Service, Emotional Support, Pets, and Other Animals on Campus

Authority for Procedure granted by UWG PL 7010, Animals on Campus

The University of West Georgia (UWG) recognizes the importance of Service Animals as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the broader category of Emotional Support Animals under the Fair Housing Act (FHA) that provides physical and/or emotional support to individuals with disabilities. UWG also recognizes the therapeutic benefits and healing Therapy Animals, and Domesticated Animals (Pets) offer to the mental, physical health, and overall well-being of the UWG Community.

Exclusions

- Fish in aquariums no larger than 10-gallon tanks
- Animals used in police, search and rescue operations on UWG property
- Animals used in approved research, based on a request by faculty for the use in accordance with UWG policy.

A. Service Animals/Service Animals in Training

The Americans with Disabilities Act defines a Service Animal as "any dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including but not limited to physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability."

Whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, other animals are not Service Animals. The crime deterrent effects of an animal’s presence and the provision of Emotional Support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for this definition.

Access - Service Animals/Service Animals in Training
Service Animals assisting individuals with disabilities are generally permitted to be accompanied by their Handlers in all areas where official activities occur and where members of the public, participants in services, programs, or activities, are allowed to go.

UWG may prohibit the use of Service Animals in Controlled or Restricted Spaces due to health or safety restrictions or when required by federal regulations or other applicable laws. Restricted spaces may include, but are not limited to:

1. biologically sensitive or hazardous research laboratories;
2. mechanical rooms/custodial closets, such as boiler rooms, electrical closets, elevator control rooms, technology control rooms, and similar spaces;
3. motor pools, rooms with heavy machinery, wood and metal shops;
4. areas where protective clothing and gear are required;
5. food preparation areas (except for food preparation areas in residence halls, to the extent the Service Animal is necessary for a resident to use the area); or
6. any other areas outlined in federal, state, or local laws as inaccessible to animals.

Before excluding a Service Animal from a particular space, UWG Accessibility Services or Human Resources must engage in an individual analysis to determine whether a significant risk exists and whether modifications to its practices would mitigate such risk and enable the individual with a disability to use the Service Animal. This analysis will be performed in consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs.

If the individual analysis determines that the Service Animal poses a health or safety risk, UWG Accessibility Services or Human Resources must ensure the individual with a disability has an opportunity to participate in the program or activity without the Service Animal.

**Notification - Service Animals/Service Animals in Training**

Individuals with disabilities accompanied by a Service Animal or Service Animal in Training are encouraged to notify Accessibility Services in advance of coming on University property. Such courtesy notification allows Accessibility Services to make appropriate arrangements, offer any necessary assistance prior to the Handler's arrival, and notify the campus law enforcement or security personnel of the animal's presence in case of an emergency.

**Students** with disabilities accompanied by a Service Animal or Service Animal in Training are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services in advance of beginning classes on University property. In addition to the reasons stated above, the Handler's Student Accommodation Report (SAR) will be updated and an ID card issued for the Service Animal. For more information, visit the [Office of Accessibility Services website](http://uwg.policystat.com/policy/12162151/).

**Employees** seeking a reasonable accommodation for a Service Animal in the workplace should notify the Office of Human Resources before coming on University property and follow the reasonable accommodation process for employees. For more information, contact the [Office of Human Resources website](http://uwg.policystat.com/policy/12162151/).
Service Animals may not reside in on-campus housing without the expressed approval of the University of West Georgia. For more information, see Section F of the Service Animal Registration Form.

Service Animal Etiquette

Employees cannot ask about the Handler’s disability, require medical and/or training documentation, for a special identification card for the Service Animal, or ask that the animal demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task. Only limited inquiries are allowed when it is not obvious what service an animal provides. An individual may be asked:

1. Is this Service Animal required because of a disability? and
2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

No further inquiries are permitted if these requirements are met.

Employees and students should not:

- Pet, touch, or feed Service Animals or Emotional Support Animals without the Handler’s permission
- Deliberately startle or distract Service Animals or Emotional Support Animals
- Separate or attempt to separate a Handler from a Service Animal or an ESA

B. Emotional Support Animals

Emotional Support Animals are considered for Residence Halls only, as noted by the Fair Housing Act, to afford individuals with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy University housing, provided certain conditions, as described herein, are met.

Access

B. Emotional Support Animals are:

1. not permitted in any UWG Controlled Space (e.g., academic buildings, classrooms, libraries, student centers, etc.).
2. restricted to the Handler’s assigned, on-campus dwelling, except to take the ESA out for natural relief and exercise.
3. allowed in common outdoor areas that are not being used at the time of an event (unless pets are specifically authorized during the event) and that are not sports fields.

