A Quick Guide To Drexel’s Service & Assistance Animal Policy

What is a service animal?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines service animals as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks directly related to the owner/handlers disabilities.

Individuals with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animals on all Drexel University property where the public is normally allowed to go.

What is an assistance animal?

An assistance animal, often referred to as an Emotional Support or Therapy Animal, is any type of animal that provides comfort or emotional support but does not perform work or tasks that would qualify them as service animals under the ADA.

Individuals with disabilities are not permitted to be accompanied by assistance animals while on campus, with the exception of an On-Campus Housing Residence Hall if the presence of that animal has been determined to be a reasonable accommodation by Disability Resources.

Can I question the status of a person’s animal?

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, inquiries should be limited to two questions:

First, Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability.
Second, What work or task has the dog been trained to perform.

If the work or task is “emotional support,” then it is not a service animal.

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

What if a person misrepresents the status of their animal?

If a person represents an animal as a service animal when, in fact, it is not a service animal, that person could be considered in violation of the University’s Student Code of Conduct for furnishing false information to the University or to University Officials.

Comparing service and assistance animals:

Both service and assistance animals:
Must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered
Must comply with Pennsylvania’s dog laws
Must be under the effective control of their handler
Must be appropriately contained in the dorm room when the handler must leave their residence hall without the animal, and
May not be left overnight without their handler in University housing.
The handler is solely responsible for cleanliness, care, and supervision, and
Costs incurred by the University for cleaning-up after the animal are the sole responsibility of the handler.

Differences between service and assistance animals:

There are also some critical differences between service and assistance animals. As noted, service animals are specially trained to do work or perform a task for their disabled owner or handler, while assistance animals’ primary function is to provide support through companionship. Service animals are permitted on all Drexel University property, while assistance animals are permitted only in residence halls as an approved accommodation. Finally, assistance animals, but not service animals, must be registered with Disability Resources.

Contact Information:

Specific questions related to the use of service and assistance animals at Drexel University can be directed to Disability Resources via email to disability@drexel.edu or by phone at (215) 895-1401.

Drexel University’s Service and Assistance Animal Policy can be accessed online at http://drexel.edu/oed/policies/overview/OED-5/