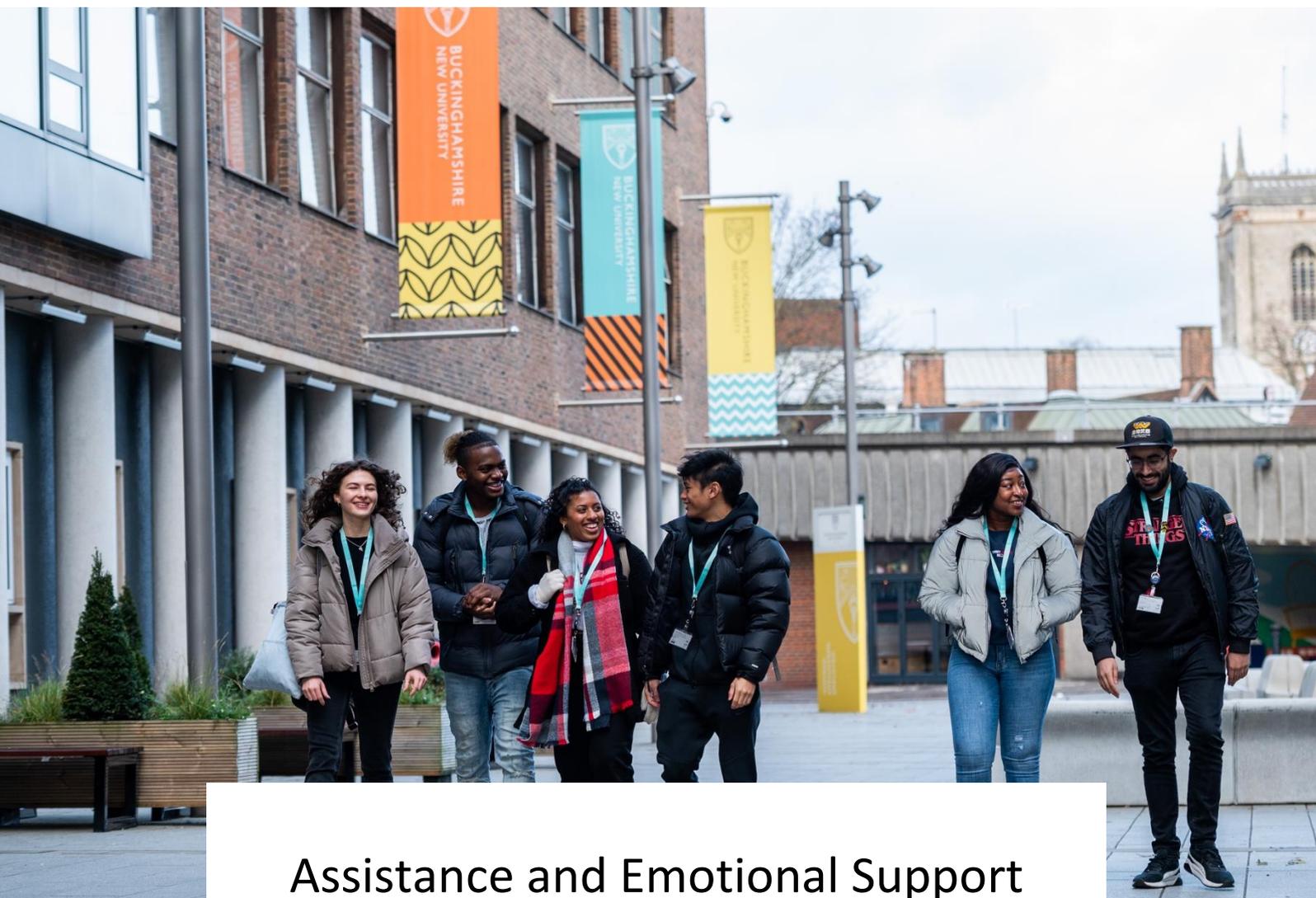




BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891



Assistance and Emotional Support Animals Policy: Students



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I. Purpose

1.1 This policy is designed to provide information and guidance regarding assistance animals and emotional support animals on Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) campuses and in university-managed student accommodation. It should be noted that students living in university accommodation are not permitted to have any pets (please see Halls of Residence Terms and Conditions of license). This policy relates to assistance animals who are formally accredited and emotional support animals (who are not accredited and are only permitted in exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis).

