

SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

Ross University School of Medicine (“RUSM” or the “University”) is committed to promoting full participation and equal access to University programs and activities for individuals with disabilities. Pursuant to these commitments, service animals (defined below) are permitted on campus for persons with disabilities in accordance with the requirements of this policy. Prior to arrival on campus, an individual with a service animal may, but is not required to, contact the Office of Student Disability Services (“OSDS”) at rossmedosds@adtalem.com or 855-229-0848 to notify the institution that they will be bringing a service animal.

In any case RUSM has shared purview over a space/activity with the government of Barbados, or in spaces where the purview is solely that of the Barbados government, RUSM will defer to the government regulation. In the case where Barbados law takes precedence over RUSM policy, students may work with the OSDS to determine if options and potential modifications may exist. Private businesses on Barbados may have their own rules and procedures that restrict or otherwise prevent access by service animals.

Definitions

"Service Animal" means any guide dog, signal dog or other dog or miniature horse that is individually trained or undergoing training; to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. Disability refers to an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks of daily living for an individual with a disability. A service animal is a working animal, not a pet. To be considered a service animal, the work or task the animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the individual's disability. Although the animal must be trained, it is not required to be licensed or certified by a state or local government or particular training program to be a service animal. 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.

Examples of work or tasks performed by a service animal include but are not limited to:

- Guiding people with impaired vision
- Alerting individuals with impaired hearing to the presence of other people or sounds
- Assisting with opening doors or pushing buttons
- Aiding persons with impaired mobility by steadying the person when walking
- Pulling a wheelchair
- Retrieving dropped items
- Alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure
- Reminding a person with a mental health impairment to take prescribed medications
- Recognizing that a person is about to have a psychiatric or neurological episode and responding in a manner that prevents or interrupts the episode or otherwise protects the person until the episode subsides
- Providing minimal rescue or non-violent protection work

"Disability" means a physical or mental health impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

"Individual with a Disability" refers to a person with a disability or who has a record of a disability or who is regarded as having a disability.

"Handler" means either the trainer of a service animal or the individual who utilizes a service animal to perform work or tasks pertaining to that individual's disability.

Requirements of Handlers & Service Animals

Service Animals are permitted inside RUSM buildings and facilities pursuant to the requirements below. Outside of RUSM buildings on the campuses, animals are permitted to transiently use other outdoor campus areas, e.g., walkways, parking lots and streets, while in transit to and from the grassy area or the destination building or site.

- The service animal must be vaccinated and licensed as required by local ordinance;
- Service animals must be accompanied by the handler;
- The handler must remain near the service animal;
- The service animal must be restrained on a leash at all times unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. It should be noted, however, that service animals that leave their handlers could be indicating the handler needs help or medical assistance and the animal should be followed back to the handler;
- The service animal should be responsive to commands and be under the full control of the handler at all times. The handler must ensure that the service animal is behaving, and neither interfering with the day-to-day operations and business of the RUSM community (e.g., not barking regularly), nor posing a threat to others (e.g., not growling or biting others). Handlers, whose service animal does not behave appropriately are expected to remove the animal from the immediate environment if asked by RUSM staff or faculty. Instances of inappropriate behavior may result in a determination by the Office of Accommodations that the service animal is no longer allowed on campus;
- The handler is responsible for designating an alternate caregiver in case of emergency;
- The handler is responsible for the care and feeding of the service animal and immediately cleaning up waste or solicit proper assistance to clean up waste of their service animal. The handler of the service animal is solely responsible for any damage to persons or property caused by the service animal; and
- A service animal is not required to have a special harness/collar, documentation of training or identifying tags;

Visitors and their service animals are expected to comply with the requirements of handlers and service animals listed above.

Interacting with Service Animals

The handler may request that others avoid: Petting or addressing his/her service animal as it may distract it from the task at hand, feeding the service animal, deliberately startling the service animal and separating or attempting to separate the handler from his/her service animal.

To the extent possible, the service animal should not:

- Block an aisle or passageway for fire and/or emergency egress

Permissible Inquiries

Members of the RUSM community who have questions or concerns regarding the behavior of a service animal or the presence of a service animal on campus or within a RUSM facility should not direct their concerns to the individual and/or handler. Rather, direct all questions or concerns to the OSDS at rossmedosds@adtalem.com or 855-229-0848. RUSM students, faculty, and staff shall not ask any questions about the individual's disability.

Health of the Service Animal

The service animal must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. A service animal must be clean and groomed and measures should be taken for flea and odor control. Service animals that are ill or in poor health should not be taken into public areas. A handler with an ill service animal may be required to remove the animal from RUSM property at the discretion of the OSDS.

Campus Access for Service Animals

A service animal is permitted to accompany the handler anywhere the handler goes on campus with exceptions in areas where specifically prohibited due to health, environmental or safety hazards. Any protective wear required for the service animal will be at the cost of the Handler to obtain. For information on purchasing protective wear, contact the OSDS. RUSM administration should contact the OSDS to identify areas which may pose a danger to the wellbeing of the service animal or when the animal's presence fundamentally alters the nature of a program or activity. Upon identification of prohibited areas, the OSDS will notify the Handler.

Management of Service Animal off RUSM's Campuses

Management of a service animal off of RUSM's campuses is beyond the scope of this policy. RUSM defers to the policies of individual clinical training sites regarding the use of service animals. For questions regarding a service animal at the clinical training site, please contact the designated semester's Clinical Skills Course Director.

Conflicting Needs

Individuals with medical needs impacted by the presence of animals (e.g., respiratory conditions, allergies, or psychological conditions) should contact the OSDS at rossmedosds@adtalem.com or 855-229-0848.

Inquiries or Complaints

General inquiries or questions should be directed to the OSDS at rossmedosds@adtalem.com or 855-229-0848. Student complaints and escalations should be directed to Adtalem's Office of Equity and Access at equity@adtalem.com.

Emotional Support Animals and Therapy Animals

Questions about emotional support animals and therapy animals should be directed to the OSDS at rossmedosds@adtalem.com or 855-229-0848.