavior, the handler will act immediately to correct the animal or will remove the animal from the premises.

**TYPES OF SERVICE DOGS**

**Guide Dog** is a carefully trained dog that serves as a travel tool by persons with severe visual impairments or who are blind.

**Hearing Dog** is a dog who has been trained to alert a person with significant hearing loss or who is deaf when a sound, e.g., knock on the door, occurs.

**Service Dog** is a dog that has been trained to assist a person who has a mobility or health impairment. Types of duties that the dog may perform include carrying, fetching, opening doors, ringing doorbells, activating elevator buttons, steadying a person while walking, helping a person up after the person falls, etc. Service dogs are sometimes called assistance dogs.

**Sig Dog** is a dog trained to assist a person with autism. The dog alerts the partner to distracting repetitive movements common among those with autism, allowing the person to stop the movement (e.g. hand flapping). A person with autism may have problems with sensory input and need the same support services from a dog that a dog might give to a person who is blind or deaf.

**Seizure Response Dog** is a dog trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder; how the dog serves the person depends on the person’s needs. The dog may stand guard over the person during a seizure, or the dog may go for help. A few dogs have learned how to predict a seizure and warn the person in advance.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS**

- Allow a service animal to accompany the partner at all times and everywhere on campus except where service animals are specifically prohibited.
- Do not pet a service animal; petting a service animal when the animal is working distracts the animal from the task at hand.
- Do not feed a service animal. The service animal may have specific dietary requirements. Unusual food or food at an unexpected time may cause the animal to become ill.
- Do not deliberately startle a service animal.
- Do not separate or attempt to separate a partner/handler from her or his service animal.
REQUIREMENTS OF SERVICE ANIMALS AND THEIR PARTNERS/ HANDLERS

Vaccination: The animal must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. Dogs must have had the general maintenance vaccine series, which includes vaccinations against rabies, distemper, and parvovirus. Other animals must have had the appropriate vaccination series for that type of animal. All vaccinations must be current. Dogs must wear a rabies vaccination tag.

Licensing: Salt Lake City requires dogs to wear an owner identification tag at all times. The dog must also wear a current rabies tag and dog license tag.

Health: The animal must be in good health. Animals to be housed in university housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian.

Leash: The animal must be on a leash at all times.

Under Control of Partner/Handler: The partner/handler must be in full control of the animal at all times. The care and supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of its partner/handler.

Cleanup Rule: The partner/handler must follow the Salt Lake City ordinance in cleaning up after the animal defecates. The ordinance requires the partner to:

1) Always carry equipment sufficient to clean up the dog’s feces whenever the dog and partner are off the partner’s property.
2) Never allow the dog to defecate on any property, public or private (except the partner’s own property), unless the partner immediately removes the waste.
3) Properly dispose of the feces by flushing or burial.
4) Individuals with disabilities who physically cannot clean up after their own service animal may not be required to pick up and dispose of feces.

WHEN A SERVICE ANIMAL CAN BE ASKED TO LEAVE

Disruption: The partner of an animal that is unruly or disruptive (e.g. barking, running around, bringing attention to itself) may be asked to remove the animal from college facilities/grounds. If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the partner may be told not to bring the animal into any college facility until the partner takes significant steps to mitigate the behavior. Mitigation can include muzzling a barking animal or refresher training for both the animal and the partner.

Ill Health: Service animals that are ill should not be taken into public areas. A partner with an ill animal may be asked to leave college facilities/grounds.

Uncleanliness: Partners with animals that are unclean, noisome and/or bedraggled may be asked to leave college facilities/grounds. If the animal in question usually is well groomed, consider the animal tidy even though its spring coat is uneven and messy-appearing or it has become wet from weather or weather-related incidents.
AREAS OFF-LIMITS TO SERVICE ANIMALS

Teaching Laboratories: The natural organisms carried by dogs and other animals may negatively affect the outcome of experiments. At the same time, the chemicals and/or organisms used in experiments may be harmful to service animals.

Mechanical Rooms/ Custodial Closets: Mechanical rooms, such as boiler rooms, facility equipment rooms, electric closets, elevator control rooms and custodial closets are off-limits to service animals. The machinery and/or chemicals in these rooms may be harmful to animals.

Areas Where Protective Clothing is Necessary: Any room where protective clothing is worn is off-limits to service animals.

Areas Where There is a Danger to the Service Animal: Any room, including a classroom, where there are sharp metal cuttings or other sharp objects on the floor or protruding from the surface; where there is hot material on the floor; where there is a high level of dust; where there is moving machinery is off-limits to animals.