1.2 BNU is committed to providing a welcoming and inclusive environment and values the diversity of its staff and students. The University recognises the important role played by assistance animals and emotional support animals, which provide valuable, even life-changing, assistance for disabled people.

2. Applicability and Scope

2.1 In line with the Equality Act 2010 (England, Wales and Scotland) and the Disability Discrimination Act (Northern Ireland), BNU Disability and Inclusion Services will work with disabled students and other stakeholders to identify support needs and make reasonable adjustments to mitigate barriers to learning.

A person is considered disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This encompasses individuals with physical or sensory impairments, mental ill health, specific learning difficulties, and a range of chronic or fluctuating conditions. It is unlawful to discriminate against a disabled person or an individual based on their association with a disabled person in relation to the provision of education and related services.

2.2 The presence of an assistance or emotional support/ therapy animal on university premises must be assessed, reasonable and justifiable, requiring consideration of impact across multiple stakeholders, cohorts, and departments.

2.3 The main hazards and concerns associated with having animals inside university premises are:

- Stalled or delayed evacuation of a building in an emergency situation
- Aggressive behaviour of animals
- Allergic reactions and transmission of disease
- Zoophobia (phobia of animals that causes distress or dysfunction in an individual's everyday life)
- Slips, trips and falls
- Animal waste/ hygiene
- Damage to University property

In order to minimise these risks, subject to the exceptions given in clause 3 and 4, animals are not permitted inside university owned, leased, or controlled buildings, vehicles or structures.

In addition:

- No animals (including recognised assistance animals) should be left in parked vehicles on campus or tied up outside buildings.
- Animals (excluding assistance animals, as described in clause 3 and 4) must not be brought onto campus, with the exception of public rights of way.

3. Definition and types of assistance animal

3.1 For the purpose of this policy, an assistance animal is one, which has been specifically trained to assist disabled people and has been duly accredited by the appropriate organisation.

For example, an assistance dog will be accredited by one of the organisations registered as a member of Assistance Dogs (UK) or an equivalent organisation in another country.

3.2 Assistance dogs trained by members of Assistance Dogs (UK) have formal identification (coloured coat and collar tag) and have been granted certification by the Department of Health. As such, they are permitted to accompany their owners at all times and in all places within the UK (unless, in the view of the University, there is a genuine health and safety risk).

3.3 The University reserves the right to refuse access:

- To a dog that is not qualified by one of the seven membership organisations of Assistance Dogs (UK):

- Canine Partners
- Dog A.I.D.
- Dogs for the Disabled
- Guide Dogs
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
- Medical Detection Dogs
- Support Dogs

Or

- To a dog that is from another nation, which does not meet the full membership criteria of the established international assistance dog Assistance and Emotional Support Animals Policy: Students 4 organisations – Assistance Dogs International, Assistance Dogs Europe, International Guide Dog Federation – or other such international bodies as may from time to time be recognised; or

- For any other good reason, such as health and safety.

Types of assistance dogs include:

- Guide Dogs - assist people who are blind or visually impaired.
- Hearing Dogs - assist people who are deaf or hearing impaired.
- Support Dogs/Dogs for the Disabled – a Support Dog can be trained in a wide variety of practical tasks which their owner may find difficult or impossible, for example:
 - opening and closing doors
 - calling an ambulance
 - picking up objects
 - assisting with dressing and undressing
 - accompanying their owner while shopping etc.
 - acting as a physical support
 - raising the alarm
 - operating control buttons
 - switching lights on and off
 - carrying items
 - loading and unloading the washing machine

4. Emotional Support/ Therapy animals

The University's approach to emotional support animals.

4.1 BNU recognises the positive impact animals have on wellbeing and in providing emotional assistance. There is currently no recognised accreditation of emotional support animals. The University therefore reserves the right to refuse access to any animal at its discretion that is not accredited (as detailed in section 3 above). However, in exceptional circumstances and when there is clear medical evidence, consideration will be given to requests by students to bring emotional support/ therapy animals to university.

4.2 Definition of an emotional support/ therapy animal:

A therapy animal or emotional support animal is an animal that provides emotional support to help alleviate identified symptoms or effects of disability or mental health condition. A therapy animal does not necessarily aid with mobility and does not assist with practical daily tasks. Consideration can only be given to small animals that can be appropriately, safely, and hygienically transported in a pet carrier and/or housed in a student's bedroom.

