

Service Animal Awareness

What is a service animal? According to the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA Subsection 36.104), a service animal is defined as “a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability.” Service dogs are not required to wear identifying information or a special vest. General questions about service dogs or concerns about service dogs exhibiting inappropriate behavior should be directed to Student Accessibility Service at 281-756-3533.

Although service dogs are allowed on campus, certain restrictions apply and programs may have additional regulations to meet state and federal health and safety requirements (e.g., safety precautions may apply to service animals in science labs). For more information, contact Student Accessibility Services.

If an employee is not sure whether a dog is a service animal, the following questions may be asked:

1. Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

An employee may not ask why the handler needs a service dog, because a person cannot be asked about his or her disability.

An employee may not ask for documentation confirming the handler is allowed to utilize a service animal, because documentation is not required under the *ADA*.

An employee may not ask how the service animal performs tasks to support the handler’s disability, because the handler is not required to demonstrate the dog’s training.

Service Dogs on Campus Should:	Service Dogs on Campus Should Not:
Possess a stable, even temperament without aggressive behavior.	Display anxiety, reactivity, or aggression of any kind.
Remain quietly by their handler’s side while walking without wandering or losing focus.	Wander or move widely out of heel position when walking unless cued to by their handler (e.g., no pulling, straining, lunging, etc.).
Lay quietly under the table or beside the handler’s chair while seated in a classroom or a service area.	Wander or move around excessively, while the handler is seated in a classroom or service area, to engage in or respond to distractions.
Be seen, but not heard, unless working (e.g., no whining, barking, growling, etc.).	Whine, bark, growl, or make other noises (an exception may be if the whining is an alert to the handler who is experiencing symptoms related to their disability (e.g., seizure, panic attack, low blood sugar, etc.).
Only use their nose for sniffing if it is related to their trained work task.	Use their nose for purposes other than to support their handler’s disability (e.g., the service dog should not use their nose for exploring or sniffing other people, food items, personal belongings, etc.).
Respond quickly and readily to the handler’s commands, cues or directions. Service dogs are highly trained and possess outstanding obedience skills.	Disobey their handler or require several prompts to fulfill a task. Task work is not optional for a service dog. If the dog does not perform task work, the animal may not be a service dog.

**** Please note: Emotional Support or Comfort is not an ADA recognized “Service” (work or task).****