



### **Introductions and Definitions**

Boston College is committed to the accessibility of its programs and services to students with disabilities, including accommodating service and assistance animals in accordance with its obligations under federal and state law.

“Service animal” is a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform specific tasks for a person with a disability. Under Massachusetts law, a person raising or training a service dog has the same rights as a person with a disability who has a service dog. Service animals do not include assistance animals. “Assistance animal” is an animal that assists an individual with a disability or provides necessary emotional support to an individual with a mental or psychiatric disability that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of the disability, but does not meet the definition of a service animal.

### **Service Animals**

Students who require the presence of a service animal at Boston College should inform the Disability Services Office as early as possible before bringing the animal to campus. The Disability Services Office will help ensure that the service animal is appropriately accommodated at the University, and if the student will reside on campus with the animal, help make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Residential Life. If it is not readily apparent that an animal is a service animal, the University may require additional information to determine whether the animal qualifies as a service animal under applicable law. This may include asking whether the animal is required because of a disability and what work or task the animal has been trained to do. For service animals in training, the University requires that the student trainer notify the Disability Services Office about the animal no later than the date set forth in the housing application for making requests for housing accommodations. The Office may request reasonable documentation regarding the animal’s training program.

### **Assistance Animals**

As discussed below, assistance animals may be allowed in University housing, but are generally not permitted in other campus facilities or vehicles. Students who have a disability-related need to live with an assistance animal in University housing must make a request to the Disability Services Office as early as possible, but no later than the date set forth in the housing application for making requests for housing accommodations. The University, including the Disability Services Office and the Office of Residential Life, will determine if the assistance animal is necessary to afford the student an equal opportunity to use and enjoy University housing and if the animal’s presence in University housing is reasonable. The student will be required to submit reliable documentation from a physician, social worker, or other mental health professional that establishes that the student has a disability and a disability-related need for the animal (that the animal in question provides disability-related assistance or support). A request for an assistance animal may be denied as unreasonable if the presence of the animal (i) imposes an undue financial or administrative burden; (ii) fundamentally alters University housing policies; (iii) poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, or (iv) would cause substantial property damage. If the University approves the assistance animal for housing, the animal must be contained in the student owner’s assigned living space, other than as required to be taken out for natural relief, during which time the animal must be in an animal carrier or controlled by a leash or harness.

### **Requirements and Limitations**

The owner of the service or assistance animal has responsibility for the management and supervision of the animal. Consistent with federal and state law, a service or assistance animal may be prohibited from a facility or program if the animal's behavior or presence poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. It may be excluded from areas where its presence fundamentally alters the nature of a University program or activity, if the animal is disruptive, if its presence would result in substantial physical damage to property, or if it substantially interferes with the reasonable enjoyment of the program, service or facility by others.

The owner of the animal must abide by all state and local requirements regarding vaccination, licensure, leash control, and all other requirements for animals. The University may require documentation of compliance with these requirements. The owner is responsible for the care, well-being, and appropriate treatment of the animal, and must clean up after and properly dispose of the animal's waste in a safe and sanitary manner.

Research laboratories, animal facilities, workshops, boiler rooms, or other areas with special safety or logistical considerations may not be accessible to animals under certain circumstances. Animal owners who wish to access specialized facilities of this nature are encouraged to notify the Disability Services Office as early as possible so that the Office can work with appropriate administrators to determine what accommodations are possible. Depending on the nature of the animal and the circumstances, the University may impose additional reasonable requirements for the health, safety and effective functioning of the University community.

### **Guidance for the University Community**

Any questions or concern regarding the presence of a service or assistance animal on campus should be addressed to the Disability Services Office at 617-552-3470, rather than to the owner of the animal. Individuals with allergies or other medical conditions that may be affected by the presence of a service or assistance animal should contact the Disability Services Office, which can help facilitate reasonable and appropriate accommodations that address the needs of both individuals.

### **Retaliation**

The University will not retaliate against any person because the person has requested or received a reasonable accommodation, including one that involves a service or assistance animal.

### **Grievances**

Any Boston College student who believes that a disability accommodation has been inappropriately denied, or otherwise believes that the University has discriminated against the student because of a disability, may bring a grievance under the Student Grievance Procedure for Students with Disabilities.

<http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/offices/dos/pdf/Student%20with%20Disability%20Grievance%20Procedures.pdf>

i A miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability may be permitted as a service animal under reasonable circumstances, considering the following factors: (i) whether the miniature horse is housebroken; (ii) whether the miniature horse is under the owner's control; (iii) whether the University can accommodate the miniature horse's type, size, and weight; and (4) whether the miniature horse's presence will not compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the University.