Service, Assistance, and Emotional Support Animal Policy

The University of Tampa fully supports the efforts and welfare of all its students. The University faculty and staff are mindful of the diversity of the student body and act in ways to promote the academic success of each individual. It is in that spirit that UT has established a policy regarding Service, Assistance and Emotional Support Animals on campus. For more information regarding service, assistance and emotional support animals as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, visit http://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm.

SERVICE ANIMAL

Definition: A dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medication, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a service animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals.

Service animals on campus: UT generally allows service animals in all of its facilities when the animal is accompanied by its handler. The animal may not be permitted in some areas where it would pose a direct threat to health or safety or when the animal constitutes a fundamental alteration to the nature of the program.

Use of service animals in the classroom: It is strongly recommended that students who need the assistance of a service animal in the classroom register their disability with Student Disability Services. Documentation is not required to have a service animal in the classroom; however, by doing so, students will be able to:

- Document their need for an appropriate classroom accommodation
- Receive a letter of accommodation for their instructors at the being of each semester
- Access additional resources and services available to students with disabilities

Use of service animals in the Residence Halls: Students planning to live with a service animal in the Residence Halls must make this known on their application for special needs housing or for general room selection, as applicable. While requests submitted after the recommended deadlines can be accepted and considered, there is no guarantee that late applicants’ accommodation needs can be met. For new students, the housing application deadlines are May 1 for the fall semester and October 1 for the spring semester. For continuing students, housing applications are due on February 15.

Roommates and suitemates will need to sign and submit an Animal Agreement Form to Student Disability Services. If an individual cannot live in a shared space with a service animal, Residence Life will work with the student to arrange an alternate accommodation. In addition:
The handler is responsible for assuring the approved animal does not interfere with the routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for students who reside there.

The owner is financially responsible for any expenses incurred for repairs, cleaning, and pest control above and beyond standard repairs and cleaning of the residence hall.

**Service Animal maintenance and control requirements:**

- Service animals must be on a leash at all times when not in the residence of the handler.
- Animals must be controlled and cared for by the student handler at all times. This includes Winter, Summer and Spring breaks. Students may not leave animals in the residence halls during times when the residence halls are closed.
- The handler must accompany the service animal at all times while on campus.
- To the extent possible, the animal should be unobtrusive to other individuals in the community.
- Handler is responsible for the actions of their animal and may be referred for violations of the campus living policies or student conduct policies made by the animal (i.e. noise, vandalism, etc.).
- The handler should properly pick up and dispose of animal waste.

**ASSISTANCE OR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL (ESA)**

**Definition:** An animal that alleviates one or more symptoms of a disability, but is not required to perform a task or service, and therefore would not qualify as a “service animal” under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Assistance and emotional support animals that are not service animals under the ADA may still be permitted, in certain circumstances, in University Housing pursuant to the Fair Housing Act.

**Documentation requirements for Assistance or Emotional Support Animal:** Documentation of the need for an assistance or emotional support animal should follow the Student Disability Services guidelines for documentation of disability, and should generally include the following information:

- Diagnosis of disability from a physician or mental health professional, and whether that disability is temporary or permanent
- Statement on how the animal serves as an accommodation for the diagnosed disability
- Statement on how the need for the animal relates to the ability for the student to use and enjoy the residence halls

**Assistance and Emotional Support Animals on campus:** Assistance and emotional support animals that have been approved to be on campus are generally only permitted in the handler’s residence hall room and/or suite, with a signed Animal Agreement Form from all roommates and suitemates. Residence Life has the right to reassign the handler or other occupants of the room to another accommodation within the Residence Halls if all residents are not in agreement or if care of the animal or interactions with other students, including roommates or suitemates, becomes a concern. Assistance and emotional support animals are only permitted in common indoor areas as needed to enter or exit their residential building.

Updated 7/27/17
Assistance and Emotional Support Animals in the Residence Halls: Students should submit a formal request for an assistance or emotional support animal to Student Disability Services, at least 60 days prior to need of accommodation. This should also be included in their application for special needs housing or for general room selection, as applicable. For new students, the housing application deadlines are May 1 for the fall semester and October 1 for the spring semester. For continuing students, housing applications are due on February 15. The student must also submit documentation to Student Disability Services, along with a Disability Disclosure form. While requests submitted after the recommended deadlines can be accepted and considered, there is no guarantee that late applicants’ accommodation needs can be met.

