



**POSITIVE RESPONSE SERVICES
PTY LTD**

Positive Response Assistance Dogs Guidelines

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Introduction

Positive Response Assistance Dogs is an approved training institution under the Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dog Act QLD (2009) and works with people with psychiatric and/or physical disabilities to assist with independent living.

You may have already had a conversation with your health care provider about the implementation of an assistance animal to alleviate the symptoms that you are living with.

Please note that under Australian Legislation a dog MUST complete a Public Access Test to be deemed a certified Assistance Animal. Until such time as your dog is fully certified, your dog is classified as a pet and therefore DOES NOT have the same access rights as a fully certified Assistance Animal. In short, there is no such title or coverage for: 'Assistance Dog in Training', 'Emotional Support Animal' and/or 'Companion Dog'.

A letter from a doctor or psychologist noting that an assistance dog may provide support is not a substitution for a Public Access Test under the Act and is not classified as a legal document allowing public entry.

The decision to join an Assistance Dog program is not one to be taken lightly. Please ensure that you take the time to understand the process to ensure that you can make the commitment to ongoing training and accreditation.

Please note the route to training up an assistance dog takes around 18 months and there is never any guarantee that your dog will meet all the criterion at any point throughout the process. We will train alongside you to manage and assess on a regular basis to ensure we can capture any potential issues promptly.



Eligibility Under Guide Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009 (QLD)

To be eligible you need to:

- have a disability as defined by the [Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009 \(QLD\)](#)
- rely on a guide, hearing, or assistance dog to reduce your need for support
- be able to physically control your dog, or identify an alternative handler to support you to control the dog
- have your dog pass the PAT and be certified by an approved trainer or training institution.

Suitable Breeds

A dog of any breed may be suitable for the Assistance Dog Program as long as it is not listed as a [restricted breed](#) in Australia. The breed best suited to you will often depend upon your exact requirements, we are happy to discuss and provide guidance in selecting the right breed for you.

Buying a Puppy

In making the decision to purchase a puppy for the specific role of becoming an assistance dog, please consider the following:

What type of dog will suit your needs – (i.e. breed size, hypoallergenic, grooming requirements). The size of the dog you choose is critical; you must consider your lifestyle, the size of your property/yard and your daily movements (getting on a bus, plane or train is more difficult with a large breed dog).

Finances – Can you afford this option as part of your treatment? Please consider the following: initial cost of dog, veterinary requirements including vaccinations, spaying/neutering and microchipping, food and housing requirements, insurance, council registration, ongoing training requirements.

Patience – Similarly to a human baby, you can expect sleepless nights and a lot of settling in time with your new puppy.



Physical Capability – Are you able to keep up with the physical requirements of a young without endangering your own health. Young puppies are fully on energy and constantly on the go so you will need to keep up with their exuberant behaviour.

Risks – Please be aware that there is always the risk that your chosen dog may not make it to assistance dog level. To achieve success there are some aspects that should be taken into strong account:

- Your puppy **must** come from a reputable breeder who knows what to look for and may well have bred these pups before. They are chosen for their ability to be:
 - Bomb-proof – able to cope with a variety of noises and situations from 8 weeks of age
 - No anxiety at all
 - Calm and confident natures
 - Happy to be picked up and handled
 - Is not the shy pup in the corner nor the over stimulated pup
 - Have been on a desensitisation and habituation program by a registered breeder who knows what they are doing.

We have found that labradoodles from a good, reputable breeder can make especially good assistance dogs due to the fact that they come in varying sizes, are low allergenic and have two great breeds in them that make them versatile and easy to train.

The breeders we recommend have extremely high standards, breed exceptional puppies and work with them in those vital early weeks so that they are comfortable with being handled and are desensitised to a variety of objects and sounds. They hand pick the puppy best suited to you after spending time with you on the phone and offer a full money back guarantee upon return of the puppy to them, should you not be happy.

