



UNSW Safety and Wellbeing

HS935 Pets on Campus Guide

Background

The purpose of this document is to provide a guide on bringing pets into buildings on campus. UNSW recognises that pets enhance the lives and wellbeing of many people, but also seeks to ensure the safety and health of staff, students and visitors to campus.

In forming this guide, consideration has been given in balancing the positive impacts of having pets on campus such as improved wellbeing, with the (real or perceived) threats such as animal bites, allergens, as well as the welfare of the pets themselves.

Scope

This guide relates to all pets inside buildings and applies to all staff, students, contractors and visitors to UNSW. Pets on campus outside of buildings are covered by expected behaviours for pets in public spaces.

This guide does not apply to animals used to support University activities such as research or theatrical performances (for which an approval process already exists).

This guide does not apply to pets in residential colleges, which are governed by individual colleges.

Statement

UNSW supports the following animals on campus:

- Registered assistance animals (including those in training), such as service dogs, guide dogs and hearing dogs, being used to help people who are living with physical disabilities to move around and do everyday tasks (for which an individual notification process already exists);
- Animals used in the function of law enforcement (such as sniffer dogs);

UNSW recommends that pets not be brought inside University buildings because of:

- The potential for attacks or bites to both people and pets from trained and untrained animals;
- Risk of slips, trips and falls from pets or their waste underfoot;
- Pathogens and dander contaminating buildings, labs and other research areas;
- Fear of certain animal breeds or staff concerns (real or perceived) about their safety;
- Risks to pet's own welfare from being in an environment not appropriate or designed with them in mind;
- The impact on productivity of having a pet inside a work or research area.

Exemptions

An exemption to this guide can be requested by writing from the area manager to the Head of School/Division for the areas where the pet will be taken.

Approval is to be decided on a case by case basis taking in to consideration the factors including, but not limited to, those contained within this guide.

Potential positive factors:

- Reduce stress; interacting with pets can lower blood pressure and increase exercise opportunities;
- Improve morale/job satisfaction; due to flexibility in the workplace;
- Build relationships by breaking down barriers; pets can act as social catalysts;
- Increased creativity; interacting with a pet be a positive micro-break.

Other factors that must be considered include:

- The reason for having the pet on campus;
- If the pet is a therapy animal (e.g. Delta Society) or companion animal;
- All regular occupants of the area must be consulted and agree;
- Whether any regular occupants have severe animal allergies (and any associated anaphylaxis response);
- Visitors to the area (e.g. meeting attendees) should be notified if there is potential for interaction with an uncontained animal;
- Who will feed or care for the animal during and outside core business hours/weekends/ end of year shut down?
- Will additional precautions need to be taken to ensure hygiene and prevention of cross-contamination is maintained, particularly around labs (for example PC2, OGTR etc)?
- How the pet will be transported onto/off campus, including appropriate containment/restraint;
- How the pet will be managed in an evacuation or during an emergency situation;
- Consideration of any smell and noise impact on the space;
- Will the pet be contained in its own environment (e.g. tank);
- If on Canberra campus, consider the Defence environment;
- Identify who will have overall responsibility for the pet;
- That the owner understands that they are responsible for all actions of their pet.

References:

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/projects/assistance-animals-and-disability-discrimination-act-1992-cth>

<http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/dogs-and-cats/information-for-the-community/assistance-animals>

http://kb.rspca.org.au/what-should-i-consider-before-taking-my-dog-to-the-office_552.html