



University of Pittsburgh
Assistance Animals, Therapy Animals, and Pets
Policy CS 31

Implementing Executive: Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
Responsible Unit: Disability Resources and Services
Category: Community Standards
Effective Date: May 6, 2024

I. Purpose

This Policy establishes responsibilities and requirements that support and govern individuals' use of an Assistance Animal (as defined below) in University of Pittsburgh (University) owned or operated facilities and on University owned or operated grounds. This Policy also outlines the expectations for University Members who interact with Assistance Animals.

II. Scope

This Policy applies to individuals seeking to bring Assistance Animals or Pets on to any University campus, as well as individuals who interact with those Animals or Pets while on campus.

This policy does not apply to individuals who are bringing animals on to campus for research purposes, pursuant to an agreement between the University and a third-party vendor, or to perform law enforcement activities.

III. Definitions

- A. **Assistance Animal**: an animal that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or that provides emotional support to alleviate one or more identified effects of a person's disability. "Assistance Animal" is the general term that incorporates Emotional Support Animals, Service Animals, and Service Animals In Training (SAIT). An Assistance Animal is not a Pet.
1. **Emotional Support Animal**: an Assistance Animal that provides emotional support to alleviate one or more symptoms or effects of a person's disability.
 2. **Service Animal**: an Assistance Animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. The work or task performed by a Service Animal must be directly related to the person's disability. Service Animals include dogs and, in some instances, miniature horses. These tasks can include such actions as pulling a wheelchair, guiding a person who is visually impaired, or alerting the handler of a possible seizure.

3. Service Animal in Training (SAIT): an Assistance Animal that is being trained to perform work or tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. This category can also include a puppy being raised to become a Service Animal for an individual with a disability.
- B. DRS: The designated departments responsible for reviewing, approving, and enforcing disability accommodations. For contact information you can refer to the contacts section of this policy or the Pittsburgh Campus Office of Disability Resources Services for a list.
 - C. Handler: an individual who is responsible for the care and supervision of the Assistance Animal, including a Service Animal In Training.
 - D. Pet: a companion animal that does not meet the definition of an Assistance Animal or Therapy Animal as provided for in these guidelines.
 - E. Therapy Animal: an animal that has been trained to provide support, affection, and comfort to individuals other than the Handler. A Therapy Animal is not a Pet or an Assistance Animal.
 - F. University Members: All full-time and part-time faculty, staff, students, temporary employees, researchers, academic visitors, volunteers, postdocs, fellows, trainees, and interns at the University.

IV. Policy

The University recognizes the importance of Assistance Animals in providing equal access to facilities and programs, and maintaining compliance with laws and regulations, while preserving a healthy, safe, and supportive environment.

A. Assistance Animals

University Members are permitted to utilize Assistance Animals in University facilities or on University grounds, subject to the conditions outlined in this Policy. Handlers are responsible to take effective action for controlling their Assistance Animal (e.g., harness, leash, voice control, signal control). Below are the specific requirements for each type of Assistance Animal permitted in University facilities or on University grounds.

Additionally, University Members who reside in University housing must provide DRS with a nonresidential emergency contact person who can, if needed, be available to pick up an Assistance Animal within hours of notification to ensure uninterrupted care of the animal on the individual's behalf.

1. Service Animals

Service Animals are generally allowed to accompany their Handlers in University facilities or on University grounds where their Handlers are permitted. Service Animals may be excluded in areas where their presence fundamentally alters the nature of a program or activity, or where their presence interferes with the legitimate safety requirements of the facility. For questions on where Service Animals are allowed, please contact DRS.

Consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the University does not require documentation that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a Service Animal and the University will not ask Handlers about the nature or extent of their disability. The following two inquiries can be made to determine whether an animal qualifies as a Service Animal:

- i. Is the animal required because of a disability?
- ii. What work or task the animal has been trained to perform?

Also, the University is prohibited from making inquiries about a Service Animal when it is readily apparent that an animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability (e.g., the dog is observed guiding an individual who is blind or has low vision, pulling a person's wheelchair, or providing assistance with stability or balance to an individual with an observable mobility disability).

Employees with disabilities who require the use of a Service Animal within their employment at the University are required to submit a [Workplace Accommodation Request](#) through DRS.

