

UGA Assistance Animal Policy

The University of Georgia (“UGA”) is committed to maintaining a fair and respectful environment for living, work, and study for all, including individuals with disabilities. To that end and in compliance with federal and state laws, this policy (“Policy”) provides general guidelines and permitted uses of animals assisting individuals with disabilities while on UGA property.

This Policy does not pertain to animals being used for teaching or research or animals receiving treatment at the College of Veterinary Medicine or the UGA Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Definitions

Assistance Animals: (1) service animals and (2) other trained or untrained animals that do work, perform tasks, provide assistance, and/or provide therapeutic emotional support for individuals with disabilities (referred to in this Policy as an “Emotional Support Animal”).

Service Animal: Any dog [1] 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 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, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, 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.

[1] When this Policy refers to “dogs” in the context of Service Animals, the references also include miniature horses.

Handler: The individual with a disability, as 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.

Service Animals in Training: Dogs that are undergoing individual training to provide specific disability-related work or service for an individual with a disability. This does not include obedience training or socialization of puppies who may later become Service Animals. Adult dogs are recognized as being “in training” to provide disability-specific assistance only after they

have completed an earlier period of socialization (obedience training, being house broken, getting acclimated to public places and everyday activities as pets).

Trainer: The agent or employee of a school for seeing eye, hearing, service, or guide dogs who is providing individual training to a Service Animal in Training so that it will do work or perform specific tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.

Puppies Being Raised for Training: Dogs that are being raised to be evaluated for their suitability for training as a service animal by a Puppy Raiser identified as an agent of an entity specialized in training dogs to become Service Animals.

Puppy Raiser: The individual who is a registered agent of an entity specialized in raising dogs to become service animals who is responsible for raising, socializing, and providing basic obedience training to a dog that will be formally trained as a Service Animal by the above entity after it is raised.

Emotional Support Animal: Any animal providing emotional or other support that ameliorates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a documented disability. Emotional Support Animals (“ESAs”) may also be referred to as comfort or therapy animals. Unlike Service Animals, ESAs are not required to be individually trained to perform work or tasks, and they include species other than dogs. Pets (as defined below) are not considered ESAs.

Emotional Support Animal Owner: The individual with a documented disability who has an animal that ameliorates one or more identified symptoms of the disability (“ESA Owner”).

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

Campus Access

Access for Service Animals

Pursuant to federal and state law, Service Animals must be allowed to accompany Handlers in all areas of the University’s campus and facilities, subject to the restrictions outlined below.

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. Employees may ask two questions: (1) Is the dog a Service Animal required because of a disability? and (2) What work or task has the dog been trained to perform? Employees cannot ask about the person’s disability, require medical documentation, require special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

Access for Service Animals in Training

Georgia law provides that Service Animals in Training accompanying Trainers must be given the same degree of access as Service Animals and Handlers. Therefore, Service Animals in Training must be allowed to accompany Trainers in all areas of the University's campus and facilities, subject to the restrictions outlined below.

Service Animals in Training must be registered with Accessibility and Testing, have a UGA red tag, and wear a collar, leash, or other appropriate apparel or device that identifies the dog as a Service Animal in Training. Trainers must be able to provide documentation of their credentials as an agent or employee of a school for seeing eye, hearing, service, or guide dogs who is providing individual training to a Service Animal in Training.

Access for Puppies Being Raised for Training

Georgia law provides that Puppy Raisers accompanying Puppies Being Raised for Training, subject to certain identification and other requirements outlined below, are required to be given the same degree of access to areas of campus where students, members of the public, and other participants in services, programs, or activities are allowed to go. This does not include University Housing facilities.

[2] As of the effective date of this Policy, no new registrations for Puppies Being Raised for Training will be considered by Accessibility and Testing and/or University Housing. As of Fall Semester 2026, Puppies Being Raised for Training will no longer be allowed in University Housing.

Puppies Being Raised for Training must be registered with Accessibility and Testing, have a UGA red tag and must wear a collar, leash, or other appropriate apparel or device that identifies the dog as a Puppy Being Raised for Training. Puppy Raisers must also be able to provide their credentials as an agent of an entity specialized in training dogs to become service animals. No further inquiries are permitted once compliance is confirmed.

Access for Emotional Support Animals

Because ESAs are not covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act, ESAs are not allowed to accompany persons with disabilities in University facilities other than University Housing facilities. ESAs are allowed in a student's [3] assigned University Housing unit after approval has been received from Accessibility and Testing, said approval is provided to University Housing, and the required University Housing paperwork is completed. ESAs are restricted to the registered student's unit and only allowed outside the unit to care for the animal outside of the building or to leave the building with the animal. ESAs are not otherwise permitted inside other University facilities.

[3] There are circumstances that require employees to live in University Housing. Required documentation of the requisite disability for non-student employees will be handled by the Human Resources Workforce Engagement Team and forwarded to University Housing.

Access for Pets

Pets are not allowed in any UGA facility with the sole exception of fish in aquariums of 20 gallons or less in University Housing residence halls ([University Housing Pet Policy](#)).

Restrictions to Access on Campus

UGA may prohibit or otherwise restrict the access of Service Animals, Service Animals in Training, and Puppies Being Raised for Training in certain UGA facilities due to health or safety restrictions and concerns or where their presence may compromise the integrity of research or otherwise fundamentally alter a program or activity of UGA. Any such prohibition or other restriction on access to any UGA facility pursuant to this Policy shall be determined in writing using the guidance provided by this Policy and other relevant information by responsible officials of each affected UGA unit, with copies provided to the UGA Director of Accessibility and Testing and the UGA Director of Equal Opportunity/Disability Compliance Officer (“EOO Director”). Such restrictions include, but are not limited to:

1. Food preparation areas.
2. Teaching or research laboratories.
3. Classrooms or other facilities or activities involving demonstration or research animals.
4. Mechanical rooms or custodial closets such as boiler rooms, facility equipment rooms, electrical closets, elevator control rooms, and similar spaces.
5. Areas where personal protective clothing or equipment is necessary.
6. Areas where there is a danger to the Service Animal or Service Animal Being Raised for Training such as classrooms or wood/metal/machine shops where there are sharp metal cuttings or other sharp objects on the floor or protruding from a surface, where there is hot material on the floor (*e.g.*, molten metal or glass), where there is a high level of dust, where there are harmful chemicals or materials, or where there is moving machinery.
7. Such other areas where the Service Animal or Service Animal Being Raised for Training may be endangered or constitute a danger to persons or animals.
8. Areas where the presence of the Service Animal or Service Animal Being Raised for Training would cause or require a fundamental alteration of a UGA program or activity.

Exceptions

Exceptions to any provision of this Policy, including restrictions placed by UGA units on access to specific areas or other aspects of UGA facilities for Assistance Animals, will be considered on

a case-by-case basis upon written request to the EOO Director, submitted not less than five business days prior to the effective date of any such exception. The EOO Director will consult with appropriate members of the UGA community in an interactive process to determine whether the request will be granted or denied, considering all relevant facts and circumstances. The EOO Director will inform the requester of the decision in writing, including any conditions or restrictions in cases where exceptions are granted.

Under exigent or unusual circumstances, a responsible official of a UGA unit may allow a temporary exemption to any restrictions pursuant to this Policy. Such a temporary exemption may grant an Assistance Animal temporary access to otherwise restricted areas of UGA facilities, but only for a duration and extent required based on the nature of the exigency or other unusual circumstances.

Responsibilities of Handlers, Trainers, Puppy Raisers, and ESA Owners

- a. A Handler, Trainer, Puppy Raiser, or ESA Owner must maintain close and direct physical control of their animal at all times by means of an appropriate leash or other lead of a type and length that enables the Handler, Trainer, Puppy Raiser, or ESA Owner to maintain close and direct physical control of the animal. If a Handler is unable to use these restraints because of his or her disability or because use would interfere with the safe and effective performance of work or tasks, then the animal must otherwise be under the Handler's control by voice control, signals, or other effective means. ESAs must also be kept under control by a harness, leash, or other tether when outside of the University Housing unit.
- b. All are prohibited from transferring control of their animals to another person even momentarily, requesting the assistance of other persons in supervising or controlling their animals, or otherwise leaving the presence of their animals for any period while on UGA facilities, except as provided by this Policy or other UGA policies. Puppy Raisers may transfer control of their registered Puppy Being Raised for Training to an authorized Alternate who is an agent of the same entity purposed to train dogs as service animals and who is registered with Accessibility and Testing as an Alternate. ESA Owners are responsible for ensuring that the animal is contained appropriately when the Owner is not present in the residence unit for class, work, or other activity.
- c. All must ensure that their animals are kept clean and well-groomed and kept in a healthy clean environment.
- d. Handlers, Trainers, Puppy Raisers, and ESA Owners must ensure that their animals are housebroken. In the event of an isolated incident of an animal failing to control its bodily eliminations due to illness or accident, the Handler, Trainer, Puppy Raiser, or ESA Owner is responsible for immediately and properly cleaning up and disposing of any bodily fluids or solid

waste from the animal, whether indoors or outdoors. All are responsible for maintaining their animals in a sanitary and clean manner in the residence halls.

e. Proper clean-up will depend on the specific circumstances but includes, at a minimum, physical removal of any liquid and solid wastes and disposal of the same and the cleaning materials used by securing the materials in a plastic bag and depositing the bag in an outdoor waste container. To this end, all Handlers, Trainers, Puppy Raisers, and ESA Owners are required to have in their possession at all times when accompanied by their animals appropriate and sufficient cleaning materials and disposal bags whenever their animals are present on UGA facilities or property.

f. In the case of a Handler whose disability prevents or impairs the ability to comply with the requirements of this section, as required by applicable federal laws, it is the responsibility of such Handler to have previously made satisfactory arrangements for a third party to perform all actions required by this section. Accessibility and Testing or the Human Resources Workforce Engagement Team is available for consultation on making third-party arrangements if needed.

g. Handlers, Trainers, Puppy Raisers, ESA Owners, and any other individuals who bring an animal on campus shall be liable for all resulting costs when an animal causes damage to UGA facilities or property or injury to persons. In all cases of damage to UGA facilities or property by an animal failing to control its bodily eliminations due to illness, accident, or otherwise, the owner is personally responsible for the cost of additional cleaning of or repairs to UGA facilities or the cleaning, repair, or replacement of damaged property. In the case of any incident involving injury to a person by an animal, the owner shall make an immediate report to the UGA Police Department so that the incident can be properly investigated and documented, and the owner shall also fully comply with any state or local law or regulation requiring additional reports to other government agencies that may be required due to the physical injury caused by the animal.

h. All approved animals must be in compliance with state and local laws regarding health, vaccination, and care of the particular type of animal.

Conflicting Disabilities

Some people may have allergic reactions to animals that are substantial enough to qualify as disabilities. UGA will consider the needs of such persons as well as the needs of Handlers and ESA Owners in meeting its obligations to reasonably accommodate all disabilities. Students requesting allergy accommodations should contact Accessibility and Testing to register and document the allergy. Employees who are not also students should submit their allergy documentation to the Human Resources Workforce Engagement Team. The EOO Director will facilitate a resolution when a resolution cannot be reached within the affected UGA unit, program, or activity.

Grounds for Removal of Animals from UGA Facilities

In addition to referral to either the Office of Student Conduct or University Human Resources Workforce Engagement Team for disciplinary actions under the student Code of Conduct or employee progressive discipline process, violation of the following provisions may serve as grounds for the removal of an Assistance Animal otherwise permitted under this Policy from UGA Facilities:

Out-of-Control Animal: Owners will be asked to remove any animal if it is out of control and the owner does not take effective and immediate action to control it. If the out-of-control behavior happens repeatedly, the owner may be prohibited from bringing the animal into University facilities until the owner can demonstrate that significant steps have been taken to correct and control the behavior. An example of an animal that is out of control would be an animal that repeatedly gets loose and runs at large, even if it does not physically injure another person or animal.

