

# POLICY REGARDING SERVICE ANIMALS: ACCESS TO OKLAHOMA CITY UNIVERSITY FACILITIES, PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND ACTIVITIES

## I. POLICY STATEMENT:

Oklahoma City University recognizes the importance of service animals to individuals with disabilities and has established the following policy regarding service animals (and service animals in training) to provide a reasonable accommodation to people with disabilities. This policy ensures that people with disabilities who require the use of a service animal as a reasonable accommodation will receive the benefit of the work or tasks performed by such animals. The University is committed to allowing people with disabilities the use of a service animal on campus to facilitate their full-participation and equal access to the University's programs and activities. This policy sets forth the specific requirements and guidelines concerning the appropriate use of and protocols associated with service animals. The University reserves the right to amend this policy as circumstances require.

This policy does not address the University's policies concerning the on-campus presence of animals that do not qualify as service animals. See the Policies section of the University's website for policies concerning the presence of other animals on campus:  
<http://www.okcu.edu/policies/>

## II. DEFINITIONS:

**Approved Animal:** An "Approved Animal" is a service animal that has been granted approval as a reasonable accommodation under this policy. An individual requesting an accommodation to bring his or her service animal to campus may be required to provide documentation to support the reasonable accommodation requests, if the need for the animal is not readily apparent. Service animals whose behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or is disruptive to the campus community may be excluded, regardless of training or certification.

**Pet:** A "Pet" is an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. A pet is not considered a service animal or an emotional support animal. It is not covered by this policy. Pets are not permitted on university property or in university housing.

**Service Animal:** The American with Disabilities Act, as amended in 2008, defines a "Service Animal" as 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.

The work or task that the dog performs must be directly related to the functional limitation of the person's disability and can include a wide variety of services, such as assisting those with low vision, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, pulling a wheelchair, and retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone. Service dogs may also perform tasks such as recognizing and assisting during seizures. For individuals with neurological or psychiatric disabilities, the dog's tasks may include preventing or interrupting impulsive destructive

behavior. For example, for autistic students, service animals can be trained to interrupt inappropriate repetitive behavior with a persistent nudging task.

The following animals are not considered service animals under Title II of the ADA:

- Any animal besides dogs – regardless of whether they are domesticated or trained;
- Animals that serve solely to provide a crime deterrent effect; and
- Emotional support, comfort or companionship animals.

**Therapy Animal:** A “Therapy Animal” is an animal that provides affection and comfort and is specifically trained to be gentle and stable in stressful situations. Therapy animals are most often used in hospitals, nursing homes, mental health facilities and children’s therapy animal may be incorporated into the treatment process as prescribed by an appropriate health care professional. A therapy animal is not considered a service animal.

**Trainee:** A “Trainee” is a service animal in training, including puppies in training once they are old enough to remain under the control of the handler. The animal must be accompanied by a person who is training the service animal, and the animal must wear a leash, harness, or cape that identifies the animal as a service animal in training. Trainees are not permitted to reside in campus housing. All trainees being trained by University students must register with Campus Disabilities Services.

### III. REQUIREMENTS FOR SERVICE ANIMALS AND THEIR PARTNER/HANDLERS

1. **Training:** To work on campus, a service animal must be specifically trained to perform a service function. While not required, evidence of successful completion of a recognized licensing or certification program for service animals or a letter documenting training is recommended. If available, a copy of the proof of certification should be on file with the Campus Disabilities Services (for students) or the Human Resources office (for faculty/staff).
2. **Identification:** It is required that the service animal wear a harness, cape, identification tag or other gear that readily identifies its working status.
3. **Control:** The partner/handler must be in full control of the service animal at all times. The care and supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of its partner/handler. The service animal must not be left alone for more than 24 hours. The partner/handler must nominate a designee to collect or care for the animal if he or she is not able to do so.
4. **Leash:** The service animal must be on a leash at all times.
5. **License and Tags:** All service animals must meet local, county, and/or state licensing regulations. It is required that service animals have an owner ID tag.
6. **Health:** All animals must comply with local, county, and/or state vaccination and health requirements. Animals to be housed in campus housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian, including current vaccinations and immunizations against diseases common to that type of animal.

