

SERVICE ANIMALS AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS

Service Animals

Service animals are trained to provide a specific service or services to an individual with a disability. Examples include a dog that guides an individual who is blind, alerts a deaf or hard of hearing person when a doorbell rings, or picks up and hands a pen to a person with a mobility impairment. With a limited exception for miniature horses, a service animal can only be a dog. Generally, service animals are permitted to go anywhere on campus that is open to the public.

A college may recommend to a student (the handler) that they register a service animal with the Accommodations and Accessibility Services but may not require the handler to do so. Nor may a college require documentation for review by Accommodations and Accessibility Services before the service animal is permitted on campus.

An individual with a service animal is not required to obtain permission to bring the animal on campus. Service animals are not designated on a student's Memorandum of Accommodation (MOA). Students who use a service animal may or may not have any other accommodations.

When a student appears with a service animal, the college may ask only two questions:

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

These are the only two questions that may be asked. Individuals may not inquire as to the nature of the student's disability. Individuals may not attempt to verify or confirm that the animal performs the service indicated by the handler.

The handler is expected to always maintain control of the service animal. If the presence of a service animal causes a disruption, individuals should contact Accommodations and Accessibility Services as soon as possible to enlist their help in resolving the matter.

If there are any other concerns about having a service animal present (i.e., allergies), individuals should also contact Accommodations and Accessibility Services.

Emotional Support Animals

An emotional support animal (ESA), by its mere presence, is used to ameliorate or reduce the limitations associated with a disability. For example, the companionship of a dog may reduce the anxiety level of a person with a disability to such a degree that attending college becomes possible when it would not otherwise be. ESAs are not trained to perform a specific task.

An individual who wishes to bring an ESA on campus **must obtain approval** through the college's accommodation process. ESAs must be designated on a student's Memorandum of Accommodation (MOA) and the MOA must be presented before the animal is allowed inside of

NOVA's building and facilities. There should be no further discussion about the purpose or function of the animal.

As with a service animal, the handler is expected to always maintain control of the ESA. If the presence of the animal causes a disruption, or if there are other concerns, individuals should contact Accommodations and Accessibility Services as soon as possible to enlist their help in resolving the matter.