

Assistance Dogs at Leeds Beckett University – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is an Assistance Dog?

An Assistance Dog is a highly trained working dog that helps people with disabilities or long-term health conditions in their everyday life. They perform tasks such as guiding individuals with sight loss, alerting those with hearing difficulties, or assisting with mobility, epilepsy, or diabetes.

2. Are pets or emotional support animals allowed in our university buildings?

No. Only registered Assistance Dogs are permitted in non-public spaces, including offices, classrooms, and University-managed student accommodation. Pets and therapy animals are not allowed. The only exception to this is when the University invites animal wellbeing services onto campus for specific events. Members of the public that walk their pet dog within the public spaces at our Headingley campus must always keep their dog on a lead.

3. Where are Assistance Dogs allowed?

They are permitted in all Leeds Beckett University buildings, facilities, offices, and University-owned student accommodation, unless there is a genuine health and safety or food hygiene risk (in which case, a risk assessment should be completed in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy).

4. How do I know if a dog is an Assistance Dog?

Assistance Dogs are usually identifiable by a harness, coat, or ID from an accredited organisation. However, this is not a legal requirement. They will behave calmly and remain close to their owner.

5. Which organisations train Assistance Dogs?

Most Assistance Dogs are trained by members of [Assistance Dogs UK \(ADUK\)](#) or assessed by the Assistance Dog Assessment Association (ADAA). Dogs trained or assessed by these bodies meet the University's criteria.

6. Should Assistance Dog owners let the University know that they use an Assistance Dog?

Yes. Managers should let the [Employee Relations Team](#) know if colleagues in their teams use an assistance dog. We encourage colleagues to update their disability information in the 'sensitive information (disability description)' free-text field in their iTrent profile to state that they have an assistance dog.

Students with an assistance dog will have their information captured in their student record, so their Course Team are aware, as well as Disability Services if they have chosen to engage with them.

7. How can I learn more about the correct etiquette around Assistance Dogs?

If you work with a colleague or student who uses an assistance dog, it is a good idea to brief people on how to behave around assistance dogs. The Guide Dogs association has [created a short video](#) on this topic which you might find helpful.

Do

- ✓ Give them space: Allow the dog and assistance dog user plenty of room to walk, especially in public places.
- ✓ Ask the assistance dog user for permission: Always ask them before interacting with the dog, even if it's not in harness.
- ✓ Speak to the assistance dog user first: If you need to offer assistance, address the person directly instead of trying to interact with the dog.
- ✓ Offer assistance appropriately: If the assistance dog user wants help, ask them how they would like you to assist before you take action.

Don't

- X Distract the dog: Do not touch, pet, call to, or make noises at the dog while it is working in harness, as this can be dangerous.
- X Feed the dog: Never give a guide dog food without the owner's permission.
- X Grab the harness: Never grab or hold the dog's harness or lead, as this interferes with the assistance dog user's control.
- X Interfere with training or corrections: Do not interrupt or interfere when a handler is giving the dog instructions or corrections.

8. What are the responsibilities of Assistance Dog owners?

Owners must ensure their dog's care, health, behaviour, and hygiene at all times. They are responsible for any damage caused by the dog. The University may restrict access to certain areas for health and safety or food hygiene reasons (e.g., labs, professional kitchen facilities).

9. What if I have concerns about an Assistance Dog?

Raise concerns informally first. Colleagues should speak to their manager, and students should speak to their tutor or Student Services. Unresolved issues should follow the University's complaints procedures.

10. What if someone has allergies or cultural objections to dogs?

The University will consider reasonable adjustments for allergy risks (e.g., cleaning measures) and additional advice can be sought from Human Resources. Cultural or religious objections are not grounds for refusing access to Assistance Dogs.

11. Are there toilet facilities for Assistance Dogs on campus?

Yes the University provides specific dog waste bins on our campuses. Owners should use designated outdoor areas for their dog's toileting needs. Event organisers should ensure these facilities are accessible and signposted.

12. Are Assistance Dogs insured?

Owners are responsible for ensuring their Assistance Dog is covered by the appropriate insurance for health, liability, and public access.

13. How should University event organisers consider Assistance Dog users?

It is good practice for event organisers to ask attendees in advance if they have any accessibility requirements, so they can prepare for assistance dog users in advance. They should also inform staff about the presence of assistance dogs to avoid unnecessary disruption.

You can read more about Assistance Dogs using the following links to external webpages:

- [ADUK Quick Guide for Students](#)
- [ADUK Guide for Employees](#)
- [Equality and Human Rights Commission \(EHRC\): Assistance dogs: A guide for businesses and service providers](#)