- The handler is responsible for assuring the approved animal does not interfere with the routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for students who reside there.
- The owner is financially responsible for any expenses incurred for repairs, cleaning, and pest control above and beyond standard repairs and cleaning of the residence.
- The owner is responsible for ensuring that the animal is in good health, clean, free of fleas and ticks, and is in compliance with all Florida state laws and requirements associated with licensing, vaccinations and other health regulations.
- The owner must notify Student Disability Services and the Office of Residence Life if the approved animal is no longer needed or if the approved animal is replaced.

Assistance and Emotional Support Animal Control Requirements:

- The animal must be on a leash at all times when it is not in the residence of the handler.
- All animals must be crated or otherwise contained when the handler is not in their residence. If the student resides in apartment-style housing, the animal may be contained in their individual bedroom when the handler is not present.
- Animals must be controlled and cared for by the student handler at all times. This includes Winter, Summer and Spring breaks. Students may not leave animals in the residence halls during times when the residence halls are closed.
- To the extent possible, the animal should be unobtrusive to other individuals in the community.
- Handler should properly pick up and dispose of animal waste.
- Handler is responsible for the actions of their animal and may be referred for violations of the campus living policies or student conduct policies made by the animal (i.e. noise, vandalism, etc.).

Animal Health and Well-being

- Animals must be vaccinated in accordance with local ordinances. For Hillsborough County’s Animal Ordinance, visit http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/index.aspx?NID=367.
- Students must provide registration and vaccination records, along with a picture of the animal, to Student Disability Services. Students must submit updated vaccination records and a recent
picture of the animal each year that they are residing in campus housing. Student Disability Services will notify Campus Safety and Residence Life of the animal’s approved presence on campus.

**NOTICE TO CAMPUS COMMUNITY**

**Service Animals in the classroom:** Classroom instructors will be made aware of the presence of a service animal in the classroom by a letter of accommodation drafted by the Associate Director of Academic Excellence Programs if the student chooses to register with Student Disability Services.

**Assistance and Emotional Support Animals in the Residence Halls:** The residence hall staff will be made aware of the presence of assistance and emotional support animals in the specific residence hall in which they live. Roommates and suitemates of the student with an animal will sign an Animal Agreement Form. Roommates may request a room change if they do not want to share space with an animal. Residence Life has the right to reassign the handler or other occupants of the room to another accommodation within the Residence Halls if all residents are not in agreement on the Animal Agreement Form or if care of the animal or interactions with other students, including roommates or suitemates, becomes a concern. Residence Life staff will assist the student or students with relocation. Each situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If any new roommates or suitemates are assigned to the residence, it is the handler’s responsibility to provide them with an Animal Agreement Form. It is also the handler’s responsibility to work with Residence Life staff should they choose to change rooms.

**Assistance and Emotional Support Animals on campus:** Assistance and emotional support animals are only permitted in the Residence Halls. Assistance and emotional support animals are not permitted in any other campus facilities.

**Conflicting Health Conditions:** Students with medical conditions that are affected by animals are asked to contact Student Disability Services with any concerns. The University will make reasonable effort to accommodate individuals with such medical conditions.

**Etiquette of the campus community:** Members of the campus community are not to touch, pet or feed a service, assistance or emotional support animal unless invited to do so. They are not to inquire into details about the owner’s disability. The nature of a person’s disability is not required to be shared.

**REMOVAL OF APPROVED ANIMAL**

The University may exclude/remove an approved animal when:

- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
- The animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it.
- The animal’s presence results in a fundamental alteration of the academic and/or residential program.
- The handler does not comply with residence hall responsibilities or control requirements on campus.

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**APPEALS PROCESS**

Should a student wish to appeal a decision made regarding a service or emotional support animal, the student should write a letter to the Associate Provost outlining the appeal. If the appeal involves housing, the student should write to the Associate Dean of Residence Life. Any questions about the process should be directed to Student Disability Services.

*By my signature below, I verify that I have read, understand, and will abide by the policies outlined here.*

________________________________________________________

Student Signature                                      ID#                                      Date