I. Allowed Use of Service Versus Emotional Support Animals

Use of a service animal is an ADA-protected right for individuals with disabilities. The service animal is allowed to go anywhere the public is allowed to go. Therefore, service animals assisting OU students must be allowed in OU classrooms and must be allowed at field placement sites. If a child at the field placement site is allergic to the service animal, the child will receive an accommodation. An allergy is not a reason to deny the service animal.

Use of an emotional support animal is not a protected right. Emotional support animals, no matter how well-trained, may be barred from OU classrooms and from field placement sites.

Faculty will NOT receive an official DRC email regarding students who use service animals because such animals are not considered an accommodation. They are classified as a service device (e.g., the same category as a wheelchair).

II. What to Ask

Any instructor with a need to know may ask the OU student presenting with or asking to use a service animal these two (and only these two) questions:

1. Is the dog a service animal that is required because of a disability?
2. What work or task the animal has been trained to perform?

If the OU student indicates that the animal IS NOT a service animal that is required because of a disability, then it is left to the discretion of the instructor whether the animal is allowed to be present in class. There is no obligation to allow the animal to attend class with the OU student.

If the OU student indicates that the animal IS a service animal that is required because of a disability, then the animal must be allowed to attend class with the OU student as long as it is not disruptive. If the animal is disruptive and the OU student does not quickly bring the animal under control, the instructor should ask the student to remove the animal from the classroom and contact the DRC for guidance at the earliest opportunity.

III. Field Experiences

Special preparation is required of OU students planning to take a service animal to field placements. It is important that the student contact Dr. Guttery at the OU Disability Resource Center upon admission to the Teacher Education program. Dr. Guttery will help the student anticipate and plan for the complexities of taking an animal into a classroom or agency context. Also note that most schools and other organizations will require the student to register the animal with them prior to bringing it to the classroom or agency.
IV. Inform the DRC

In all cases, if an animal is attending class with an OU student, the instructor should notify the DRC of this fact.

If there are any questions or concerns about the presence or behavior of a particular animal, or about the OU student’s response to the two questions above, the instructor should contact the Disability Resource Center for further assistance.

V. More Information

ADA National Network website:
https://adata.org/publication/service-animals-booklet

OU Disability Resource Center
730 College Avenue - University Community Center, Norman, OK 73019
(405) 325-3852 (Voice) Email: drc@ou.edu