

Assistance Animals on Campus Policy

1. Statement of policy

The Gordon Institute of TAFE is committed to supporting the specific needs of individuals, including staff, students and visitors with a disability or impairment through providing equal access to its classrooms, public spaces and accommodation services. As part of this commitment, The Gordon acknowledges that students and staff are entitled to be accompanied by appropriately accredited Assistance Animals on our campuses and sites where animals would normally be excluded. These animals must also meet a standard of hygiene and behaviour appropriate for an animal in a public place.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all Gordon campuses and delivery locations, both permanent and rented, and the same policy principles apply to both staff and students.

3. Definitions

The following terms and abbreviations are specific to this policy:

Assistance Animal: Under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth), a dog or other animal that is:

1. Accredited under a law of a State or Territory that provides for the accreditation of animals trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability; or
2. Accredited by an animal training organisation for the purposes of this paragraph; or
3. trained:
 - To assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability, and
 - To meet standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.
4. Assistance Animals are **generally classified** as belonging to one of the following categories:
 - Guide Dogs for the visual impaired
 - Hearing Dogs for the hearing impaired, and
 - Assistance Animal/Animal for other disabilities (including mental or physical impairment), including epilepsy, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or Autism.

In Victoria, Assistance Animals are recognised as aids for people with disabilities and they are often used in educational and other settings to assist people in their daily lives.

Accredited Assistance Animal: Evidence in support of the animal being an accredited Assistant Animal is required, this may include:

- an accredited assistance ID attached to the animal or
- a letter from an accredited assistance animal training organisation attesting to the animal training, or
- an Assistance Animal Pass issued by Public Transport Victoria
- a doctor's letter does not turn an Emotional Support Animal into an Assistant Animal

Restricted dog breed: Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs are prohibited from The Gordon campuses at all times. The list of restricted breed dogs under the definitions section of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Vic) include the following:

- a. Japanese Tosa
- b. Fila Brasileiro
- c. Dogo Argentino
- d. Perro de Presa Canario (or Presa Canario)
- e. American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier)

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Companion animal or Pet: any animal which is kept for the mutual welfare and benefit of the animal and its carer. It may be kept primarily as a companion or pet, for protection or for aiding its carer

Public Access Test: The PAT must be completed by an accredited business/association that can issue the certificate. The certificate is held by the owner and must be displayed when on campus. It needs to be on the animal with the appropriate documentation

Public Transport Victoria (PTV) recommends that all Assistance Animals be trained to pass a Public Access Test (PAT) in order to enter public spaces with their owners or handlers. This usually requires 12 months training, which includes early age socialisation and obedience training, including house and crate training. A Public Access Test is provided by an approved trainer or training institution.

4. Policy

The Gordon TAFE is committed to the following principles for the management of Assistance and Companion Animal requests from students and staff:

- The Gordon TAFE will permit access to The Gordon TAFE campuses and sites to appropriately trained Assistance Animals.
- The Gordon TAFE will work to manage any reasonable adjustment arrangements when required for staff and students to facilitate the access of Assistance Animals.
- The Gordon TAFE will NOT permit access to Companion Animals Or Pets

These procedures support the Gordon TAFE, in relation to animals on campus.

4.1 Access Rules for Accredited Assistance Animals

The following evidence about the Assistance Animal and the student or staff member as the animal's handler is required to support the arrangement:

1. The animal is an Assistance Animal accredited to assist a person with a disability or impairment. Evidence is required, to be placed on file, that the dog has been trained to the requisite standard.
2. The animal is trained to meet the standards of hygiene and behaviour appropriate for an animal in a public place.
3. If the animal is a Guide Dog, its owner is requested to produce certification of its guide dog training a copy should be lodged with the relevant People Leader
4. Certification for Assistant Animals requires that the animal is in healthy condition and has received all vaccinations, worming and flea treatments: A current vaccination certificate must be shown.
5. Access to specific areas of the Institute may be restricted where it would contravene another legislative requirement, currently this only applies to food preparation areas in cafeterias, the Culinary School's Davidson Restaurant and Café on Track Kitchens. Assistance Animals with their handlers **are not** restricted from entering the front of house areas of these facilities.
6. The handler is not exempt from liability for any damage to property caused by the Assistance Animal.
7. If the Assistance Animal displays disruptive behaviour, The Gordon may ask for the handler and Assistance Animal to leave immediate area.
8. It is the handler's responsibility to promptly dispose of the Assistance Animal's waste whilst on any Gordon campus
9. The Assistance Animal must be restrained at all times i.e. on a leash, unless for specific circumstances, at which time must be responsive to voice commands
10. Assistance Animals other than dogs, must go through a vetting process and approval by the Head of Centre and RSW
11. In the event that the owner of the Assistance Animal fails to meet with their responsibilities, a discussion will be held between the owner, student supports services and People Leader.