Students with disabilities who require the use of a Service Animal at the University are encouraged, but not required, to contact DRS. Contacting DRS will provide access to disability-related resources, information, and support. For use of a Service Animal by a resident or prospective resident in University housing, students should refer to the [Notification Regarding Service Animals in University Housing](#).

Visitors to University facilities and grounds who are Handlers of a Service Animal are not required to notify the University of the presence of the animal.

2. Service Animals In Training (SAITs)

SAITs, including puppies, are generally allowed to accompany their Handlers into University facilities and on University grounds where their Handlers are permitted. SAITs may also be excluded in areas where their presence fundamentally alters the nature of a program or activity, or where their presence interferes with the legitimate safety requirements of the facility. For questions on where SAITs are allowed please contact DRS.

Employees with disabilities who want to bring their SAIT into their place of employment at the University are required to submit a Workplace Accommodation Request through DRS.

Students who are training SAITs and want to bring their SAIT into University facilities must submit documentation to DRS to verify that the animal is a SAIT (e.g., has a training plan). Contact DRS for required documentation and guidelines.

Visitors to University facilities and grounds who are Handlers of a SAIT are not required to notify the University of the presence of the animal.

3. Emotional Support Animals

Emotional Support Animals are only permitted in University housing for individuals residing in University housing facilities or in the employees workplace, as an accommodation, when approved by DRS.

Employees with disabilities can request the use of an Emotional Support Animal by submitting a [Workplace Accommodation Request](#) through DRS.

Those with disabilities residing in University housing can request an Emotional Support Animal housing accommodation through the [Request for Support Animal in University Housing webpage](#).

Visitors in University-owned housing are not permitted to bring an Emotional Support Animal into University-owned Housing.

B. Therapy Animals

Therapy Animals must be sponsored by a University Unit in order to be in University facilities or on University grounds. The sponsoring Unit may be responsible for facilities costs associated with damage or cleanup of areas in which the Therapy Animals are used.

C. Pets

University employees who live in University housing (e.g., Resident Directors) are permitted to have Pets as approved by their supervisor and in compliance with any housing policies. Other University Members are not permitted to bring their pets into University facilities. Pets may not be tethered to University buildings, structures, motor vehicles, trees, railings, light poles, benches, posts, or other structures.

D. Health and Safety

University Members concerned about a disruptive animal should contact one of the following:

1. University Campus Police when there is an imminent health or safety risk.
2. A supervisor when the reporter is an employee.
3. Residence hall staff or DRS when the Handler is a student.
4. DRS when the status of the Handler is unknown.

If an allergy or other condition renders a University Member unable to share space with an animal, that University Member should contact DRS to discuss whether a disability accommodation for them is appropriate for that setting.

A Service Animal or SAIT may be removed from a facility or program if the animal's behavior or presence is disruptive (e.g., barking or howling) or is a direct threat (nipping, biting, attempting to bite, jumping, lunging) to the health or safety of others.

An Emotional Support Animal may be removed from University-owned housing if the animal’s behavior creates a significant disturbance or a direct threat to University operations or individuals (for example, through barking or other disruptive behavior) and the student is unable to control the animal’s behavior or to properly care for the animal.

V. Noncompliance

Handlers are financially responsible for costs associated with the care, maintenance, and removal of the animal. The costs of damage to University facilities and grounds caused by the animal, including but not limited to cleaning and repairs beyond reasonable wear and tear, and pest control, are the responsibility of the animal’s Handler.

University Members found to be falsely characterizing their animal as an Assistance Animal may be subject to discipline in accordance with other applicable University policies.

VI. Governance or Responsibilities

Each DRS is responsible for reviewing, approving, and enforcing disability accommodations that it grants.

VII. Contact Information

This Policy is posted under Community Standards on the Office of Policy Development & Management’s website and can be found at: <https://www.policy.pitt.edu>.

For specific questions related to this Policy, please contact the pertinent campus Office of Disability Services below:

Campus Webpage	Phone
University of Pittsburgh – Pittsburgh Campus	(412) 648-7860
University of Pittsburgh Bradford and Titusville	(814) 363-7609
University of Pittsburgh Johnstown	(814) 269-7119
University of Pittsburgh Greensburg	(724) 836-7098

VIII. Related Authorities and Policies

[Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

[Title II Regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

[US Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)