

Health and Safety Procedure - Pet and Assistance Animals

Section 1 - Key Information

Policy Type and Approval Body	Administrative – Vice-Chancellor
Accountable Executive - Policy	Chief Operating Officer
Responsible Manager - Policy	Senior Manager, Health and Safety
Review Date	19 December 2026

Section 2 - Purpose

(1) This Procedure outlines and aligns the relevant legislative compliance obligations with the University's [Health and Safety Policy](#) regarding pets and assistance animals brought onto campus.

Section 3 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to:

- a. all staff and members of the University Community (including Council members, volunteers, students, contractors and associates)
- b. all University campuses and research areas

Section 4 - Key Decisions

Key decisions	Role
Review and approve the hazard risk assessment to enable a non-assistance animal to attend campus	Local area supervisor or manager
Approve visiting pets on campus for staff	Local area supervisor or manager

Section 5 - Policy Statement

(3) This Procedure forms part of the [Health and Safety Policy](#) suite and the [Disability Policy](#) which governs its application.

(4) Assistance animals can make a profound difference in the lives of people with disabilities. The University supports the important work of these animals and their role in enabling people with disabilities to access higher education and employment.

(5) The University also recognises that non-assistance animals can also play a role in supporting individuals with a disability. Where there is sufficient evidence that a non-assistance animal is required, the University will consider whether permission will be granted for such animals to enter buildings and built-up areas as part of the University's consideration of reasonable adjustment under equal opportunity legislation.

(6) Conversely, the University prohibits domestic pets from entering buildings, built up areas and University vehicles (unless approval has been granted in accordance with the procedure below) owing to potential risks and/or disturbances to staff, students and the campus more generally. As per the University Grounds Statute 2009, animals should not be taken into built up areas and University buildings unless an exemption applies. Exemptions prescribed by this procedure include:

- a. Guide dogs and guide dogs in training
- b. Assistance animals
- c. Animals used to support approved research, clinical and teaching structured learning instances
- d. Animals used in theatrical performances
- e. Fish, amphibian, or reptile tanks in communal display areas
- f. Emergency services and law enforcement animals which are on duty e.g. police dogs

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Pets in Built Up Areas and University Buildings

(7) The University recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where a pet may need to be brought into a built-up area or University building. Should an exceptional circumstance exist, the staff/student must apply in writing and receive approval from their head of Divisional area prior to the pet being brought onto campus and a built-up area of the University.

(8) A written request should be made to the head of the Divisional area for approval and provide details on:

- a. The type of pet
- b. Period of the time the pet is required to be on campus
- c. Reason for the pet being brought onto campus

(9) Approving positions must take into consideration any potential risks, disturbances and individual objections including:

- a. Possibility of the pet posing risks of barking, biting, scratching or upsetting people who may be exposed to the animal
- b. Pathogens being introduced into the workplace, animal hygiene issues and allergies of individuals
- c. Contamination of experimental areas
- d. Interference with work practices or contributing to harm or accidents

(10) A request must not be made for a restricted breed dog, dangerous dog, or menacing dog as defined in the [Domestic Animals Act 1994 \(Vic\)](#).

(11) If written approval is provided, the animal owner must comply with the responsibilities outlined in Part E below and ensure that their pet is accompanied and controlled/restrained.

(12) The approving head of Division may also request that a pet be removed from campus.

Part B - Assistance Animals

(13) An assistance animal (which is also commonly referred to as a service animal) is defined under the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (Cth) as a dog or other animal that:

- a. Is accredited under law to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability;
- b. Is trained by an accredited training organization prescribed by the regulations; and
- c. Meets the standards of hygiene and behavior that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.

(14) An assistance animal is deemed such when it has undertaken formal training OR is in-training with an accredited training organisation to perform a service function for the owner/handler who has a disability, including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.

(15) All assistance animals (which are generally dogs) operating on university campuses need to have satisfactorily completed or be in training with an accredited training provider to perform specific work/tasks that mitigates their handler's disability, including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. This can include but is not limited to guide dogs, hearing dogs, mobility assistance animals, physical assistance animals, psychiatric assistance animals, assistance animals for development/intellectual disabilities, seizure alert/response animals and diabetes alert animals.

(16) The Wellbeing Dog program and partnership between the University and the Centre for Service and Therapy Dogs Australia (CSTDA) is recognized as a training provider. Participants of the program are recognised by the University as being in training to be an 'assistance animal' and will have public access rights while on campus, subject to the specified exceptions in the restricted areas listed in the clause below.

(17) As stated in the [University Grounds Statute 2009](#), service and assistance animals have access to all La Trobe University campuses and facilities with the exception of:

- a. Physical Containment (PC) laboratories levels 1-4 because the fundamental function of containment will be compromised with the introduction of additional hazard risk; and
- b. Research laboratories, teaching wet laboratories and workshop areas, unless a hazard risk assessment demonstrates that reasonable adjustments can be made.

