Service Animal/Assistance Animal Policy

Animals, including pets are not permitted on the University of Massachusetts Lowell housing, with the exception of approved Service or Support Animals for individuals with disabilities, or a fish tank less than 10 gallons.

The University of Massachusetts Lowell is committed to assuring equal access for disabled students, staff, and faculty, as well as guests and visitors to the campus. It is the University’s policy to permit service animals as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, and may permit Assistance Animals, as determined on a case by case basis, to reside in the residence hall with a student with a documented disability as a reasonable accommodation. This policy and the following requirements are designed to facilitate a process for assuring equal access while addressing health and safety concerns, particularly in residence halls. This policy supports the University of Massachusetts Lowell’s commitment to comply with state and federal laws, rules and regulations pertaining to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended and related laws, rules and regulations, including without limitation Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Pub. L. 93-112, 87 Stat. 394 (29 U.S.C. 794), as amended, and MA General Laws chapter 129, section 39F. Adherence to these policies and requirements is essential to support a foundation of understanding, comfort, and security that make University of Massachusetts, Lowell a welcoming and accessible place for all.

Section 1: Service Animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act

A Service animal is defined under the ADA as dogs, or in some cases a miniature horse, that are trained to perform one or more specific tasks for a person with a disability. Service animals are permitted in all public areas of campus, except where specific restrictions apply as described in the Restricted Areas section below. Massachusetts State laws also support access to public places for service animals and their handlers. The policies below apply to students as well as visitors, guests, and temporary residents.

A request for service animal should be submitted along with the application for University housing. The animal must not be in residence prior to the approval of Disability Services. The approval of the request of the animal is animal specific and nontransferable to another animal.

Examples of Service Animal Tasks: The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. Examples of 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, 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 actively 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. (ADA, March 15, 2011) (Current law also includes a limited exception for miniature horses)

**Identification:** University staff may ask the two questions below to determine if a dog is a service animal:

1. Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

Staff may not ask about the individual’s disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

**Control Requirements:** Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal’s work or the individual’s disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

**Care of Service Animals:** Individuals with disabilities who use service animals are expected to:
1. Attend to the wellbeing and cleanliness of their animal.
2. Animals must be under control at all times and not disruptive to others or they may be removed
3. Be responsible for removal of animal waste and maintaining clean conditions
4. Have a plan in place for animal care in the event of an emergency,
5. Arrange alternative shelter if the animal has to be removed from campus due to disruptive or unsafe behavior or environmental conditions or if the handler becomes unable to care for the Service Animal.
6. Maintain up to date licensing through the city of Lowell.
   http://www.lowellma.gov/CityServices/Pages/Home.aspx

**Relief Areas**
Relief areas may be designated on an individual basis with the collaboration of the Disabilities Services Office and the University grounds personnel for individuals, events or programs.

**General Rules:**
   a. Service Animals are allowed in public areas where food is sold or prepared even if state or local health codes prohibit animals on the premises.
   b. Allergies and fear of dogs are not acceptable reasons for excluding a service animal, but cooperation is essential to accommodate those with allergies or other conflicting disabilities when necessary. Those individuals with conflicting requests may be asked to show documentation of a disability to help determine appropriate accommodations.
   c. An individual with a service animal may not be isolated or treated less favorably than others.
   d. University staff is not required to provide food or care for service animals.

**Removal of a Service Animal:** A person with a disability can be asked to remove his or her service animal when the dog is out of control and the handler does not take action to control it, when the dog is not housebroken, or when it poses a threat to health and safety. When there is a legitimate reason that a service animal must be removed, staff must offer to still provide services or assistance without the animal being present.
**Restricted Areas:** The University may prohibit the use of service animals in certain locations due to health or safety hazards, where service animals may be endangered, or where their use may compromise the integrity of research or fundamentally alter the nature of a program or activity. Restricted locations may include, but are not limited to: research laboratories, classrooms with demonstration/research animals present, medical areas, research areas using radioactive materials or lasers, mechanical rooms or custodial closets, workshops with operating machinery, and food preparation areas. The safety of locations will be individually considered by the Disabilities Services Office, the laboratory director or professor, and the University risk management team when appropriate. If a location is determined to be unsafe for the use of a service animal, alternative reasonable accommodations will be explored and provided as appropriate to ensure the individual equal access to the activity.

