



# ANIMALS ON CAMPUS

**Health, Safety and Compliance Guidance**

**December 2025**

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# Introduction

The University of Portsmouth values the diversity of its staff and students and is committed to providing and maintaining an environment that is welcoming for all. In line with the Equality Act 2010, the university works to identify the support needed and make reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities to promote and advance equality and provide a safe and inclusive place for work and study.

Assistance dogs are fully protected under the Equality Act 2010 and are allowed into all public spaces including cafés and restaurants. The university welcomes assistance dogs onto university-owned or controlled premises (including halls of residence), but does not permit any other dogs, animals or pets.

Emotional support dogs, therapy dogs or any other support animals are not protected in the same way under UK law and therefore will not be permitted. However, as part of an event, they may be considered subject to the appropriate assessments and documentation.

## Assistance Dogs Procedures

### Expectations of Assistance Dogs on University Premises

Where and when assistance dogs are on university premises, the following expectations of the assistance dog and handler should be applied:

- There is a provision of clean fresh water readily available to the assistance dog.
- The assistance dog must be toilet trained. Handlers are responsible for disposing of their dog's waste. The exception to this is where the owner is registered blind.
- If the assistance dog does foul inside university premises, the handler is responsible for initially cleaning up the waste and disposing of it appropriately. The incident should then be reported to Estates and Campus Services so that arrangements can be made to clean and sanitize the area as required.
- The assistance dog should be kept on a lead when moving around university premises.
- When not actively assisting their handler, the assistance dog should lie or sit quietly on the floor in close proximity to their handler.

- If the dog is wet or muddy from travelling to and from university premises, they should be dried as soon as possible upon entering the building. In the event of wet flooring, as a result of a wet assistance dog, this should be reported to Estates and Campus Services so that arrangements can be made to clean and dry the area as required.
- The dog should be healthy, uninjured and should not have any medical conditions that may increase risks to others whilst on university premises.
- There should be a means to alert others of the presence of an assistance dog on university premises and the type of assistance they are providing. This should include identification of the assistance dog and visibility of the controls in place. If significant risks are identified, a risk assessment should be implemented.
- The handler, or others on university premises, should not be playing with the assistance dog during working hours including during lectures. However, it is accepted that toys may be brought onto university premises to help the assistance dog settle into unfamiliar surroundings.
- The positioning of bedding and water for the assistance dog should be done in a way which does not cause unnecessary obstructions or increase risks to others in the area.
- The assistance dog should not be acting aggressively towards others within university premises, or when transiting between university premises. Should staff or students feel that an assistance dog poses a threat to the health and safety of others, this should be reported to the Health, Safety and Compliance Team and the university may request that the assistance dog is removed from university premises.
- The assistance dog should not be leaving the handlers side unless a situation calls for it to due to its work in assisting their handler, or for other health, safety or wellbeing reasons.

## Reasonable Adjustments

The following reasonable adjustments may be required for staff or students with an assistance dog on university premises:

- Additional breaks from work or study to allow for toileting of the assistance dog.
- Additional time during lunch breaks to allow the handler to have the same lunch provision as their colleagues including tending to welfare requirements for the assistance dog.

- Suitable access to all areas required by the assistance dog is provided in order for them to carry out their duties for their handler. In situations where access to food preparation areas or environments where there are hazardous substances is required, a risk assessment must be completed to come to a reasonable, safe and workable solution.
- Where it is identified that staff or students have allergies or fear of dogs, provisions should be put in place so that they have minimal to no contact with assistance dogs. This includes ensuring areas where assistance dogs are present have sufficient ventilation.
- Sufficient information and instruction should be provided to staff and students on how to interact with assistance dogs.

## Interaction with Assistance Dogs

Interacting with the assistance dog without permission may place their handler at an increased risk, as it may distract the dog from the assistance task required. To prevent this risk, permission should be sought from the handler before touching their assistance dog. Some handlers may grant permission and offer advice on how best to interact, whereas others may have strict no-petting rules.

Distractions may interfere with the handler delivering a command to their assistance dog. To support those who require an assistance dog, consider doing the following:

- Do not treat the assistance dog as if they are a pet, such as praising them when they have completed a task for their handler.
- Attempting to get the dogs attention whilst they are working in any way without permission from the handler is unacceptable and will distract the dog from performing their duties.
- Do not feed assistance dogs. They are trained to ignore food in their working environment. Offering food can distract the dogs from their duties, and some foods may make them sick.
- If a person with an assistance dog appears to need help, ask how you can help them rather than taking control of the assistance dog, as this may hinder their ability to assist their handler.

## Assistance Dog Insurance

There is no legal requirement for the handler to have insurance for their assistance dog. However, as public liability insurance protects the handler if the assistance dog causes accidental injury or damage to another person's property, the university recommends that handlers have this type of insurance and that this is provided during the application process.

## Assistance Dog Registration Process

Under the Equality Act 2010, the university has a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that individuals who use an assistance dog can access the premises.

Permission to bring an assistance dog onto campus is not required. The registration process is not intended for owners to seek approval or provide proof of their assistance dog, but rather to help the University manage any associated risks as far as is reasonably practicable.

To support this, the university has implemented an [online registration process](#). Completing the registration form enables the university to put suitable and sufficient controls in place, and to identify where additional measures or reasonable adjustments may be required to support individual circumstances.

## Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans

Staff or students bringing an assistance dog onto university premises should complete a [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan \(PEEP\)](#) to ensure their safe evacuation in the event of a fire alarm activation. Please contact the [Health, Safety and Compliance Team](#) to arrange a PEEP.

# Associated Documents

## Legislation

The relevant sets of legislation are:

- [The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#)
- [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)

## University Documents

This Guidance should be read in conjunction with the following University documents:

- [Accident/Incident Reporting and Investigation Arrangement](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement](#)
- [Animals on Campus Arrangement](#)
- [Risk Assessment Guidance](#)
- [Assistance Dog Registration Form](#)
- [Reporting of an Accident/Incident or Near Miss/Undesired Circumstance/hazard](#)
- [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan \(for staff\)](#)
- [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan \(for students\)](#)
- [Assistance Dog Application Form](#)