

Worcester Polytechnic Institute Animals on Campus

Policy

Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) is committed to creating a welcoming environment through the use of commonly accepted guidelines and procedures that allow animals to be on-campus for specific purposes. These purposes include reasonable accommodations for employees, students, and visitors with disabilities in compliance with applicable state and federal laws, pets that may be brought on campus for casual use of the grounds, special occasion visits by therapy animals, law enforcement animals, and those animals employed in the teaching and research environment.

Definitions

Disability: Defined as a physical or mental condition or impairment that is medically recognizable and diagnosable, and substantially limits one or more of an individual's major life activities. These limitations may include performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and learning. An individual is substantially limited in major life activities if unable to or significantly restricted from performing the activity compared to the average person.

Pet: A pet is an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. A pet is not considered a service or assistance animal. For pets in any university housing, please refer to [Community Standards for Living on Campus](#) on the Residential Services webpage.

Service animal: Any dog or miniature horse 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. The work or tasks a service animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability, and must accompany the individual with the disability at all times. The provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purpose of this definition.

Assistance animal: An animal that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for an individual with a disability, or provides necessary emotional support to an individual with a mental or psychiatric disability that alleviates one or more identified symptoms of the individual's disability, but which are not considered service animals under the definition above. Dogs are commonly used as assistance animals, but any animal may serve a person with a disability as an assistance animal. Unlike a service animal, an assistance animal does not accompany a person with a disability at all times.

Departmental Contacts

If you are a...	Go to...
... student bringing a service or assistance animal to campus and/or campus housing	Office of Disability Services 508-831-4908
... faculty or staff member bringing a service animal to campus	Human Resources 508-831-5470

...an employee or student group seeking approval to bring therapy animals to campus for special occasion visits	Student Activities Office 508-831-5291
... individual reporting a safety issue with an animal on campus	Campus Police 508-831-5433
... individual reporting an issue with an animal in any on-campus housing	Residential Services Office 508-831-5645

Procedures

General Expectations for All Animals on Campus Grounds

The handler/owner is responsible for assuring that the approved animal does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the university or cause difficulties for campus community members. Therefore any and all animals are not permitted to: sniff people, tables in eating areas, food, or the personal belongings of others; initiate contact with someone without the owner's direct permission; display any disruptive behaviors or noises (such as barking, whining, growling, or rubbing against people); or block an aisle or passageway.

Campus Property: Animals may not enter recreational space including the Recreation Center and all outdoor athletic fields, research laboratories, machine shops, residential space unless approved by Residential Services or in accordance with the *Pet Ownership Guidelines for Complex Coordinators*, residence hall courtyards, or dining areas. These expectations apply unless specifically approved by the appropriate office noted above or the animal serves as a service animal, special occasion visit animal, or law enforcement animal. When bringing animals into shared spaces, please be considerate of other community members and their working and living environments.

Care and Supervision: Care and supervision of the animal are the responsibility of the handler/owner. Community members may not transfer responsibility of animal care and supervision to any other individual while on-campus. The handler/owner is solely responsible for: maintaining full control of the animal at all times; the cost of care; responsibilities for the well-being of the animal; ensuring the cleanup of the animal's waste; and when appropriate, toileting the animal in areas designated by WPI and consistent with the person's needs and abilities.

Casual Use of the Campus for Pets: Casual use refers to those members of the community or surrounding neighborhoods who may bring their animal onto campus for a short period of time. Please refer to the guidelines outlined above under General Expectations for All Animals on Campus Grounds.

Health: The animal must have documentation from a licensed veterinarian dated within the past year stating that the animal is in good health and is immunized against diseases common to that type of animal within the State of Massachusetts. Preventative measures must be taken at all times for flea and odor control. Consideration of others must be taken into account when providing maintenance and hygiene of the animal. All service and assistance animals must be housebroken and must be spayed or neutered.

Licensing: All animals must meet the applicable licensing requirements of the City of Worcester and the State of Massachusetts. Dogs are required to wear an owner identification tag, a current rabies tag, and a dog license tag at all times. (For nonresidents, home state tags may be accepted.)

Leash: Animals must be on a leash and monitored at all times while on campus. Exceptions are permitted only if the animal is performing a specific duty that requires it to be unleashed or while in a student's on-campus residence if it is a university department approved assistance or service animal.

Steps to Request a Service or Assistance Animal

Procedure for Use of Service Animals on Campus

Service animals are permitted on WPI's campus, subject to the provisions in this policy applicable to service animals. Where it is not readily apparent what service an animal provides, in accordance with applicable laws WPI may ask (1) if the dog is a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task the dog has been trained to perform. WPI will not 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.

Verification of Disability Accommodation and Need for an Assistance Animal

All decisions associated with assistance animals will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Where it is not readily apparent that an animal is an assistance animal and the individual has indicated that there is a need, WPI may require sufficient information and documentation in accordance with applicable laws. If requested, documentation must be provided on the letterhead of the appropriate professional(s) qualified to provide such verification (i.e. treating/licensed physician, mental health provider, animal trainer, etc.) and must permit WPI to determine the following:

- that the individual has a disability for which the animal is needed;
- the relationship between the individual's needs and the assistance the animal provides;
- that the animal is necessary to afford the person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy the WPI facilities.

An on-campus resident student wishing to use an assistance animal in university housing must request permission to bring an animal to campus at least 30 days before their intended arrival. If requested, the resident must provide sufficient information through the Office of Disability Services online *Accommodated Housing Request Form* (for [first year/transfer students](#) and [upperclass students](#)) and include relevant documentation in accordance with the [Office of Disability Services documentation guidelines](#). Working in consultation with the Residential Services Office, the Office of Disability Services will determine the need for accommodations and work with the student and other necessary WPI offices to facilitate a reasonable accommodation. A request for an assistance animal may be denied as unreasonable if the presence of the animal: (1) imposes an undue financial and/or administrative burden; (2) fundamentally alters university housing policies; and/or (3) poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or would cause substantial property damage to the property of others, including university property. Students who are seeking university residential housing must complete a request each year for which they will reside on campus.

