Service & Assistance Animals Policy and Guidelines

I. Purpose of the Policy and Guidelines

This document explains Washington University’s 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.

II. Definitions

a. Service Animal

Service Animal means any dog or, in certain circumstances, miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of and to accommodate the functional needs of an individual with a disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not Service Animals for the purpose of this policy. The work or task performed by a Service Animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability.

b. Assistance Animal

Assistance animal means any animal that is specifically designated by a qualified medical treatment provider as affording an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling, provided there is a nexus between the individual’s disability and the assistance the animal provides. As described below, Assistance Animals must stay in the individual’s residence—they cannot accompany the individual on daily tasks like attending class or studying in the library.

c. Individual with a Disability

An individual with a disability is a person who

   i. Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of a person’s major life activities; or
   ii. Has a record of having, or being perceived as having, a physical or mental impairment.

III. Policy

a. Service Animal

Washington University 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 whether 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. Such prohibited areas may include but are not limited to the following:

- Research and teaching laboratories
- Other research facilities where the animal may compromise the integrity of research
- Mechanical rooms/custodial closets
- Areas where protective clothing is necessary
- Areas where there is a danger to the service animal
- Exceptions to restricted areas may be granted on a case-by-case basis by the Office of Environmental and Health Safety, the Chief of Police, the Office of Residential Life, and/or the department/program chair responsible for the restricted area, as appropriate.

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.

b. Assistance Animal

An Assistance Animal owned by an individual with a disability who lives in a residence hall on university property is allowed to live with the individual in the handler’s residence hall. Assistance animals are not allowed in any other buildings on university property, nor are they allowed in other controlled spaces on campus.

IV. Procedures for Requesting a Service or Assistance Animal

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, Washington University will accommodate persons with disabilities who require the assistance of a qualified Service Animal or Assistance Animal. Students, faculty and staff making requests for such animals must direct their requests to the Office of Disability Resources or Human Resources, as applicable.
a. **Service Animal**

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 Office of Disability Resources, as applicable.

b. **Assistance Animal in University Housing**

- A student with a disability who lives in University Housing and wishes to seek permission to have an Assistance 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.
- The student will be expected to provide documentation of the disability and the disability-related need for an Assistance Animal, and it must state how the animal will impact the student’s ability to participate in University housing.
- A new request for housing accommodations must be completed for each new academic year.
- 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.

When a **Service Animal** is confirmed by the University, the owner will be given access to a Verification of Individual Student Accommodation (VISA) document 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 security staff, as needed) that the animal will be residing in a shared assigned living space.
Should the request for an **Assistance Animal** be approved, the owner will be given access to a VISA document that confirms his/her right to maintain the animal in the owner’s housing assignment. The student must provide their Residential College Director with a copy of the VISA prior to moving the animal into the housing assignment. If necessary, the Office of Residential Life will notify other residents within the housing assignment (as well as maintenance and security staff, as needed) that the animal will be residing in a shared assigned living space.

V. **Responsibilities of the Owner of a Service or Assistance 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 Assistance 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.

The University reserves the right to deny access to campus, or remove from campus, any Service Animal or Assistance 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.

The Office of Residential Life retains the right to relocate the owner and approved animal as necessary. Should the animal be removed from the premises for any reason, the owner is expected to fulfill his/her housing obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

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 Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action. If a Service Animal or Assistance 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.

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:**
The Office of Disability Resources
http://cornerstone.wustl.edu/disabilityresources.aspx

If you are a **faculty or staff member:**
The Office of Human Resources
http://hr.wustl.edu
https://hr.wustl.edu/items/service-assistance-animals/

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 under the university's Discrimination and Harassment policy.

Policy effective date: August __, 2015

Approved by: The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Human Resources and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Students