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1. OBJECTIVE

There are many reasons for animals to be present at the University's workplaces and learning environments. This guidance addresses Assistance Animals only. In Victoria, Assistance Animals are generally classified as belonging to one of the following categories:

- Guide Dogs for the visually impaired
- Guide Dogs for the hearing impaired, and
- Assistance Dog/Animal for other disabilities (including mental or physical impairment), including epilepsy, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or Autism.

This work instruction outlines RMIT's approach to Assistance Animals on University campus to ensure compliance with the **Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)** and the safety and wellbeing of staff, students and other members of the RMIT community.

2. BACKGROUND

N/A

3. SCOPE

This work instruction has been developed to support staff, students and others attending the university with Assistance Animals.

The scope excludes management of other animals such as emotional support or companion animals, wildlife, farm animals, pets, research animals or veterinary patient animals on university campus.

4. WHAT MUST GO RIGHT?

Should this guidance material be implemented appropriately by RMIT, the expected outcomes – known as 'what must go right' – will be that:

- Evidence is provided to verify the animal is an assistance animal appropriately trained
- Risk assessments are completed when Assistance Animals may require entry to High-Risk Areas or Settings, and prior to Assistance Animal being brought on campus
- Staff, students, or others with assistance animals are provided general access to campus.

5. PROCEDURE / IMPLEMENTATION

5.1. Attendance on campus

Assistance Animals may access RMIT's campuses provided the following are met:

- Satisfactory evidence is provided to RMIT to verify the animal is trained as an Assistance Animal – see Verification section below
- For General Access – the handler of the Assistance Animal complies with the conditions listed in General Access section below; and

- For High-Risk Areas or Settings – if required by RMIT, a risk assessment is conducted - see High Risk Areas or Settings section below.

5.1.1. Verification

Before bringing the Assistance Animal on University campus, RMIT must be provided with satisfactory evidence to verify it is trained as an Assistance Animal. Satisfactory evidence is:

- **For Guide Dogs** – a certificate of accreditation issued by Guide Dogs Victoria (or another equivalent State or Territory body).
- **For Assistance Animals** (other than Guide Dogs) – an PTV Assistance Animal Pass.

If an PTV Assistance Animal Pass is not available, a certificate from a [GHAD approved trainer or training institution](#) certifying that the animal has passed the Public Access Test as an Assistance Animal.

5.1.2. General access

A handler with an Assistance Animal may access all areas of University campus which are not considered High Risk Areas or Settings, provided that at all times:

- the Assistance Animal is under the effective control of its handler, or another person on behalf of the handler;
- the Assistance Animal meets the standards of hygiene and cleanliness that are reasonably appropriate in a public space, including for the handler or a person on behalf of the handler picking up of the animal's waste; and
- the handler of the Assistance Animal remains liable for any property damage caused by the Assistance Animal whilst on University campus.

In addition, RMIT may make any other direction that may be reasonably required to ensure public health and safety.

5.1.3. High risk areas or settings

RMIT may conduct a risk assessment before an Assistance Animal is permitted to access a High-Risk Area or Setting. The risk assessment may be conducted with guidance and input from Student Equity and Disability Services, Human Resources, Health and Safety advisors and other relevant stakeholders.

Following the conduct of the risk assessment, reasonable adjustments may be made to best accommodate the handler and the Assistance Animal whilst ensuring public health and safety in the High-Risk Area or Setting.

5.1.4. Therapy dogs

There are times during the year when staff and students experience higher than normal levels of stress – e.g., exams. During these times, Colleges/Schools/departments may engage therapy dogs to assist staff and students with managing their stress levels.

Generally, therapy dogs will attend campus for short and fixed periods of time, be at a fixed location and be under the constant control of their owner/handler.

RMIT only accepts dogs which are certified [Delta Therapy Dogs](#) for this purpose. Colleges/Schools/departments and therapy dog owners/handlers must also comply with other risk management requirements as detailed in this process.

5.1.5. Identification of assistance animals

Animals certified as assistance animals must wear identification displaying their accreditation type. The assistant animal must always wear the appropriate identification while on campus.

A person who owns or controls an animal without the proper identification will be asked to immediately remove the animal from campus.

5.1.6. Other domestic animals

Establishing and maintaining an animal-friendly workplace requires a delicate balancing of the benefits, risks, rights and obligations.

Attendance of emotional support animals and pets inside University buildings must follow the **HR – HSW-PR53 - Pets on Campus** process.

5.1.7. Contact

Please contact the following areas for any enquiries related to Assistance Animals or this Work Instruction.

- Students contact **Student Connect** on **9925 5000**
- Staff contact **Inclusion and People Connect** on **9925 8000**

6. Responsibilities

6.1. Senior Leaders

- Ensure the implementation of this work instruction in areas under their control.
- Ensure risk assessments are completed when Assistance Animals may require entry to High Risk Areas or Settings, and prior to Assistance Animal being brought on campus
- Approves all required risk assessments

6.2. Operational Leaders

- Ensure the implementation of this work instruction in areas under their control.
- Participate in risk assessments when Assistance Animals may require entry to High-Risk Areas or Settings, and prior to Assistance Animal being brought on campus
- Ensure consultation with all those impacted or potentially impacted when a risk assessment is required for Assistance Animals entering High Risk Areas or Settings
- Ensure the verification and identification of the animal

6.3. Staff, students, researchers, third parties, volunteers, clients and visitors

- Participate in risk assessments when Assistance Animals may require entry to High-Risk Areas or Settings, and prior to Assistance Animal being brought on campus
- Comply with and adhere to the requirements set out in this work instruction document
- Full responsibility for the actions/behaviour of their Assistance Animal while on RMIT campus

7. Definitions

Defines any key terms and acronyms relating to the process where they apply.

Term / acronym	Definition
Assistance Animal	A dog or other animal that is:

Term / acronym	Definition
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">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; or2. Accredited by an animal training organisation for the purposes of this paragraph; or3. Trained:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability, andb. to meet standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.
Assistance Animal Pass	An assistance animal pass issued by Public Transport Victoria, or an equivalent pass issued by another Australian State or Territory.
General Access	Access to all parts of the University campus which are not classified by RMIT as High-Risk Areas or Settings.
Guide Dog	A dog that is trained and is performing its function as a guide dog for a visually impaired or hearing-impaired person.
High Risk Areas or Settings	Those areas or settings on University campus which RMIT considers to be high risk for the handler of the Assistance Animal, the Assistance Animal, or other members of the RMIT community. An example of a high-risk area may be a chemistry lab. An example of a high-risk settings may be a tutorial where another tutorial member is known to have a severe allergy to dogs.
Public Access Test	The test to assess an animal's ability to work and behave as an assistance animal in public places, including on public transport. A Public Access Test is provided by an approved trainer or training institution

8. Supporting Documents

Lists the supporting and related Processes and Guidance Material, Legislative references, Australian and International Standards etc. that may be useful references for process users

- RMIT Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- HR – HSW-PR53 – Pets on Campus
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic)