

Policy Title:	Service Animals in Laboratory Settings
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Governing Body:	Southern Oregon University	Policy Number:	AAD.059
Policy Contact:	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Division	Date Revised:	
Custodial Office:	Provost’s Office	Date Approved:	July 14, 2020
Approved By:	President	Next Review:	July 2023
Related Policy:	Assistance (Service and Support) Animals (FAD.079)		

Revision History

Revision Number:	Change:	Date:
	Initial version	July 2020

A. Purpose

This policy provides guidance on the presence of service animals in laboratory and field settings. This policy supplements SOU’s policy on [Assistance \(Service and Support\) Animals](#).

B. Policy Statement

A. Service Animals

All students requiring the assistance of a service animal should be advised that many laboratory and field settings are potentially hazardous to the health and safety of the service animal. Due to physiological differences between humans and animals, the guidelines and protective equipment required for humans in these laboratory and field environments may not be suitable to shield the service animal from harmful exposure.

To ensure the safety of service animals, faculty, staff, and students, service animal teams will need to engage in an interactive process with Disability Resources prior to the start of the term to determine whether the lab poses a health or safety threat for the animal, with or without safety gear. The decision will be made on a case-by-case basis after consulting with the student, the lab instructor, the department head, and a representative from Disability Resources.

Consideration will be given to, but not limited by: chemical and biological materials used, biological specimen used, physical safety, physical setting, equipment, fumes, vapors, sounds, and how the service animal interacts with and/or alerts its partner.

If it is determined that the service animal must accompany its handler in the lab, the student will be required to purchase personal protective equipment designed for the service animal that meets the same threshold of protection required for students, faculty, and staff entering the lab. If the service animal’s presence is determined to pose a

health or safety risk, the service animal will be kept safely outside of the lab (e.g., in a portable kennel provided by the student during designated class hours).

B. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

According to the ADA, service animals are permitted to accompany their partners into most public places. However, the ADA does not require covered entities to modify policies, practices, or procedures if it would “fundamentally alter” the nature of the services, programs, or activities provided to the public. Nor does it overrule legitimate safety requirements. If admitting service animals would fundamentally alter the nature of a service or program, service animals may be prohibited. When deciding whether the accommodation of a service animal in the Science Building is reasonable, SOU will consider factors including, but not limited to, the safety of the animal and any potential impact on the results of the experiment or work being done in the lab.

A student may choose whom they wish to contact first when initiating this conversation, but all parties should defer to Disability Resources as soon as that individual becomes aware of a student with a service animal who would like to take, or whose major requires them to take, a class with a laboratory or field component. Disability Resources is the designated entity for navigating student accommodations and is always the designee for issuing notice of them to instructors and departments.

Service-animals-in-training are NOT covered under the ADA. Therefore, only those who have received explicit approval from Disability Resources and who have engaged in the procedure outlined here and in compliance with SOU’s policy on [Assistance \(Service and Support\) Animals](#) are permitted in the Science Building.

C. SOU’s Policy on Service Animals

SOU’s policy on [Assistance \(Service and Support\) Animals](#) provides guidance on service animals. According to that policy, “A service animal means any dog (or in limited cases, miniature horse) that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. The work or task performed by a service animal must be directly related to the person’s disability... Service animals are permitted to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of SOU’s facilities where students, members of the public, and other participants in services, programs, or activities are allowed to go. SOU does not require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed, as a service animal. Individuals accompanied by service animals on campus but who do not need any disability-related accommodations are not required to register with Disability Resources, nor are such individuals required to submit requests for reasonable accommodation to receive access for their service animals.

Additionally, SOU cannot ask about the nature or extent of a person’s disability to determine whether a person’s animal qualifies as a service animal. However, when it is not readily apparent that a dog is a service animal, SOU staff may make two inquiries to determine whether the dog qualifies as a service animal, which are:

- Is the dog required because of a disability?
- What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

A service animal must be housebroken ... and must be kept under control by a harness, leash, or other tether, unless the person is unable to hold those, or such use would interfere with the service animal’s performance of work or tasks.”

D. SOU’s Policy on Support Animals

SOU’s policy on [Assistance \(Service and Support\) Animals](#) also provides guidance on support animals. According to that policy, “Support animals are generally not allowed to accompany persons with disabilities in all public areas of SOU as a service animal is allowed to do... If the disability is not obvious, Disability Resources may require documentation from a licensed physician or mental health provider, including without limitation a qualified psychiatrist, social worker, or other mental health professional, to provide sufficient information for SOU to determine whether the individual has a disability and that there is a disability-related need for the requested

accommodation.”

For the health and safety of the animal, as well as the safety of students, faculty, and staff, support animals are not permitted in the Science Building.

E. Animal Environment, Housing and Management

The [National Center for Biotechnology Information](#) (NCBI) advances science and health by providing access to biomedical and genomic information. According to the NCBI, “Proper housing and management of animal facilities are essential to animal well-being, to the quality of research data and teaching or testing programs in which animals are used, and to the health and safety of personnel. A good management program provides the environment, housing, and care that permit animals to grow, mature, reproduce, and maintain good health; provides for their well-being; and minimizes variations that can affect research results.” Further, animals should be housed in a manner that minimizes stress-induced behaviors. Environmental factors can have a profound effect on the health and well-being of animals as well as on the outcome of experimental manipulation. Among other factors, noise levels and pheromones may affect animal well-being and research results. Pheromones are used to mark territories and to recognize which individuals are familiar. They may also invoke or suppress aggression between males and influence mating behavior. Research laboratories need to keep these animals physically and psychologically healthy—not only for moral obligation, but also because doing so reduces extraneous variables.

SOU houses and maintains research animals. As such, SOU will abide by the guidelines governing their care and use when determining whether a service animal may be permitted into a laboratory or field classroom.

This policy may be revised at any time without notice. All revisions supersede prior policy and are effective immediately upon approval.

C. Policy Consultation

Disability Resources, Campus Public Safety, the Science’s Chemical Hygiene and Safety Committee, and Policy Council. Policy was posted on May 15, 2020 for community comment.

D. Other Information

[The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee \(IACUC\) Protocol](#)

The Policy Contact, defined above, will write and maintain the procedures related to this policy and these procedures will be made available within the Custodial Office.