

Animals on Campus Policy

Accommodations for individuals with disabilities in accessing these policies are available upon request by emailing accessiblepolicy@wcupa.edu

Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to all individuals bringing an animal on West Chester University (WCU) property. WCU does not permit animals in University buildings, facilities, vehicles, or on University grounds except as described in this policy. The University remains committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. Therefore, WCU allows animals in its buildings, vehicles, or facilities when they are serving a University-approved purpose, or meet the definition of Service Animals, Service Animal in Training, Emotional Support Animals, or Therapy Animals as provided in this policy.

Policy Statement

Except as otherwise provided in this policy, animals may not enter any: (a) campus building, facility, or University vehicle, including all office, residence, and educational buildings; (b) enclosed or delineated outdoor athletic or recreational facility; or (c) officially reserved or scheduled outdoor events on campus. ***See Appendix A for requirements for all animals on WCU campus. See Appendix B for additional requirements for all animals approved to be in WCU Traditional Housing.***

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Definitions used in this Policy:

Controlled Spaces

Controlled spaces are not public spaces. Controlled spaces are defined as any indoor area or facility owned or controlled by the University, such as classrooms and offices, and any outdoor area owned or controlled by the University with limitations on use or access, such as practice fields, stadiums, tennis courts, and officially reserved or scheduled outdoor events. Areas open to the public, such as streets, lawns, or sidewalks with no limitations or access are not controlled spaces.

Emotional Support Animal (ESA)

An ESA is an animal (typically a dog or cat, though this can include other animals) that provides a therapeutic benefit to its owner through companionship. The animal provides emotional support and comfort to individuals with psychiatric disabilities and other mental impairments. The animal is different from a service animal because it is not specifically trained to perform tasks for a person who has emotional disabilities. Under 2018 Pa. ALS 118, ESAs are referred to as “assistance animals”.

Handler

A handler is the owner or person bringing an animal onto University property.

Pet

For purposes of this policy, a pet is any animal that is not a Service Animal, Service Animal in Training, ESA, or otherwise noted in this policy.

Public Spaces

Public spaces are indoor and outdoor areas that are open to the general public.

Classrooms, residence halls and most employee workspaces are not generally considered public spaces.

Service Animals

Service Animals are defined as animals (dogs and occasionally, miniature horses) that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. These tasks can include things like pulling a wheelchair, guiding a person who is visually impaired, or alerting a person who is having seizure. The work or task a Service Animal does must be directly related to the person’s disability. Service dogs may accompany persons with disabilities into places that the public normally goes.

Service Animals in Training

Service Animals in Training are dogs and occasionally, miniature horses, that are being individually trained to perform a specific task(s) for people with disabilities. They have already been puppy trained and can complete everyday tasks not related to a disability, such as sitting, staying, or being housebroken. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not apply to Service Animals in Training.

University Property

For purposes of this policy, University property includes all areas owned or controlled by WCU.

WCU Housing

For purposes of this policy, WCU Housing refers to on-campus housing controlled, managed, and operated by WCU.

University Student Housing (USH)

University Student Housing, LLC (USH), a division of the WCU Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, manages six high-end communities located on the WCU campus.

To access all student forms referenced in this policy, students should visit the following link:

[Request for Exemption to Parking, Housing, or Dining Policies](#)

I. Service Animals

a. Individuals Not Residing On Campus:

Individuals are not required to receive permission from the University prior to bringing a service animal onto University property. The handler may be asked (1) whether the animal is needed because of a disability and (2) what work or task(s) the animal has been trained to perform.

Service Animals are generally allowed to accompany their handlers anywhere their handlers are permitted on campus (exceptions may exist in areas requiring protective equipment or clothing for access). The handler can be asked to leave campus if the animal is out of control, a threat to others, or the animal is ill.

In academic labs, Service Animals are not allowed if the task can be replaced by a person. The handler should notify the faculty member and the OEA before bringing a Service Animal to an academic lab.

b. Individuals Residing in WCU Traditional On-Campus Housing (WCU Housing):

This portion of the policy applies to WCU Housing only.¹

Notification of Service Animal in WCU Housing

If a student with a Service Animal intends to reside on campus in WCU Housing, the student should notify the Office of Residence Life and Housing Services of the need of a Service Animal's presence **30 days** before beginning residence on University property with the animal. This notification allows the University to make appropriate arrangements, offer any necessary assistance prior to the student's arrival on campus, and to notify WCU Public Safety of the animal's presence in case of an emergency.

To access all student forms referenced in this policy, students should visit the following link:

[Request for Exemption to Parking, Housing, or Dining Policies](#)

The ADA Coordinator or their designee in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance (EQOC) will ask the student with a Service Animal to provide the following documents:

- An [Animal Information Form](#)
- Veterinary verification that the animal is healthy, spayed or neutered (if applicable), and its vaccinations are current (if applicable)
- A photo of the animal

The Office of Residence Life and Housing Services will ask for a completed [Animal in Residence Agreement](#).

c. Employees with Service Animals

Employees should contact the Office of Human Resources for information on Service Animals.

