

Service Animal Policy for Employees and Visitors

We are committed to providing individuals with disabilities full and meaningful access to all College programs and activities and recognize that, for certain individuals, service animals fulfill a crucial role in removing barriers necessary to achieve equal access to the programs and activities offered by the College and College facilities. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), New York Human Rights Law, and other applicable laws, Skidmore College permits qualified service animals to accompany their handler in all facilities on campus. As the health and safety of all those who access Skidmore College is also important, only service animals that meet the guidelines outlined below will be exempt from College policies that otherwise prohibit the presence of animals.

This policy applies to reasonable accommodations for employees, applicants and visitors to public spaces on campus. Students seeking a service animal as a reasonable accommodation may submit a Request for Accommodation to the coordinator of student access services.

A **“Service animal”** is an animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. The ADA limits service animals to dogs and, in some circumstances, miniature horses. Service animals are not considered “pets” and are explicitly permitted to accompany the disabled person in all areas of the College where the disabled person is authorized to be. In extremely unusual circumstances a service animal may not be permitted in a specific area, such as in an animal research lab, if the service animal’s presence would pose a danger or interfere with research activities. In those cases, the College will work with the individual to explore alternative accommodations for the individual to participate in the College’s program.

Examples of Service Animals - The examples below are not meant to serve as an exhaustive list but do indicate specific work or tasks performed by a service animal that directly relate to specific disabilities, thus meet the broad definition of service animal.

- **Guide Dog** is a carefully trained dog that assists persons with severe visual impairments or who are blind to navigate and travel.³ **Hearing or Signal Dog** - has been trained to alert and assist persons with significant hearing loss or who are deaf to respond to specific sounds such as emergency alarms, doorbells, phones, and alarm clocks.
- **Sensory Signal or Social Signal (Ssig) Alert Dog** is trained to assist people with autism to avoid sensory overload, remain calm when in environments where sensory overload is high, and alerts the handler to distracting, repetitive movements. Dogs may also provide support similar to hearing or signal dogs.
- **Seizure Alert Dog** is trained to alert persons with seizure disorders of impending seizures and to assist their handler during and after a seizure by standing guard or going for help.

- Mobility Dog has been trained to assist people with severe mobility challenges by pulling wheel chairs or by providing physical support for balance and stability.

Other animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition.

Qualified Individuals - For an individual to qualify for using a service animal on campus they must:

- Have a disability as defined by applicable law; and
- The service animal must be trained do specific tasks for the qualified individual related to the individual's disability.

Requesting a Service Dog as a Reasonable Accommodation – Non-student requests for service dogs as a reasonable accommodation should be submitted to the Assistant Director of Employment and Workforce Diversity, who is responsible for managing the interactive process for developing and implementing reasonable accommodations for staff and faculty. If the work or tasks a service animal provides to a handler are not readily apparent, Human Resources may inquire whether the animal is required because of a disability and what work or tasks the animal has been trained to perform. Employees may contact Campus Safety if any questions or concerns arise relating to the presence of a service animal, to report service animal misbehavior, or mistreatment of a service animal.

Responsibilities of the Handler – A service animal must remain under the control of its handler. A service animal shall have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless the handler is unable to use such devices because of their disability, or because the use of such devices would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks. In the event a service animal is not harnessed, leashed, or tethered, the handler must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls. Handler of a service animal must be in compliance with local licensing laws. The handler will be held responsible of repairs for any damage or destruction caused by the service animal. The handler is responsible for removing or arranging for removal of animal waste.