



## Animals on Campus Guidance Note

### 1. Introduction

The University recognises that there may on occasions be a desire, or requirement, for animals to be present within the University. This note seeks to provide some guidance on how access can be managed in a way that takes account of the needs of all campus users. It is intended as a guide but seeks to allow some flexibility to allow situations to be managed sensibly and on an individual basis, where required.

As a general principle, animals should not be brought into University buildings without permission or operational reason. Some reasons why animals may legitimately need to be within University buildings include:

- Animals that form part of the University activity on that site. (e.g. farm animals, veterinary teaching animals)
- Animals being brought into a building for veterinary treatment or investigation.
- Animals involved in specific scientific studies or teaching activity.
- Animals brought into a building under a prearranged and agreed protocol, for example, as an animal-assisted education or therapy session.
- Working animals that are required to perform a specific role, in that location. (e.g. sheepdogs, Police dogs, search dogs.)
- Assistance animals providing specific physical support to their owners. (This will almost exclusively be assistance dogs) (see further definitions below)

### 2. Assistance Dogs

**The University recognises that some people rely on an assistance animal for support with physical tasks and is fully committed to allowing open access for such dogs except where there is a genuine biosecurity or safety risk.**

**There is very limited legal definition of what constitutes an assistance dog.** Typically, a key role of an assistance animal – typically dogs - is that it must be specially trained to help people by carrying out specific physical tasks. The most typical type of assistance dog is a guide dog, used by those with sight loss. However, assistance dogs may be trained to help people with hearing difficulties, epilepsy, diabetes, physical mobility problems and more. Medical alert dogs are considered to fall within this definition.

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to refuse access to a disabled person accompanied by an assistance dog except in the most exceptional circumstances. An assistance dog is legally permitted to accompany its client, owner, or partner, at all times and in all places, within the United Kingdom with only a very few exceptions where there is a genuine health and safety risk.

Assistance dogs may therefore be taken into most areas of the University including catering outlets, sports facilities, the library and most teaching areas. They could potentially be excluded from some types of laboratory and would not normally be permitted within animal units and biological containment labs without prior approval. This is due to potential biosecurity issues, or health and safety issues within the specific unit but should not be interpreted as a blanket ban; they may only be excluded where this is fully justifiable and proportionate based on an assessment of risk by local management, supported, if necessary, by advice from the Safety and Environmental Protection Service.

### 3. Emotional support/therapy animals

At present, emotional support animals are not formally classed as assistance animals, although the University does recognise that there is considerable national debate on their future status. We will continue to monitor legal developments in this area. At present, our policy is that we do not regard emotional support or therapy animals as assistance animals and so they do not enjoy the same legal right of access.

**Such animals will generally not be allowed within communal areas of University buildings other than in very limited circumstances and where the need for this is supported by evidence of medical need.** Communal areas include lectures, seminars, study areas catering outlets, sport facilities and the library. When present in communal areas, dogs should be kept on a lead, as a courtesy to other building users who may be nervous of animals. Students who feel that they require access for a support animal for should discuss their situation confidentially with the Disability Service who can conduct a needs assessment and, if appropriate, advise on provision of suitable medical evidence. Staff should approach their line manager and may also discuss their situation confidentially with their HR contact and should be prepared to provide evidence in support of their case, normally via HR.

The University regards it as incumbent on the owner of an animal that is not a registered assistance dog to demonstrate that it is fulfilling a legitimate and essential support need for the individual comparable to that of a guide dog, hearing dog or medical alert dog. Where such a need can be shown, comparable access rights will normally be allowed. A key test will be whether the owner has a physical need for the animal to be present to perform some necessary function.

### 4. Companion animals

The University recognises that companion animals often provide great support and comfort to many people and is sympathetic to this. However, it is important to balance that against the right of other campus users to work and study in an environment that they find comfortable, healthy and safe. Many people may be physically uncomfortable around animals, however well behaved those animals may be. There are also potential issues of allergy and hygiene that those who do not own animals may find unacceptable within their working environment. In some cases, animals may be disruptive either in normal circumstances or, potentially, in an emergency.

The default position is therefore that companion animals should not be brought into the **communal** areas of the University (see examples in the previous section) unless there are demonstrably good

reasons for this. This will generally mean that that animal must be fulfilling some recognised and demonstrable assistance or support role as indicated in the previous sections. When present in communal areas, dogs should be kept on a lead, as a courtesy to other building users who may be nervous of animals.

Companion animals may be permitted within some **singly occupied or low occupancy areas** where there are suitable facilities available to accommodate the animal safely and in a way that avoids disturbance, anxiety or risk to other building users. This type of access should be agreed at Head of School/Service/Institute level and should normally be managed through a formal local system that takes full account of the wishes of other users of that area, including cleaning staff. The nature of the area must also be assessed; companion animals should not normally be permitted within lab, workshop or food handling areas. The default position is that the animal should not be allowed access unless this can be provided without adverse effect on others, or health and safety risk.