Non-Housebroken/Unsanitary Animal: Owners may be directed to remove an animal from University facilities if that animal is not housebroken or if the animal's environment is not maintained in a healthy, sanitary manner or if the animal is not kept clean and well-groomed.

Direct Threat: An animal that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by reasonable modifications is not permitted on campus. An example would be an animal that exhibits aggression or has injured another person or animal. A direct threat determination will consist of an individualized assessment based on reasonable judgment, current medical knowledge, or the best available objective evidence to determine: (1) the nature, duration and severity of the risk; (2) the probability that the potential injury will actually occur; and (3) whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk.

Improper/Inadequate Care: Failure to properly care for an animal will result in the animal being removed from UGA property. The University will report any animal abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities, in addition to applicable disciplinary actions under the student Code of Conduct or employee progressive discipline process.

This section is not exhaustive, and other provisions of this Policy may warrant removal of animals from UGA facilities. When an animal is removed pursuant to this Policy, UGA will work with the owner to identify reasonable alternative opportunities to participate in UGA services, programs, or activities without the animal's presence.

Administrative and Other Matters

Students

Service Animals: Student-Handlers who require the use of Service Animals that have been trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities may choose to register their dogs with Accessibility and Testing but are not required to do so. University Housing has separate procedures ([Community Guide](#)) to facilitate Service Animals in residence halls.

Service Animals in Training: Trainers must first contact Accessibility and Testing to register their Service Animals in Training. Registration is annual or at any time the Trainer changes animals. A Trainer must provide appropriate documentation for their Service Animal in Training to document their credentials from an entity purposed to train dogs for use as a Service Animal. Completed registration will be evidenced by the distribution of a red tag that is to be affixed to the Service Animal's collar and must be worn at all times. Accessibility and Testing shall maintain appropriate records on registered Service Animals in Training. Trainers must also provide documentation showing that the Trainer is an agent or employee of a school for seeing eye, hearing, service, or guide dogs.

Puppies Being Raised for Training: Puppy Raisers must first contact Accessibility and Testing to register their Puppies Being Raised for Training. Registration is annual or at any time the Puppy Raiser changes animals. A Puppy Raiser must provide appropriate documentation for his or her Puppy Being Raised for Training to document his or her credentials from an entity purposed to train dogs for use as a Service Animal. Completed registration will be evidenced by the distribution of a red tag that is to be affixed to the animal's collar and must be worn at all times. Accessibility and Testing shall maintain appropriate records on registered Puppies Being Raised for Training.

Emotional Support Animals: Before a student with a disability may bring an ESA into University Housing, the student must register the ESA with Accessibility and Testing. This registration must be renewed annually. The student must provide medical documentation from a licensed physician, mental health provider, or other mental health professional who can attest:

- (1) The individual has a physical or mental impairment, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment;
- (2) The impairment substantially limits at least one major life activity;
- (3) The individual needs the specific animal requested to have an equal opportunity to enjoy the residence hall because the animal does work, performs tasks, provides assistance, and/or provides emotional support with respect to the individual's disability; and
- (4) The documenting licensed physician, mental health provider, or other mental health professional has a documented history of treating the student for the underlying disability.

In general, only domesticated animals of a type commonly kept in households are eligible to serve as Emotional Support Animals. Although it is possible that an "exotic" animal could

qualify as an ESA, the individual seeking accommodation has a substantial burden to demonstrate a disability-related need for the specific exotic animal or the specific type of exotic animal.

ESAs are required to be housebroken, spayed or neutered, and current on rabies vaccinations. It is highly recommended that ESAs are current on other vaccinations as recommended by a licensed veterinarian for that animal type.

Note that University Housing may deny access to an ESA if it is too large for the available housing assignment or if its presence would otherwise constitute an unreasonable accommodation. In such circumstances, Accessibility and Testing will engage in an interactive process with the individual to determine if there are alternative accommodations that might effectively meet the individual's disability related needs.