We Highly Recommend the Following Breeders:

- GaGa Labradoodles: <http://www.gagalabradoodles.com/>
- Tallai Labradoodles: <http://www.tallai-australian-labradoodles.com/>
- Misty Mountain Labradoodles: <https://www.mistymountainlabradoodles.com/>



Training

- Puppy classes through a reputable trainer that ONLY uses reward-based training should be undertaken from 8 weeks of age or as soon as possible. If you are outside of our Brisbane based training centres, please be aware that we do also offer virtual sessions utilizing an online conferencing program. If you prefer physical sessions and are out of our training regions, please search for another nationally qualified force free trainer via the [Pet Professional Guild of Australia Site](#).
- Socialization is critical and we will be able to assist you to set your new puppy up for success. We have physical play groups for young puppies and provide you with tips on getting your new pup out and about safely to slowly desensitize it to the outside world.

Buying an Adult Dog

When considering the route of commencing with an adult dog – the first avenue to explore is available shelter/rescue dogs. Giving a dog a second chance at life can be rewarding for both you and your new-found friend as long as steps are taken to ensure the perfect fit.

How to choose your dog

- Look for a dog that is calm, happy to make body contact with you, not shy or withdrawn, does not snarl or move away from you.
- Will it take some food from your hand?
- Will it lie down for a tummy rub?
- Is the dog allergic to anything or does it have a clean bill of health?
- Take the dog for a walk. Will it go willingly, run with you, play, sniff around
- Is its tail up and is it looking happy and relaxed? If the tail is down and the dog is anxious or nervous, won't take food then chances are its not the right dog
- Ask the shelter if you can take the dog out and see if it will willingly get into your vehicle. A dog that won't go near a car means extra work that may not reduce the behaviour and again this is not the right dog.
- If you have another pet dog at home a meet and greet between both is required.



- If you have any other small animals at home, you must consider the dog you are looking at should not have high prey drive. i.e. a cat at home and you are looking at a retired greyhound that might chase.
- Take into consideration other immediate and extended family/people in your life – are they allergic to dogs, do they have very young children a large dog might knock over etc

Positive response can do a suitability test for your new dog. Please contact us for more information.

Finances – Can you afford this option as part of your treatment? Please consider the following: initial cost of dog, veterinary requirements including vaccinations, food and housing requirements, insurance, council registration, ongoing training requirements

Patience – Adult dogs can have behavioural issues that arise after you bring them home. You need to ensure you have the patience and time to dedicate to training and rectifying these issues.

Physical Capability – Are you able to keep up with the physical requirements of a dog without endangering your own health.

Risks – Many unforeseen issues can arise and there is always the risk that the dog you have chosen may not be a suitable assistance dog.

De-sexing

Entire dogs are not eligible to perform duties as an assistance dog. Hormones can cause major behavioural issues in entire dogs.

Puppies **MUST** be spayed/neutered before sitting the PAT. Ensure that you discuss scheduling the procedure with your vet.

Documentation

Prior to commencing with the Assistance Dog program, documentation must be forwarded to the office of Positive Response Assistance Dogs (info@positiveresponse.net.au)



Please see required documentation below:

Dog

- Current vaccination records
- Tick and Flea prevention
- Microchip ID
- Sterilisation Paperwork
- Council registration

Primary Handler

- Disability Certificate – mandatory
- Outline of desired tasks that will assist with handlers' disability

Training Timeframe

Puppy (8 weeks – 6 months)

- Home preparation session for bringing home new puppy – optional
- Puppy Education (part 1-2-3) or equivalent – mandatory
- Appropriate training equipment as outlined in our rules - mandatory
- 6 months old – must be spayed/neutered – mandatory
- 6 months of age – 1-hour assessment – mandatory to join program
- Private one on one training ongoing sessions – mandatory
- Task Training – mandatory
- Upon reaching 12 months of training history - a pre-assessment for a PAT – mandatory

Adult Dog (7 months – 3 years)

- Please note we do not accept adult dogs over age of 3 years unless they are with another organisation and/or have been previously Public Access Tested
- Initial Behavioural Assessment - mandatory
- Adult Education (part 1-2-3) or equivalent - mandatory
- Must be spayed/neutered – mandatory
- Appropriate training equipment as outlined in our rules - mandatory
- Private one on one training ongoing sessions – mandatory



- Task Training – mandatory
- Upon reaching 12 months of training history - a pre-assessment for a PAT – mandatory

Acceptable Equipment

- Front attached harnesses **ONLY** (no back loaded harness). Positive Response strongly recommend the Harmony Harness (front loaded harness). These can be purchased online.
- Collars and leads **ARE NOT** acceptable for beginners. High level obedience trainers who use force free may use a collar and it must be of a soft material.
- Retractable leads, chain leads, bungee leads **ARE NOT** acceptable.
- Check chains, martingale collars, training haltis of all descriptions, electric shock collars, citronella or prong collars **ARE NOT** acceptable at all.

