

# QMUL Policy on Assistance Animals

## Introduction

Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) is committed to becoming the “most inclusive university of its kind, anywhere”. As part of this commitment we “will be inclusive and maintain our proud tradition of nurturing and supporting talented students and staff regardless of their background and circumstances” (QMUL Strategy) and wish to ensure that we provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for all staff and students. QMUL recognises the important role played by Assistance Animals, and welcome them onto our campuses. This guidance applies to all QMUL campuses.

This policy provides information regarding Assistance Animals within academic and QMUL-managed residential buildings. Please note that if you attend teaching, events, placements or other activities held outside of QMUL then you should also consult their policy/guidance where applicable.

QMUL is happy to listen to the suggestions of Assistance Animal owners as to how provision for Assistance Animals may be improved.

## Definition of an Assistance Animal

Under the Equality Act (2010) disabled people are allowed to bring Assistance Animals onto campus as a reasonable adjustment. Throughout this guidance document, an Assistance Animal is defined as:

- An animal (usually, although not exclusively, a dog) which has been specifically and highly trained to perform tasks to assist disabled people.
- An animal that has been qualified and accredited by the appropriate organisation, for example one of the organisations registered as a member of Assistance Dogs (UK) or equivalent (either within or outside the UK).
  - Where proof of accreditation is not possible it may be possible to use proof of training in lieu of this. In such cases students will also need to provide documentation, demonstrating the dog has undergone adequate training.
- Assistance animals will have formal identification (in the form of a branded jacket or lead slip) 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).

In the interests of health and safety, QMUL reserves the right to refuse access to any animal that is not an Assistance Animal.

## Examples of Assistance Animals

- Guide Dogs
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
- Support Dogs/Dogs for the Disabled
- Animals that detect onset of seizures/changes to blood sugar levels, which may highlight imminent ill health.

Please note that some Assistance Animals are trained to behave differently when they detect a specific set of circumstances. This can appear as if they are not behaving appropriately, but are trained to do this to attract attention and seek assistance.

## Pets, Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) and Emotional Support Animals

Unfortunately, these animals are not classified as Assistance Animals and are not permitted on campus. We recommend, if you are planning to bring an animal with you, that you also discuss this with your prospective landlord/accommodation provider.

## Responsibilities

Queen Mary University of London

QMUL departments will, as far as reasonably practical:

1. Ensure that adequate communication is made with other Schools/departments/persons who are likely to come into contact with the Assistance Animal and identify any conditions that may cause concerns/difficulties for either the owner or the Assistance Animal. This could include correspondence being sent by the Disability and Dyslexia Service (regarding students), Human Resources (regarding staff) and/or other relevant parties.
2. Ensure Assistance Animal owners are aware of this guidance and associated responsibilities
3. Provide bespoke support for campus familiarisation/orientation, upon request.

## Assistance Animals Owners

The Assistance Animal is the responsibility of its owner at all times. The owner will, as far as reasonably practical:

- **Staff Members:** Inform Human Resources, your line manager and/or Head of School/Institute/Directorate to ensure that QMUL are aware of support needs (if any), and ensure that those needs can be met efficiently and effectively.
- **Students:** Inform the Disability and Dyslexia Service to ensure that QMUL are aware of support needs (if any), and ensure that those needs can be met efficiently and effectively.
- **Visitor/Other:** Visitors/Other people accessing QMUL grounds/buildings should let the person/people you are visiting know that you will be bringing an Assistance Animal. This will ensure that appropriate preparations can be made (if any) to ensure the safety and comfort of the Assistance Animal and other participants.
- Ensure that the Assistance Animal is easily identifiable as such.
- Ensure the Assistance Animal's needs are met, including:
  - Regular health checks, vaccinations and an adequate standard of grooming.
  - Requirements in relation to feeding, watering and toileting being fully met.
  - Training needs are met, for the correct and safe performance of their duties.

QMUL is not responsible for the loss, ill health, or death of an Assistance Animal.

- Keep Assistance Animals under control at all times. If the animal is an Assistance Dog then it should be kept on a lead whilst on campus.
- Preventing and correcting Assistance Animal's misbehaviour is the owner's responsibility
- Ensure that Assistance Animals are not left unsupervised at any time.
- Ensure that Assistance Animals do not cause injury or harm, ill health, offense, nuisance or distress to other members of the community.
- Ensure that Assistance Animals do not cause damage or introduce parasites – owners would be liable for any damage caused.
- Ensure that Assistance Animals are covered by full public liability insurance.
- Ensure that Assistance Animals use the spending facilities provided. Where reasonably possible, Assistance Animals must not foul other areas of campus. If this occurs then the Assistance Animal owner should make necessary arrangements to ensure this is adequately

cleaned, consistent with reasonable capacity. If the Assistance Animal owner is blind or otherwise unable to do so then they should contact [Estates and Facilities](#) on 020 7882 2580 for assistance.

- Note that Assistance Animals are allowed in all public areas, including all communal areas within a student's own residence.
- Ensure that Assistance Animals do not enter other students' privately assigned areas (e.g. bedrooms) without permission.
- Note that Assistance Animal owners must respect access restrictions on grounds of health and safety. Applications for exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## Allergies and Phobias

Where a student has an Assistance Animal and is residing in QMUL accommodation, QMUL will endeavour to contact flatmates prior to their arrival to identify and resolve any potential issues, where possible.

With regard to interactions outside of QMUL residences, where an Assistance Animal poses an adverse health risk to other student(s) or member(s) of staff, QMUL would seek supporting evidence from the affected party/parties to determine suitable alternative and equitable arrangements. Such issues will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. For students, such cases will be handled by the Disability and Dyslexia Service in conjunction with their School(s). For staff this would be handled by HR, in conjunction with a line manager and/or Head of School/Institute/Directorate.

## Religious or Cultural Preferences

Religious or cultural preferences/beliefs cannot be used to restrict or prohibit access for Assistance Animals or their owners.

## Complaints

### Complaints from an Assistance Animal Owner

#### *Students*

Any issues in relation to Assistance Animals that cannot be resolved informally should be raised with the Disability and Dyslexia Service in the first instance. If the issue cannot be resolved then the QMUL's complaints procedure should be utilised.

#### *Staff*

Any issues in relation to Assistance Animals that cannot be resolved informally should be raised with your line manager and/or Head of School/Institute/Directorate in the first instance. If the issue cannot be resolved then the QMUL's complaints procedure should be utilised.

### Complaints about an Assistance Animal

Any issues in relation to Assistance Animals that cannot be resolved informally should then be handled by QMUL's complaints procedure.

## Version Control

Version 1, Ashleigh Brownsmith, Megan Vagg and Laurence Gouldbourne, October 2020