



Assistance and Emotional Support Animals Policy: Students

Responsible Office	Student Wellbeing Services
Responsible Officer	Head of Student Wellbeing Services
Approval Authority	Senior Leadership Group
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Amended (if applicable)	
Related Procedures	Mental Health Framework Support to Study Procedure
Related University Policies	Student Complaints Policy
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1.Purpose

- 1.1 This policy is designed to provide some general information and guidance regarding assistance animals and emotional support animals on Bath Spa University campuses and in University-managed student accommodation. It should be noted that students living in University accommodation are not permitted to have any pets. This policy relates to assistance animals who are formally accredited and emotional support animals (who are not accredited and are only permitted in exceptional circumstances).
- 1.2 Bath Spa University is committed to providing a welcoming and inclusive environment and values the diversity of its staff and students. The University recognises the important role played by assistance animals and emotional support animals, which provide valuable, even life-changing, assistance for disabled people.
- 1.3 The policy outlines the following key areas:
 - The definition and types of assistance animals;
 - The definition and types of emotional support animals;
 - The practical arrangements on campus;
 - University responsibilities;
 - Owner responsibility;
 - Dealing with complaints or concerns.

2.Definition and types of assistance animal

- 2.1 For the purpose of this policy, an assistance animal is one, which has been specifically trained to assist disabled people (including physical and/or psychological disabilities) and has been duly accredited by the appropriate organisation. For example, an assistance dog will be accredited by one of the organisations registered as a member of Assistance Dogs (UK) or an equivalent organisation in another country.
- 2.2 Assistance dogs trained by members of Assistance Dogs (UK) have formal identification (coloured coat and collar tag) and have been granted certification by the Department of Health. As such, they are permitted to accompany their owners at all times and in all places within the UK (unless, in the view of the University, there is a genuine health and safety risk).
- 2.3 The University reserves the right to refuse access:
 - To a dog that is not qualified by one of the five membership organisations of Assistance Dogs (UK); or
 - To a dog that is from another nation, which does not meet the full membership criteria of the established international assistance dog

organisations – Assistance Dogs International, Assistance Dogs Europe, International Guide Dog Federation – or other such international bodies as may from time to time be recognised; or

- For any other good reason.

2.4 Types of assistance dogs include:

- Guide Dogs - assist people who are blind or visually impaired;
- Hearing Dogs - assist people who are deaf or hearing impaired;
- Support Dogs/Dogs for the Disabled – a Support Dog can be trained in a wide variety of practical tasks which their owner may find difficult or impossible; for example:
 - opening and closing doors;
 - calling an ambulance;
 - picking up objects;
 - assisting with dressing and undressing;
 - accompanying their owner while shopping etc.;
 - acting as a physical support;
 - raising the alarm;
 - operating control buttons;
 - switching lights on and off;
 - carrying items;
 - loading and unloading the washing machine;
 - fetching the telephone and other items.

3. Practical arrangements on campus

- 3.1 The University aims to provide a welcoming and safe environment for assistance animals and their owners while ensuring the well-being and comfort of all staff, students and visitors. As such, for the purpose of assistance dogs, the university makes the following arrangements.
- 3.2 Toileting: the provision of ‘Spending Pens’ and waste bins for the toilet needs of assistance dogs. The dogs are trained to use these facilities only. In the unlikely event of a dog fouling elsewhere it is the owner’s responsibility to remove the waste.
- 3.3 Dining/Café areas: Disabled people accompanied by their assistance dogs have full access to all dining/café areas on all campuses. Assistance dogs are trained to lie quietly at their owner’s feet when they sit down to eat. The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health has determined that assistance dogs are unlikely to present a risk to hygiene.
- 3.4 Canine behaviour: Assistance dogs are specially selected for their temperament, and undergo lengthy training to ensure they are always under the control of their owner, and will not cause a nuisance to anyone. Their

owners also receive full training to ensure that they can handle their dogs appropriately.

- 3.5 Allergy concerns/fear of dogs: the Equality Act (2010) states that organisations must make reasonable adjustments to policies to accommodate disabled people. This includes amending any 'no dogs' and 'no pets' policies to allow access for assistance dogs, and means it is permissible for assistance dogs to accompany their owners anywhere on campus, including all lectures and seminars. If a person is identified as having an allergy to, or extreme fear of dogs, every effort will be made to ensure that the person has minimal or no exposure to any assistance dogs.

4. University responsibilities

4.1 Student Accommodation

Student Accommodation will ask all applicants if they would be prepared to live in an accommodation block where an assistance dog is present. This early survey, at point of application, will ensure the University has a comprehensive level of data prior to the allocation of rooms. If an applicant and their assistance dog (in any given academic year), will be attending Bath Spa University, we will:

- Inform other allocated students that an assistance dog will be present in their residences, and provide guidance on acceptable interaction with the dog (Appendix 1); and
- All applicants will be given the opportunity to amend their preference to live alongside an assistance dog; and
- We will undertake a final check prior to signing of the licence agreement to check all applicants do not have an allergy to dogs, or an extreme fear.

4.2 Student Wellbeing Services, SWS

SWS will provide advice and guidance for students with assistance dogs. It will provide students with a copy of this policy so they are fully aware of all procedures and responsibilities. SWS will liaise with all University stakeholders, including Accommodation, Estates and Academic departments as appropriate and will be the first point of contact should any issues arise.