Registration

Students intending to bring an Emotional Support Animal on-campus must register with the Office of Housing and Residence Life and provide documentation from a licensed professional that the animal provides support that alleviates the identified symptoms or effects of the individual’s disability.

ESA requests will be reviewed and approved through the reasonable accommodation process consistent with UWG policy and applicable laws. After the student’s diagnosis and need for an ESA are verified,
Housing and Residence Life may consult campus partners, including but not limited to the Office of Legal Affairs, to discuss procedures concerning having an Emotional Support Animal in residence. For documentation requirements, forms, and guidelines for Emotional Support Animals, visit the Office of Housing and Residence Life.

Note: Registration certificates available for purchase through various websites are often scams and do not constitute appropriate documentation.

C. Therapy Animals

Access

Therapy Animals are generally permitted on University property, either in public or private areas (i.e., the Counseling Center, common public areas, etc.), provided certain conditions, as described herein, are met.

1. Therapy Animals must be certified by a formal Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) organization recognized in the State of Georgia, such as Assistance Dog International (ADI), Canine Assistants, and Happy Tails Pet Therapy.

2. A certified AAT Handler must accompany Therapy Animals at all times. With the approval of the President’s Cabinet and the appropriate dean (if the visit is in an academic building), an AAT handler may schedule specific hours for a registered Therapy Animal to be on campus and available to students or employees who wish to interact with the animal.

3. Therapy Animals should be available for visits in areas easy for those who do not wish to interact with the animal to avoid such contact. The area may be public or private, but such an area should not be an office space shared with others (such as a shared office or an office suite).

4. Therapy animals shall not be in food preparation or service areas.

Registration

The above criteria and approvals must be satisfied before a Therapy Animal is allowed on UWG property. In limited circumstances, University administrators may approve the presence of Therapy Animals in Training on campus. Approvals are obtained by following the Contract Management approval workflow.

D. Pets (domesticated)

All individuals on UWG property, including employees, affiliates, volunteers, students, business representatives, contractors, and visitors, are generally prohibited from bringing Pets into any building or other controlled space on University property.

Pets are allowed on University property only if the following conditions are met:

1. the pet is leashed and/or under the control of a handler at all times;
2. the Handler cleans up after the pet;
3. the pet is only taken to common outdoor areas that are not being used at the time of an event.
(unless pets are specifically authorized during the event) and that are not sports fields.

E. Pets in Residence Halls

Pets for ordinary use and companionship are permitted in on-campus residential housing provided certain conditions, as described herein, are met.

- Small fish in bowls or aquariums (maximum capacity of ten gallons) are the only pets allowed in all UWG residence halls.
- UWG designates pet-friendly residence hall(s) that allow one dog, domestic cat, or small fish to reside with its owner. Approved Pets are restricted to the pet owner's residence hall room. Approved Pets are not permitted to:
  1. roam outside of the pet owner's room, within the residence hall,
  2. on the grounds,
  3. in common areas of the building,
  4. other student rooms,
  5. any other building or controlled area on campus, or
  6. ride on university transportation

When a Pet needs to go outside, it must be on a leash, harness, or another tether except in designated areas. The owner is responsible for picking up the animal's waste and appropriately disposing of it immediately in the area designated by Housing and Residence Life.

Registration

Students must apply to live in a pet-friendly community every academic year. Upon approval, the student must provide documentation of the animal (cat or dog) receiving all required vaccinations. See Housing and Residence Life's Pet Vaccination webpage for more information on vaccine requirements.

Authorized Staff

Authorized staff permitted to live in UWG housing facilities must provide documentation of the animal (cat or dog) receiving all required vaccinations each academic year. Staff must comply with all federal and state animal laws, UWG policy, and procedures for animals on campus. See Housing and Residence Life's Pet Vaccination webpage for more information on vaccine requirements.

F. Responsibilities

The University

- will not be responsible for the upkeep, care, or supervision of a Service Animal, Emotional Support Animal, or Pet.
- cannot require an additional room deposit for a Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal.
Housing and Residence Life

- Will notify roommates about the Emotional Support Animal to include the type and size. (Roommates may request a room change from the Office of Housing and Residence Life if they desire to do so.)

- May exclude an Emotional Support Animal from on-campus housing using the following criteria for **Assessing a Person's Request to Have an Animal as a Reasonable Accommodation Under the Fair Housing Act**.

