

Piedmont University

Animal Policy

Effective Date: August 21, 2026



Policy Statement

Piedmont University recognizes the importance of Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) to individuals with disabilities and is committed to providing reasonable accommodations in accordance with applicable federal and state laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Piedmont University is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal access to University programs, services, activities, and housing. In support of this commitment, the University permits the use of Service Animals on campus in accordance with applicable law and considers requests for Emotional Support Animals in University housing as reasonable accommodations on a case-by-case basis through an individualized assessment process.

While the University generally prohibits animals in University buildings and residential facilities except as otherwise permitted by this Policy, Piedmont University will evaluate requests for disability-related animal accommodations in a timely, equitable, and individualized manner.

This Policy establishes the requirements, responsibilities, and procedures governing the presence of Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals on University property in order to:

- Support equal access for individuals with disabilities;
- Maintain the health and safety of the campus community;
- Preserve the integrity of University property and operations; and
- Ensure appropriate standards for animal behavior, care, and control within the campus environment.

Students requesting Emotional Support Animals in University housing, including initial requests and semester renewal requests, must complete the University's accommodation process and receive approval no later than six (6) weeks prior to the first day of the applicable semester. Emotional Support Animals may not be brought to campus until official written approval has been granted by the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator.

The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator is responsible for reviewing accommodation requests, determining eligibility for disability-related accommodations, engaging in the interactive process when appropriate, and monitoring University compliance with applicable disability laws and regulations.

Definitions

Service Animal: is defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as a dog individually trained to perform work or tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. In limited circumstances, miniature horses may also qualify as Service Animals.

Examples of work or tasks performed by a Service Animal include, but are not limited to:

- Guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision;
- Alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- Pulling a wheelchair;
- Assisting during a seizure;
- Retrieving items;
- Reminding an individual to take medication; or
- Interrupting or mitigating symptoms of a psychiatric disability.

Service Animals are working animals and are not considered pets. The provision of emotional support, comfort, companionship, or well-being alone does not constitute work or tasks under the ADA.

Emotional Support Animal (ESA): is an animal that provides emotional support or alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. ESAs are not individually trained to perform work or tasks and are therefore not considered Service Animals under the ADA.

ESAs may be approved only as a residential accommodation and are generally restricted to approved residential areas as outlined in this Policy.

Handler: The individual with a disability who utilizes a Service Animal.

Owner: The individual approved to maintain an Emotional Support Animal in University housing.

University Property: Includes all property owned, leased, operated, or controlled by Piedmont University.

I. Access Parameters

A. Service Animal Access

Service Animals are generally permitted to accompany individuals with disabilities in all areas of University property where members of the public, students, employees, or participants are permitted to be.

When it is not readily apparent that an animal is a Service Animal, University officials may ask only the following two questions:

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

University employees may not:

- Ask about the nature or extent of an individual's disability;
- Require medical documentation;
- Require certification or identification for the animal; or
- Require the animal to demonstrate the task it performs.

B. Emotional Support Animal Access

ESAs are permitted only within the Owner's approved University residential assignment and only after official written approval has been granted by the Office of Accessibility, Resources, and Services.

ESAs are not permitted in classrooms, academic buildings, dining facilities, libraries, recreational facilities, administrative buildings, or other public areas of campus unless otherwise authorized by law or approved by the University as a separate accommodation.

An ESA must remain under the Owner's control at all times and may only be outside the assigned residential area for reasonable animal care purposes, including exercise and toileting.

II. Access Restrictions

Piedmont University may impose reasonable restrictions on the presence of animals in certain locations when:

- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
- The presence of the animal fundamentally alters a University program, service, or activity;
- The animal may compromise legitimate safety standards;
- The environment presents a danger to the animal; or
- The animal's presence would create substantial disruption.

Restricted areas may include but are not limited to:

- Food preparation areas;
- Classrooms or other facilities or activities involving demonstration or research animals;
- Mechanical rooms;
- Custodial storage areas;
- Areas requiring protective clothing or safety equipment;
- Spaces where sterile conditions are necessary.

Any restriction will be based on an individualized assessment and not on assumptions, stereotypes, or generalized fear regarding a specific type or breed of animal.

III. Animal Approval and Registration Process

A. Service Animals

Individuals with disabilities may utilize Service Animals on campus without prior approval from the University.

Students and employees are encouraged, but not required, to voluntarily register Service Animals with the Office of Accessibility, Resources, and Services to assist with emergency planning, housing coordination, and implementation of accommodations when needed.

B. Emotional Support Animals

Students requesting an ESA as a residential accommodation must complete the University's accommodation request process and receive official written approval from the Office of Accessibility, Resources, and Services, before bringing the animal to campus.

ESA accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis through an individualized assessment.

a) Timeline for ESA Requests and Semester Request Renewals

Students requesting an Emotional Support Animal as a residential accommodation, including both:

- Initial ESA requests; and
- Semester request renewals for previously approved ESAs

must submit all required documentation and receive final approval at least six (6) weeks prior to the first day of the applicable semester.

