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## Service and Emotional Support Animals Policy and Guidelines - Interim

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**Applies to:** (examples; Faculty, Staff, Students, etc)

Faculty , Staff , Students , Contractors\_Vendors

**Policy Overview:**

Issued: 08-01-2017

Next Review Date: 06-15-2022

Frequency of Review: Every 2 Years

This document explains University of Health Sciences and Pharmacy in St. Louis' policy toward animals utilized for disability purposes. It is the purpose of these guidelines to articulate the conditions under which such animals are permitted access to University grounds and facilities.

Applies to University of Health Sciences and Pharmacy in St. Louis faculty, staff, students, and visitors.

**Definitions:**

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Service Animal	As defined by Title II and Title III of the ADA: A service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Tasks performed can include, among other things, pulling a wheelchair, retrieving dropped items, alerting a person to a sound, reminding a person to take medication, or pressing an elevator button. Emotional support animals, comfort animals, and therapy dogs are not service animals under Title II and Title III of the ADA. A psychiatric service animal is a dog that is individually trained for people with an emotional or psychiatric disability so severe that it substantially limits his/her ability to perform at least one major life task. PSDs are considered service animals.
Emotional Support animal	An emotional support animal (ESA) is an animal that has been prescribed for a person by his/her licensed therapist (a licensed mental health professional) in a properly formatted letter. This letter should state that the person is determined to be emotionally or psychiatrically disabled and that the presence of the animal is necessary for the disabled person's mental health.  An emotional support animal can sometimes be referred to as a support animal, assistance animal, helper animals, or assist animals.
Individual with a Disability	An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

**Details:**

I. Service Animal

a. University of Health Sciences and Pharmacy in St. Louis welcomes the presence of trained service animals assisting individuals with disabilities on its campus in areas open to the public, consistent with the provisions of this policy and applicable law. A service animal is generally permitted to be on University property in any place where the animal's handler is permitted to be, although there are

specific locations and activities on University property where all animals are prohibited for health and safety reasons. Examples of such prohibited areas, depending on the activities, may include but are not limited to the following:

- i. Research facilities where the animal may compromise the integrity of research
  - ii. Mechanical rooms/custodial closets
  - iii. Areas where protective clothing is necessary
  - iv. Areas where there is a danger to the service animal or handler
  - v. Exceptions to restricted areas may be granted on a case-by-case basis by the Office of Environmental and Health Safety.
- b. A service animal shall have a harness, leash or other tether, unless the handler's disability precludes use of such tether, in which case the animal must otherwise be under the control of the handler (i.e. voice controls or other effective means). Members of the University community and visitors are prohibited from interfering in any way with a service animal or the duties it performs.

## II. Emotional Support Animal

a. An Emotional Support Animal, or otherwise named animal, owned by an individual with a disability who lives in a residence hall on University property is allowed to live with the individual and go with him or her into any public space where residents are authorized to be in the residence hall. Emotional Support animals are not allowed in any other buildings on University property, nor are they allowed in other controlled spaces on campus.

b. An emotional support animal shall have a harness, leash or other tether, unless the handler's disability precludes use of such tether, in which case the animal must otherwise be under the control of the handler (i.e. voice controls or other effective means). Members of the University community and visitors are prohibited from interfering in any way with an emotional support animal or the duties it performs.

## III. Fair Housing Act

a. University of Health Sciences and Pharmacy in St. Louis will make reasonable accommodations for service animals and emotional support animals.