What are definable tasks?

Definable tasks are what sets an assistance dog apart from a pet dog. An assistance dog **MUST** be able to perform identifiable tasks to alleviate the handler's disability to be able to pass the Public Access Test. Please see below for an example of trainable tasks:

- Positioning themselves in front/behind their handler, a technique known as "posting" which helps to ease hyperawareness, the feeling of being constantly on edge.
- Entering a room before the handler and turning on the lights so they do not have to enter a dark space.
- Entering a room or house and sweeping it for people or intruders, alerting its handler by barking.
- Alerting handler to take medication
- Bringing medication to a handler
- Providing physical contact or waking up a handler that suffers from nightmares.
- Diverting their handler's attention to the dog, a technique known as "anchoring", helping to bring their owner back to the present moment.



- Dogs sense when handler is about to have a panic attack and will push, paw bark to alert and then will often lie on the owner for deep pressure therapy
- Pulling a wheelchair
- Helping handler to balance when getting out of bed/chair
- Opening/closing doors, drawers etc.
- Paying shop keepers
- Picking up items/clothing for the handler
- Leading others to run away/injured handler (common task trained for young handlers with ASD who may be prone to running away from carers).

Prior to Public Access Test

The following supporting documentation must be provided to Positive Response Assistance Dog prior to the Public Access Test:

- Recent (no older than 6 months) **Passport style photo identification in high resolution** of the handler/s - must clearly show the face, head and top of shoulders, looking directly at the camera
- Recent (no older than 6 months) **Passport style photo identification in a high resolution** of the dog that clearly shows the head of the dog looking directly at the camera
- Certified true copy of ID - Certified copy of **one** of the following identification documents for the handler/s (primary/alternative) certified by a person before whom a statutory declaration may be made under the Statutory Declarations Act 1959 (Cwlth) section 8(b) – e.g. Justice of the Peace, legal practitioner, medical practitioner, physiotherapist, psychologist:
 - a birth certificate
 - a current driver's licence
 - a current 18 plus card
 - a current Medicare card
 - a current passport

Public Access Test

Positive Response Assistance Dogs conducts the Public Access Test to certify dogs under the Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009 (QLD).



A copy of the test can be found online [here](#).

The test takes approximately 1 hour to complete and will result in either a pass or fail. In the event of a team failing the Public Access Test (PAT), the next test can be carried out within four weeks (a charge will apply for the re-test). This timeframe gives the team and trainer the opportunity to rectify identified concerns.

Upon successful pass of the Public Access Test you will be provided with a Positive Response Assistance Dog jacket. This jacket remains the property of Positive Response Assistance Dogs and in the event that the assistance dog status is cancelled or revoked – the jacket must be returned either in person or via registered post to the Positive Response office.

Once you have passed your public access test

Please note that the price of the Public Access Test includes the cost of the test, training jacket hire and 2 x **MANDATORY** annual re-assessments)

This will be the re-occurring process for the working life of your assistance dog:

- Public Access Test – PASS
- 12-month 1-hour re-assessment (included in price of PAT)
- 24-month 1-hour re-assessment (included in price of PAT)
- Public Access Re-test (must be booked and paid for online)

Please keep in touch with the office with your progress and any queries that you have. Feel free to send photo/video updates either via email to info@positiveresponse.net.au OR via www.wetransfer.com which is a free file sharing website which allows larger files to be sent with ease.

Once your dog reaches 10 years of age, we will require an annual veterinary health check/letter from your vet advising that the dog is still fit to continue with their duties as an assistance dog:

- Your dog is required to complete an assessment every 12 months from 10 years of age onwards



Conditions

- It is a condition that all client/dog teams that pass a public access test continue to follow the rules and guidelines that relate to Assistance Dogs under the [Guide Hearing and Assistance Dog Act 2009](#), along with the guidelines, policies and procedures set out by [Positive Response Assistance Dogs](#).
- Any team that is deemed to have breached these conditions will be subject to immediate suspension or termination of their Assistance Dog Status.