(18) There are several other types of animals which do not meet the legal definition and are not considered 'assistance animals' including companion, emotional support, therapy, facility and visitation animals. The University recognises the service and supporting role that these animals have in an individual's life and will assess and make reasonable adjustments for any individual requests that it receives. Requests and supporting documentation should be directed in the first instance to:

- a. Access Ability and Inclusion for students
- b. People & Culture for staff

(19) In all instances which involve a non-assistance animal, a Risk Assessment to identify reasonable adjustments will be undertaken with the Health and Safety team before the animal will be allowed on campus. The Risk Assessment ensures there are appropriate provisions and controls in place and that any necessary communications are undertaken to manage the expectations of all other stakeholders.

Part C - Social Behaviour and Expectations

(20) Whilst on campus, all animals will:

- a. meet the standards of hygiene, including toileting
- b. demonstrate social behaviour that is neither unruly nor aggressive
- c. be under continuous effective control by their owner or handler
- d. not be left unattended or tethered

Part D - Responsibilities

Animal Owner/Handler

(21) The service and assistance animal owner/handler is responsible for:

- a. Managing the hygiene and behaviour of the animal
- b. Ensuring the animal remains under continuous effective control
- c. Providing the University evidence of service animal accreditation or accredited in-training
- d. Providing evidence for the requirement of a non-assistance animal. A non-assistance dog will require a training report for behavioural assurance to be submitted as part of the approval process
- e. Participating in a risk assessment to identify the reasonable adjustments that are required for non-assistance animals on campus

Managers and Leaders

(22) Managers and leaders are responsible for:

- a. Ensuring evidence of assistance animal accreditation or accredited in-training is obtained
- b. Ensuring evidence for the requirement of a non-assistance animal is obtained, including a training report
- c. Providing approval or otherwise for visiting pets
- d. Ensuring a Risk Assessment to identify the reasonable adjustments is completed prior to the non-assistance animal coming on campus, and that these requirements are managed
- e. Providing visible support and managing the communications/expectations with other University stakeholders

Health and Safety Team

(23) The Health and Safety Team is responsible for:

- a. Providing oversight and monitoring this Procedure
- b. Supporting the risk assessment process to identify the reasonable adjustments
- c. Monitoring to ensure any necessary corrective actions are implemented

All Staff, Students, Contractors and Visitors

(24) All staff, students, contractors and visitors are responsible for:

- a. Being supportive to the presence of service and assistance animals
- b. Refraining from distracting or interfering with an assistance animal whilst it is working

Part E - Emergency or Immediate Assistance

(25) For assistance where there may be a danger to a person or property, or if an animal is found unattended, University Security will be contacted in the first instance, please refer to Security and Emergency Assistance contact numbers.

(26) University Security may contact the relevant authority to request the removal or detainment of an animal.

Section 7 - Definitions

(27) For the purpose of this procedure:

- a. Animal handler: The person who is in charge of and managing the service and assistance animal. This person is commonly experiencing the disability for which the service and assistance animal is required.
- b. Assistance animal: An animal that is trained and accredited to perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability. An assistance animal has public access rights in Australia and is defined under the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (Cth).
- c. Built up areas: include but are not limited to, lecture theatres, laboratories, workshops, classrooms, meeting rooms, common rooms, tea rooms, office area, food/commercial venues. Agora (University centre), foyers or other public areas of University buildings.
- d. Non-assistance animal: is not recognized as an assistance animal as defined in the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (Cth) and does not have public access rights in Australia. These animals include companion, emotional support, therapy animals and facility animals.
- e. Pet: A domesticated or tamed animal that is kept as a companion and cared for affectionately.
- f. Reasonable adjustment: the term applied to modifying the learning or work environment or making changes to the curriculum to assist a learner with a disability or to assist a staff member with a disability to be able to perform their work refer to the [Disability Policy](#).

Section 8 - Authority and Associated Information

(28) This Policy is made under the [La Trobe University Act 2009](#).

(29) Associated information includes:

- a. [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- b. [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#)
- c. [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986](#)
- d. [Health and Safety \(intranet\)](#)
- e. [Disability Policy](#)
- f. [University Grounds Statute 2009](#)
- g. [Health and Safety \(intranet\)](#)

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	19th December 2023
Review Date	19th December 2026
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	19th December 2023
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Manager - Policy	Spomenka Krizmanic Senior Manager, Health and Safety 61 3 9479 2186
Enquiries Contact	Health and Safety

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"staff" - Staff means any person employed by the University as per the definition in the La Trobe University Act 2009 (Vic).