



**NORTHWEST**  
MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

## **ASSISTANCE ANIMAL POLICY**

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| Policy Name:        | Assistance Animal Policy |
| Effective Date:     | December 17, 2015        |
| Responsible Office: | Residential Life ADA/504 |
| Category:           | Student Life             |

### **I. Purpose**

Northwest Missouri State University supports the use of an assistance animal by students with disabilities in residential housing in appropriate circumstances. Assistance animals are animals prescribed or otherwise documented by a healthcare or mental health professional for an individual with a disability that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of the individual, or provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of the individual's disability.

### **II. Policy**

#### **I. Making Requests and the Review Process**

Before bringing an assistance animal into a residence hall/apartment, the student must complete the accommodation request and review process. This process is as follows:

1. All requests should be made, in writing, to the ADA/504 Coordinator and require current documentation from the student's healthcare or mental health provider. This can be done through email ([ADA@nwmissouri.edu](mailto:ADA@nwmissouri.edu)), or by dropping off the materials at the Proctoring Center in B.D. Owens Library Room 243.

- a. Requests should be made as far in advance as is reasonably possible before the student intends to bring an assistance animal to campus. An assistance animal will not be allowed until formal approval has been received. While accommodation requests will be accepted and considered at any time, below are some suggested deadlines that will help ensure timely consideration:
    - i. Incoming residential students should indicate their intent to request an assistance animal accommodation on their initial housing application and submit their request to the ADA/504 Coordinator by the housing application deadline.
    - ii. Existing residential students should submit their completed accommodation request by the deposit date for the following academic year.
  - b. Documentation of the need for an assistance animal should generally include the following:
    - i. A current diagnostic statement that identifies the disability, including date of initial and most current diagnosis, any evaluations/testing that support the diagnosis, and a description of the functional limitation of the disability;
    - ii. Information regarding the relationship between the disability and the relief the animal provides; and
    - iii. Information that demonstrates the animal is necessary in order for the student to use and enjoy his/her living arrangement.
2. After submitting a request, the student meets with the ADA/504 Coordinator to review this policy and the request is reviewed by the Learning Assistance Providers/Services Committee (LAP/S).
  3. LAP/S will make a determination about whether to allow the use of an assistance animal.
  4. If the accommodation is granted, the ADA/504 Coordinator will inform the student and direct him/her to the appropriate Area Coordinator to complete Residential Life requirements, such as submitting vaccination records and written agreements from the student's roommates (if applicable).

## II. Conditions

Students who have been approved to bring their assistance animals to reside in University housing must abide by the conditions outlined below. For purposes of the forthcoming sections of this policy, a student who has an approved assistance animal in residential housing will be referred to as the "Owner."

1. Owners must comply with all state and local animal ordinances and are subject to all policies and guidelines regarding Residential Life as outlined in the Residential Life Handbook.

2. Owners must comply with any ordinances that require licenses, registration, collars, I.D. tags, etc. Owners will provide to the Office of Residential Life proof of any registered license and veterinarian recommended vaccinations, including the absence of communicable diseases such as fleas and parasites, annually or as needed thereafter.
3. Assistance animals must be contained within the Owner's housing assignment at all times, except when transported off campus in an animal carrier or controlled by a leash or harness. Assistance animals are not allowed in classrooms, dining areas, or any campus property except the Owner's residence hall/apartment.
4. An Owner is responsible for assuring that his/her assistance animal does not create an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for students who reside there.
5. Owners are responsible for cleaning up all animal waste, both indoors and outdoors in a timely and effective fashion. Caged animals are to be kept in an appropriately sized containment unit/cage with flooring and liners to allow for proper disposal of waste and to prevent damages to floors and surfaces.
6. Owners are financially responsible for the actions of their assistance animals including bodily injury or property damage. Owners are also responsible for any expenses for cleaning above and beyond a standard cleaning or for repairs to University premises that are assessed after the Owner and animal vacate the residence. The University reserves the right to bill the student account of the Owner for any unmet obligations.
7. Owners must arrange for care of their animals when away on weekends, vacations, or any other extended periods of time. Assistance animals are not to be cared for by a roommate or another resident. In the event that an assistance animal is left alone in a room for an extended period of time and is not being properly cared for, someone from Residential Life will contact the Owner or the emergency contact to remove the animal.
8. In response to a particular situation, the University reserves the right to impose other reasonable conditions or restrictions on the use of an assistance animal if necessary to ensure the health, safety and reasonable enjoyment of others.

The University may immediately remove an assistance animal from campus (a) for noncompliance with the conditions outline above, (b) if the animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, or (c) if the animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of the University's programs. Should the assistance animal be removed from the premises for any reason, the Owner is expected to fulfill his/her housing obligations for the remainder of his/her housing contract.

### III. Additional Matters

1. All roommates of the Owner must sign an agreement allowing the assistance animal to be in residence with them. In the event that one or more roommates do not approve, either the Owner and animal or the non-approving roommate(s), as determined by appropriate Residential Life staff, may be moved to a different location.

- a. If at a point later in time there is a conflict between roommates regarding the assistance animal that cannot be resolved among the parties, the ADA/504 Coordinator and Assistant Director of Residential life will collaborate on a solution.
2. The Owner must notify the ADA/504 Coordinator in writing if the assistance animal is no longer needed as an accommodation or is no longer in residence.
3. *Concerns*
  - a. Owners should understand that having an assistance animal in a residence hall/apartment may raise issues with other residents. The Owner must be receptive to any concerns raised by other residents and, if necessary, contact the Area Coordinator and/or ADA/504 Coordinator for assistance in resolving the situation.
  - b. Residents with minor concerns about an assistance animal in their residence hall/apartment may discuss the matter with Owner or talk with the Area Coordinator in order to reach a resolution. Major concerns should be immediately brought to the attention of the Area Coordinator.
  - c. The University recognizes that there may be students in a residence hall/apartment that have medical conditions that are affected by animals (e.g., respiratory disease, asthma, severe allergies). The University is prepared to also reasonably accommodate individuals with such medical conditions that require accommodation when living in close proximity to an assistance animal. Concerns of this nature should be brought to the attention of the ADA/504 Coordinator.
4. *Grievances*: If the decision is made to deny a request or remove an assistance animal from campus the owner may file an appeal, in writing, with the ADA/504 Coordinator. Appeals must state a specific reason for reconsideration and will be reviewed by an ad hoc committee appointed by Vice President of Student Affairs. The ad hoc committee will not consist of any LAP/S members or administrators responsible for making the decision that gave rise to the appeal.