Service and Assistance Animal Guidelines

Service Animals: The Americans with Disability Act and Amendments (ADA-AA) defines a Service Animal as a dog or miniature horse that is trained to perform tasks and provide assistance to an individual with a disability. Examples of such work or tasks include, but are not limited to, 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 medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties.

Assistance Animals: Emotional Support/Therapy Animals are animals that provide emotional support and companionship to an individual with a disability which is necessary for that individual to have an equal opportunity to enjoy a dwelling. These Assistance Animals may include animals other than dogs and are not Service Animals under the ADA-AA even if prescribed by a physician or therapist. Animals that are not trained Service Animals are not permitted inside Food Service/Dining areas, classrooms or other buildings/facilities on campus without permission of the building/facilities administrator or departmental Dean.

Pets: A pet is an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship unrelated to a disability. A pet is not considered a service animal, assistance animal or an emotional support animal. As such, a pet is not covered by these Guidelines or any other University policy governing service or assistance animals. Students are not allowed to have pets in University housing, classrooms, buildings, or facilities.

Students Requesting the Use of an Assistance Animal in University Housing

There are specific procedures for requesting the use of an Assistance Animal in University Housing as an official disability accommodation. Students with disability needs should contact the Center for Student Academic Support (CSAS). To make a complete request, students will engage in an interactive process with the University and meet with a disability administrator in CSAS to facilitate these accommodations. The following forms (available online or at CSAS) will need to be submitted to make a complete request:

Student Submits: Application for Disability Services; Intake Interview
Diagnosing Professional Submits: Psychological Disability Verification; Application for Assistance Animal.

Students should contact CSAS prior to the beginning of any semester to facilitate these accommodations. The earlier these requests are submitted, the more likely it is to acquire student housing preferences.

Interacting with People with Service/Assistance Animals

1. Do not ask the person for documentation or other proof of their disability and/or their animal’s training.
2. You may ask the person if it is a trained Service or Assistance Animal if you are unsure.
3. Speak to the person, and do not speak to or interact with the animal as you would a pet.
4. Do not interfere with the animal’s work or aim distracting or rude noises at the animal.
5. Do not touch the animal without asking for and receiving permission from the owner.
6. Do not offer food to the animal.
7. Do not ask personal questions about the owner’s disability, or otherwise intrude on his or her privacy.
8. Do not be offended if the owner does not wish to chat about the animal.

**General Guidelines Regarding Service/Assistance Animals**

The owner/user is responsible for the care and conduct of the animal at all times. The animal’s owner/user is solely responsible for any damage to property or harm to persons caused by the service animal. The University and its employees shall be held harmless in the event that the animal damages property or causes harm to anyone on campus. The University follows all applicable laws and regulations to protect the health and safety of the campus community and those animals which it permits on campus. A service/assistance animal may be excluded from the campus if the animal is disruptive to the educational process/event or poses a direct threat to the health and/or safety of others.

Any individual who believes that he/she is being denied access to buildings or programs because of a Service Animal, or with questions about policies or procedures regarding service/assistance animals should immediately inform the ADA/504 Coordinator, Dr. Tawny Rigsby, at 918-631-2315. If a service/assistance animal behaves aggressively or dangerously, contact Campus Security at 918-631-5555 immediately.

The following guidelines are designed to provide guidance regarding the use of Service and Assistance Animals by students and others with disabilities:

1. **Service Animals** as defined by the ADA-AA are permitted on campus and in campus buildings/facilities including all areas where customers are normally allowed to go. To ensure access, students with service animals are encouraged to document their service animal with the Center for Student Academic Support by contacting the ADA/504 Coordinator, Dr. Tawny Rigsby.

2. **Assistance Animals** are not permitted on campus or in campus buildings/facilities, including classrooms, unless given permission by the building/facilities administrator or departmental Dean. For students who live in campus housing, Assistance Animals that meet certain requirements may be approved as a disability accommodation to live in that student’s approved residence on a case-by-case basis. To apply for this accommodation, students should self-identify and go through the normal accommodation request process by contacting the Center for Student Academic Support.

3. Students who have Service Animals or approved Assistance Animals may live on campus with the animal in approved campus apartments. Housing has the authority to relocate a student and the animal as necessary per current contractual agreements and the needs/safety of residents.

4. **Service/Assistance animals** are not permitted in private residences, suites, or apartments of others on campus without the expressed permission of the occupant(s) of that residence.