1. Any request for an animal may be denied if granting the request would impose an undue financial and administrative burden on the University or fundamentally alter the nature of the University's operations. If a request is denied, the University will discuss alternative accommodations that would not impose such a burden or result in a fundamental alteration.

2. UWG may consider the criteria below in determining whether the animal's presence is reasonable in housing assignments for individuals with Emotional Support Animals.
   
   i. whether the animal poses or has posed in the past a direct threat to the individual or others;
   
   ii. whether the animal causes or has caused excessive damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear;
   
   iii. whether the size of the animal is too large for available assigned housing space;
   
   iv. whether the animal’s presence would force another individual from that individual’s housing (e.g., serious allergies);
   
   v. whether the animal's presence otherwise violates individuals' right to peace and quiet enjoyment; and
   
   vi. whether the animal is housebroken or is unable to live with others in a reasonable manner.

*Please note:* Allergies and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using Service Animals. Most allergies to animals are due to direct contact with the animal. A separated space might be adequate to avoid allergic reactions. If a person is at risk of a significant allergic reaction to an animal, UWG must find a way to accommodate both the individual using the service animal and the individual with the allergy.

For employees, fellow students, or the public afraid of Service Animals, a solution may be to allow enough space for that person to avoid getting close to the Service Animal.

In addition to the provisions regarding service dogs, the ADA regulations have a separate provision about miniature horses. Miniature horses generally range in height from 24 inches to 34 inches, measured to the shoulders, typically weighing between 70 and 100 pounds. Entities must make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the miniature horse is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of
the individual with a disability.

The regulations set out **four assessment factors** to assist entities in determining whether the Service Animal can be accommodated in their facility. The assessment factors are:

1. whether the Service Animal is housebroken;
2. whether the Service Animal is under the Handler’s control;
3. whether the facility can accommodate the Service Animal’s type, size, and weight; and
4. whether the Service Animal’s presence will not compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for the facility’s safe operation.

**Animal Handler/Owner**

Owners and Handlers or designees are responsible for all of the following:

1. **Unattended Animals**
   
   i. Animals may not be left unattended on University property, except for Service Animals, Emotional Support Animals, and Pets left in the Handler’s assigned University residence by the Handler.
   
   ii. The animal may only be left unattended for reasonable periods and not neglected, whereby the animal’s health may be impacted, as determined by University staff.
   
   iii. An Emotional Support or Service Animal left for longer than a reasonable period of time may be impounded by the University police, and the Handler will receive one warning.
   
   iv. If the behavior occurs a second time, the Handler will be required to remove the animal from campus and prohibited from bringing the animal back onto University property.
   
   v. Animals may not be tied or tethered to any University property, including but not limited to buildings, railings, bike racks, fire hydrants, fences, sign posts, benches, or trees.
   
   vi. Animals may not be allowed to run loose anywhere on campus.

2. **Disruption**

   i. Animals must not be allowed to disrupt or interfere with University activities, including but not limited to the communal living in the University’s residences, teaching, research, service, or administrative activities.

   ii. If the animal is unruly or disruptive, or if the Handler fails to maintain control of the animal, the Handler must regain control immediately or remove the animal from University property.

   iii. If the improper behavior continues or happens more than once, the Handler may be prohibited from bringing the animal on to University property, in the determination of the Chief of Police, the Dean of Students (for students), the Vice President of Student Affairs (for on-campus residents), or the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources (for employees).
iv. If an animal is banned, the University will engage as needed in a good-faith process with the individual to identify other accommodations that will effectively allow the individual to participate in the program, service, or activity.

3. Health and Safety

UWG may remove any animal that it deems to be a risk to the health and safety of community members, including but not limited to any animal that has injured or threatened to injure any individual or other animal.

4. Laws and Policies

   i. The Handler must abide by current city, county, and state ordinances, laws, and regulations pertaining to animal licensing, vaccination, and other animal requirements.

   ii. The Handler's responsibility is to know and understand these ordinances, laws, and regulations.

   iii. The University has the right to require documentation of compliance with such ordinances, laws, and regulations, including a vaccination certificate.

   iv. Additionally, the owner must abide by all equally applicable residential policies, such as assuring that the animal does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for individuals who reside there.

   v. Animals in University housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian.

   vi. Documentation must be filed annually with Housing and Residence Life (i.e., vaccination certificate for the animal or a veterinarian's statement regarding the animal's health.)

vii. The University has the authority to direct that the animal receives veterinary attention.

