

Office for Students with Disabilities & Deaf Services  
DON 147  
303 Homestead Ave  
Holyoke MA 01040  
P: 413.552.2417  
VP: 413.650.5502  
F: 413.552.2058

## **Policy on Service Animals**

Holyoke Community College generally permits service animals assisting individuals with disabilities in all facilities maintained by the College. Therefore, an individual with a disability shall be permitted to be accompanied by his/her service animal in all areas of the College's facilities where members of the public are permitted. The College reserves the right to impose restrictions on the use of service animals on its property in order to maintain safety or to avoid disruption of College operations.

This policy applies only to facilities owned by the College or under its control. Please be advised that there may be restrictions imposed on the use of service animals in non-college facilities, such as hospitals, science laboratories or other clinical or internship experience locations. Such restrictions are established by the individual facilities according to their own policies and procedures and the College has no control over such restrictions.

### **“Service Animal” Defined**

The Americans with Disabilities Act's regulations define “service animal” as 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. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. However, in certain instances, the use of other animals as a service animal may be permitted under other laws so please consult with the College's ADA Compliance Coordinator.

### **Type of Work or Tasks a Service Animal May Provide**

Work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to its handler's disability. Examples of work or tasks performed by service animals include, but are not limited to:

- assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks
- alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds
- providing non-violent protection or rescue work
- pulling a wheelchair
- assisting an individual during a seizure
- alerting individuals to the presence of allergens
- retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone
- providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities
- helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors

Services that do not qualify as work or tasks performed by a service animal include:

- crime deterrent effects; or
- the provision of emotional support, comfort, or companionship, often referred to as “therapy” or “companion” animals.

### **Service Animal Documentation**

Consistent with state law, all dogs on campus shall:

- possess an animal license in compliance with Massachusetts law;
- be properly immunized and vaccinated; and,
- wear a current license and rabies vaccination tag.

It is recommended that a service animal wear some type of recognizable symbol identifying it as a service animal. However, there is no requirement for documentation to prove that the animal has had particular training or is a “certified” service animal.

### **Registration of a Service Animal on Campus**

When practicable, a student or employee seeking to use a service animal is requested to notify the Office for Students with Disabilities and Deaf Services (OSDDS) prior to bringing the animal onto College property. A service animal’s handler will be asked to complete a voluntary *Service Animal Registration Form*. This document shall be maintained confidentially by the College. If the animal qualifies as a service animal, the handler will voluntarily agree to comply with this policy at all times while the animal is on College property. Members of the general public intending to visit the college with a service animal should notify OSDDS in advance when practicable. Specific questions related to the use of service animals on College property can be directed to the Director of OSDDS, Maureen Conroy via email at [mconroy@hcc.edu](mailto:mconroy@hcc.edu) or by phone at 413.552.2582.

### **Permissible Inquiries about a Service Animal**

It is permissible for the College to make the following inquiries in order to determine whether an animal qualifies as a service animal:

- is the animal required because of a disability?

AND

- what work or task is the animal trained to perform?

The College shall not inquire about the nature or extent of a person’s disability. Further, the College shall not make these inquiries about a service animal when it is readily apparent that an animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability (e.g., the dog is observed guiding an individual who is blind, pulling a person’s wheelchair, or providing assistance with stability or balance to an individual with an observable mobility disability).

## **Control of a Service Animal**

The College is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal. A service animal must be under the control of its handler at all times. A service animal shall have a leash or other tether, unless the handler is unable because of a disability to use a leash or other tether, or the use of such would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of its work or tasks. Under those circumstances where a service animal is not tethered, the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means).

## **Health, Hygiene and Cleanliness**

Service animals must be clean. Daily grooming and occasional baths should be utilized to keep the animal's odor to a minimum. Adequate flea prevention and control must be maintained. If a service animal's odor is offensive to other individuals, the handler will be requested to bathe the service animal prior to returning to the College. A service animal's handler must clean up after the animal. If due to a disability the handler is unable to do so, the handler shall make alternative arrangements to do so.

## **Exclusion of a Service Animal from College Property**

The College may direct an individual with a disability to remove a service animal from the premises if the animal:

- is out of control and its handler does not take effective action to control it (including the animal poses a direct threat to others on campus and/or exhibits behavior that interferes with the educational process);
- is not housebroken, is ill, or presents a reoccurring offensive odor; and/or
- is not properly licensed and/or vaccinated

If the College excludes a service animal from its premises, it shall still afford the individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in its programs or activity without having the service animal on the premises.

## **Public Etiquette Rules**

Members of the public should avoid:

- petting a service animal as it may distract the animal from its work
- feeding a service animal
- deliberately startling a service animal
- calling or attempting to attract the attention of a service animal
- attempting to separate a service animal from its handler

## **Grievances**

Any person who believes that his/her rights to use a service animal on College property have been violated may file a complaint under by contacting the College's ADA Compliance Coordinator.