

## SERVICE ANIMAL AND ASSISTANCE ANIMAL POLICY

### Massachusetts College of Art and Design Student Accessibility Services

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, public institutions are required to allow the use of service animals on college campuses to achieve equal access to programs, activities. Massachusetts College of Art and Design ("MassArt" or "the University") recognizes the importance of Service Animals and Assistance Animals to individuals with disabilities. It has accordingly established this policy to assist students with disabilities.

MassArt is committed to allowing students with disabilities the use of a Service Animal on campus to facilitate their full participation and equal access to the University's programs and activities.

Specific requirements and guidelines concerning the appropriate use of and protocols associated with Service Animals and Assistance Animals are included below. MassArt reserves the right to amend this policy as circumstances require.

#### SECTION I DEFINITIONS

##### A. Service Animal

A "Service Animal" is a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. In some cases, a miniature horse may be permitted as a Service Animal. No other animal qualifies as a Service Animal.

Examples of the work or tasks performed by Service Animals include:

- guiding people who are blind;
- alerting people who are deaf;
- pulling a wheelchair;
- alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure;
- reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications;
- calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack; or
- performing other duties.

Service Animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task that a Service Animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as Service Animals.

##### B. Service Animals in Training

Individuals qualified to train dogs to aid and guide persons with disabilities are afforded the same rights as those individuals who require the assistance of a Service Animal. If you are training a dog to aid and guide persons with disabilities, you must contact Student Accessibility Services, register the dog, and comply with the requirements set forth in this Policy.

**C. Assistance Animal/Emotional Support Animal**

An "Assistance Animal" is an animal that provides emotional support, which alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. An Assistance Animal is not a Service Animal.

Some, but not all, animals that assist persons with disabilities are professionally trained. Other Assistance Animals are trained by the owners. In some cases, no special training is required. Unlike a Service Animal, an Assistance Animal does not assist a person with a disability with activities of daily living, nor is it permitted to accompany a person with a disability at all times. Assistance Animals may be considered for residence in University housing, but they are not permitted in any other area on campus.

**D. Pet**

A "Pet" is an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. A pet is not considered a Service Animal or an Assistance Animal. Students are not permitted to bring pets on University property or keep pets in University residential housing.

**SECTION II. USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS**

**A. Accommodation Procedures**

It is recommended that students who need the assistance of a service animal in the classroom setting register with Student Accessibility Services, located in the Academic Resource Center/ Student Development. By doing so, students will be able to:

- Document their need for an appropriate classroom accommodation.
- Receive an academic accommodation letter for their instructors at the beginning of each semester.
- Access additional resources and services available to students with a disability.

**B. Control Requirements**

If the animal is not being controlled properly, it ceases to provide a service and can be excluded from the classroom and/or residence hall. Therefore, the following guidelines for service animals are being set forth by the University to ensure the animal does not engage in behavior that would be a direct threat to the health and safety of others. If the service animal's behavior is disruptive, aggressive or destructive, the student will be held responsible and may be asked to remove the animal from campus.

The guidelines for service animals on campus:

- Service animals must be in good health.
- Service animals must be on a leash at all times.
- Service animals must be controlled by handler/student at all times.
- When entering campus facilities or University vehicles with a service dog, the owner is strongly encouraged to use an identifying vest, tag, leash, or other visible method to indicate to the general public that the animal is a service dog.

- Service animals must be properly vaccinated; vaccinations must be current.
- Service animals must be well groomed.
- Service animals must be maintained in a manner that takes into consideration the health and hygiene of the animal and those who come in contact with the animal.
- The owner is responsible for the cost to repair any damage done by the service dog to University property, just as the owner would be responsible for damage he or she caused.
- The student must on campus with the service animal at all times.

The University has the authority to remove a service dog from its grounds or facilities if the service dog becomes unruly or disruptive, unclean, and/or unhealthy to the extent that the animal's behavior or condition poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, or otherwise causes a fundamental alteration in the University's services, programs, or activities. If such behavior persists, the owner may be directed not to bring the dog into public campus areas until the problem is rectified.