EXCEPTIONS

A laboratory director may open his or her laboratory to all service animals.

A laboratory director or instructor in a classroom or teaching laboratory with moving equipment may grant permission to an individual animal/partner team to enter the classroom or teaching laboratory with moving machinery. Admission for each team will be granted or denied on a case-by-case basis. The final decision shall be made based on the nature of research or machinery and the best interest of the animal. Example: The machinery in a classroom may have moving parts at a height such that the tail of a large dog could easily be caught in it—this is a valid reason for keeping large dogs out. However, a very small hearing dog may be shorter than any moving part and therefore may be considered for admission to the classroom.

Access to other designated off-limits areas may be granted on a case-by-case basis

To be Granted an Exception: A student who wants her or his animal to be granted admission to an off-limits area should contact his/her Disability Advisor. An employee should contact the Director of Human Resources. Visitors should contact the Disability Resource Coordinator in the START Center in Carleson Hall.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

In the event of an emergency, the Emergency Response Team (ERT) that responds should be trained to recognize service animals and to be aware that the animal may be trying to communicate the need for help. The animal may become disoriented from the smell or smoke in a fire or laboratory emergency, from sirens or wind noise, or from shaking and moving ground. The partner and/or animal may be confused from the stressful situation. The ERT should be aware that the animal is trying to be protective and, in its confusion, is not to be considered harmful. The ERT should make every effort to keep the animal with its partner. However, the ERT’s first effort should be toward the partner; this may necessitate leaving an animal behind in certain emergency evacuation situations.
GRIEVANCES

Any partner dissatisfied with a decision made concerning a service animal should follow the applicable Westminster ADA Accommodation Requests and Appeal/Grievance Procedures.

CLARIFYING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: How can I know if the animal is a service animal and not just a pet?

A: Some handlers carry a certification from the school that trained the animal, but certification cannot be required. Many service animals will be wearing a harness, cape or backpack, but some will have only a leash. It may be possible to discern that an animal is a service animal from the partner’s disability, but some disabilities are not visible. You may have to rely on the verbal statement of the partner/handler.

You may exercise your judgment concerning whether the partner’s statements about the training and functions of the animal make it reasonable to think that the animal is a service animal. The following factors can be used in evaluating the credibility of the partner’s statements.

- The nature of the individual’s disability (when the disability is visible)
- The training the animal is said to have received
- The ability of the animal to behave properly in public places
- The functions the animal is said to perform for the individual
- The animal is fully controlled by the partner at all times

Q: What if the handler does not appear to have a disability?

A: A person does not have to have a disability to be training a dog for a service dog-training program. A non-disabled person may be caring for the service animal at the request of the disabled partner. (The animal may be of a breed or have a personality type that requires a significant or constant presence by a person to maintain the level and quality of training the animal has received.) A handler may be transporting the animal to a disabled partner. A service animal being transported or temporarily cared for retains rights granted to service animals. The partner may indeed have a disability, but the disability is not visible. You may ask the partner how the animal is assisting her or him.

Q: What if an animal acts out of control?

A: Service animals are trained to behave properly in public settings. For example, a properly trained service animal will remain at its owner’s feet. It does not run freely around, bark or growl repeatedly at other persons or animals, bite or jump on people, or urinate or defecate inside buildings. An animal that engages in such disruptive behavior shows that it has not been successfully trained to function as a service animal in public settings. Therefore, you are not required to treat it as a service animal, even if the animal is one that performs an assistive function for a person with a disability. You may ask the partner to remove a disruptive or unruly animal. However, you should consider available means of mitigating the effect of an animal’s behavior that are acceptable to the individual with a disability (e.g., muzzling a dog that barks frequently) that would permit the animal to remain. You may not make assumptions about how
a particular animal is likely to behave based on past experience with other animals. Each situation must be considered individually. You may inquire, however, whether a particular animal has been trained to behave properly in a public setting.

Q: What else should I know about behavior?

A: The service animal should be unobtrusive, not solicit attention, pull or strain on its leash (unless pulling a wheelchair), and not exhibit aggressive or fearful behavior. Aggressive behavior is growling, biting, raising hackles, baring teeth, etc. However, these examples are not always indicative of aggression. For example, growls are means of communication to dogs and sometimes that communication is valuable and appropriate. A curled lip that exposes the teeth can also indicate the presence of distasteful odors or that something offensive has been picked up on the lip, tooth or gums. It is entirely appropriate for a dog to display a protective or fearful response in certain contexts.

CAMPUS CONTACTS

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