Students (or staff) living within **University accommodation** are subject to tenancy agreements that will indicate whether animals may be kept. This will generally not be permitted within student residences but may be allowed in some privately occupied dwellings. (e.g. staff accommodation at Cochno Farm). Animal health is an obvious concern, particularly at the Vet School site, and additional restrictions may periodically be applied on some sites.

The University does not support or condone animals being left in cars on campus. However, if owners do choose to do this, appropriate animal welfare standards must be in place. Dogs should not be left tethered unattended outside buildings or in the University grounds.

## 5. Dog walking on campus

The above guidance applies to animals within University buildings only. The University encourages public use of the campus at both Gilmorehill and at Garscube for recreational purposes and staff, students and visitors are welcome to walk their own dogs at either site provided they clear up any mess the animals may leave behind and keep their animals under close control as described below. Bins are provided at Garscube for the safe disposal of waste.

Dogs should always be kept on a lead. A muzzle should be considered if the dog is known to be aggressive or to behave unpredictably with other dogs or with humans. These measures are intended to provide physical control and visible reassurance to other campus users, including those who may be afraid of dogs.

Those bringing large groups of animals onto University premises should have regard to the density of people on the relevant site, particularly at Gilmorehill and the potential for conflict between campus users and animals. The University reserves the right to limit access to those bringing large groups of animals on site. Animals that are known to be aggressive around people, or disruptive, should not be brought into the University campus.

Campus Security are authorised to ask owners to remove any animal(s) that are not being handled and managed appropriately.

## 6. Administrative procedures

### Pre-arranged access

If an individual wishes to bring an animal into any University building it is for the local line manager/Head of unit/ Course co-ordinator or member of staff in charge of the area to discuss the situation with the individual involved, in the first instance to establish the status of the animal and the access requirements. In this process, further advice can be sought from Safety and Environmental Protection Service, Human Resources, Disability Service and Equality and Diversity to help inform a decision on whether access can be agreed, and under what arrangements.

Pre-arranged access is not required for genuine assistance animals whose status and role is obvious or can be demonstrated by the owner, (e.g. by a registration card indicating the animal's status). Such animals should normally be allowed entry with no further enquiry or restrictions other than to high risk areas where the presence of an animal is not appropriate for reasons of health and safety. Advice should be sought from SEPS if it is proposed to exclude a genuine assistance animal on health and safety grounds.

If the status of the animal is unclear, the owner can be asked to provide evidence that the animal is fulfilling an assistance role and should be directed to either Disability Service in the case of students, or Human Resources if staff, so that a needs assessment can be made. Where there is a genuine medical need for the animal to be present to fulfil a support role, the University will try to accommodate this. However, this will always be subject to the need to support and respect the health, safety and rights of other building users.

### Unplanned access

It is likely that on some occasions, local managers, and Security, will be confronted with a situation where an individual arrives with a dog, or is found to be already within a building. In such circumstances, by necessity, discretionary decisions have to be taken by those in charge, following discussion with the owner, on whether to allow temporary access pending further enquiries. In making this decision the rights of other building users should be considered as well as the circumstances of the animal owner. Where the animal is well behaved, is causing no concern to others and it is judged that the owner may have had a reasonable expectation that it would be admitted, it may be reasonable to allow the dog to remain for a short period, on that occasion only, on the understanding that prior permission will be sought for any future access.

In all cases, if an animal is disruptive or aggressive the owner should be asked to immediately remove it. This includes assistance dogs although they are typically well behaved. Security can support this if required.

## Appendix

### What is an “assistance dog” and how do I recognise one?

The only current legal definition of an assistance dog is given with Section 173 of the Equality Act 2010. Whilst this definition applies only to travel by private taxi and not to the wider provisions of the Act it does provide an indication of the intent of the legislation.

*Equality Act 2010 Section 173*

*“assistance dog” means—*

- a) a dog which has been trained to guide a blind person;*
- b) a dog which has been trained to assist a deaf person;*
- c) 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;*
- d) 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;*

This definition does not extend to owner-trained animals at present although various groups are lobbying to formulate a wider definition.

Assistance dogs are highly trained and are usually (but not necessarily) qualified by one of the charitable organisations registered as members of Assistance Dogs (UK), a voluntary coalition of 8 assistance dog charities accredited by Assistance Dogs International and the International Guide Dogs Federation.

Owners of AD(UK) registered animals will normally have evidence that the dog is a registered assistance dog. Typically, this may include:

- a formal identification in the form of branded jackets or lead slips.
- a yellow ID booklet from the Assistance Dogs (UK) member organisation. This ID book contains information about the Assistance Dog and its owner, and details of the training organisation who trained the Assistance Dog.

Owners are not obliged to provide evidence and should not be asked to do so where the role and capabilities of the dog are obvious (e.g. a guide dog). Where there is no visible evidence that the animal is providing physical assistance, the University may request evidence of the status of the animal, particularly if the animal does not display the training and behaviours expected of an assistance dog.

There may be occasions where students, staff members or visitors to the University from other countries request that their assistance dog accompanies them. This is acceptable if the dog has been trained by an organisation equivalent to one of the member organisations of Assistance Dogs (UK).

### Useful links

[Assistance Dogs UK website](#)

[Assistance Dogs UK – Guide for HE and FE](#)

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