



## **Service Animal Policy**

### Concordia University Irvine

#### **Policy Administration**

This policy is administered by the Disability Access Services Office in alignment with Concordia's mission to "develop wise, honorable, and cultivated citizens." Questions or concerns may be directed to:

Disability Access Services

Email: [DAS@cui.edu](mailto:DAS@cui.edu) || Phone: (949) 214-3039 || Location: Schroeder Library & Learning Commons

Policy Revised: July 2025

#### **Purpose**

Concordia University Irvine is committed to providing an accessible and inclusive learning environment for all students. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Concordia permits the presence of service dogs in classrooms and campus facilities to support students with disabilities, while maintaining respect for the integrity of the learning environment and the University's Christ-centered mission.

#### **Definition of a Service Animal**

A service animal is a dog that is individually trained to perform specific tasks or work for a person with a disability. The task(s) performed must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

Note: Emotional support animals, therapy dogs, and pets are not considered service animals under the ADA and are not permitted in classrooms unless approved under a separate accommodation process through Disability Access Services.

#### **Policy Overview**

##### **1. Access to Classrooms and Campus Facilities**

Students with disabilities may be accompanied by their service dog in all campus buildings, including classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and residence halls, unless a service dog's presence would fundamentally alter the nature of a program or activity. Faculty and staff may not deny access or



participation to a student using a service dog. Faculty may, however, request that a student establish a Service Animal Safety Plan before allowing the dog in the class/lab/clinical setting. Students bringing a Service Animal into the residence halls must connect with DAS at least 2 weeks prior to moving into the dorms.

## **2. Individualized Assessment**

Concordia University Irvine may impose legitimate safety requirements on the use or presence of a Service Animal that are necessary for safe operation of its facilities. There are some facilities that are not safe for use or presence of a Service Animal and from which Concordia University Irvine may exclude a Service Animal based on actual risks. Laboratories, research facilities and food preparation locations are areas where a Service Animal may pose a substantial and direct threat to health and safety. As a result, requests in these areas will require an individualized assessment that is determined on a case-by case basis. For additional information on Service Animals in laboratories and healthcare facilities, please see [Addendum for Science & ABSN Programs](#) below.

## **3. Service Dog Identification**

If the student's need for a service dog is not obvious, Concordia staff may ask the following two questions only:

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

No additional documentation or demonstration of the dog's abilities may be requested.

## **4. Student Responsibilities**

Students who bring a service dog to campus must:

- Maintain control of the dog at all times (via leash, harness, or voice command).
- Ensure the dog is clean, well-groomed, vaccinated, and free from illness.
- Take full responsibility for the care and supervision of the dog, including waste removal.
- Ensure the dog does not interfere with classroom activities or pose a threat to others.
- Meet with Disability Access Services if (1) living on campus, and/or (2) if enrolled in non-lecture courses, such as science labs or the ABSN program. This meeting is to evaluate potential safety issues and address them proactively. ABSN students are encouraged to meet with DAS upon admittance to the program in order to prevent delays for clinical placements. Residential students need to meet with DAS prior to moving into the dorms.



## **5. Conduct and Removal**

Service dogs must:

- Behave appropriately and not disrupt instruction or campus activities.
- Remain calm, non-aggressive, and under control at all times.
- Be housebroken.

Concordia reserves the right to remove a service dog if:

- It is not under control and the handler fails to take effective action.
- It is not housebroken.
- It poses a direct threat to health or safety.
- The class/program requires a Service Animal Safety Plan, and the student has not met with DAS to establish this plan. This is most relevant for labs and practicums.

If the dog is removed, the student may continue to participate in class without the dog and will be provided reasonable accommodations as needed.

## **6. Conflict Resolution**

Students or faculty with documented allergies, phobias, or health concerns related to dogs may also contact DAS for assistance. Concordia will engage in an interactive process to ensure the needs of all parties are met while upholding the rights of individuals with disabilities.

## **7. Campus Etiquette**

- Do not pet, feed, or distract a service dog while it is working.
- Respect the handler's privacy and avoid asking about their disability.
- Faculty may include a brief etiquette reminder in the course syllabus if a service dog will be regularly present.



### **Addendum for Science & ABSN Programs**

#### **Responsibility of the Individual Requesting a Service Animal:**

- Assume all responsibility for the care and supervision of their Service Animal.
- Ensure the Animal wears appropriate and suitable PPE as determined by the University and/or healthcare/clinical partner.
- Ensure the Animal does not engage in behavior in the lab/healthcare setting that endangers the health or safety of others, or of any research animals.
- Ensure the Animal complies with applicable county codes, including requirements for vaccinations and licensing laws.

#### **Responsibility of Disability Access Services:**

- Determine appropriate accommodations including the presence of the Service Animal in the lab/healthcare setting.
- Consult with the program/college to understand the safety hazards and risks presented by the specific laboratory/healthcare environment.
- Communicate accommodations to the responsible person to implement the accommodations and ensure safety procedures are put in place.

#### **Responsibility of the Program/College:**

- Determine if hazardous materials are present in the specific lab/healthcare setting
- Examine the physical layout of the specific laboratory/healthcare setting to determine locations of hazardous materials, workflow patterns, and potential locations for a Service Animal.
- Evaluate the various and unique safety hazards and risks, to people and the Animal, presented by the specific laboratory/clinical/healthcare setting environment.
- Provide recommendations to DAS regarding any safety issues, location advice, and any appropriate PPE for the Animal.
- Prepare an MOU for the Animal's presence in the specific laboratory/clinical/healthcare setting if appropriate.