

## **Library Accessibility Committee Policy Recommendation Regarding Animals in Emory University Library Buildings (Approved by Library Cabinet 5/2/2019)**

Because of restrictions governing university insurance policies, concerns for the integrity of research projects, and interest in the welfare of faculty, students, staff, and visitors, it is the policy of Emory University that animals are not permitted in university buildings, including university library buildings. Service animals and approved research animals are the exception to this policy. Emotional support animals are not permitted inside university buildings without prior approval from the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS).

### **Service Animals**

1. Service animals do not need to be authorized by the University. A service animal as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is “...any dog 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.” A service animal can only be a dog or a miniature horse. The task that the animal performs must be measurable and directly related to the handler’s disability. Many service animals have vests, but they are not required.
2. To determine if an animal is a service animal there are only two questions that may be asked:
  - a. Is this animal required because of a disability?
  - b. What work or task has this animal been trained to perform?
3. Per Georgia law [O.C.G.A. 30-4-2 (2010)], service animals in training are considered to be service animals. Therefore, they are permitted in University Libraries when they are under the care of their trainer, as long as their trainer is considered an agent or employee of a school for seeing eye, hearing, service, or guide dogs. The dog should wear apparel that identifies the accredited school for which the dog is being trained.

### **Emotional Support Animals**

1. The terms emotional support animal or comfort animal are generally used interchangeably. Emotional support animals may be socialized and obedience-trained, but they are not trained to perform any specific disability-related tasks.
2. At Emory, emotional support animals are authorized by OAS as a housing accommodation. If appropriate, these types of animals MAY be permitted to be in specific locations on campus, if approved by OAS in consultation with the department or program.
3. If a student wishes to enter a University Library building with an emotional support animal, they must have *prior* authorization from OAS.
4. Students who wish to request an emotional support animal as an accommodation must provide documentation to the OAS and if approved, sign an agreement that outlines their responsibilities and designates the spaces where the animal is permitted.

### **Tips for Staff from the Office of Accessibility Services**

- Even if an animal is not wearing a distinctive leash, harness, vest, backpack or tag, it may still be a legitimate service animal. If staff is suspicious that a patron is bringing a pet into the library, staff may say something as simple as “Is this your pet?” This gives the patron a chance to explain

the role of an animal without cuing them to the “service animal” terminology. If the patron says the animal is a service animal, you take them at their word and let them bring the animal into the library with them.

- Staff may ask a library user to remove from the library any animal, including a service animal, when the animal’s behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. For example, any animal that displays vicious behavior toward other users may be excluded. You also may ask a person to remove their dog if it is barking uncontrollably or if its behavior is disturbing other users. Do not make assumptions about how a particular animal is likely to behave based on your past experience with other animals. Each situation must be considered individually.
- Allergies and fear of animals are generally not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to patrons with service animals. If other library users raise those issues, help them find a different location to do their work.
- Never pet, talk to, or otherwise distract a service animal when it is working.

#### References:

ADA 2010 Revised Requirements: Service Animals [https://www.ada.gov/service\\_animals\\_2010.htm](https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm)

2010 Georgia Code O.C.G.A. 30-4-2 (2010)

Right to equal public accommodations; right to be accompanied by guide dog or service dog <https://law.justia.com/codes/georgia/2010/title-30/chapter-4/30-4-2/>

Emory University Policy 4.111 Animals in Buildings

<https://emory.ellucid.com/documents/view/17707/active/4>