

What is a service animal?

A service animal is an animal trained or being trained to assist a person with needs relating to a physical or mental disability; or that has been trained to be used by a peace officer or person authorized by a peace officer in the execution/assistance of the peace officer's duties. Service animals are working animals trained to perform specific tasks that support individuals with disabilities or trained peace officers.

Most are dogs, but other animals may qualify. Service animals are not pets, companion animals, or therapy animals. Tasks may include guiding individuals who have vision impairments, alerting those who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, detecting seizures, reminding a person to take medication, or providing calming support for anxiety or PTSD.

What are examples of the types of tasks that service animals perform?

Service animals that support persons with disabilities are trained to perform specific, disability-related tasks that support their partner's independence and well-being. Examples include:

- Guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision
- Alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to sounds
- Pulling a wheelchair or assisting with mobility and balance
- Detecting and responding to seizures or medical episodes
- Retrieving items or opening doors
- Interrupting self-harming behaviors or providing deep pressure therapy for anxiety or PTSD
- Reminding a person to take medication or alerting to physiological changes (e.g., blood sugar levels)

These tasks are tailored to the individual's needs and go beyond providing comfort or companionship.

It is important to remember that not all disabilities are visible. A person who relies on a service animal may not appear to have a disability, but their need for support is valid and protected under accessibility legislation.

Do I need to register my service animal with the College?

No formal registration is required. However, students and staff are encouraged to speak with their **Student Success Advisor** or **Human Resources** and affiliates are encouraged to speak to **Security** before bringing a service animal to campus. This helps ensure orientation to relief areas and allows for any necessary accommodations.

What documentation might be required?

If the disability-related need is not obvious, documentation may be requested in accordance with the Service Animal Policy, M15.

How should service animals be identified?

Service animals should be clearly identifiable, typically by wearing a vest or harness. If not obvious, responsible college officials may respectfully ask:

- “Is this a service animal required for a disability?”
- “What task is the animal trained to perform?”

Partners are not required to disclose their disability or provide certification unless there is a legitimate concern.

Are therapy animals or companion pets allowed on campus?

No, therapy animals and companion pets are not considered service animals and are generally not permitted.

Definitions:

- **Therapy Animal:** A therapy animal is typically trained to provide comfort and emotional support to multiple people in structured settings such as hospitals, schools, or during wellness events. They do not perform specific tasks for a person with a disability and are not granted public access rights given to service animals. Some therapy animals may have completed training programs and may hold certifications. Therapy animals are not service animals and are not permitted on campus without prior approval.
- **Pet:** A pet is a domesticated animal kept for companionship or enjoyment. Pets are not trained to perform disability-related tasks and are not permitted on campus unless part of an approved event.

What if I want to bring an animal on campus for a special event or activity?

Animals that are not service animals may be permitted on campus for specific events or purposes (e.g., therapy dogs during exam periods), if advance approval is granted.

These requests must be submitted using the [Animals on Campus Request Form](#) at least two weeks in advance of the event. The [Animals on Campus Event Planning Guide](#) helps organizers provide the necessary information to plan a successful event.

Are there any areas on campus where service animals may not be permitted?

Service animals generally have the right to access public areas of campus. However, in rare and exceptional circumstances, access may be restricted due to health, safety, or legal regulations. In these instances, Assiniboine would engage in a reasonable accommodation process to balance accessibility rights and legal/safety obligations.

What if I have allergies or a phobia of animals?

Assiniboine College recognizes that while service animals support accessibility, some individuals may have disability-related needs that conflict with their presence (e.g., severe allergies or phobias). If you have a concern, you may submit it using the [Service Animal Accommodation & Concern Form](#).

The College will assess competing rights and explore reasonable accommodation for all parties involved.

Where can service animals relieve themselves?

Relief areas are identified on [Assiniboine Campus Accessibility Maps](#). Students or staff can request an orientation to the campus from Security, to be shown these areas. Requests for changes can be made using the [Service Animal Accommodation & Concern Form](#).

Can a service animal be removed from campus?

Yes, but only under specific circumstances, such as:

- Aggressive or disruptive behavior
- Lack of control by the partner
- Illness or inability to perform tasks

Concerns about a service animal's behaviour should be directed to **Security**, who will consult with HR to ensure respectful and policy-aligned action.

Is there training about Service Animals available for staff?

Yes, Human Resources provides training to staff on:

- Access rights under relevant legislation.
- Identifying service animals and those in training.
- Respectful inquiry by responsible college officials:
 - "Is this a service animal required for a disability?"
 - "What task is the animal trained to perform?"
- What not to ask or do (e.g., touching, feeding, asking about disabilities).
- How to respond to concerns—contact Security, or HR.
- Supporting competing rights (e.g., allergies or phobias) through accommodation.

Staff and students are encouraged to review the [Service Animal Policy \(M15\)](#) and related guides for full details.