5. Owner responsibilities

5.1 The assistance dog is the responsibility of its owner at all times and must ensure that it:

- is kept on a lead at all times when walking on university premises;
- uses the Spending Pens provided for all toileting needs and does not foul the grounds;
- has all its requirements met in respect of toileting, feeding, watering and veterinary attention;
- does not enter any other student rooms, in any university accommodation, without prior consent;
- does not enter any shared bathroom facilities in any university accommodation;
- is well-behaved at all times and causes no disruption.

6. Dealing with complaints or concerns

6.1 Complaints from assistance dog owners

Any students with assistance dogs wishing to make a complaint about the treatment of themselves or the dog should report the incident to Student Wellbeing Services in the first instance. SWS is responsible for investigating the complaint, making every effort to resolve the matter informally. In the event that it cannot be resolved informally, the issue will be escalated and dealt with through the University's Students Complaints Procedure, or other applicable policy.

6.2 Complaints about assistance dogs

Anyone wishing to make a complaint about an assistance dog should raise the concern with Student Wellbeing Services in the first instance. As above, every effort will be made to resolve the matter informally. In the event that it cannot be resolved informally, the issue will be escalated and dealt with through the University's Student Complaints Procedure, or other applicable policy.

7. Emotional support/ therapy animals

7.1 The University's approach to emotional support animals

Bath Spa University recognises the positive impact animals have on wellbeing and in providing emotional assistance. There is currently no recognised accreditation of emotional support animals. The University therefore reserves the right to refuse access to any animal at its discretion that is not accredited (as detailed in section 2.3 above). However, in

exceptional circumstances and when there is clear medical evidence, consideration will be given to requests by students to bring emotional support/ therapy animals to University.

7.2 Definition of emotional support or therapy animal

A therapy animal or emotional support animal is an animal that provides emotional support to help alleviate identified symptoms or effects of disability or mental health condition. A therapy animal does not necessarily aid with mobility and does not assist with practical daily tasks.

Consideration can only be given to small animals that can be appropriately, safely and hygienically kept in a student's bedroom, such as small rodents or birds.

7.3 Process for emotional support/ therapy animals (animals that are not registered under ADUK)

Students who wish to bring a therapy animal on campus must:

- be registered with the Accessibility Team in Student Wellbeing Services
- provide appropriate medical evidence to support the request to have a therapy animal on campus, which should include information about the support the animal will provide
- complete the animal application form (Appendix 1) and if approved;
- complete the conduct agreement (Appendix 2)
- arrange public liability insurance (through pet insurance) and provide a copy of the policy to the Accessibility Team

7.4 Once the applicant student has completed the above steps Student Wellbeing Services will take the following action:

- Include this information on the student's Academic Access Plan
- Consider the student's application as part of the priority housing process
- Consider if bringing a therapy/ emotional support animal onto campus and into Halls is a reasonable adjustment or if the student can be supported effectively through other services
- Consider the possible impact of the request on other members of the University community such as significant disruption to services and allergies
- Consider the welfare requirements of the animal

- Consult with students living in close proximity to the applicant student (e.g. in the same flat).

7.5 The Accessibility team will make a decision on the request. If the student is unhappy with the decision, a review can be requested by writing to the Head of Student Wellbeing Services. If there is still a disagreement students have the right to appeal.

8. Complaints or concerns

8.1 Complaints from assistance or emotional support animal owners

Any students with assistance or emotional support animals wishing to make a complaint about the treatment of themselves or the animals should report the incident to the Head or Deputy Head of Student Wellbeing Services in the first instance. They are responsible for investigating the complaint, making every effort to resolve the matter informally. In the event that it cannot be resolved informally, the issue will be escalated and dealt with through the University's Student Complaints Procedure, or other applicable policy.

8.2 Complaints about assistance or emotional support animals or their owners

Anyone wishing to make a complaint about an assistance or emotional support animal or their owner should raise the concern with the Head or Deputy Student Wellbeing Services in the first instance. Every effort will be made to resolve the matter informally. In the event that it cannot be resolved informally, the issue will be escalated and dealt with through the University's Student Complaints Procedure or other applicable policy.

Appendix 1

Assistance and Emotional Support Animals Application Form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/UkkhztJU1G>

Appendix 2

Emotional Support and Therapy Animal Conduct Agreement

This Agreement is part of the process outlined in the Assistance and Emotional Support Animals Policy

To bring my animal into my University residence on campus I agree to the following and have read and understood the **Assistance and Emotional Support Animals Policy**:

- My animal remains my responsibility at all times
- I will ensure that I have pet insurance that has public liability cover. I will provide evidence of this each year
- I will keep my animal in my bedroom at all times
- I will ensure that my animal is healthy, that they have regular treatments and vaccinations as appropriate. I will take veterinary advice with regard to their welfare
- If I need to leave the campus for more than one night, I will take my therapy animal with me
- I will inform the Accessibility team as soon as possible if there are any complaints or negative comments made about my animal
- If my animal damages any University property I will pay for any repairs/replacements
- I will ensure that my animal is appropriately fed, watered and looked after at all times. This includes ensuring that my room remains clean and hygienic

I also agree that:

- I will not take my animal into any University or Students' Union owned buildings except my own residence.
- If it is not possible to manage a situation where someone is upset, anxious or scared of my animal in any other way, I will discuss alternative arrangements with Student Wellbeing Services

I understand that if I am not able to comply with this agreement I may not be able to bring my animal onto campus.

Signed:

Date: