

**HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES  
CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY**

Service animals are animals trained to assist people with disabilities in the activities of daily living. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a service animal as “any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.” If an animal meets this definition, it is considered a service animal regardless of whether it has been licensed or certified by a state or local government or a training program.

The ADA allows service animals accompanying persons with disabilities to be on the HWS Colleges campus. A service animal must be permitted to accompany a person with a disability everywhere on campus except in situations where safety may be compromised or where the service animal may interfere with the fundamental nature of the activities being conducted.

The person a service animal assists is referred to as a partner. The partner’s disability may not be visible. If you are not sure whether an animal is a pet or a service animal, you may ask if the animal is a pet. This is non-controversial and permits the person to identify the animal in a dignified manner. You may exercise your judgment concerning whether a person’s statements about the training and functions of the animal make it reasonable to think that the animal is a service animal. Although you may ask the person how the animal is assisting him or her, you may not require a person to tell you details about his or her disability. Questions of a personal nature should be avoided.

A service dog can be any breed or size. It might wear specialized equipment such as a backpack, harness, or special collar or leash, but this is not a legal requirement.

Faculty, staff, and students should know the following about service animals:

- Allow a service animal to accompany the partner at all times and everywhere on campus, except where service animals are specifically prohibited. The courts have upheld the rights of service animal owners to take service animals into food service locations.
- Do not pet a service animal without first asking permission; touching the animal might distract it from its work.
- Speak first to the partner.
- Do not deliberately startle a service animal.
- Do not feed a service animal.
- Do not separate or attempt to separate a partner from his or her service animal.

- In case of an emergency, every effort should be made to keep the animal with its partner. However, the first effort should be toward the partner; this may necessitate leaving an animal behind in certain emergency situations.

The following are requirements of service animals and their partners:

- To be qualified to utilize a service animal for ongoing accommodation on the HWS Colleges campus, the student/partner must register with the Disability Services office at the CTL and supply appropriate documentation of disability.
- The animal must be in good health. Animals to be housed in Colleges housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian that the student/partner must provide to the Disability Services office.
- Local ordinances regarding animals apply to service animals, including requirements for immunization, licensing, noise, restraint, at-large animals, and dangerous animals. Dogs must wear a license tag and a current rabies vaccination tag.
- Service dogs must be on a leash at all times when outside of a residential room.
- The partner must be in full control of the animal at all times. The care and supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of its partner. The animal must be maintained and used at all times in ways that do not create safety hazards for other people.
- The partner is responsible for cleaning up the animal's feces. The partner should always carry equipment and bags sufficient to clean up and properly dispose of the animal's feces. Partners who are not physically able to pick up and dispose of feces are responsible for making all necessary arrangements for assistance. The Colleges is not responsible for these services.
- The partner is responsible for maintaining his or her residence hall room in a clean and orderly fashion as to minimize the presence of pet hair and animal dander. Any damage caused by the service animal will be the responsibility of the partner.

Service animals may be asked to leave HWS College facilities or grounds under circumstances that may include the following:

- The animal is objectively determined to be presently incapable of performing appropriate and disability-related work or tasks for the partner and is deemed as indistinguishable from a pet or companion animal, thus not meeting the specific ADA definition of "service animal."
- The animal is unruly or disruptive or exhibits aggressive or fearful behavior. An animal that engages in such disruptive behavior shows that it has not been successfully trained to function as a service animal in public settings. Therefore, it is no longer a requirement to treat it as a service animal, even if the animal is one that performs an assistive function for a person with a disability.
- The animal is destructive.
- The animal is ill. Service animals that are ill should not be taken into public areas.
- The animal is not clean. However, an animal that becomes wet from weather or weather-related incidents, but is otherwise clean, should be considered a clean animal.