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**Title:** Guidance on Assistance Dogs

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**Description:** Guidance regarding support for assistance dogs on campus for staff and students at Bournemouth University

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**Audience:** Staff & Students

**Bournemouth University Guidance on Assistance Dogs**

**1. Introduction**

1.1. This guidance seeks to address specific issues relating to assistance dogs while on the University campus. It is also intended to raise awareness for students, staff and visitors of the issues relating to assistance dogs.

1.2. As a general premise, BU prohibits individuals from bringing animals inside any University owned, leased or controlled buildings, vehicles or structures.

1.3. However, the University recognises that a dog kept and used by a disabled person (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) wholly or mainly for the purpose of assisting that person to carry out day to day activities (an “**Assistance Dog**”), will require access to the University’s estate, relevant buildings and University student accommodation.

1.4. This guidance aims to outline:

• The arrangements made to provide a welcoming and safe environment for assistance dogs and their owners.

• The roles and responsibilities within the University in relation to assistance dogs.

• The responsibilities of the owners of assistance dogs on University property.

• A process for dealing with issues and complaints if they arise.

**2. Assistance Dogs**

2.1. Assistance Dogs are trained by members of Assistance Dogs (UK) (<http://www.assistancedogs.org.uk/>) or by an equivalent organisation in another country.

2.2. Assistance Dogs (UK) is a coalition of assistance dog organisations, individual members of which are listed below, and the assistance dogs are required to have:

• 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.

**Assistance dog owners should therefore be in a position to evidence that their dogs are certificated assistance dogs.**

**See section 5 of this document for guidance on dogs that are yet to achieve Assistance Dog (UK) accreditation.**

2.3. There are eight registered charities that form Assistance Dogs (UK). These are:

1. [Canine Partners](http://www.caninepartners.org.uk/)

2. [Dog A.I.D. (Assistance in Disability)](http://www.dogaid.org.uk/)

3. [Dogs for Good](http://www.dogsforgood.org/)

4. [The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/)

5. [The Seeing Dogs Alliance](http://www.seeingdogs.org.uk/)

6. [Hearing Dogs for Deaf People](http://www.hearingdogs.org.uk/)

7. [Medical Detection Dogs](http://www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk/)

8. [Support Dogs](http://www.supportdogs.org.uk/)

2.3. Assistance dogs have formal identification and are permitted to accompany their owners at all times and in all places within the United Kingdom (unless there is a genuine health and safety risk).

2.4. Please note that assistance dogs are highly trained working dogs, performing tasks to assist disabled persons.

* Guide Dogs assist people who are blind or visually impaired.
* Hearing Dogs assist people who are deaf or hearing impaired.
* Support Dogs/Dogs for people with disabilitiescan be trained to do many other 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 whilst 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. Assistance Dogs on University premises**

3.1. Assistance dogs are permitted to access all BU premises under the control of their handlers (or where necessary in order to control the assistance dog for a short period of time, someone other than the handler), who may be students, staff members or visitors to the University.

Details of how to interact with an assistance dog can be found in Appendix A of this guidance document.

3.2. When assistance dogs are in University properties, their owners must comply with the following guidelines:

3.2.1. Information

Assistance dog owners shall provide information about the animal and its tasks/duties, if reasonably requested by University staff.

3.2.2. Identification

Assistance dog owners must ensure that their assistance dogs are clearly identifiable by the use of special collars, harnesses and/or ID tags when on duty. BU approved dogs will also be issued with a BU ID card.

3.2.3. Insurance

Assistance dog owners are responsible for ensuring that their assistance dogs are covered by a level of public liability insurance that must include the workplace and/or place of study.

3.2.4. Access restrictions

Assistance dog owners must respect access restrictions established by the University on grounds of health and safety. Assistance dog owners must ensure that assistance dogs do not enter staff and students’ privately assigned spaces, such as bedrooms and flats within residences, without permission.