Requests submitted fewer than six (6) weeks before the start of the semester may result in delays in processing, housing coordination, roommate notification, or accommodation implementation due to the time required for review and housing arrangements. Piedmont University will continue to review all ESA-related accommodation requests regardless of submission date; however, for late requests, the University cannot guarantee that residential accommodations will be fully finalized or implemented by the beginning of the semester. ESA-related residential accommodation requests may be submitted at any time during the academic year; however, the timing of submission may affect the ability to implement accommodations for the current semester.

b) ESA Request Procedure

Students requesting an ESA as a residential accommodation in university housing must complete the following steps:

1. Complete a request for accommodations through the University's accommodation portal and indicate that they are requesting an Emotional Support Animal accommodation for university housing.
2. Submit Provider Documentation from a qualified, licensed healthcare or mental health professional who is not a family member and who is familiar with the student's disability and treatment history. Documentation should include an explanation of current functional limitations and how the requested animal alleviates one or more symptoms of the student's disability. An initial evaluation alone does not constitute an established treating relationship.
3. Submit current rabies vaccination certificate for the identified ESA.

4. Submit proof of spay or neuter, if applicable to the animal. Exceptions may be granted for specific ESAs and must be supported by documentation from a licensed veterinarian.
5. Submit a recent photo of the ESA, its crate and leash (if applicable).

Piedmont University reserves the right to request updated or additional documentation when necessary to evaluate the request or confirm continued eligibility.

c) Interactive Process

The Office of Accessibility, Resources, and Services may schedule a meeting with the student to discuss:

- Disability-related residential needs;
- Responsibilities associated with maintaining and ESA in University housing;
- Shared living considerations; and
- Applicable University policies.

d) Housing Coordination and Cohabitation

Upon preliminary approval of an Emotional Support Animal, the Office of Accessibility, Resources, and Services (OARS), in collaboration with Residence Life, may notify roommates, suitemates, and other affected residents regarding the presence of the approved ESA within a shared residential environment. Roommates and suitemates may be required to review and complete a Cohabitation Agreement acknowledging their understanding of applicable residential expectations and responsibilities related to the approved ESA.

Failure to return a completed Cohabitation Agreement within fourteen (14) calendar days of notification by the University shall not delay, prevent, or otherwise affect the implementation of an approved ESA accommodation. The University may document any refusal or failure to respond and proceed with implementation of the approved accommodation. All residents remain subject to applicable University policies, procedures, and community standards regardless of whether a Cohabitation Agreement has been completed or signed.

The University reserves the right to review and address residential concerns on a case-by-case basis and, when appropriate, consider reasonable residential adjustments consistent with applicable law and University policy.

e) Final Determination

Following review of all submitted materials and completion of the interactive process, the Office of Accessibility, Resources, and Services will issue a written determination to the student via the student's Piedmont University email address.

If approved, the approval notice will be sent electronically through the accommodation portal to the student's assigned university email address with digital signature required for acknowledgement. If denied, the student will receive written notice explaining the basis for the decision and information regarding applicable appeal procedures.

ESA approval applies only to the specific animal identified in the approval notice. Requests to replace, substitute, or add an Emotional Support Animal require submission of a new accommodation request and supporting documentation

IV. Handler and Owner Responsibilities

Handlers and Owners are responsible for ensuring that animals:

- Remain under control at all times;
- Do not disrupt University operations or residential communities;
- Are properly cared for and supervised;
- Are maintained in a sanitary manner;
- Do not cause property damage; and
- Comply with all University policies and applicable laws.

Additional responsibilities include:

1. Animals must be housebroken.
2. Waste must be immediately cleaned and properly disposed of.
3. Animals must be appropriately restrained when outside approved residential spaces.
4. Animals may not be left overnight in University housing under the care of another student.
5. Owners are financially responsible for damages, excessive cleaning costs, pest treatment, or repairs caused by the animal.
6. Animals may not be neglected, abused, or improperly cared for.
7. The University is not responsible for the care, supervision, injury, or loss of an animal.
8. Owners must notify the Office of Accessibility, Resources, and Services as well as Residence Life if an ESA is no longer needed or residing on campus.

When maintenance, health, safety, or emergency personnel must enter a residential space, the Owner may be required to appropriately secure the animal.

V. Removal of Animals

The University may remove or require removal of an animal from campus or University housing if:

- The animal is out of control, and effective corrective action is not taken;
- The animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others;
- The animal causes substantial property damage;
- The animal creates a substantial disruption to the campus environment;
- The Handler or Owner fails to comply with this Policy; or
- The animal's presence fundamentally alters a University program, service, or activity.

Removal decisions will be based on an individualized assessment and not on assumptions about a specific species or breed.

Where appropriate, the University may provide notice and an opportunity to correct policy violations before removal occurs. Immediate removal may occur when health or safety concerns exist.

Removal of an animal does not relieve a student of obligations under housing agreements or University policies.

VI. Conduct Toward Animals and Individuals with Disabilities

Members of the campus community are expected to:

- Refrain from distracting, petting, or interfering with a Service Animal while it is working;
- Refrain from feeding or intentionally startling an animal;
- Respect the privacy of individuals with disabilities; and
- Avoid asking unnecessary or intrusive questions regarding disabilities or accommodations.

Intentional interference with an approved animal or harassment of an individual utilizing an accommodation may result in disciplinary action.

VII. No Retaliation

Piedmont University prohibits retaliation against any individual for requesting, receiving, or utilizing a reasonable accommodation, including accommodations involving Service Animals or Emotional Support Animals.