5. Control

   i. A Service Animal shall be under the control of its Handler.

   ii. A Service Animal shall have a harness, leash, or other tether.

   iii. If the Handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the Service Animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the Service Animal must be otherwise under the Handler's control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means).

   iv. The Handler is financially responsible for the actions of that individual's animal, including bodily injury or property damage.

   v. The Handler's responsibility covers, but is not limited to, replacement of furniture, carpet, window, wall covering, and the like.

   vi. The owner is expected to cover these costs at the time of repair and/or move-out.
6. Cleanliness

i. All animals, except those exclusively confined to cages, shall be housebroken.

ii. Any animal that is not housebroken may be excluded from UWG facilities.

iii. In an isolated incident, the Handler is responsible for immediately cleaning up and disposing of bodily fluids or solid wastes, indoors or outdoors, unless the Handler can physically not perform the cleanup.

iv. The Handler should have appropriate cleanup materials and disposal bags at all times. Used cleanup materials should be disposed of by tying them securely in a plastic bag and depositing them in an outdoor waste container.

v. Any Handler who is physically unable to perform the necessary cleanup must make satisfactory arrangements for a third party to perform all actions required by this paragraph.

vi. It is the Handler’s responsibility to make such arrangements, and all costs for additional cleanup or repairs will be the responsibility of the Handler.

vii. The Handler’s residence may be inspected for fleas, ticks, or other pests. 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.

viii. The Handler will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment above and beyond standard pest management in the residence halls.

7. Treatment

Any evidence of mistreatment, abuse, neglect, or leaving the animal unattended for unreasonably long periods of time may result in immediate removal of the animal and discipline for the responsible individual pursuant to the University Student Code of Conduct and any housing-related sanctions.

G. Reporting Animals’ Concerning Behavior

If an animal injures a person, another animal, or is exhibiting aggressive or disruptive behavior, is posing a direct threat to the health or safety of others, or the Handler is unable to maintain control of the animal, contact UWG Police Department (UPD) at (678) 839-6000.

H. Appeals

Individuals may submit a written appeal, grievance, or complaint to the appropriate office. Staff within those offices have the knowledge and training to address the matter professionally and collaboratively for each case. Complaints covered by policies already in place should be directed to the appropriate office.

Please see the list and the links below.

- Accessibility Services (accessibility-services@westga.edu),
I. Violations

Students violating this procedure violate the UWG Student Code of Conduct and may be referred to the Office of Community Standards.

Faculty or staff violating this procedure may be referred to the employee's supervisor for handling under Employee Performance and Conduct or referred to Human Resources.

Visitors and guests who fail to comply with this policy will be asked to leave or be removed from the UWG property.

If a Service or Emotional Support Animal is banned from university property, the individual with a disability will have the right to engage in an interactive process to determine if effective participation can occur with other appropriate accommodations.

Any animal found unattended in or on any university property (other than Service, Emotional Support or Animals, or Pets in a student's residence left for a reasonable period of time) may be impounded. Handlers or owners of impounded animals will be held responsible for paying any impound and/or license fees required to secure the release of their animals.

Any Handler or owner whose animal causes property damage may be charged for replacing and repairing university or other individuals' assets, including grounds, personal property, and improvements.

Definitions

**Emotional Support Animal (ESA)** - An emotional support animal is any animal providing emotional support, well-being, or comfort that eases one or more identified symptoms or effects of a documented disability. Emotional support animals may also be referred to as comfort animals.

**Handler** - An individual with a disability, defined under federal and state law, who uses a service animal to perform a work or task directly related to the individual’s disability. A Handler may also be a personal care attendant who handles the animal for a person with a disability.

**Partner** - A person engaged in training a service animal to accompany a Handler.

**Pet** - Any animal kept for ordinary use and companionship that does not meet the definition of an ESA.

**Residence Hall** - Any University-owned or managed facility that houses students.

**Service Animal** - Any dog 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. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler's disability. Examples of such work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the
presence of people or sounds, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.

**Service Animal in Training** - Dogs being trained by a trainer identified as an agent or employee of an entity specialized in training dogs to become service animals.

### Forms
- Service Animal Acknowledgment Form (in progress)
- Emotional Support Animal Application
- Pet-Friendly Community Application
- Companion Animal Registration Packet (in progress)

### Guidelines/Related material
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Fair Housing Act (FHA)
- Georgia Code Section 30-4-2
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Assessing a Person's Request to Have an Animal as a Reasonable Accommodation Under the Fair Housing Act
- Housing and Residence Life Webpage
- Accessibility Services Webpage

### Training
- ADA Essentials: A Practical Approach for Employers
- Working with the ADA (2014 Edition)

**Keywords**

Companion, Comfort
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Approval Signatures