

Skidmore College

Service Animal Policy

Skidmore College cultivates an inclusive and supportive learning community and values the diverse identities of our students. We are committed to providing students with disabilities full and meaningful access to all college programs and activities and recognize that, for certain students, 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), Skidmore College service animals are welcome 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.

Service animal means any *dog 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.

Examples - 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.

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 or Social Alert dog (Ssig) - is trained to assist people with autism to avoid sensory overload, remain calm when in environments where sensory overload is high, alerts the handler to distracting, repetitive movements. Ssig 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.

*Under particular circumstances, a miniature horse may qualify as a service animal. All other species of 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 he/she must:

- Have a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act; and,
- The service animal must be trained do specific tasks for the qualified individual.

Institutional Inquiry

If and only if the work or tasks a service animal provides to a handler are not readily apparent, Skidmore staff may inquire of the qualified individual:

- Whether the animal is required because of a disability; and,
- What work or task has the dog been trained to perform.

Staff cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

Staff or students may contact the Campus Safety if any questions or concerns arise relating to the presence of a services animal, to report service animal misbehavior or mistreatment of a service animal. If living in a Skidmore residential hall, College personnel may require proof of compliance with local animal licensing ordinances.

Responsibilities of the Handler

Unless such devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using them, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered.

In all cases, the handler must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

The expense and responsibility to feed, provide health care, and necessary bathing and grooming of service animals is the sole responsibility of the handler. Service animals must be in compliance with local licensing laws.

The handler is responsible for removing or arranging for removal of animal waste.

Violations of this policy will be referred to the Integrity Board