4.3 Process for emotional support/ therapy animals (animals that are not registered under ADUK):

Students who wish to bring a therapy animal on campus must:

- Register with the BNU Disability and Inclusion Services
- provide appropriate medical evidence to support the request to have a therapy animal on campus, which should include information about the support the animal will provide

- arrange public liability insurance (through pet insurance) and provide a copy of the policy to the Disability and Inclusion Services.

4.3 Once the applicant student has completed the above steps, their Disability and Inclusion advisor will apply the Reasonable Adjustment Decision making process and form (available in Appendix1) along with the relevant stakeholders (i.e. The Estates team, Accommodation service, Academic team).

The process will support:

- Consideration of if bringing a therapy/ emotional support animal onto campus and/ or into Halls is a reasonable adjustment or if the student can be supported effectively through other services.
- Consider the possible impact of the request on other members of the University community such as significant disruption to services and allergies.
- Consider the welfare requirements of the animal.
- Consult with students living/ studying in close proximity to the applicant student (e.g. in the same flat/ classroom).

A collaborative decision on the request will be made.

If the student is unhappy with the decision, a review can be requested by writing to the Head of Student Wellbeing. If there is still a disagreement students have the right to appeal or escalate a complaint (see section 5.3).

5. Responsibilities

5.1 The University is responsible for:

Reasonable adjustments for a disabled student with an assistance dog/ support animal commonly include:

- Giving full access to buildings, classrooms, campuses, and accommodation even if there is a 'no dogs' or 'no animals' policy.
- Allocating a dedicated outside space or 'spending area' where the animal can relieve itself, where applicable.
- Educating staff and students as to the needs and rights of disabled students who rely on assistance animals and addressing concerns directly.
- Allowing students appropriate breaks to allow the assistance animals needs to be met.

Dining/Café areas: Disabled people accompanied by their assistance dogs have full access to all dining/café areas on all campuses. Assistance dogs are trained to lie quietly at their owner's feet when they sit down to eat. The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health has determined that assistance dogs are unlikely to present a risk to hygiene.

Canine behaviour: Assistance dogs are specially selected for their temperament and undergo lengthy training to ensure they are always under the control of their owner and will not cause a nuisance to anyone. Their owners also receive full training to ensure that they can handle their dogs appropriately.

Allergy concerns/fear of dogs: the Equality Act (2010) states that organisations must make reasonable adjustments to policies to accommodate disabled people. This includes amending any 'no dogs' and 'no pets' policies to allow access for assistance dogs, and means it is permissible for assistance dogs to accompany their owners anywhere on campus, including all lectures and seminars. If a person is identified as having an allergy to, or extreme fear of dogs, every effort will be made to ensure that the person has minimal or no exposure to any assistance dogs – this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

- The Disability and Inclusion Services are responsible for registering the student, including:
 - needs assessment
 - being in receipt of, holding and reviewing medical evidence/ AD(UK) registration documentation
 - applying the reasonable adjustment decision making process and form
 - recording and internally sharing the outcome on the student's adjustment and inclusion plan, as appropriate and only with consent from the student
 - offering advice and guidance
 - will provide students with a copy of this policy so they are fully aware of all procedures and responsibilities.
 - will liaise with all University stakeholders, including Accommodation, Estates and Academic departments as appropriate and will be the first point of contact should any issues/ questions arise.
- All relevant departments (i.e. the academic school, estates team, timetabling, accommodation service, exams, health and safety, security, etc.) are to contribute to the reasonable adjustment decision making process and implement agreed outcome/ actions in-line with the student's adjustment and inclusion plan.

- **Student Accommodation**

Where a student is residing in university-controlled accommodation with an assistance or emotional support/ therapy animal, student accommodation will ask all applicants if they would be prepared to live in an accommodation block where an assistance or emotional support/ therapy animal is present. This early survey, at point of application, will ensure the University has a comprehensive level of data prior to the allocation of rooms.

- Inform other allocated students that an assistance animal will be present in their residences, and provide guidance on acceptable interaction with the animal
- All applicants will be given the opportunity to amend their preference to live alongside an assistance animal
- In the event of disclosure of allergy to dogs/animals, or an extreme fear emerging, an assessment will be carried out on a case-by-case basis and mitigating efforts made.

- Estates will manage the upkeep of spending areas including the regular provision of refuse bins.

