

<b>TYPE:</b>	Administrative
<b>TITLE:</b>	Service Animals
<b>NO.:</b>	ADMIN-271
<b>RESPONSIBILITY:</b>	Vice President, Academic and Students; Associate Vice President, Human Resources and Equity
<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	Durham College Leadership Team
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	December 2025

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## 1. Introduction

Durham College values and actively promotes the rights of all individuals, including those with disabilities/exceptionalities who require the use of service animals.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to regulate service animals on College property and provide conditions that inform their presence and safety.

## 3. Definitions

Refer to Durham College's Standard Definitions.

## 4. Policy statements

- 4.1. This document was developed under the scope of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC).
- 4.2. This policy and procedure applies to all students, employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors who use service animals and covers all property owned or leased by Durham College ("College property").
- 4.3. Service animals are working animals. They perform tasks for a person with a disability/exceptionality, such as, but not limited to:
  - Guiding individuals around obstacles;
  - Alerting a person to low blood sugar levels;
  - Providing protection or assistance during seizures;
  - Offering calming support in environments with excessive sensory stimulation and helping to prevent behavioural outbursts;
  - Retrieving objects that are out of reach; or

- Alerting individuals to important sounds.
- 4.4. Service animals are not pets. Pets are prohibited from entry to all College property.
  - 4.5. A student's or employee's use of service animals during off-campus learning activities or College-sanctioned events is determined by the hosting organization's policies and procedures, not the College.
  - 4.6. All service animal handlers ("handlers") shall familiarize themselves, and comply with their responsibilities under this policy.
  - 4.7. Where service animals are not permitted on or in a particular campus location or building due to health and safety laws or requirements, the College will endeavour to provide alternate support to permit access to goods and services or provide reasonable accommodation.
  - 4.8. Students living in on-campus residences who use service animals are subject to the policies and procedures established by Campus Living Centres, the building operator.

## **5. Procedure**

The College is committed to the development and implementation of procedures that enable its community to support service animals and their handlers while on campus.

### **5.1. Service Animal Approval and Notification**

- 5.1.1. In order to bring a service animal on College property on an ongoing basis, students and employees are required to submit a Service Animal Request Form for consideration, along with supporting documentation from one of the nine regulated health professionals to demonstrate their requirement for a service animal to assist with their disability/exceptionality-related needs. Students shall submit their forms to the Access and Support Centre (ASC), and employees shall submit their forms to Human Resources (HR).
- 5.1.2. Service animal handlers (students and employees) will receive a copy of their accommodations. With their consent, a copy will be provided to the relevant College employees, including, but not limited to, a faculty member or an employee's supervisor.
- 5.1.3. Visitors accompanied by service animals are welcome to access public areas of the College. No prior notice is required unless visiting restricted or controlled-access areas.

- 5.1.4. Some College locations (e.g., food service preparation spaces, wet labs) prohibit animals by law. These locations will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, with the appropriate department coordinating the accommodation.
- 5.1.5. Additional information may be requested in instances where the College has reasonable doubt regarding the service animal's capacity to be in public spaces.

## 5.2. Service Animal Handler Responsibilities

5.2.1. Handlers are responsible for the care, behaviour, and control of their service animal on College property. These responsibilities help ensure accessibility while maintaining a safe and respectful learning and working environment. Handlers are expected to:

- Accompany the service animal at all times;
- Keep the service animal under control using a leash, harness, carrier, or other physical control method, unless doing so interferes with the service animal's tasks or the handler's disability/exceptionality prevents it;
- Provide a crate or carrier, if used, that it is appropriately sized, secure, well-ventilated, and in good condition;
- Maintain the health and well-being of the service animal;
- Promptly clean up and safely dispose of the animal's waste, unless the handler's disability/exceptionality prevents them from performing this task, in which case, the College will work with the handler to arrange appropriate assistance;
- Cover costs related to property damage caused by the service animal, but only when such costs would also be charged to anyone else causing similar damage to property; and
- Ensure the service animal's behaviour does not create a health and safety risk or cause significant disruption, except where specific behaviours are part of the animal's trained tasks (e.g., alerting to a medical condition).

## 5.3. Service Animal On-Campus Requirements

5.3.1. Documentation proving a service animal has been vaccinated and is properly licensed as required by Ontario law and/or municipal by-law is required.

- 5.3.2. Handlers whose service animals do not wear a vest or harness, may be asked to provide acceptable documentation from a regulated health professional, or an identification card from the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General for people who are blind and use a guide dog.
- 5.3.3. If a service animal is temporarily removed from a College space due to disruptive behaviour, the handler must be permitted to re-enter and participate in the activity with the service animal once the behaviour has been appropriately addressed.
- 5.3.4. In the event that 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 Campus Security for assistance.
- 5.3.5. If a service animal is determined to pose an unmanageable health or safety risk, the College may require its immediate removal and/or set conditions for its continued presence. In such cases, the College will work with the handler to provide alternate support to permit access or provide reasonable alternate accommodations.
- 5.3.6. The College recognizes that some individuals may have allergies, phobias, or sensitivities related to animals. In these situations, the College will take reasonable steps to accommodate all parties involved, including facilitating communication through ASC (for students) or HR (for employees). In such cases, the College will make every reasonable effort to accommodate all individuals. Concerns should not be directed to the service animal handler. If there is a conflict involving competing human rights, the College will apply the following principles to resolve the matter:
  - The duty to accommodate under the OHRC;
  - The approach outlined in OHRC's Policy on Competing Human Rights as applied to all parties; and
  - Employer obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

## **6. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act considerations**

This policy and procedure was developed to comply with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act standards. The College is committed to upholding the AODA standards as demonstrated by its Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

## **7. Non-compliance implications**

Failure to comply with applicable federal and provincial legislation may lead to legal costs arising from potential lawsuits and/or monetary penalties, as well as possible reputational harm.

## **8. Related forms, legislation or external resources**

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- Blind Persons' Rights Act
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Dog Owners Liability Act
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Health Protection and Promotion Act
- Occupational Health & Safety Act
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Personal Health Information Protection Act
- Service Animal Request Form
- United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities