**Internal Guidelines for Service Animals on University Property**

Date Created: September 2012

**PURPOSE**

These guidelines provide a framework to evaluate student requests for bringing animals onto University property to accommodate a disability.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Handler:**

A person with a disability who is the owner and user of a service animal.

**Pet:**

Any animal that is not trained or used as a service animal by the person who owns the animal.

**Service Animal:**

Any animal trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of and to accommodate the functional needs of a person with a disability.

**University property:**

Land or buildings that the University owns or leases and that is under the direct control of the Board of Visitors. University property also includes premises the University uses for activities of its offices, departments, personnel or students.

**APPLICABILITY**

These guidelines apply only to students seeking an accommodation for a disability. Students must request the University’s permission to allow the presence of a service animal on University property. The University will use an objective reasonableness standard in evaluating all such requests. Permission will be granted only as an accommodation for a documented disability. Students must seek and obtain permission from the Student Disability Access Center (SDAC) prior to bringing a service animal onto University property. The Student Disability Access Center will coordinate evaluation of any such requests within the University, prior to determining whether a specific request represents a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and should be granted. The University will make every effort to accommodate requests for service animals consistent with its general support for students with disabilities. For more information see http://www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/inec.html

**GUIDING PROTOCOL**

- A service animal is generally permitted to be on any portion of University property where the animal’s handler is permitted to be; however, there are areas on University property where all animals are prohibited due to health and safety concerns. These areas may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Research and teaching laboratories (or other research facilities)
  - Mechanical rooms/Custodial closets
  - Areas where protective clothing is necessary
  - Areas where there is a danger to the service animal
• A service animal must be supervised at all times. The owner or handler must retain full control of the animal while on University property. Service animals may not be left unattended at any time on University property including residential space. Service animals may not be tied or tethered to any University property, including but not limited to buildings, railings, bike racks, fire hydrants, fences, sign posts, benches and/or trees.

• Service animals may not disrupt or interfere with University activities, including but not limited to teaching, research, service or administrative activities. If a service animal becomes unruly or disruptive, or if the owner or handler fails to maintain control of the animal, the owner or handler must regain control immediately or remove the animal from University property. If the unruly or disruptive behavior continues or happens more than once, the owner or handler may be prohibited from bringing the service animal back onto University property.

• The owner or handler is responsible for cleaning up any waste created by the service animal and for all costs related to damages created by the animal. Costs include fees for clean-up and disposal of animal waste and replacement or repair of University or other individual’s assets, including grounds, personal property and improvements. If the owner or handler fails to clean up after the service animal or the animal causes damage to property, the owner or handler may be prohibited from bringing the animal back onto university property.

• The introduction of a service animal must take into account the needs and requirements of other University community members with disabilities or medical conditions, including allergies to animals. Students who live in university housing are given housing assignments at the beginning of each academic year based on the accommodations requests made known at that time. A student who requests a new or additional accommodation after housing assignments have been made, for example introduction of a service animal into university housing, will generally be expected to move if the presence of the service animal would conflict with accommodations granted another student in the same residential facility.

UNSUPERVISED ANIMALS

Any animal found unattended in or on University property may be seized by animal control officers or other authorized agents. Dogs that are seized are typically deposited at the local Albemarle County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to await identification by their owners. Owners are responsible for payments of any impound and/or license fees required to secure the release of their animals.