5.2 Student/ owner is responsible for:

- Sharing details of their disabilities and support needs at the earliest opportunity (including providing a copy of the yellow ID booklet from the AD(UK) member organisation for assistance dogs).
- Engage in meetings as requested to discuss their needs and specific arrangements.

The assistance dog is the responsibility of its owner at all times and must ensure that it:

- is kept on a lead/ contained at all times when on university premises
- is wearing formal identification (coloured coat and collar tag)

- has all its requirements met in respect of toileting, feeding, watering, grooming and veterinary attention:
 - Registered blind people are not required to clean up after their guide dogs but they are expected to have received the appropriate training to avoid dog waste on university property. Assistance dog users share responsibility for the clean-up of the animal's waste, consistent with reasonable capacity. Owners must use the designated areas identified by the university. In the unlikely event that the animal does foul outside of these designated areas, the owner must report this to the main reception desk on campus or halls reception who will make arrangements with the Estates team for the area to be cleaned and sanitised. For occurrences outside of manned hours, this should be logged with Estates, Facilities and Services via Badger under the 'cleaning' tab ([Bucks New University Web Helpdesk - Maintenance \(ert-cloud.net\)](#)).
- respect access restrictions established by the University on grounds of health and safety
- does not enter any other student rooms, in any university accommodation, without prior consent
- does not enter any shared bathroom facilities in any university accommodation
- is well-behaved at all times and causes no disruption
- ensure that their assistance animal is covered by full liability insurance and provide a copy to the University.
- Assistance Dog owners are responsible for any damage to persons or University property

Owners of assistance dogs that are ill, in poor health, excessively unclean or unkempt may be required to remove the animal from university premises – (for actions when concerns of abuse or neglect of the animal are raised see clause 5.3).

The University reserves the right to remove or bar entry to an Assistance Dog when it poses a direct threat to the health & safety of others. Unresolved animal misbehaviour may also provide grounds for removal, after all reasonable measures have been taken to address this.

BNU is not responsible for the loss, ill health, or death of the assistance dog/animal.

Where an Assistance animal poses adverse health risk to a/other student(s), the University will seek medical documentation from the affected party/parties to determine suitable alternative and equitable arrangements for either or both parties.

Religious or cultural beliefs cannot be used to prohibit access to Assistance Dogs and their owners.

5.3 Complaints

Concerns and complaints about assistance or emotional support animals or their owners:

Anyone wishing to raise a concern or make a complaint about an assistance or emotional support animal or their owner should raise the concern through the '[Report & Support](#)' link which will ensure a timely response in case there is a welfare concern. Every effort will be made to resolve the matter informally.

In the event that it cannot be resolved informally, the issue will be escalated and dealt with through the [Student Complaints Procedure](#) or other applicable policy.

In the event of concerns that an assistance dog is being abused or neglected, this will be reported to the training charity detailed on the lead slip.

- In the absence of this information, or for any other support animal this will be reported to the Royal Society from the Prevention of Cruelty of Animals (RSPCA).

6. Additional Information

AD UK Quick Guide [ADUK-Quick-Guide-to-Welcoming-Students-with-Assistance-Dogs-in-FE-and-HE.pdf \(assisteddogs.org.uk\)](https://www.assisteddogs.org.uk/ADUK-Quick-Guide-to-Welcoming-Students-with-Assistance-Dogs-in-FE-and-HE.pdf)

Guide Dogs www.guidedogs.org.uk guide_dogs@guidedogs.org.uk 0845 241 2178

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People www.hearing-dogs.co.uk info@hearingdogs.org.uk

Assistance Dogs UK www.assisteddogs.org.uk 01844 348 100

Support Dogs www.support-dogs.org.uk supportdogs@btconnect.com 0870 609 3476

Canine Partners www.caninepartners.co.uk info@caninepartners.co.uk 08456 580 480

The Royal National Institute of Blind People www.rnib.org.uk 0303 123 999

Dogs for the Disabled www.dogsforthedisabled.org info@dogsforthedisabled.org 08700 776 600

Dogs A.I.D www.dogaid.org.uk 01743 588 469

Medical Detection Dogs www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk 01296 655 88

[Emotional Support Animals UK Registration \(esaorguk.com\)](http://esaorguk.com)

The Emotional Support Animals UK Registration Club is a private registry established in 2019 to provide assistance to individuals seeking to navigate public spaces with their support animals and improve their quality of life. Their primary objective is to advocate for changes in current UK laws to grant Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) the same legal rights as service or assistance animals.

