**Service Animal Policy for Students and Visitors**

**Policy Statement**

This policy is designed to inform constituents regarding the definition, processes and guidelines surrounding service animals on the St. Edward’s University campus.

**Audience**

The Service Animal Policy applies to all students and visitors to St. Edward’s university. Human Resources is responsible for any [policy](http://think.stedwards.edu/hr/sites/think.stedwards.edu.hr/files/2015%20SEU%20Handbook%20Secured%20E%20Final.pdfhttp:/think.stedwards.edu/hr/sites/think.stedwards.edu.hr/files/2015%20SEU%20Handbook%20Secured%20E%20Final.pdf) regarding service animals for all university employees.

**Definitions**

A **service animal** is an animal trained to assist individuals with disabilities in the activities of independent living.  Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a service animal means any dog or miniature horse 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. No other species of animal may serve as a service animal.  Animals that do not perform a task for the benefit of an individual with a disability but rather serve as assistance animals providing emotional support, comfort or companionship, are not service animals.  Service animals are not pets.

**Compliance**

The service animal is considered an extension of the person and therefore must be compliant with the same public rules and regulations as any other member of the university community. A service animal accompanied by a student handler that is found to be in violation is subject to the Student Code of Conduct.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Director of Student Disability Services – Is responsible for student education regarding this policy and all questions regarding service animals should be directed to Student Disability Services (SDS).

Dean of Students – Is responsible for student education regarding this policy and/or enforcement of any violation of this policy by a student.

**Policy Standards and Guidelines**

The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability.  Examples of work or tasks may 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;
* Helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.
* Providing deep pressure therapy to individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

The ADA takes precedence over other university practices and policies regarding animals in buildings. Individuals with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animal on all St. Edward’s campuses where members of the public, participants in services, programs or activities, or invitees, as relevant, are allowed to go.

Exceptions to these permissions include, when the service animal:

* is not housebroken
* cannot be effectively controlled by the owner
* poses a health or safety concern

An individual with a disability may be asked to remove a service animal from the university if the animal cannot be effectively controlled by its owner or the animal is not housebroken.  A service animal shall have a harness, leash or other tether, unless either the individual is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash or other tether would interfere with the service animal’s safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the owner’s control (e.g., voice control, signals or other effective means).

The accompaniment of an individual with a disability by a service animal in locations with health and safety restrictions, such as food preparation areas and laboratories, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the appropriate department representative(s) in collaboration with Student Disability Services.

If the university determines that a service animal must be excluded for any reason listed above, the individual with a disability will be provided the opportunity to participate in the service, program or activity without having the service animal on the premises.

### Federal law does not require the individual to provide documentation that the animal has been certified, trained or licensed as a service animal. In making a decision whether to permit accompaniment of a service animal, the university shall not ask about the nature or extent of a person’s disability.  The university may, however, ask if the animal is required because of a disability, as well as what work or task the animal has been trained to perform.  The university shall not charge a surcharge for the service animal, even if people accompanied by pets are required to pay fees.  If the university normally charges individuals for damages caused by a pet, an individual with a disability may also be charged for damage caused by the service animal.

**Procedures**

Students who wish to bring a service animal to campus are strongly encouraged to partner with Student Disability Services, especially if other academic accommodations are required. Additionally, students who plan to live in on-campus housing are strongly encouraged to inform Residence Life and Dining Services that they plan to have a service animal with them in student housing. Advance notice of a service animal for on-campus housing may allow more flexibility in meeting student’s specific requests for housing

**Related Regulations, Statutes, and Related Policies**

The Service Animal Policy is in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**Contacts**

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| **Contact** | **Telephone** | **Email** |
| Student Disability Services | 512-448-8561 | sds@stedwards.edu |
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**Document History**

This section must contain the following dates or placeholders for future dates:

* Effective Date: March 2017
* Last Revised Date: February 10, 2017