### **C. Relief Areas**

Students who use service animals should meet with the Office of Facilities before the start of each semester to discuss procedures for identifying proper waste disposal areas on campus. The student is ultimately responsible for the cleanliness, grooming and health of the animal and must take responsibility for the proper disposal of all waste.

### **D. Areas Restricted to Service Animals**

The University may prohibit the use of service dogs in certain locations due to health or safety restrictions, where service dogs may be in danger, or where their use may compromise the integrity of certain research. Such restricted locations include, but are not limited to, food preparation areas, certain research laboratories, mechanical rooms/custodial closets, classrooms with demonstration/research animals, areas where protective clothing is necessary and other areas where the dog's presence may constitute a danger or a fundamental alteration of the program or activity conducted in the area. Access to restricted areas may be granted on a case-by-case basis by contacting Student Accessibility Services.

### **E. Public Etiquette by Service Animal**

- The animal must not be allowed to sniff people or the personal belongings of others.
- The animal must not initiate contact with someone without the handler's direct permission.
- The animal must not display any behaviors or noises that are disruptive to others such as barking, whining, growling or rubbing against people while waiting in lines. This includes aggressive behaviors.
- The animal must not block an aisle or passageway.
- The animal must never be more than 12 inches from the handler's leg or side of the chair.

## **F. Public Etiquette by the University Community**

Members of the University community are required to abide by the following practices:

- Allow a service dog to accompany its owner at all times and in all places on campus except where dogs may pose a safety risk
- Do not touch a service dog unless invited to do so.
- Do not feed the service dog.
- Do not deliberately startle a service dog.
- Do not separate or attempt to separate a partner from their service dog.
- Do not inquire for details about a person's disabilities. The nature of a person's disability is a private matter.
- Do not hesitate to ask a person if they would like assistance if the team seems confused about a direction to turn, an accessible entrance, entrance to an elevator, etc.
- If questions arise as to whether a person should have a service dog on campus contact Student Accessibility Services located in the Academic Resource Center/Student Development Office

## **SECTION III. ASSISTANCE/EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS**

Assistance Animals are not allowed in classrooms or other University facilities; Assistance Animals may not be brought into University housing without the express approval of the University. The procedures for requesting Assistance Animals to be allowed in University housing are outlined below.

- A. A student requesting permission to keep an Assistance Animal in University housing must make a formal request to Student Accessibility Services following the deadlines set by the office of Housing and Residence Life and submit documentation of their disability to Student Accessibility Services Office.
- B. Documentation of the need for an Assistance Animal should follow Student Accessibility Services' guidelines for documentation of disability, and should generally include the following information:
  - Verification of the student's disability from a physician, psychiatrist, social worker, or other mental health professional;
  - A statement from the health care provider as to how the animal serves as an accommodation for the verified disability;
  - A statement from the health care provider as to how the need for the animal relates to the ability of the student to use and enjoy the living arrangements provided by the University; and
  - Documentation of items requested above from the qualified health care provider dated within the most recent 6 months. The provider must demonstrate a therapeutic relationship or nexus between the comfort animal and the student's disability. The documentation must also be specific to requesting a housing accommodation.
- C. A staff member from Student Accessibility Services will review documentation and arrange a meeting with the person requesting that an Assistance Animal be

housed in University housing. This policy will be carefully reviewed with the student at that time.

- D. In the event that the University denies a student's request for an Assistance Animal, the student will have the opportunity to appeal such decisions to the Executive Director of Compliance, EO Officer, Title IX and ADA Coordinator who will review the request and make a ruling. Students will receive information about the appeals process upon notification of the University's decision to deny the request for an Assistance Animal in University housing.
- E. Upon the approval of an Assistance Animal to reside in campus housing, residential building staff will be notified as appropriate.
- F. Upon the approval of an Assistance Animal to reside in campus housing, the University will, if applicable, notify the student's roommate(s) or suitemate(s) to solicit their acknowledgment of the approval, and notify them that the approved animal will be residing in shared assigned living space.

More complete information and policy can be obtained by contacting the Associate Dean of the Academic Resource Center for Academic ([arc@massart.edu](mailto:arc@massart.edu).) Questions about documentation may be directed to Student Accessibility Services at [student.accessibility@massart.edu](mailto:student.accessibility@massart.edu)

*Updated 5/25/16*