

GRAYS HARBOR COLLEGE
Administrative Procedure

Subject: Service Animals on Campus

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In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), people with disabilities may bring their service animals into all Grays Harbor College facilities. Along with the ADA, state and local governments prohibit agencies from discriminating against individuals with disabilities. Allowing people with disabilities to be accompanied by their service animal onto premises where animals are usually prohibited is a reasonable modification of policy and practice.

The ADA defines a service animal as “dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.” Washington law defines a service animal as “an animal that is trained for the purposes of assisting or accommodating a disabled person’s sensory, mental, or physical disability.” A service animal is any dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Under the law, service animals are working animals, not pets, and the work or task that the animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. A service animal may perform tasks such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens or performing other special tasks.

Service animals-in-training require college permission to enter a building or facility. As a courtesy, and on a case-by-case basis, a college executive may grant permission for a service animal-in-training to enter a college building or facility.

Miniature horses generally range in height from 24 to 34 inches measured to the shoulders and generally weigh between 70 and 100 pounds. Entities covered by the ADA must modify their policies to permit miniature horses where reasonable. The regulations set out four assessment factors to assist in determining whether miniature horses can be accommodated in their facility. The assessment factors are (1) whether the miniature horse is housebroken; (2) whether the miniature horse is under the owner’s control; (3) whether the facility can accommodate the miniature horse’s type, size and weight; and (4) whether the miniature horse’s presence will not compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the facility.

Animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA. Because such therapy or companion animals are not considered service animals, they are not allowed on campus. College officials shall not grant service animal status to therapy/companion/emotional support animals.

Students using a service animal on campus are not required to notify or seek approval from the college. However, the owner must provide an adequate response to any college official who asks for verification of the function or tasks of an animal as a service animal, if the service function or task is not visibly obvious. Inquiry should be limited to the following questions:

- *Is the service animal required because of a disability? and
- *What work or task has this animal been trained to perform?

College staff cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the animal, or ask that the animal demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

For practical purposes, we encourage students with disabilities who use service animals to identify the working status of the animal with a harness, cape, or identification tag that readily identifies its working status. Members of the campus community are reminded that service animals are not pets, and interference with a service animal is a crime under Washington state law.

A service animal is allowed to accompany the owner at all times and everywhere on campus, except where animals are specifically prohibited due to safety or health restrictions or where the animal may be in danger. Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

The health and safety of other students, faculty and staff may also be taken into consideration. Every attempt will be made to insure that neither the student with a service animal or others on campus will be negatively impacted by the presence of the animal in class or other areas on campus. If a college student or staff member has a disabling condition for which they have medical documentation that shows incompatibility with a service animal, the Vice President for Student Services will determine appropriate accommodations for both parties on a case-by-case basis.

The care and supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of their owner. Proof of vaccination and licensing may be required in accordance with state and local laws. The person must maintain control of the animal at all times. The person is responsible for ensuring the animal has appropriate hygiene and is responsible for the cleanup of all animal waste. A service animal may be excluded from the college's premises or specific areas of the college if:

1. The animal is out of control and the owner does not take effective action to control it, or
2. The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, or
3. The animal is sick, unclean or malodorous, or
4. The animal's behavior is disruptive, e.g., barking, growling, displaying aggressive behavior, or
5. The owner fails to clean up after their animal.

Although the college may exclude a service animal, the individual with a disability who uses the service animal will be given the option of continuing to utilize or participate in college services without having the service animal on the premises.

If an individual with a disability questions the exclusion of their service animal, they should be offered the opportunity to address any questions or concerns with college officials.