

# Oberlin College and Conservatory

## Policy and Procedures on

### Service Animals

### for Students with Disabilities

## Definitions

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**Pets:** A pet is any animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. As described in the Oberlin College and Conservatory Housing and Dining Regulations, “Fish and other aquatic animals that can only survive in water are the only pets permitted by students in College housing.” Service animals are not considered pets.

**Service Animals:** Service animals are dogs trained to assist people with disabilities in the activities of normal living. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines service animals 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. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler's disability. Examples of work or tasks 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, . . . retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.” In some circumstances, miniature horses may qualify as service animals.

## Procedure

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**Service Animals:** Service animals will be permitted to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of Oberlin College and Conservatory's facilities, including College housing, where students, members of the public, and other participants in services, programs or activities are allowed to go. Oberlin College and Conservatory does not require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal. Individuals accompanied by a service animal on campus but who do not need any disability-related accommodations are not required to register with Disability Resources, nor is such individual required to submit a request for a reasonable accommodation to receive access of his or her service animal.

Additionally, Oberlin College and Conservatory cannot ask about the nature or extent of a person's disability to determine whether a person's animal qualifies as a service animal. However, when it is not readily apparent that a dog is a service animal, Oberlin College and Conservatory staff may make two

inquiries to determine whether the dog qualifies as a services animal, which are:

- 1) Is the dog required because of a disability?
- 2) What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

A service animal must be housebroken (i.e. trained so that it controls its waste elimination, absent illness or accident) and must be kept under control by a harness, leash, or other tether, unless the person is unable to hold those, or such use would interfere with the service animal's performance of work or tasks. In such instances, the service animal must be kept under control by voice, signals, or other effective means.

Oberlin College and Conservatory will assess requests for the use of miniature horses by people with disabilities on a case-by-case basis. Requests should be submitted to Disability Resources, and consistent with applicable laws, Oberlin may make modifications in its policies to permit their use if they meet certain criteria and have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of people with disabilities.

## Responsibilities of Students Using Service Animals

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Oberlin College and Conservatory is not responsible for the care or supervision of service animals. People with disabilities are responsible for the cost, care, and supervision of the animals including:

- Compliance with any laws pertaining to animal licensing, vaccination, and owner identification. Lorain County, OH law requires that a dog is licensed (requires annual renewal) and wears a tag at all times. Go online to [Lorain County, OH Auditor - Dog Licenses](#) for specifics
- Keeping the animal under control and taking effective action when it is out of control
- Feeding and walking the animal
- Disposing of its waste.

Oberlin College and Conservatory will not require any surcharges or fees for service animals. However, a person with a disability may be charged for damage caused by an animal to the same extent that the institution would normally charge a person for damage they cause.

People with disabilities who are accompanied by animals must comply with the same College rules regarding noise, safety, disruption, and cleanliness as people without disabilities.

For the safety of workers, any work orders submitted to the College must have an indication that there is an animal in the room. The work order should also indicate the type of animal.

## Restrictions

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Oberlin may pose some restrictions on an animal under certain circumstances. Any animal may be excluded from an area in which it was previously authorized if

- The animal is out of control and effective action is not taken to control it
- The animal is not housebroken
- The owner fails to maintain the cleanliness of the room

- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be mitigated by reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures, or the provision of auxiliary aids or services.

Disability Resources will make the determination if a restriction should apply. In considering whether an animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, Oberlin College and Conservatory will make an individualized assessment based on reasonable judgment.

## Grievances

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The Disability Resources grievance policy is available on the Oberlin College and Conservatory website at [Disability Resources - Policies - Grievance Process](#).

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