



## Disability & Testing Services

### Service Animal Policy

#### Purpose

While Service Animals (SA) and Emotional Support Animals (ESA) both are commonly used by individuals with disabilities, they each possess their own set of policies, rules, and restrictions. Failure to abide could result in violation of Oregon Tech Student Code of Conduct and result in the removal of the animal from campus.

This policy is specific to Service Animals, which are highly trained animals who perform work/tasks for their owner's disability. **ESAs are not Service Animals and are not evaluated or treated in the same manner.** Please see the Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Policy for specific information related to ESAs.

#### Service Animal Definition

The ADA defines a Service Animal as:

"[...] a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. The rule states that other animals, whether wild or domestic, do not qualify as service animals. Dogs that are not trained to perform tasks that mitigate the effects of a disability, including dogs that are used purely for emotional support, are not service animals.

#### Types of Service Animals:

- Guide dog is a carefully trained dog that serves as a travel tool by persons who are blind or have severe visual impairment.
- 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/Assistance dog is a dog that has been trained to assist a person who has a mobility or health impairment. Types of duties 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.

- Sig dog is a dog trained to assist a person with autism. The dog alerts the owner 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. In some cases, these dogs have learned to predict a seizure and warn the person in advance.

## Registration of Service Animal

Students with a Service Animal ("SA"), if not living in campus housing, are not required to register with Disability & Testing Services (DTS). However, registration is recommended so that we are aware and can provide support if/when necessary. If the SA will be residing in campus housing, DTS will need to know so that we can communicate with Housing & Residence Life office staff. Please see the section below on the registration process.

## Allowed Questions for Student

In compliance with the law, you may be asked by university employees the following one or two questions when bringing your SA into a space otherwise not permitting animals (ex. campus buildings, classroom, etc.):

1. *"Is the animal required because of a disability?"*
2. *"What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?"*

If you encounter any other questions or difficulties regarding your SA, please contact our office immediately so that we can assist you. You can email us at: [access@oit.edu](mailto:access@oit.edu).

## Student Responsibility for Service Animal

The student holds full responsibility for their SA. If a Service Animal must be left under the supervision or control of fellow students, staff, faculty, or otherwise, the owner will need to make the necessary arrangements ahead of time.

- A SA must not display any behaviors or noises that are disruptive to others such as barking, whining, growling or rubbing against people while waiting in lines. This includes aggressive behaviors.
- All SAs must be potty trained and remain under the control of the owner. The owner holds the sole responsibility for cleaning up after the SA.
- The SA must always be on a leash in public spaces; unless a leash interferes with the work or task the dog needs to provide for their owner. If a leash interferes with the task being performed, the SA will need to be under voice control.
- Any expenses resulting from damage to property created by an SA will be the responsibility of the owner.
- The SA must not initiate contact with someone without the owner's direct permission. Furthermore, others should not initiate contact with an SA without permission from the owner. (A vest is helpful to communicate this to other people but is not required.)
- SAs are subject to local vaccination, registration, and licensure requirements that are set in place for all dogs in the region.

## Service Animal Requirements

- Service Animals must be adult dogs, but there are no breed restrictions under the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). In some rare cases, miniature horses have been trained to be service animals, but no other animal types fall under the service animal category.
- Oregon Tech staff is not permitted to ask an individual to provide proof or documentation pertaining to a Service Animal. Oregon Tech staff is also not permitted to ask for demonstration of a trained task pertaining to an individual's disability. Service Animal vests or other forms of identification are not required.
- The Service Animal must be as unobtrusive as possible.

- A Service Animal must not display any behaviors or noises that are disruptive to others such as barking, whining, growling or rubbing against people while waiting in lines. This includes aggressive behaviors.
- The Service Animal must not block an aisle or passageway. The Service Animal must never be more than 12 inches from the owner's leg or side of the chair.

## Registration Process

Below is the process if wanting to register your SA with the DTS office:

1. The student submits an application through Access Information Management (AIM) system; available to all students via TechWeb ("Accommodations – Student").
  - a. If the student is only registering their SA, they should select the application specific to "Service Animal Registration"
  - b. As part of the application, the student will need to:
    - i. attach/upload documentation supporting the therapeutic need for an ESA, if available
    - ii. provide information about the animal including name, type, breed, size, age, image, veterinary records showing vaccination history (if applicable); vaccination records are required prior to an ESA moving into university housing and also to continue living in university housing.
2. The student will not need to meet with their DTS Advisor who will review their application, documentation, and records. The student will have an opportunity to answer any questions their Advisor might have and also ask any additional questions they may have about the accommodation.
3. The DTS Advisor will present the information provided by the student and their notes and the DTS office will collaboratively determine if the student's request is reasonable and approved, or if additional information/documentation is needed.

## Exclusion of Service Animals

There are instances when it may be considered unsafe for animals in such

places as medical facilities, laboratories, mechanical rooms or any other place where the safety of the Service Animal, owner, or other students and staff may be threatened. Additionally, there may be instances in which the Service Animal's involvement in an environment will compromise the educational activity taking place such as those taking place in sterile areas. The determination of these instances in which a Service Animal may be excluded from certain environments is accomplished through a collaborative process involving faculty, the student/owner, and Disability Services staff. This will be dependent upon the nature of the facility, laboratory, room, and/or activity in question, the nature of the individual's disability, and the task that the Service Animal is performing for the student. When it is determined unsafe for the Service Animal to be in one of these areas, reasonable accommodation will be provided to assure the student equal access to the activity. The alternative reasonable accommodations will be determined through the same collaborative process.

If the Service Animal is able to wear protective equipment in one of these areas, this can often be a solution that will allow them to remain in the environment. In this case, the owner will be responsible for purchasing any and all equipment.

## **SAs and On-Campus Housing**

An exclusion of all policies that prohibit animals from the Oregon Tech campus and within on-campus housing must be provided for dogs who meet the ADA definition of a Service Animal.

## **Emergency Situations**

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

Oregon Tech is not responsible for the emergency response facilitated by outside entities or first responders.

## **Conflicting Disabilities**

It is common for persons to have a disability that precipitates an allergic reaction to animals. Persons making an asthmatic/allergy/medical complaint are to be directed to make that complaint with the Disability Services Office. Action will be

taken to consider the needs of both persons and to resolve the problem as efficiently and expeditiously as possible. This will be done through a collaborative process between the students involved, Disability Services staff, and Housing and Residence Life. In the event this cannot be resolved, the institution will invoke first-person rights.

**First Person Rights:** If the person uses a Service Animal and is registered in a course or present in a college area, and another person arrives with serious allergies, you cannot remove the first person to accommodate the second person. (Disability Compliance for High Education (July 1996) Vol. 1, No. 12, p. 4 & 5).

**Have a question? Email us at [access@oit.edu](mailto:access@oit.edu)**