Responsibilities of People Using Service or Assistance Animals

In addition to the general expectations for animals on campus outlined herein, the expectations noted below are specific to service and/or assistance animals.

Physical Control: The student must be in full control of the animal at all times. The care and supervision of the animal is the sole responsibility of its handler/owner. It is the responsibility of the handler/owner to ensure that others are not disrupted by an unattended animal. Approved animals may not be left overnight in student housing to be cared for by another student. Animals must be taken with the student if they leave campus for a prolonged period, such as an overnight or extended weekend.

Care for Campus Property and Safety: The owner of the animal is financially responsible for the actions of the animal including bodily injury or property damage. The owner is expected to cover any costs for repair or cleaning beyond reasonable wear and tear. The owner could be asked to move out if the damage is deemed excessive and/or the result of negligence. The owner's room may be inspected for fleas, ticks, or other pests as needed. The room will be treated if pests are detected and the owner will be billed for the inspection and pest treatment.

Indoor Campus Locations: Service animals may accompany the handler/owner to all campus locations unless the presence of the animal poses a health or safety issue (please see the *Removal of Animals from Campus* section below). Individuals are strongly encouraged to speak with Environmental Health & Safety to discuss the risks to safety of their service animal in the research laboratory or machine shop environment. Assistance animals must remain in a student's residence when not being walked or toileted. Assistance animals are not permitted in food preparation or service areas, classrooms, other campus buildings, or residence hall locations other than the student's room and the pathway to and from the exits in the residence hall. Animals are not permitted in residence hall courtyards except in the case that a service animal is providing a service to its handler/owner.

Other Components and Limitations of This Policy

Possible Impacts on Other Members of the WPI Community

Individuals with medical condition(s) that are affected by animals (such as respiratory diseases, asthma, severe allergies) are asked to contact either the Office of Disability Services, the Student Health Center, Human Resources, or Residential Services Office if they have a health or safety related concern about exposure to a service or assistance animal. The individual will be asked to provide medical documentation that identifies the condition(s) and the need for an accommodation. Action will be taken to consider the needs of both individuals and to resolve the problem as efficiently and expeditiously as possible.

Limited or Special Occasion Visits

A University employee or recognized student organization may request approval for a therapy animal(s) to visit campus on a limited and structured basis for special occasions, such as mid-term examinations, final examinations, or other specified occasions. A written proposal must be provided to The Office of Student Activities at least 3 weeks in advance of the event. In order for limited and special occasion visits by therapy animals to be considered, a proposal must meet, at minimum, the following criteria:

- The proposal must specify the reason for the therapy animal(s) to be on campus.
- The proposal must specify the hours the animal(s) will be on campus and the identity of the certified handler who will be handling the animal(s) at all times.
- The proposal must describe how the University community will be notified of the presence of the therapy animal(s) on campus.
- All therapy animal(s) must have documentation and certification of training as a therapy animal. The recognizing agency must be approved by the State of Massachusetts.

- The proposal must specify the on-campus location of the therapy animal(s)' visit. The therapy animal(s) should be made available for visits in an area that is easy for those who do not wish to interact with the animal(s) to avoid such contact. Therapy animals are not permitted in food preparation or service areas.
- The proposal must specify how all event participants will sign a waiver in advance of interacting with the therapy animal(s).
- Any person approved to bring therapy animals onto campus property must provide a commercial general liability certificate of insurance for the handler and therapy animal with coverage of no less than \$100,000 per occurrence with the University named as an additional insured.

Law Enforcement Animals

WPI Campus Police, independently or working in a coordinated effort with any federal, state, or local law enforcement agency, may be accompanied by law enforcement agency animal(s) in conjunction with their respective duties. These officers, handlers, and animals may enter any and all facilities associated with WPI in the performance of their official duties.

Animals Used in Teaching and Research

The proper care, use, and humane treatment of animals used in research, testing, and education requires scientific and professional judgments based on a knowledge of the needs of the animals and the special requirements of the research, testing, and educational programs. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) at WPI is charged with overseeing and evaluating WPI's animal program, procedures, and facilities to insure that it is consistent with all applicable guidelines, recommendations, and regulations. [This website](#) provides information on animal use, policy, and protocols, as well as relevant forms and vendors associated with IACUC.

Removal of Animals from Campus

Consistent with federal and state law, WPI may exclude or remove a service or assistance animal if the animal's behavior or presence poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or causes a disruption to the health, welfare, success, or access of members of the campus community. The animal may also be excluded from areas where its presence fundamentally alters the nature of a program or activity. If the animal that is excluded or removed is a service or assistance animal, WPI will work with the individual to explore options that do not include having the service or assistance animal on the premises.

Appeal Process for Service/Assistance Animals

If the decision is made to deny a request or remove a service or assistance animal, the owner may request an appeal of the decision in writing to the Office of Disability Services (if a student) or Human Resources, (if an employee). Appeal requests must provide additional information or documentation that was not available at the time of the original decision, and must state a specific reason for reconsideration. Appeals will be reviewed by an Appeals Board, a committee of individuals representing Disability Services, the Dean of Students, Human Resources, Residential Services, and the Compliance Office.

The Appeals Board will render a final resolution to the specific issue within 5 University business days of the appeal, pending any updated and/or relevant information. It is important to note that the Appeals Board may refuse to accept any appeal that does not provide new and credible information or documentation. During the appeals process, the original decision will remain in force.