## Procedures:

1. In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the Fair Housing Act, and state and local law, University of Health Sciences and Pharmacy in St. Louis will accommodate persons with disabilities who require the assistance of a qualified Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal. Students, faculty and staff making requests for such animals must direct their requests to the Student Success Center or Human Resources, as applicable.
2. Service Animal
  - a. Faculty, staff, students, and University visitors and guests are not required to receive permission from the University prior to bringing a service animal onto University property. Individuals with disabilities who intend to bring a service animal onto campus are requested to notify the university of the need for a service animal's presence in advance of bringing the animal to campus. The individual with the disability may be asked whether the animal is needed because of a disability and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform. If the individual needs any other accommodations, documentation of the disability and a request for accommodations must be made pursuant to the procedures set forth by the Office of Human Resources or the Student Success Center, as applicable.
3. Emotional Support Animal in University Housing
  - a. A student with a disability who lives in University Housing and wishes to seek permission to have an Emotional Support Animal in University Housing must submit a request in advance of bringing the animal to campus to Disability Resources during the special housing accommodations process.
  - b. The student will be expected to provide documentation from a physician of the disability and the disability-related need for an Emotional Support Animal, and it must state how the animal will impact the student's ability to participate in University housing. Students should use the [Medical or Health Disabilities Criteria for Documentation](#) when requesting a letter from their physician.
  - c. A new request for housing accommodations must be completed for each new academic year.
  - d. The student will also be expected to provide documentation that the animal is in compliance with all required Missouri State and local requirements associated with licensing, vaccinations, and other health regulations.
4. When a Service Animal is confirmed by the University, the owner will be given access to a Verification of Individual Student Accommodation (VISA) document from the Office of Environmental Health and Safety that confirms his/her right to be accompanied by the service animal on campus and if applicable, the Office of Residential Life will be notified. The student may choose to share the VISA document with members of the campus community. If necessary, the Office of Residential Life will notify other residents within the housing assignment (as well as maintenance and public safety staff, as needed) that the animal will be residing in a shared, assigned living space.
5. Responsibilities of the Owner of a Service or Emotional Support Animal
  - a. The owner is responsible for assuring that the animal does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for other residents. The owner must always be in control of the animal.
  - b. The owner is financially responsible for the actions of the animal, including bodily injury or property damage. The owner's responsibility covers but is not limited to replacement of furniture, carpet, window, wall covering, and the like. The owner is expected to cover these costs at the time of repair.

- c. The owner is responsible for any expenses incurred in cleaning (above and beyond a standard cleaning) or for repairs to University premises that are assessed after the student and animal vacate the residence. The University shall have the right to bill the student owner's student account for unmet obligations.
  - d. The owner is responsible for ensuring the cleanup of the animal's waste, and, when appropriate, must toilet the animal in areas designated by the University consistent with the reasonable capacity of the owner. Indoor animal waste, such as cat litter, must be placed in a sturdy plastic bag and securely tied up before being disposed of in outside trash dumpsters. Litter boxes should be placed on mats so that waste is not tracked onto carpeted surfaces.
  - e. The owner is responsible for the overall health and well-being of the animal, including compliance with all Missouri State and local laws concerning animals (e.g., registration, vaccinations, and tags) as well as annual documentation of the health of the animal from a licensed veterinarian.
  - f. Service or assistance animals may not be left unattended in or on any University property, other than Emotional Support Animals left in an individual's University housing for a reasonable period of time. Animals must be taken with the owner if the owner leaves campus for a prolonged period of time.
  - g. The owner agrees to abide by all other residential policies. An exception to the no-animals policy does not constitute exception to any other policy.
6. The University reserves the right to deny access to campus, or remove from campus, any Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal if -
- a. The animal is out of control and its owner does not take action that is effective to control it;
  - b. The animal is not housebroken (i.e. cannot control waste elimination);
  - c. The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level by a reasonable modification to other policies or procedures; or
  - d. The owner fails to comply with his/her responsibilities under this policy.
7. The Office of Residential Life retains the right to relocate the owner and approved animal as necessary.
- a. Any violation of the above rules or incidence of other violations may result in immediate removal of the animal from the University and, if appropriate, referral to the Office of Human Resources or the Student Success Center for disciplinary action. If a Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal is banned from campus, the individual with a disability will have the right to engage in a deliberative process to determine if effective participation can occur with other appropriate accommodations.
  - b. Owners of animals that are impounded are responsible for the payment of any impound and/or any fees required to secure the release of their animals.

For additional information, please visit:

If you are a **student**:

Student Success Center

[https://my.stlcop.edu/dept/office\\_studentsurvices/SitePages/Home.aspx](https://my.stlcop.edu/dept/office_studentsurvices/SitePages/Home.aspx)

If you are a **faculty or staff member**:

Office of Human Resources

<https://my.stlcop.edu/hr/Pages/default.aspx>

Any individual who feels that they have been unfairly denied the ability to bring a service animal onto University property, or who feels that they have been unfairly denied the ability to have an assistance animal in university housing may file a grievance with Human Resources.

**Responsibilities:**

<b>Position/Office/Department</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Residential Life	Notifying residents of service animal or emotional support animal of a student in the residence hall.
EH&S	Support in making reasonable accommodations for the student with a service animal or emotional support animal.
Disability Services	Assistance with students with ADA concerns or those requiring emotional support animals to reside with them on campus.
Counseling Center	Review and approval of requests to bring emotional support animals to campus.

**Resources:**

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Fair Housing Act

**Policy Contacts:**

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