Assistance dog owners must ensure that there is a safe and suitable emergency evacuation plan in place for their dog and themselves. Emergency responders will be trained to make every effort to ensure that assistance dogs are kept with their owners in an emergency evacuation situation, but the responder’s priority should be towards the safety of the owner.

3.2.5. Animal misbehavior

Preventing and correcting assistance dog misbehaviour is the owner’s responsibility. Assistance dog owners must make sure that their assistance dogs do not cause harm or injury to others and damage to University property.

3.2.6. Cleanliness

Registered blind people are not required to clean up after their assistance dogs but they are expected to have received the appropriate training to avoid dog waste on campus. Assistance dog owners must take responsibility for the clean-up of the animal’s waste, consistent with reasonable capacity. Assistance dog owners shall use reasonable endeavours to use the designated ‘spending’ (toileting) areas identified by the University.

In order to support assistance dog owners who are students or staff, the University will provide toileting facilities in an appropriate location for the assistance dog owner, as soon as is practical, once a need has been identified and communicated to the University.

In the unlikely event that the assistance dog does ‘spend’ outside of these designated areas, the assistance dog owner must report this to the **Estates Helpdesk** (provide link)who will make arrangements for the area to be cleaned and sanitised.

3.2.7. Animal care and supervision

Animal care is primarily the assistance dog owner’s responsibility. The owner ensures regular health checks, vaccination and an adequate standard of grooming of the assistance dog. Assistance dog owners must ensure the assistance dog has its requirements in relation to feeding, watering and toileting fully met.

Owners must ensure that assistance dogs are kept on a lead at all times when walking around the University’s estate or are safely restrained when unsupervised for short periods of time.

The University is not responsible for the loss, ill health or death of an assistance dog.

3.8. Animal training

Assistance dog owners are responsible for any additional training needs for their assistance dogs and for the correct and safe performance of their duties.

**4. Assistance Dogs from other countries**

There may be occasions where students, staff members or visitors to the University from other countries request that their assistance dog accompanies them. As long as evidence can be provided that the dog has been trained to an equivalent standard as of the member organisations of Assistance Dogs (UK), this is acceptable.

**5. Therapy and Support Animals**

Therapy and support animals are different to assistance dogs and will only be permitted in University premises on a case-by-case basis, with the prior written agreement of the University.

Depending on the applicant, the agreement process will include representatives from Faculty/Professional Service, Student Services, Health, Safety & Wellbeing and Estates and will be made on behalf of the Chief Operating Officer.

**6. Pets**

This policy deals explicitly with assistance dogs, and not pets. (see sections 1.2 and 7.3)

**7. Residential accommodation**

7.1 Accommodation guarantee

BU is committed to supporting the needs of all students as far as reasonably practicable. BU endeavours to accommodate all students falling within the [BU Guarantee Policy](https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/why-bu/accommodation/how-book-accommodation/terms-conditions-accommodation-guarantee). However, where a student declares they require an assistance dog, which means that they need specialist or modified accommodation, or require the allocation of a specific type of room, this cannot be guaranteed, and if suitable accommodation can be provided it may not be possible to meet the student’s preference as to location or accommodation provider. For such students a full needs assessment will be conducted by BU in conjunction with its accommodation partners where relevant. Taking into account third party advice or recommendations as appropriate (e.g. from a consultant) BU will determine whether suitable accommodation is or can be made available (this might be existing accommodation in its current form or subject to reasonable adjustments made to meet the student’s needs). If the assessment finds that BU and/or its accommodation partners is unable to accommodate the student, because reasonable adjustments cannot be made or the student’s and dog’s needs are such that they cannot reasonably and safely be met, BU will provide the student with information on seeking accommodation in the private sector.

7.2 Terms and Conditions of Residence

Once in residence, all other relevant requirements contained within this policy, along with any other policies or requirements from the relevant accommodation operator apply to the student and their assistance dog.

7.3 Therapy and Support Animals

Therapy and support are different to assistance dogs and will only be permitted in residential accommodation on a case-by-case basis, with the prior written agreement of the University and/or relevant accommodation operator. The agreement process will include BU’s Residential Services Manager, Health & Safety Adviser and/or equivalent accommodation operator personnel.

