

Policy Category:	General
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Policy Name:	Service Animal on Campus
Responsible Department:	Human Resources
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Approval Authority:	Vice-President, Finance & Administration
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Purpose

Nipissing University is committed to the duty to accommodate, as outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), as an essential element to foster an inclusive and equitable campus environment. This includes the presence of service animals that assist students, employees, or visitors on campus. This policy is intended to provide helpful information on the applicable legislation and requirements for the handler and community while interacting with service animals and handlers. This policy excludes animals on campus for research purposes and residence.

Definitions

“handler” refers to the person who has charge of the service animal. This would typically be the person with whom the service animal is assisting with a disability. The handler may also be the owner.

an animal is a “service animal” for a person with a disability, as outlined by the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) if,

- a. the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person’s disability, because of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- b. the person provides documentation from one of the regulated health professionals listed in the IASR, confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario

- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

The definition of disability under section 10(1) of the OHRC contemplates circumstances where a person might physically rely on an animal to assist with their disability-related needs. Disability also clearly includes a condition of all mental impairments.

Requirements for Service Animals:

- Local bylaws regarding animals apply to service dogs and cats, including requirements for immunization, licensing, noise, at-large animals, and dangerous animals.
- Dogs and cats must wear a license tag and a current rabies vaccination tag from its home municipality.
- Animals should be regularly examined by a veterinarian to ensure they are in good health.

Conduct of the Service Animal:

- Service animals must be accompanied and always controlled by the handler. The service animal must be always restrained on a leash or harness unless the animal is confined to a crate.
- The handler must always remain near the service animal.
- The service animal should be always responsive to voice commands and be under the full control of the handler.
- Unprovoked barking, growling, biting or aggressive behaviour by a service animal will not be tolerated or permitted. The service animal must not be a disruption to others.
- The only exception to some of the above behaviors e.g. barking or whining, if the service animal is trained to alert the handler of a medical related symptom.
- Animals who are anxious, on edge, reactive, fearful, or aggressive in any way will not be permitted on campus as a service animal.
- If the behaviour of a service animal is aggressive or threatening (e.g. lunging, baring teeth, growling, biting), the person with a concern should immediately contact Security Services.
- Such behaviour may result in removal of the animal from university campus.
- The conduct and behavior of the service animal also entail being trained to maintain a calm demeanor when interacting with or encountering other service animals, ensuring mutual respect and minimizing disruptions.

Care of the Service Animal:

- The care and supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of its handler.
- The handler is responsible for cleaning up the animal's waste and immediate proper disposal of the waste.
- The handler is liable and responsible for any costs, damages, injuries, or harm caused by the service animal.

- It is the responsibility of the handler to ensure the animal is kept clean, well-groomed and odor free.
- It is the responsibility of the handler to guarantee the animal is safe and in control during an emergency drill.

Requirements for Service Animal Interaction and Inclusivity:

- Allow the service animal to always accompany the handler and in all permitted areas.
- Speak to the handler before giving attention to the animal. It is not appropriate to pet, feed or startle a service animal while it is working.
- Maintain a respectful distance from the service animal.
- It is not appropriate to pet, feed or startle a service animal while it is working.
- In case of an emergency, every effort should be made to keep the animal with its handler.
- If the handler needs your help, they will ask for it.

Guidelines for Verification of a Service Animal:

- If someone is on campus with a service animal, the requirement for the service animal should be taken in good faith unless there is a concern.
- If the person's disability is obvious or otherwise known to you, and if the need for the service animal is apparent, additional information about the disability may not be needed.
- If the disability is known, but the need for the service animal is not apparent, employees can request only the information necessary to evaluate the disability-related need for the service animal per the AODA. This information should only be requested after a consult with Human Resources or Student Development and Services keeping in mind the principles of inclusion and equity.

Exclusions:

- If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, Nipissing shall ensure that other measures are available to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the provider's goods, services, or facilities.
- Animals are not allowed in places where food is manufactured or processed.
- The regulation makes an exception for service dogs, which are permitted where food is sold. Other types of service animals are not permitted in these areas.
- Where health and safety may be put at a risk via the presence of service animals, the animals may be denied entrance or their activities may be restricted to enter under certain conditions for the safety of the animal, the handler and or other persons.
- Any off-campus placement must adhere to the policies and guidelines of the partnering agency.

For the Use of Human Resources and/or Student Development and Services

- When seeking written verification of the need for a service animal, the individual may be asked to provide medical documentation, completed by a qualified health care practitioner who has knowledge about the person's disability and the need for the service animal.

- When requested, documentation for students, employees or visitors who require the support of a service animal for reasons of disability shall include the following:
 - Name and credentials of qualified healthcare practitioner.
 - Description of the current functional limitations as they relate to the need for the service animal; and
 - If the need for the service animal is non-apparent, specific tasks the service animal performs to meet the needs of the individual.

Conflicting Rights:

It is acknowledged that as rights are better understood and exercised, there is an increased probability that when individuals or groups try to enjoy or exercise a right, some of those rights may come into conflict with the rights of others.

Nipissing University seeks ways to accommodate both those accompanied by service animals and those who have health or safety concerns or other human rights concerns or legal entitlements regarding animals. If you have a serious concern regarding a service animal on campus, please contact the University so we can investigate alternate arrangements to accommodate both you and the student accompanied by the service animal.

In the event of a disagreement about the appropriateness of an accommodation, service quality, or an animal exclusion, students can contact Student Accessibility Services at sas@nipissingu.ca and employees or visitors can contact Human Resources at humanresources@nipissingu.ca. Please note that each situation is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

By bringing your service animal on campus you are responsible to review and abide by this guideline. If you do not abide by this guideline the animal could be removed from campus and restricted from returning. The University assumes no liability for any injuries sustained by animals on campus.

Other Important Internal Policies:

- [Nipissing University - Residence Special Accommodation](#)
- [Nipissing University - Employment Accommodation Policy](#)

Applicable Legislation:

- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)
- [The Ontario Human Rights Code | Ontario Human Rights Commission](#)
- [CCAC - Canadian Council on Animal Care](#)

Accessibility Training:

- [Accessible Customer Service Training - AccessForward](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Training - OHRC & AODA](#)