

Office of Accommodations & Accessibility

The Office of Accommodations and Accessibility (OAA) works to ensure equal access for people of differing abilities to the many opportunities at Marist University.

We understand that service animals perform necessary tasks that enable many people to fully access the Marist University campus, whether that be in a classroom, a theater, a cafeteria, or a sports facility. We also understand that Emotional Support Animals have helped to improve the lives of many by alleviating symptoms of an emotional or mental disability through companionship and affection.

This brochure discusses the laws that protect individuals who rely upon service animals, and the roles service animals and emotional support animals play in the lives of their owners. If you have questions about service animals and emotional support animals on campus please contact the OAA.



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Service and Emotional Support Animals on Campus: Quick Facts



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Service Dogs vs Emotional Support Animals—What’s the Difference?

Many people think the terms service animal and emotional support animal (ESA) are interchangeable, but these animals actually serve different roles.

A service animal is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as any dog that is individually trained **to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability**, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, or intellectual disability. Service animals are provided legal protections under the ADA.

Emotional support animals are companions animals that provide emotional comfort for their owners. **They are not trained for a specific task or duty, and they do not have the same legal rights as service animals.**

Service Animals on Campus: Quick Facts

- A service animal is trained to do work or perform a specific task for a person with a disability. The most common types of service dogs include guide, hearing, medical alert, and mobility service dogs.
- Under the ADA there is no certification required for a service dog. Service dogs may be trained professionally or by their owners.
- A service animal is NOT required to wear a vest, special harness, or tag that identifies it as a service animal.
- Service animals are working animals; avoid distracting them by petting them or talking to them.

Faculty and Staff

There are only two questions you may ask to confirm that a dog is a service animal:

1. Is this dog required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the dog been trained to do?

You may not ask about the nature of a person’s disability or ask for proof that the dog is certified.

Public Spaces

Service Dogs: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects the rights of people with disabilities to bring their service dogs with them to public places, including classrooms, cafeterias, restaurants, theaters, shops, hotels, government agencies, and non-profit organizations. *Allergies or fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access.

Emotional Support Animals: Unlike service animals, ESAs do not assist with daily living tasks. Therefore, ESAs stay only in residences. They may not attend class, enter the library, or go to the dining hall with their owner.

Can anyone have an emotional support animal? No.

While most of us agree that our pets provide us with a great deal of comfort, only people with a qualifying condition determined by a licensed healthcare provider, can have an ESA. If the licensed healthcare professional determines a need for an ESA they will write an “ESA Letter” also called an “ESA Prescription” stating that an animal is necessary reinforcement for a person’s mental well-being.

Note: Dogs are the only animals recognized by the ADA as service animals, however, miniature horses have been used as service animals as long as a facility can accommodate the horse’s size and weight, and as long as the horse has been trained to perform a specific task for its owner. **For more information visit**