7.3 Pets

Pets are not permitted in any residential accommodation.

7.4 ResLifeBU Dogs

At times throughout the year, ResLifeBU allow designated dogs on to campus and in to residential accommodation for use in student related activities, e.g. exam de-stress events. These events are indemnified under BU insurances, held on specific dates, are time bound and subject to the BU risk assessment process. The dogs used are required to be up to date with their vaccinations and records to be held by BU Residential Services.

**8. Conflict Situations**

8.1. Removal of Assistance Dog

The University reserves the right to remove or bar entry to an assistance dog when it poses a direct threat to the health & safety of others. Unresolved animal misbehaviour may also provide grounds for removal, after all reasonable measures have been taken to address this.

8.2. Damage

Assistance dog owners are responsible for any damage to persons or University property.

8.3. Restricted access

The University may restrict access of assistance dogs to certain areas for health and safety reasons. Restricted areas may include research laboratories, medical facilities, areas where protective clothing is required, boiler rooms, etc. Applications for exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

8.4. Conflicting health issues and/or disabilities

Where an assistance dog poses adverse health risk to another person (staff or student), the University will seek medical documentation from the affected party/parties to determine suitable alternative and equitable arrangements for either or both parties.

8.5. Religious or cultural conflicts

Religious or cultural beliefs cannot be used to prohibit access to assistance dogs and their owners.

8.6. Complaints

Any issues in relation to assistance dogs on University premises that cannot be resolved informally should be raised in accordance with the University’s complaints handling procedure.

**9. Review**

This guidance will be subject to review and ongoing approval as part of our commitment to continuous improvement and to enable the University to fully evaluate its impact and consider any changes in legislation.

**Linking documentation**

* [Application form for use of an assistance dog at BU](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=VZbi7ZfQ5EK7tfONQn-_uD68qDn35bpBqUKqWTsCkFJUOEtPT0pGN0UzTEQwV1JQR01VRjNCVlM1NC4u)
* [Assistance Dogs – a guide for all businesses](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/assistance-dogs-a-guide-for-all-businesses.pdf)
* [A guide for welcoming customers with assistance dogs](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/take-the-lead-welcoming-customers-with-assistance-dogs.pdf)

**Appendix A**

**Tips for Interacting with assistance dogs:**

**DO** speak to the owner/handler rather than the dog.

The assistance dog and the handler are a team. If you want to talk to them, always speak to the person first rather than automatically approaching the dog. Remember, the animal is working, and the human's life could depend on the dog staying focused on the job.

**DON'T** touch the dog without asking permission first.

Touching or petting a working dog is a distraction and may prevent them from tending to the human partner. The dog may be in the process of completing a command or direction given by the human, and you don't want to interfere.

Fortunately, most assistance dogs are trained to stay in work mode until they receive a release command from their handler. That's why many assistance dogs are able to ignore outside influences.

**DON'T** offer food to an assistance dog.

Many – not all – assistance dogs are on strict, healthy diets to keep their working lives long, and they may also have allergies that you are not aware of. It can also break the dog's training if they learn that they get food in a public place.

**DO** treat the owner/handler with sensitivity and respect.

Asking an assistance dog's handler personal questions about his or her disability is out of bounds. It's disrespectful and an intrusion of privacy. Assume the assistance dog ‘team’ can handle things themselves. If you sense they could use your help, ask first. And don't take it personally if your offer is rejected, as there's usually a good reason.

**DON'T** assume a napping assistance dog is off duty.

All dogs nap, including assistance dogs. When their handler is sitting or standing for some length of time, it's perfectly natural and appropriate for an assistance dog to sleep. The dog is still technically at work, however, so all other dos and don'ts remain in effect.

**DO** inform the handler if an assistance dog approaches you.

If an assistance dog approaches you, sniffs or nudges you, etc., politely let the handler know. Resist the urge to respond to the dog — the handler will correct the dog.