

## **Guidelines for Service and Assistance Animals on University Property**

Date Created: September 2012; amended, July 2015.

### **PURPOSE**

These Guidelines provide a framework to evaluate student requests for bringing Service Animals or Assistance Animals, as defined below, onto University Property. They are meant to provide guidance only. Each request for a Service Animal or an Assistance Animal will be considered on its merits with due consideration of the facts in the individual case and for the needs of the individual student.

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### **Handler:**

A person with a disability who is the owner of a Service Animal or an Assistance Animal.

#### **Pet:**

Any animal owned by the Handler that is not a Service Animal or an Assistance Animal.

#### **Service Animal:**

Any animal trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of and to accommodate the functional needs of a person with a disability as defined by law. The provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship does not constitute work or tasks for purposes of this definition. A Service Animal must be a dog or, in some circumstances, a miniature horse.

#### **Assistance Animal:**

Any animal that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability as defined by law, or provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability.

#### **University Property:**

Land or buildings that the University owns or leases and that is under the direct control of the University.

### **APPLICABILITY**

These Guidelines apply only to matriculating students seeking to be permitted to have a Service Animal or an Assistance Animal as a reasonable accommodation for a disability or documented need by an appropriate provider. Pets are governed by other University policy. A student must request permission from the University's Student Disability Access Center ("SDAC") to bring a Service Animal or an Assistance Animal on University Property. SDAC will consider each request on its merits and make an individualized fact-finding decision. Permission will be granted only as a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability. SDAC will consider

accommodation requests consistent with its general support for students with disabilities. See <http://www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/lnec.html>.

### **GUIDING PROTOCOLS**

- Requests for Service Animals or Assistance Animals will take into account the needs and requirements of other members of the University community with disabilities or medical conditions, including allergies to animals. Students who live in university housing are given housing assignments at the beginning of each academic year based on the accommodations requests known at the time. A student who requests a Service Animal or Assistance Animal after initial housing assignments have been made may be required to move if the presence of the animal would conflict with accommodations granted another student in the same residential facility.
- The student requesting a Service Animal or Assistance Animal must provide veterinary records or other evidence acceptable to the University that the animal is in good health and is current with respect to all vaccinations, medications, or other health-related matters required or recommended by veterinarians regarding the breed or type of animal in question. This includes verification of monthly flea prevention treatment for the animal as appropriate. The University reserves the right to require updated veterinary records or other evidence of the health of the animal at any time.
- Service Animals are permitted to be on any portion of University Property where the Handler is permitted to be; however, there are areas of University Property where all animals are prohibited due to health and safety concerns. These areas include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - o Research and teaching laboratories (or other research facilities);
  - o Mechanical rooms/custodial closets;
  - o Areas where protective clothing is necessary;
  - o Areas where there is a danger to the animal;
  - o Any other areas of University Property which, due to their specialized purposes and use, are governed by specific policies governing presence of animals on their premises, such as the Medical Center (see Medical Center Policy No. 0246, Animals in the Medical Center).
- ***Assistance Animals are only permitted on those portions of University Property constituting residence halls or similar residential buildings and areas directly adjacent to such residential properties.***
- A Service Animal or Assistance Animal must be supervised and controlled at all times and may not be left unattended at any time on University Property. A Service Animal or Assistance Animal may not be left tied or tethered out of the presence of its Handler. Any Service Animal or Assistance Animal found unattended on University Property may be seized by animal control officers or other authorized persons. Handlers are responsible for payments of any impound and/or license fees required to secure the release of their animals.
- Assistance Animals must be crated/contained in some way when the Handler is out of their assigned residence hall room. Assistance Animals may not pose a

safety issue for anyone who has a legitimate cause for entering the room and also for the safety of the animal.

- Service Animals or Assistance Animals may not pose a direct threat to the health or safety of other members of the University community or disrupt or interfere with University activities. If a Service Animal or Assistance Animal becomes unruly or disruptive, or if the Handler fails to control the animal, the University may require that the Handler immediately remove the animal from University Property. A recurrence of such behavior may result in the University requiring that the Service Animal or Assistance Animal remain off University Property.
- The Handler is responsible for cleaning up any waste, both inside their living space and outside in the adjacent areas, created by the Service Animal or Assistance Animal and for all costs related to damages created by the animal. Costs include fees for clean-up and disposal of animal waste and replacement or repair of University or individual property. If the Handler fails to clean up after the Service Animal or Assistance Animal or the animal causes damage to property, the University may require that the animal be removed from University Property.