

Use of Service Animals Guideline

Introduction

The [Sheridan Accessibility Policy](#) outlines how Sheridan will comply with the requirements of the [Integrated Accessibility Standards, O. Reg. 191/11](#) (“IAS”) under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#) (“AODA”). **Section 4.3** of the policy further describes how Sheridan will ensure access to educational or other services and facilities, by a person with a disability who may be dependent on a guide dog or other service animal due to disability-related needs.

To assist with the interpretation of the policy this guideline has been prepared by the Centre for Equity and Inclusion. This guideline is intended to:

- Inform Sheridan employees and the broader Sheridan community about the legally recognized role of a service animal
- Describe how a student or employee with a disability should identify their need for a service animal
- Outline the responsibilities of the owner of a service animal
- Share tips on how to create an inclusive environment and interact with a service animal
- Guide employees and students on when it may be necessary to confirm the use of a service animal
- Inform employees and students about conditions when a service animal may be excluded
- Advise employees and students who to contact if they have questions

This document is also available as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s). If you require the document in an alternate format or with communication supports, please contact the Centre for Equity and Inclusion at equity@sheridancollege.ca

The role of a service animal and its importance

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that a person with a disability cannot perform for themselves, including assisting with activities of daily living. Some examples include:

- Alerting people who are hard of hearing to sounds
- Pulling wheelchairs or carrying and picking up things for people with limited mobility
- Assisting people with their balance, reach, etc.
- Detecting and alerting people of oncoming seizures
- Providing comfort and emotional support

Identifying the need to be accompanied by a service animal due to disability related reasons

Employees and students who rely on a service animal are welcome to bring these animals with them to Sheridan in order to access and participate equally in employment and education services. The only exception to this practice is where animals are prohibited by law. See below for information on conditions where a service animal may be excluded.

Students with a disability who rely on a service animal are asked to identify this need (if possible, prior to attending classes), to an [Accessible Learning Advisor \(Accessible Learning Services\)](#) and have this accommodation noted on their accommodation plan.

Employees with a disability are requested to discuss this need with their Manager and the [Workplace Abilities office \(WAO\)](#), as part of the workplace accommodation process. For more information, see the [Sheridan Workplace Accommodation Policy and Procedure \(Employee\)](#).

Responsibilities of the owner of a service animal

Owners of service animals are required to:

- Ensure that the service animal is controlled
- Provide water, food and timely breaks for the service animal
- Maintain records of vaccination
- Accompany the service animal, unless it is safely confined to a cage, crate, tank, etc.
- Ensure that the service animal is not disruptive to other students, faculty, staff or visitors and/or the learning environment
- Ensure that the service animal does not engage in aggressive behaviour

Creating an inclusive environment for the owner and service animal

It is important to allow the owner and their service animal into all Sheridan areas where the public, students and employees normally have access. How can this be done?

- Ensure the person using the service animal is included and not isolated from others
- Ensure that the owner and their service animal can remain together
- In the case of an emergency, every effort should be made to keep the animal and owner together, wherever possible

Here are some tips on how to interact with a service animal:

- Maintain a respectful distance from the service animal
- Do not pet, feed or startle a service animal
- Speak to the person before giving attention to the animal
- Ask permission before touching the animal

Confirming the animal is a service animal

The **least intrusive** approach must be considered when making decisions about the need for verification of a service animal. Follow these guidelines:

- If a person's disability is obvious or otherwise known to you, and if the need for the service animal is also apparent, do not request any additional information about the disability or need for accommodation
- If a person's disability is not obvious or otherwise known to you, the individual should only be asked for information that is necessary to evaluate the disability-related need for the accommodation
- It is important to know that animals may be considered service animals regardless of whether they have been licensed or certified by a training school or facility¹

Conditions when a service animal may be excluded

A service animal may be excluded when any one of the following conditions exists:

- The service animal is disruptive and the person with a disability is not effectively controlling it;
- The service animal's presence, behaviour or actions pose an unreasonable or direct threat to the health and/or safety of others. Thinking an animal may bite someone or will annoy others is not considered a reason to arbitrarily exclude a service animal
- Allergies or a fear of animals are generally not sufficient conditions to exclude service animals. In rare cases, a person's allergic reaction or phobia may be so severe that animal contact prevents participation. In these situations, the affected person may also request an accommodation (e.g., separating the service animal and the affected person as much as possible)
- When another law specifically states that animals must be excluded, or the animal is excluded by operation of another law.

Sheridan contacts when questions arise

Please feel free to reach out if you are looking for more information or have questions about this Sheridan guideline:

- Students with disabilities may speak with an [Accessible Learning Advisor or contact Accessible Learning Services](#) at each campus if they have questions about the use of service animals at Sheridan
- Employees with disabilities may speak with their Manager and/or the [Workplace Abilities Office](#) about workplace accommodation and use of a service animal
- Visitors to Sheridan with questions about the use of a service animal should contact the Faculty or department responsible for the related event
- Questions and feedback may also be directed to the AODA Feedback email at accessibility@sheridancollege.ca

¹ The only exception is the [Blind Persons' Rights Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. B.7](#) that states "guide dog" means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations. R.S.O. 1990, c.B.7, s.1 (1).