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4.2 Applications for Assistance Animal Arrangements

Students and staff requiring an Assistance Animal arrangement must make the request as part of the:

1. Admission process outlined in the Institute's Admission and Selection Policy,
2. Recruitment process outlined in Human Resources team induction and on-boarding work instructions, or in cases where a request arises during the course of employment through a request to a People Leader.

It should be noted that the information regarding the need for an assistance animal is sought at this early stage so that the Institute can plan for reasonable adjustments to support the staff member or student so as not to unreasonably exclude the person. Students should speak to the Disability Inclusion Officer if they require an Assistance Animal for their studies (see below at 4.3).

4.3 Assistance Animal Planning

The Gordon will manage planning for Assistance Animal arrangements through the course application pre-training review processes which are designed to ensure that the course is suitable for the student and to refer students to our support services who will work to establish an individual support plan for students with a disability.

A Pre-enrolment Consultation will take place between the student and a Disability Inclusion Officer to ensure reasonable support can be given to any potential student. The Disability Inclusion Officer will follow The Gordon's procedure for the induction of students who require Assistance Animals during this Consultation and will refer the outcome of the consultation to the relevant People Leader.

As part of the planning for Assistance Animal arrangements, students and staff requesting the access for the Assistance Animal will be responsible for providing adequate care for the Assistance Animal, including:

- Provision of food and water
- Provision for **hourly** toileting breaks, and **prompt** waste collection and disposal
- Provision of appropriate rest, and
- Appropriate handling.

In addition the People Leader will need to communicate to the staff or students who will be in direct contact with the Assistance Animal, this may be the teaching staff, class, or work areas where the Assistance Animal will spend the majority of time. Issues or concerns raised will be resolved by the People Leader

4.4 Management of Assistance Animal Concerns and Complaints

In cases where students are uncomfortable in the presence of Assistance Animals or suffer allergic reactions to Assistance Animals they should in the first instance raise the issue with their teacher to determine if alternative arrangements are possible (for example changing positions for classes/assessments, or arranging alternative timetabling). Access for the Assistance Animal and handler will not be amended. Any complaints involving Assistance Animals will be managed under the:

- For students: **Complaints and Appeals Policy QA PO 10**; and
- For staff: **Workplace Complaint Resolution Policy'SHRD PR 23**.

4.5 Risk Management of Assistance Animals and Health and Safety Incidents

A risk assessment should be undertaken by People Leaders when students request to attend The Gordon with an assistant animal. Please use the **Risk Assessment Report RISK FO 01.01** to outline how you will manage the risk to The Institute. This process will ensure you have planned and managed reasonable risks associated with Assistance Animals being on campus and in classes with other students. In the event that any occupational, health and safety incidents occur involving Assistant Animals, please use the **OHS Hazard Identification and Risk Control Procedure OHS PR 07**.

Students and staff with Assistance Animals are responsible for, and hold liability for, any damage to persons or property caused by the Assistance Animal.

4.6 Assistance Animals in the Classroom with Other Animals

There may be times when having more than one Assistance Animal in a classroom causes hardship to other animals and/or other students, or can interrupt practicum activities in the laboratory. Therefore, students may be asked to place their Assistance Animals in alternative rooms, for periods of time to allow practicum activities to occur. If the Assistance Animal is fully trained, this should not occur, but it may be necessary if other animals take fright or exhibit behaviours of anxiety in the presence of the Assistance Animal, regardless of its training.