Exceptions to restricted areas may be granted on a case-by-case basis by contacting the Disabilities Services Office. In making its decision, the Disabilities Services Office will consult with the appropriate department and/or laboratory representative regarding the nature of the restricted area and any ongoing research.

**General Community Guidelines:**

**Guidelines for Faculty/Staff /Students and other Members of the Campus Community.**

Service animals are working animals; they perform tasks and are not pets. Accordingly, the University recommends that members of the University community adhere to the following best practices when interacting with service animals.

- Do not pet a service animal while it is working. Service animals are trained to be protective of their partners and petting distracts them from their responsibilities.
- Always speak to the service animal’s owner-handler first, and ask before interacting with the service animal.
- Never feed a working service animal.
- Do not deliberately startle, tease or taunt a service animal.
- Do not separate or attempt to separate a partner from his/her handler.
- Ask the service animal’s owner.handler if he/she would like assistance if the team seems confused about a direction in which to turn, an accessible entrance, the location of an elevator, etc.
- Never feed service animals alcoholic beverages. To do such may result in disciplinary action through the Dean of Students Office or Human Resources.
- Don’t be offended if the service animal’s owner.handler does not want to discuss the animal, their disability, let you pet the animal or otherwise interact with you.
If questions arise as to whether a person should have a service dog on campus please

Contact Disability Services at 978-934-6800

Appeals/Grievances:
Individuals may submit a grievance regarding service animals to the Office Equal Opportunity and Outreach by submitting a written appeal letter that specifically addresses the reason for the appeal. The appeal will be reviewed and the individual will be notified in writing on the status of the case.

Section II: Service Animals/Assistance Animals in University Housing

Service animals as defined by the ADA are allowed in University housing as a reasonable accommodation. Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Fair Housing Amendments, an individual with a disability may also request to keep an assistance animal, sometimes called an emotional support animal, as a reasonable accommodation in housing facilities as a modification to pet policies or other imposed restrictions or prohibitions on animals. In order to qualify for such an accommodation, the assistance animal must be necessary to afford the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling or to participate in the residential life program. Further, there must be a relationship, or nexus, between the individual’s disability and the assistance the animal provides. To request such an accommodation:

Application process:

1. Students with service animals as defined by the ADA may request to have a service animal in university housing by registering with the office of Disability Services. It will be necessary to provide information that supports the presence of a disability and that the animal is a service animal.
2. Students requesting to have a support animal residing in university housing must register with the Office of Disability Services and provide medical documentation of a disability which also describes the assistance the animal provides and the need for this type of accommodation. Documentation guidelines and all necessary forms can be found on the Office of Disability Services website.
3. Students should submit a written request to the Office of Disability Services outlining the reason for the request and why it is necessary no later than June 1st for fall semester or October 1st for spring semester, otherwise 30 days in advance during the school year and 30 days prior to Room Draw for the following year. Current students with roommates/suites must submit the Roommate/Suitmate Consent form with their written request.
4. The Director of Disability Services will initially review all requests and determine whether the necessary information or documentation is present. Then, a committee of professionals will review the request and make a determination as to whether this is a reasonable accommodation.
5. Upon approval, the student will be notified and a plan must be made with Disability Services and Residence Life staff for proper care and control of the animal as described in other sections of this policy.
6. Alternative accommodations may be discussed during this process and offered where appropriate.
Restrictions:

- The University of Massachusetts Lowell will not allow assistance animals if it would fundamentally alter the nature of the program.
- Animals that may pose a health risk or danger to others will not be permitted.