5. It is the owner’s responsibility to inform others that the animal is a Service/Assistance Animal and should not be petted, bothered, harassed or fed. The use of a vest or harness that identifies
the animal as a service animal is strongly recommended to communicate the animal’s status. However, service animals are not legally required to wear any identifying vest or other indicator that they are a service animal. Others cannot ask about the person’s disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the animal, or ask that the animal demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task. It is appropriate to ask if the animal is a service animal required because of a disability and what task the service animal is trained to perform.

(6) All owners/users of Service/Assistance Animals are expected to ensure the good conduct, health, care, and protection of their animal. The Service/Assistance Animal must be kept under control at all times and on a leash in public areas unless the leash obstructs the animal’s ability to perform the service needed. All service/assistance animals must comply with local and state licensing regulations as well as vaccination/health requirements.

(7) All owners are responsible for any damage done by the animal and for the upkeep and cleanliness of any area traversed or occupied by the animal. It is the sole responsibility of the owner to remove and dispose of the animal’s waste. Owners need to carry equipment for the disposal of the animal’s waste at all times. Waste should be removed immediately and placed in external building dumpsters (not inside the building). If the owner is unable to independently manage this responsibility because of a disability, he or she must contact CSAS and/or Housing to discuss other arrangements and the University will assist in finding ways to ensure compliance.

(8) Sensitivity to residents with allergies and to those who fear animals is important to ensure the peace of the community. However, allergies and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using service animals. When a person who is allergic to dog dander and a person who uses a service animal must spend time in the same room or facility, students should contact the Center for Student Academic Support for assistance.

(9) The owner is financially responsible for the action(s) of the service/assistance animal that may cause bodily injury or property damage, including, but not limited to, any replacement of furniture, carpet, window or wall covering, etc. The owner is expected to pay the cost of any damages upon repair and/or move-out.

(10) Student residences on campus may be inspected for fleas, ticks or other pests as needed. The Housing staff will schedule the inspection. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a University-approved pest control service. The student will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment.

(11) Service animals may be required to wear protective gear or be denied access to sterile surgical rooms, or areas with hazardous machinery, radiation, biologicals, or chemicals as determined on a case-by-case basis. Assistance animals are not permitted in surgical rooms or any hazardous areas.

(12) The owner/user may be asked to remedy the problem or remove the animal if it is disruptive, interferes with the educational process, or if the above conditions are not met. Students who fail to comply with policies/guidelines regarding animal disruptions, cleanliness, safety, and damage may be subject to University disciplinary policies.
(13) In the event the owner/user must be away from the animal for an extended period of time, alternative arrangements must be made for the safety of the animal. Animal cruelty is a crime and taken very seriously.

**Common Questions Related to Service/Assistance Animals on Campus**

**What if you don't like the animal, are allergic or are afraid of the animal?**

Place yourself away from the animal. If you are providing customer service, discreetly arrange for someone else to wait on the person. You may ask the person to have the animal lie down if it does not interfere with the animal’s work.

**What if the service animal barks, growls, or otherwise forgets its manners?**

Find out what happened before taking action. Was the service dog stepped on, poked or performing its job (some alert their owners to oncoming seizures by barking once or twice). If the animal's unprovoked behavior is disruptive, threatening or destructive, you may ask the person to control the animal. If they are unable to control the animal, you may ask them to remove the animal.

**What if other people complain about the animal being present?**

Explain that the animal is medically necessary and that federal and state laws protect the right of the person to be accompanied by the trained service animal in public places under most circumstances. Assistance animals are only permitted in the student’s own residence once approved.

**Are Assistance Animals or Pets Permitted in Campus Buildings or in Class?**

Assistant Animals and Pets are not covered as Service Animals under the ADAAA and are therefore not permitted into public access campus buildings. They may be covered under the HUD Anti-discrimination Housing Laws. Requests for Assistance Animals in student housing will be reviewed by the University Eligibility Committee on a case-by-case basis. Requests and supporting documentation must be submitted to the Center for Student Academic Support on the appropriate forms. Animals found to be Assistance Animals will only be permitted in the student’s own housing unit and will not be permitted in other buildings or housing units, which includes classroom buildings, without the building administrator’s permission. They are subject to the same responsibilities as Service Animal owners/users.

The University of Tulsa does not discriminate on the basis of personal status or group characteristics including but not limited to the classes protected under federal and state law in its programs, services, aids, or benefits. Inquiries regarding implementation of this policy may be addressed to the Office of Human Resources, 800 South Tucker Drice, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74104-9700, (918) 631-2616. Requests for accommodation of disabilities may be addressed to the University’s ADA/504 Coordinator, Dr. Tawny Rigsby, (918) 631-2315.