Table of Definitions

Disability	A person is disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'longterm' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities
Substantial (in reference to the above definition)	'substantial' is more than minor or trivial, e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
Long-term (in reference to the above definition)	'long-term' means 12 months or more, e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection
Reasonable Adjustment	Reasonable adjustments are changes that organisations and people providing services or public functions have to make for people if their disability puts them at a disadvantage compared with others who are not disabled

Assistance Animal	<p>An assistance animal is legally defined under commonwealth legislation as “a dog or other animal that:</p> <p>(a) is accredited under a State or Territory law to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effects of disability; or</p> <p>(b) is accredited by an animal training organisation prescribed in the regulations; or</p> <p>(c) is trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability and meets standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.”</p>
Emotional Support Animal	<p>An Emotional Support Animal (sometimes referred to as a Therapy Animal) is an animal that provides emotional support or passive comfort that alleviates one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of a disability. Unlike an Assistance Animal, an Emotional Support Animal does not assist a person with a disability with activities of daily living, nor does it accompany a person with a disability at all times.</p>
Pet	<p>A Pet is an animal kept for domestic use and companionship. A pet is not considered an Assistance or Emotional Support Animal. It is not covered by this protocol. Residents are not allowed to keep pets in King’s Residences accommodation.</p>
Assistance Dogs United Kingdom (AD UK)	<p>Assistance Dogs UK is a coalition of assistance dog organisations that have been accredited by Assistance Dogs International (ADI) and/or The International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF). ADUK members are non-profit organisations that work to the highest standards of assistance dog training and welfare.</p>

Appendix 1



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Reasonable Adjustment Decision-Making Form

How to use this form

This form would be completed when reasonable adjustment recommendations made by the Disability & Inclusion Services might not be considered reasonable locally and alternative options need to be identified. This document will help stakeholders with a legal obligation to make an evidence-based decision about whether an adjustment is 'reasonable' and establish alternatives where necessary. Once completed, this form should be sent to the Disability & Inclusion Services.

The process for deciding if an adjustment is 'reasonable'

The law does not require BNU to make adjustments that are not reasonable. However, to determine whether a requested adjustment is reasonable, you need to go through some steps to ensure that you have considered this thoroughly. There are three parts to doing this: (1) deciding if the duty to make a reasonable adjustment is required, (2) identifying possible adjustments; (3) deciding which (if any) of those adjustments are reasonable. This form will take you through these steps.

Decision-Making & Rationale

Name of individual or case identification: The name of the individual or the way in which this case is identified (e.g., student ID number)
Identified barriers and discussion with individual: Enter a brief description of the barrier that has been identified and how the individual feels about the support they need. See accompanying AIP.
Considered Adjustments: Provide list which adjustments you are assessing.
Reasonability Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effectiveness – how well does the adjustment in question remove or at least minimise the disadvantage?• Practicability – how practical is the adjustment? For example, how long will it take to implement, will anyone need extra training, are there enough resources etc.?• Cost – for example, how much will it cost, what financial resources are available (including schemes such as Disabled Students Allowance), can your organisation afford it?• Disruption – how disruptive to the business, to others, and to the needs of the organisation would it be to make this adjustment?• Risk – would making this adjustment cause any risk to others? (Note: An adjustment will not be 'reasonable' if anyone's health and safety would be compromised by making that adjustment.)



- Competence Standard – would this adjustment undermine or remove a competence standard? We do not need to adjust competence standards; however, we do have an obligation to adjust how we assess them.

Additional evidence to support decision:

List the evidence that was considered to help reach the decision (e.g., Professional Registration Standards).

Alternative Adjustments:

List alternative adjustments that would be reasonable and meet the learner’s need.

Completed by	
Job title	
School/Department or Directorate	
Date	

Disability & Inclusion Services Review:

To be completed by the Disability & Inclusion Services, reviewing the above rationale and the decision made. Formal advice from the Disability & Inclusion Services should be provided on whether the decision is endorsed or opposed.

Completed by:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Decision endorsed	Rationale:
<input type="checkbox"/> Decision opposed	Rationale:

Disability & Inclusion Lead Comments:	
Job title:	
Date Signed:	
Date sent to College Leadership:	



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