Owner’s Responsibilities for Animals in University Housing

1. The owner is responsible for assuring that the approved animal does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for students who reside there.
2. The owner is financially responsible for the actions of the approved 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 and/or move-out.
3. The owner is responsible for any expenses incurred for 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 account of the owner for unmet obligations.
4. The owner must notify Disability Services in writing if the approved animal is no longer needed as an approved animal or is no longer in residence. To replace an approved animal the owner must file a new request in writing to the Office of Disability Services according to the application process in Section II.
5. The owner’s residence may be inspected for fleas, ticks or other pests once a semester or as needed. The Office of Residence Life will schedule the inspection. 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. The owner will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment above and beyond standard pest management in the residence halls.
6. All roommates or suitemates of the owner must sign an agreement allowing the approved animal to be in residence with them. In the event that one or more roommates or suitemates does not approve, either the owner and animal or the non-approving roommates or suitemates, as determined by Residential Life and Disability Services, may be moved to a different location.
7. Service Animals may travel freely with their owner throughout University Housing (and other areas of the University, except where restrictions apply for health and safety reasons).
8. Assistance Animals must be contained within the privately assigned residential dwelling the student is housed in.
9. Approved animals may not be left overnight in University housing to be cared for by another student. Animals must be taken with the student if they leave campus for more than one day.
10. Housing has the ability to relocate owner and approved animal as necessary according to current contractual agreements.
11. The owner agrees to continue to abide by all other residential policies. Reasonable accommodation which may constitute an exception to a policy that otherwise would prohibit having an animal does not constitute an exception to any other policy.
12. Any violation of the above rules may result in immediate removal of the animal from the University and may be reviewed through the University judicial process. The owner will be afforded all rights of due process and appeal as outlined in that process.
13. Should the approved 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, unless a waiver is granted. Alternative accommodations and support will be discussed with the student as appropriate.
14. The owner undertakes to comply with animal health and wellbeing requirements as set forth in this policy.

Revised 6/29/16
Guidelines for maintaining a Service animal/Assistance animal on campus

A. Introduction

The following guidelines apply to all approved animals and their owners, unless the nature of the documented disability of the owner precludes adherence to these guidelines, or permission for a variance from the guidelines has been granted.

B. Care and Supervision:

Care and supervision of the animal are the responsibility of the individual who benefits from the approved animal's use. Owners are required to maintain control of the animal at all times. Owners are also responsible for ensuring the cleanup of the animal's waste and, when appropriate, must use relief 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 study 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.

C. Animal Health and Well-being

1. Vaccination: In accordance with local ordinances and regulations found at: http://www.lowellma.gov/cityclerk/Lists/Department%20Services/DispForm.aspx?ID=12&ContentTypeId=0x010400C03A3F6788AA4B0EAFDDFDE32914CB8F00D4D7BBA5D025D944AD9F7645259E9D75.
   The animal must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. Dogs must have current vaccination against rabies and wear a rabies vaccination tag. Although not mandated, cats should have the normal shots required for a healthy animal. Local licensing requirements are followed and documentation must be provided.

2. Health: Animals to be housed in university housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. Documentation can be a vaccination certificate for the animal or a veterinarian's statement regarding the animal's health. The University has authority to direct that the animal receive veterinary attention.

3. Licensing: The university reserves the right to request documentation showing that the animal has been licensed (e.g., Massachusetts law requires that every dog be licensed and provides that service dogs are exempt from the license fee.)

4. Behavior: Service animals must be properly trained.

D. Removal of Approved Animal

The University may exclude/remove an approved animal when:

- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, or
- The animal’s presence results in a fundamental alteration of the University’s program, or
- The owner does not comply with owner’s responsibilities in University housing, or
- The animal or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the University community.

E. Appeals

Students may appeal the University’s decision regarding service or support animals to the Office of Equal Opportunities and Outreach (EOO). In all cases, a detailed, written appeal must be submitted within five (5) class days after written notification of the decision. The student must write an appeal letter that specifically addresses the reason for the appeal. The written appeal will be reviewed and the student will be notified in writing on the status of the case.