- The Gordon may ask students to remove their Assistance Animal from the classroom when there are other animals in the classroom.
- The Gordon may communicate where the Assistance Animal may not be present at an excursion, where the facility has specific risks to the animal such as quarantine requirements which do not permit other animals to be present.
- The Gordon has the responsibility to offer a support person as per their individual learning support plan.
- The use of a soft cage for an Assistance Animal to use in the classroom and/or another room will be agreed to at the discretion of the Gordon. This may involve the Assistance Animal and the cage being in a separate room to the owner.
- The health and wellbeing of the Assistance Animal remains the responsibility of the owner.

4.7 Companion Animals and Pets on Premises

The *Disability Discrimination Act* applies directly to discrimination because a person is accompanied by an assistance animal to alleviate the effects of that person's disability. A need or desire for companionship of an animal, or need to supervise an animal, does not in itself amount to a disability under the Act.

As a publicly owned educational organisation, the Institute is required to have formal animal ethics approval from the Department of Primary Industries for the presence of animals in the learning environment to ensure that the welfare of the animal is the principal consideration in the animal's presence at the Institute. All animals present in relevant classes must have prior approval and documented controls under the Animal Ethics approval and compliance to the Animal Ethics approval and ongoing training of relevant staff is monitored.

The Institute has therefore taken the position that in the interests of consistency of application of processes, it will not allow staff, students or visitors to bring companion animals (pets) onto its premises, whether owned or rented, unless there is prior authorisation under the auspices of the Institute's Animal Ethics approval and appropriate controls as specified in that approval to ensure the animal's welfare.

Individuals will not bring on to campus:

- an animal with fleas or parasites, or any disease that is communicable to other animals or to humans;
- an animal that has not been properly vaccinated;
- an animal that is likely to create a disturbance or behave aggressively; or
- a female animal which is showing signs of being 'in season' or 'in heat';
- all animals not authorised in section 4.2, 4.3 or 4.4 of these procedures is restricted.

The following animals are authorised by these procedures on campus including within a building:

- Accredited assistance animals when accompanying a person with disability in accordance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth);
- animals used by the campus for research and teaching purposes, subject to the approval of the appropriate University Committee.

- In all instance the Animal Risk assessment form must be completed, submitted to People Leader for review and approval

The following assistance animals which are authorised by these procedures on campus, but not within a building:

- Animals used by and under the control of Australian Defence Force Officers, Police Officers and official rescue services officers in the performance of their official duties;
- Security dogs, when being used by and under the control of trained Security contractors; and
- Pet dogs, that are not a dangerous dog nor a restricted dog and are on leads and under control in areas away from student populated areas;
 - In some instances, the Animal Risk assessment form must be completed, submitted to People Leader for review and approval.

5. Governance / responsibilities

POSITION	GOVERNANCE / RESPONSIBILITY
Staff member or Student	To provide the Institute with the supporting evidence as to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the disability or medical condition which requires the Assistance Animal; • evidence of the Assistance Animal's training • the Guide Dog's identity card; • the currency of vaccinations, worming and flea treatments
Disability Inclusion Officer	To communicate the specific learning support needs to the teaching staff and communicate the Gordon's policies and procedures to the student and students in the area
PSC Consultant	To communicate the specific support needs to the employee's manager and communicate the Gordon's policies and procedures to the employee and other staff in the work area
Risk and Compliance Committee	To ensure that the implementation of the policy is aligned to the current Victorian and Commonwealth legislative frameworks and to ensure the Policy standards are communicated and implemented across the Institute

6. Key aligned internal documents

Refer to the [Operational Management System \(OMS\)](#) for copies of all policies, procedures and supporting documents.

Admission and Selection Policy STS PO 22

Complaints and Appeals Policy QA PO 10

Recruitment Policy SHRD PO 02

Workplace Complaint Resolution Procedure SHRD PR 23

Risk Assessment Report RISK FO 01.01

OHS Hazard Identification and Risk Control Procedure OHS PR 07

7. Key aligned external documents

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)

Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic)

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

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Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic)

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (Vic)

8. Review and approval

	POSITION	AREA
Business Process Owner	Manager	Risk, Safety and Wellness
Endorsed by (if applicable):	Nil	
Ratified by (if applicable):	Risk and Compliance Committee	
Review schedule:	This policy will be reviewed every 3 years (or earlier as required)	
Last reviewed / updated:	11 August 2022	