

## UT Service and Emotional Support Animal Policy

The University of Tampa (UT) fully supports the efforts and welfare of all its students. The UT 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 and Emotional Support Animals on campus.

### SERVICE ANIMAL

**Definition:** A service animal is a dog, or in certain cases, a miniature horse, 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. Furthermore, UT will not ask about the nature or extent of a person's disability, but, if not readily apparent, may make two inquiries to determine whether an animal qualifies as a Service Animal including:

1. If the animal is required because of a disability and;
2. What work or task the animal has been trained to perform.

**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 animal with Student Accessibility Services. Registration is not required to have a service animal in the classroom, however, by doing so, students will be able to:

- Document their need for the animal and better inform faculty
- Receive a letter of accommodation for their instructors at the beginning of each semester
- Access additional resources and services available to students of Student Accessibility Services.

**Use of Service Animals in the Residence Halls:** Students planning to live with a service animal in the residence halls are strongly encouraged to register their service animal with Student Accessibility Services.

To register your animal, please go to the following page on UT's Student Accessibility Services page to follow the standard accommodations process for registering your service animal: [UT Student Accessibility Services](#).

In addition, students who plan to bring their service animal into the Residence Halls must make this known on their application for housing or for general room selection, as applicable.

**Service Animals and Roommates:** Residence Life has the right to reassign students without animals to another housing option within the residence halls, if all residents are not in agreement or if care of the animal or interactions with other students, including roommates, becomes a concern. Residence Life will attempt to accommodate all students. .

If a student is assigned to a room that has an animal and they would like to move, the student is able to request a room change the following ways:

- During [Open Room Change](#)
- After Open Room Change, students can meet with their RA or Area Coordinator to talk about their situation and request a move.
- You may also contact the Residence Life Administrative team by emailing [housingassignments@ut.edu](mailto:housingassignments@ut.edu) with questions about the room change process.

In addition:

- The student owner 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 student 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.
- The student owner is responsible for ensuring that the animal is in good health, clean, free of fleas and ticks, and in compliance with all local and Florida state laws and requirements associated with licensing, vaccinations and other health regulations.
- The student owner's residence on campus must be kept clean and sanitary with no odors from the animal.

**Service Animal Maintenance and Control Requirements:**

- Service animals must be on a leash or in a carrier at all times when not in the residence of the student owner.
- Animals must be controlled and cared for by the student owner 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 student owner 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.
- The student owner 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 student owner should properly pick up and dispose of animal waste.

## **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL (ESA)**

**Definitions:** An emotional support animal 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 (ADA). In certain circumstances, emotional support animals that are not service animals under the ADA may still be permitted in UT’s Housing pursuant to the Fair Housing Act. A “Student Owner” is defined as a student with a qualified disability who requested an accommodation and was approved for an accommodation of an emotional support animal

**Emotional Support Animal accommodation request process:** The determination of whether a student has a qualified disability-related need for an emotional support animal accommodation is an individualized and interactive process. Students should contact Student Accessibility Services to request and begin the process for the accommodation. The process can be found here: [UT Student Accessibility Services](#).

When applying for on-campus housing, notification of the intent to bring an emotional support animal should be included in the student’s application for housing or for general room selection. 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 for the fall semester.

Although a student may apply after the deadlines for the semester, UT may not be able to accommodate a student immediately after the deadline. The student must also submit required documentation (see below) to Student Accessibility Services.

As part of the interactive process, Student Accessibility Services will follow up with the student related to their request to set up a time to discuss the accommodation further or ask for additional clarifying documentation. After reviewing all facts and documentation, Student Accessibility Services will decide about the student’s eligibility for the accommodation and the reasonableness of the requested emotional support animal accommodation. Student Accessibility Services reviews all requests for accommodation on a case-by- case basis. Furthermore, if a student wishes to change to a different emotional support animal than the one approved, the student must submit a new application for review with additional information from the medical care provider that verifies the medical need for a different animal.

**Documentation Requirements for an Emotional Support Animal Accommodation:** Documentation of the need for emotional support animal is required and should follow the Student Accessibility Services guidelines for documentation of disability. All documentation must be typed, on letterhead, and have a signature from the student’s treating professional. The following information must be submitted to Student Accessibility Services:

- Recognition of a 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.

**Emotional Support Animals on Campus:** Prior to approval from Student Accessibility Services, emotional support animals are not permitted on UT property. If an animal is brought on UT property and has not received prior approval by Student Accessibility Services, the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Animals residing in the residence halls that have not been approved by Student Accessibility Services must be removed within twenty-four (24) hours.

**Emotional Support Animals and Roommates:** After approval of the emotional support animal, the emotional support animal is only permitted in the student owner's assigned residence hall room. Residence Life has the right to reassign students without animals to another housing option within the residence halls, if all residents are not in agreement or if care of the animal or interactions with other students, including roommates, becomes a concern. Residence Life will attempt to accommodate all students.

