

Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals in Class  
November 5, 2018

## I. Service versus Emotional Support Animals

Use of a **service animal** is an ADA-protected right for individuals with disabilities. The service animal is allowed to go anywhere the public is allowed to go. Therefore, service animals assisting OU students must be allowed in OU classrooms and must be allowed at field placement sites. If a child at the field placement site is allergic to the service animal, the child will receive an accommodation. The allergy is not a reason to deny the service animal.

Use of an **emotional support animal** is not a protected right. Emotional support animals, no matter how well-trained, may be barred from OU classrooms and from field placement sites.

## II. Documentation/Registration

Federal law does not require the OU student to provide documentation that an animal has been trained as a Service Animal. Any instructor with a need to know may, however, ask the OU student presenting with or asking to use a Service Animal these two (and only these two) questions:

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

If the OU student indicates that the animal IS NOT a service animal that is required because of a disability, then it is up to the discretion of the instructor whether the animal is allowed to be present in class. There is no obligation to allow the animal to attend class with the OU student.

If the individual indicates that the animal IS a service animal that is required because of a disability, then the animal must be allowed to attend class with the OU student as long as it is not disruptive. If the animal is disruptive and the OU student does not quickly bring the animal under control, the instructor should ask the student to remove the animal from the classroom and contact the DRC for guidance at the earliest opportunity.

In all cases, if an animal is attending class with an OU student, the instructor should notify the DRC of this fact.

If there are any questions or concerns about the presence or behavior of a particular animal, or about the OU student's response to the two questions above, the instructor should contact the Disability Resource Center for further assistance.

## III. More Information

ADA National Network website:

<https://adata.org/publication/service-animals-booklet>

OU – Disability Resource Center (DRC) Website:

[http://www.ou.edu/drc/students/policies#Assistance Animal Policy](http://www.ou.edu/drc/students/policies#Assistance%20Animal%20Policy)

OU Disability Resource Center

730 College Avenue - University Community Center, Norman, OK 73019

(405) 325-3852 (Voice) Email: [drc@ou.edu](mailto:drc@ou.edu)