7. **Clean-up Rule:** The partner/handler must (a) always carry equipment sufficient to clean up the animal's feces; (b) never allow the animal to defecate on any property, university, public, or private (except the partner's own property), unless the partner/handler immediately removes the waste; (c) be responsible for any damage caused by the waste.

#### IV. CONDITIONS FOR PRESENCE OF A SERVICE ANIMAL ON CAMPUS

1. **Disruption:** The partner/handler of a service animal that is unruly or disruptive may be asked to remove the animal from University facilities. If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the partner/handler may be required to take significant steps to mitigate the behavior before bringing the animal into any University facility. Mitigation may include muzzling a barking animal, obtaining refresher training for both the animal and the partner, or other appropriate measures.
2. **Health problems for others:** If the presence of a service animal in a class, building, or housing unit results in health problems for others, such as asthma or an allergic reaction to fur or pet dander, a change in class schedule or housing may be necessary.
3. **Threat to others:** Although the University may exclude a service animal that is out of control or direct threat to the health and safety of others, the individual with a disability who uses the service animal will be given the option of continuing to utilize or participate in University services without having the service animal on the premises.
4. **Ill Health:** Service animals that are ill should not be taken into public areas. A partner/handler with an ill animal may be asked to remove the animal from University facilities.

#### V. PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING PERMISSION TO HAVE SERVICE ANIMALS IN UNIVERSITY HOUSING

A person seeking to keep a service animal in University housing must refer to the Housing Accommodation Policy and make a formal request to Campus Disability Services. To do so, the person should submit the appropriate "Request Form for Disabilities Housing Accommodations" so that the student can be assigned to the most appropriate housing location with their service animal, considering the student's needs and preferences.

The Campus Disability Services will review requests on an as-needed basis for housing accommodations. The student must request housing accommodations 60 days before arriving on campus.

While applications submitted after may be accepted and considered, the University cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet late applicants' accommodation needs, including any needs that develop during the semester.

Requests for service animals in housing do **not** require documentation of disability if the use of the service animal is readily apparent. Rather, students should answer relevant question on the Request Form regarding requests for service animals.

Campus Disability Services will review the request and, once the request is approved, it will arrange a meeting with the person requesting that a service animal be housed in University housing. This policy will be carefully reviewed with the person at that time.

Prior to approval of a service animal, the student's roommate(s) or suitemate(s) will be notified (if applicable) to solicit their acknowledgement of the approval and to notify them that the approved animal will be residing in shared assigned living space.

Upon approval of a service animal, the appropriate residential building staff will be notified.

Housing personnel will make a reasonable effort to notify tenants in the residence building where the approved animal will be located. Students with medical condition(s) that are affected by animals (e.g., respiratory diseases, asthma, severe allergies) will be advised to contact the Campus Disabilities Services Coordinator if they have a health or safety related concern about exposure to a service animal. The University is prepared to reasonably accommodate individuals with such medical conditions that require accommodation when living in proximity to service animals. The Campus Disabilities Services Coordinator will resolve any conflict in a timely manner. Staff members will consider the conflicting needs and/or accommodations of all persons involved. Campus Disabilities Services staff may use Campus Health Services as a resource for information on health issues. In the event that an agreement cannot be reached, Campus Disabilities Services Coordinator's decision is final and not subject to appeal.

## **VI. AREAS OFF LIMITS TO SERVICE ANIMALS**

The University may prohibit the use of service animals in certain locations because of health and safety restrictions (e.g. where the animals may be in danger, or where their use may compromise the integrity of research). Restricted areas may include, but are not limited to, the following areas: custodial closets, boiler rooms, facility equipment rooms, laboratories, areas where protective clothing is necessary, wood and metal shops, motor pools, rooms with heavy machinery, and areas outlined in state law as being inaccessible to animals. Exceptions to restricted areas may be granted on a case-by-case basis by contacting Campus Disabilities Services and the appropriate department representative; the person directing the restricted area has the final decision.