If a student is assigned to a room that has an animal and they would like to move, the student is able to request a room change the following ways:

- During [Open Room Change](#)
- After Open Room Change, students can meet with their RA or Area Coordinator to talk about their situation and request a move.
- You may also contact the Residence Life Administrative team by emailing [housingassignments@ut.edu](mailto:housingassignments@ut.edu) with questions about the room change process.

**Emotional Support Animals in the Residence Halls:** Emotional support animals are only permitted in common indoor areas as needed to enter or exit their residential building. Emotional support animals may be brought outside for natural relief but must always be on a leash under the control of the student owner and must remain in the immediate vicinity of their residence hall. General guidelines regarding emotional support animals in the residence halls include:

The student owner 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 student 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 student owner is responsible for ensuring that the animal is in good health, clean, free of fleas and ticks, and is in compliance with all local and Florida state laws and requirements associated with licensing, vaccinations and other health regulations. The student owner's residence on campus must be kept clean and sanitary with no odors from the animal. The student owner must notify Student Accessibility Services and the Office of Residence Life if the approved animal is no longer needed.

### **Additional Notice**

**Conflicting Health Conditions:** Students with medical conditions that are affected by animals are asked to contact Student Accessibility Services with any concerns. Student Accessibility Services will make reasonable efforts 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 or emotional support animal unless invited. They are not to inquire into details about the student owner's disability. The nature of a person's disability is not required to be shared.

### **Service and Emotional Support Animal Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Please read and initial next to each statement below, detailing that you acknowledge the rights and responsibilities of bringing an animal onto campus, and will therefore act in accordance:

Service 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 student owner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ All animals must be crated or otherwise contained when the student owner is not in the residence. If the student resides in apartment-style housing, the animal may be contained in the student owner's individual bedroom when the student owner is not present.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Animals must be controlled and cared for by the student at all times including Winter, Summer and Spring breaks. Students may not leave animals in the residence halls during times when the residence halls are closed, and may not leave animals under the care of others on campus
- \_\_\_\_\_ To the extent possible, the animal should be unobtrusive to other individuals in the community.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The student owner is required to properly pick up and dispose of animal waste in a safe and sanitary manner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The animal's behavior is considered the student owner's behavior. The student owner is responsible for the actions of the animal and may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for violations of the campus living policies or student conduct policies made by the animal (i.e., noise, vandalism, sanitation, aggression, violence etc.).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Residence Life has the right to reassign non-animal owner occupants of the room to another unit within the residence halls if all residents are not in agreement or if care of the animal or interactions with other students, including roommates and suitemates, become a concern. Furthermore, Residence Life and/or Student Accessibility Services may remove any animal from the residence halls if there has been a violation of the Service and Emotional Support Animal policy or other University policies.

Animal Health and Well-being (initial next to each statement):

- \_\_\_\_\_ The student owner is required to make sure that the animal is well cared for at all times. Any evidence of neglect, mistreatment or abuse may result in removal of the animal and/or referral to the Office of Student Conduct.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Animals must be vaccinated in accordance with local ordinances. For Hillsborough County's Animal Ordinance, visit the [Hillsborough County-Pet Ownership](#) page.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Students must provide a bill of health, registration and vaccination records, along with a picture of the animal, to Student Accessibility Services at the initiation of services. Student

Accessibility Services will notify Campus Safety and Residence Life of the animal's approved presence on campus.

### **Service or Emotional Support Animal Behavior**

UT may remove an approved animal when

- The animal is out of control and the handler or student owner does not take effective action to control it.
- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
- The animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of the academic and/or residential program.
- The handler or student owner is found to be unable to care for an animal, or abuse or neglect is suspected.
- The handler or student owner does not comply with the Service and Emotional Support Animal policy or other UT policies.
- UT determines that an emotional support animal accommodation is no longer reasonable under the circumstances.

Initial Here: \_\_\_\_\_

If an animal violates any of the above, the Service and Emotional Support Animal committee, comprised of staff members from Student Accessibility Services, the Office of Residential Life, and the Office of Student Conduct, will meet to discuss the incident. After this advisory committee meets to discuss the incident, action will be recommended and communicated to those involved. In most instances, the animal will be immediately removed from campus until the animal's behavior is corrected. Once an animal's behavior is corrected, an interview with Student Accessibility Services, the animal, and the student, will take place to determine the animal is fit to return to campus. If permitted back on campus, Student Accessibility Services will notify Residence Life and the animal may return to campus. If further violation of the above continues, then the animal will be removed from campus and not permitted back onto campus.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Agreement to Service and Emotional Support Animal Policy:

By my signature, I verify that I have read, understand, and will abide by the policies outlined here. Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ UT ID# \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_