Documentation from the Internet: Documentation from websites that sell certificates, registrations, and licensing documents to anyone who answers certain questions or participates in a short interview and pays a fee is not sufficient to reliably establish that an individual has a non-observable disability or disability-related need for an ESA. However, in some circumstances, documentation may be reliable where provided by legitimate, licensed health care professionals delivering health care services remotely, including over the internet, so long as that professional has an established patient-provider relationship with the individual seeking accommodations.

Generally:

Accessibility and Testing shall maintain appropriate records on registered animals and provide University Housing and EOO with the identities of the students and their approved ESAs when their registration requirements have been completed. The provisions of this Policy are minimal requirements that may be supplemented by more specific requirements and procedures developed and implemented by individual UGA units due to the particular circumstances involved. Upon approval by the EOO Director, these shall also be enforceable under this Policy.

Employees

Service Animals: Employees who require the use of Service Animals that have been trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities may choose to register their dogs with the Human Resources Workforce Engagement Team but are not required to do so. Employees with Service Animals who reside in University Housing will need to comply with Housing procedures and policies on animals in Housing.

Service Animals in Training: The employment setting is not a public setting. Therefore, UGA employees are not permitted to have their Service Animals in Training while working on campus. This applies to student employees, faculty, staff, and administrators.

Puppies Being Raised for Training: The employment setting is not a public setting. Therefore, UGA employees are not permitted to have their Puppies Being Raised for Training while working on campus. This applies to student employees, faculty, staff, and administrators.

Emotional Support Animals: Employees are not permitted to have ESAs in the workplace. Those employees who are required to live in University Housing as a condition of employment may have their ESAs with them in the University Housing unit subject to the provisions of this Policy and any applicable requirements and procedures developed and implemented by University Housing.

Employees who are not also students, who seek to have ESAs in their required University Housing unit must register the animal with Human Resources Workforce Engagement and complete subsequent University Housing processes. [4] The employees must provide the same documentation as student ESA Owners as outlined above.

[4] Spouses and children of employees who are required to live in University Housing must all register their ESAs with the Human Resources Workforce Engagement Team.

The Human Resources Workforce Engagement Team shall maintain appropriate records on registered ESA and provide University Housing and EOO with the identities of the employees and their approved ESAs when their registration requirements have been completed. The provisions of this Policy are minimal requirements that may be supplemented by more specific requirements and procedures developed and implemented by individual UGA units due to the particular circumstances involved. Upon approval by the EOO Director, these shall also be enforceable under this Policy.

Visitors

Service Animals: Visitors are permitted to bring Service Animals into campus buildings, classrooms, residence halls, meetings, dining areas, hospitals, recreational facilities, activities, and events without prior approval.

Service Animals in Training: Visitors are permitted to bring Service Animals in Training to all places where Service Animals have access rights, so long as the visitor is a trainer who is identified as an agent or employee of a school for seeing eye, hearing, service, or guide dogs.

Puppies Being Raised for Training: Visitors are permitted to bring Puppies Being Raised for Training into campus buildings, classrooms, meetings, dining areas, hospitals, recreational facilities, activities, and events without prior approval. However, the Puppy Being Raised for Training must be wearing a collar, leash, or other appropriate apparel or device that identifies the dog with an entity purposed to train dogs as Service Animals, and the visitor must be identified as an agent or employee of the entity identified. Puppies Being Raised for Training are not permitted in University Housing facilities outside of areas to which the general public is invited.

Emotional Support Animals: Visitors are not permitted to bring ESAs in any University facilities except as otherwise permitted in this Policy.

Pets: Visitors are not permitted to bring pets into any University facilities except as otherwise permitted in this Policy.

Complaints

Anyone may log an animal complaint using [this form](#), by email at ugaeoo@uga.edu, or by phone at 706-542-7912.

Violations

Students: Failure to comply with this Policy is a violation of the UGA student Code of Conduct under the jurisdiction of the UGA Office of Student Conduct.

Employees: Failure to comply with this Policy will be referred to the employee's supervisor for handling under UGA Progressive Discipline policies.

Visitors: Any guests or visitors who fail to comply with this Policy will be removed from the UGA campus.

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