Revised 6/29/16
F. Damage
Owners of approved animals are solely responsible for any damage to persons or University property caused by their animal.

Please refer to the attachments:

1. [Verification Form for Assistance Animal](#)
2. [Assistance Animal Request form](#)

Name: __________________________________________ ID No: ________________________________
(Please Print)

Signature: ________________________________ Date: ________________________________
Verification Form for Assistance Animal

The student named has request accommodations for the need of a support animal from the Disability Service at UMASS Lowell. In order to determine eligibility and to provide services, we require documentation of the student’s need for a support animal.

A diagnosis of a disorder in and of itself does not automatically qualify an individual for this accommodation; the documentation must also support the need for a support animal.

After completing this form, please print it, sign it, and email or FAX it to us at the address in our letterhead. The information you provide will not become part of the student’s educational records, but will be kept in the student’s file at DS, where it will be held strictly confidential. This form may be released to the student at his/her request. In addition to the requested information, please attach any other information you think would be relevant to the student’s academic adjustment. Please contact us if you have questions or concerns. Thank you for your assistance.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

I, ____________________________, hereby authorize the release of the following information to the Office of Disabilities Services at University of Massachusetts Lowell for the purpose of determining my eligibility to a support animal.

______________________________  ________________________________  __________
Student ID  Signature  Date

Revised 6/29/16
## Verification Form for Assistance Animal

1. Student’s Name: ____________________________ 2. Date: ____________________________

3. Student Tel No: ____________________________ 4. Email: ____________________________

5. Type of Assistance Animal: ____________________________________________

6. What is your DSM-IV multiaxial diagnosis for this student?
   - **Axis I:**
   - **Axis II:**
   - **Axis III:**
   - **Axis IV:**
   - **Axis V:**

7. Date of above Diagnosis: _______________ 8. Date last seen: _______________

9. In addition to DSM-IV criteria, how did you arrive at your diagnosis?
   (Please check all relevant items below, adding brief notes that you think might be helpful to us as we determine if the service is appropriate for the student.)

   - [ ] Structured or unstructured interviews with student
   - [ ] Interviews with other persons
   - [ ] Behavioral observations
   - [ ] Developmental history
   - [ ] Educational history
   - [ ] Medical history
   - [ ] Neuropsychological testing. Date(s) of testing: ____________________________
   - [ ] Psycho educational testing. Date(s) of testing: ____________________________
   - [ ] Standardized or non-standardized rating scales.
   - [ ] Other (Please specify): ____________________________

10. What are the limitations regarding the disorder:

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Revised 6/29/16
11. In order to help alleviate these difficulties, and to enhance student’s ability to live independently and to use fully and enjoy the University owned and administered housing unit, please support how a assistance animal will assist student to cope with his/her disability. It is anticipated that the animal will assist in the following manner:

12. Please check all of the major life activities listed below that would benefit from an assistance animal. (1 being the lowest and 4 the highest)

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13. **CERTIFYING PROFESSIONALS** Fill in this section by hand and printed:

Professional’s Name and Title: ____________________________________________

Signature of Professional: ________________________________________________

License No. ___________________________ Date: ____________________________

Address: _____________________________ Tel No: ____________________________

City, State, Zip: ___________________ Fax No: ____________________________

*Qualified diagnosing professionals are licensed psychologist, psychiatrists and neurologists. The diagnosing professional must have expertise in the differential diagnosis of the documented mental disorder or condition and follow established*
practices in the field.
Assistance Animal Request Form

Student Name: ________________________  Date: ______________

Student ID: _________________________  Phone: ______________

Address: _______________________________________________________

Dear Housing & Residence Life:

I am a student interested in on-campus housing. I have a disability and would like to request as an accommodation the permission to bring an assistance/therapy animal.

My assistance animal provides the following services: (please give examples how your assistance animal alleviates your condition.)

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________
Sign: __________________________

Date: _________________________