II. Service Animals in Training

a. General Information:

Service Animals in Training are protected under Pennsylvania law for areas of public accommodation, housing accommodation, and commercial property. Any Service Animal in Training that causes an undue disturbance must be removed from the public

¹ Students living in USH/Affiliated housing should contact the leasing center for USH for information regarding Service Animals in residence.

accommodation area. Service Animals in Training must be undergoing training for or from a recognized authority, and trainers/handlers must be able to provide information regarding their qualifications to university personnel upon request. Service Animals in Training are not allowed in academic labs. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not apply to Service Animals in Training.

b. Individuals Not Residing On Campus

Service Animals in Training are allowed in public accommodations on campus if they are actively undergoing training and must be always accompanied by their handler while in areas of public accommodation. Service Animals in Training are generally allowed to accompany their handlers anywhere their handlers are permitted on campus (exceptions may exist in areas requiring protective equipment or clothing for access).

c. Individuals Residing in WCU Housing:

*This section applies to WCU Housing only.*² Service Animals in Training are allowed in WCU Housing only with prior approval.

1. Prohibition on Puppy Raising

Puppy-raising, meaning supervising dogs that are less than 12 months old and are receiving socialization, manners, and obedience training, is **not** allowed in WCU Housing.

Service Animals in Training are animals that are being individually trained to perform a specific task(s) for people with disabilities. They have already been puppy trained and can complete everyday tasks not related to a disability, such as sitting, staying, or being housebroken.

Service Animals in Training must be more than 6 months old and wear a vest or other insignia that identifies the recognized authority sponsoring training. The handler must be able to show they provide more than basic obedience training.

2. How to Request a Service Animal in Training in WCU Housing

Before requesting a Service Animal in Training in WCU Housing, the student must have accepted a housing contract.

² Students living in USH/Affiliated housing should contact the leasing center for USH for information regarding Service Animals in residence.

To access all student forms referenced in this policy, students should visit the following link:

[Request for Exemption to Parking, Housing, or Dining Policies](#)

Service Animals in Training must be undergoing training *for or from a recognized authority*, and trainers/ handlers must be able to provide information regarding their qualifications as a trainer, name of training organization, and contact information for training organization.

To request a Service Animal in Training (SAInT) in residence, the student must submit:

- A completed [SAInT Animal Information and Training Form](#);
- Veterinary verification that the animal is healthy, spayed or neutered (if applicable); and its vaccinations are current (if applicable)
- A photo of the animal; and
- Information regarding the training organization and the student's qualifications

to the ADA Coordinator or their designee in the Office of EQOC **40 days** before occupancy is to commence in WCU Housing.

Students whose requests are approved will be permitted to have **one** Service Animal in Training in residence (in other words, one animal per student). **Students may not bring Service Animals in Training to their residence until they have been notified that their request has been granted and they have submitted an [Animal in Residence Agreement](#) to the Office of Residence Life and Housing Services.**

3. Proof of Training Progress

A Service Animal in Training outside the private individual living accommodations must be in the presence of the trainer/handler and training must be actively occurring. In addition, the handler may be required to provide evidence of the Service Animal in Training's progress toward the specific task to be performed. This can be through demonstration with the specific person with a disability the animal will be assisting or through documentation from a recognized training organization. The Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) and the Office of EQOC will work in conjunction with Residence Life and Housing Services, if needed, to evaluate the animal's progress.

4. Roommate Conflicts

The University reserves the right to reassign the student handler to a space to accommodate the SAInT, if there is a potential impact on a roommate(s). This move will only accommodate the student handler and not the roommate(s). If a different room is unavailable, the animal must be removed until a room is found.

In suite style residences, SAlnTs must always be under the control of the handler, including in common areas. Common areas include shared living areas, hallways, and hallway lounges. If there are two students with animals in the same suite, the animals may be restricted to each handler's bedroom if conflicts arise.

d. Service Animals in Training in the Workplace:

Employees should contact the Office of EQOC for information on Service Animals in Training in the workplace.

III. Emotional Support Animals (ESAs)

a. General Information:

ESAs are housing accommodations prescribed by a mental health provider for a person with a disability. ESAs are only permitted in private living accommodation or the common areas in the hall of the residence hall *where the student resides*. Common areas include shared living areas, hallways, and hallway lounges. Students may not take their ESA inside another residence hall or other campus buildings, including but not limited to classrooms, libraries, and Sykes Student Union.

b. Individuals Residing in WCU Housing:

This section applies to WCU Housing only.³ ESAs are allowed in WCU Housing only with prior approval.

- Unlike a Service Animal, an ESA is not automatically granted access to places of public accommodation unless covered under Section 504.
- ESAs are allowed in common areas only while under the control of the handler.
- ESAs are considered a housing-based accommodation and requests for emotional support animals are handled as any other request for housing-based accommodation.
- Students whose requests are approved will be permitted to have **one** ESA in Residence.

To access all student forms referenced in this policy, students should visit the following link:

[Request for Exemption to Parking, Housing, or Dining Policies](#)

³ Students living in USH/Affiliated housing should contact the leasing center for USH for information regarding ESAs in residence.

1. How to Request an ESA in WCU Housing

Before requesting an ESA in Residence, the student must have accepted a housing contract to WCU Housing.

To request an ESA in WCU Housing, the student must provide:

- A completed ESA Animal Information Form;
- Veterinary verification that the animal is healthy, spayed or neutered (if applicable), and its vaccinations are current (if applicable);
- A photo of the animal; and
- An Emotional Support Animal (ESA) - Request For Information Form to be filled out by the student's psychiatrist, psychologist, or mental health provider

to the ADA Coordinator or their designee in the Office of EQOC **40 days** before occupancy is to commence in WCU Housing.

The information from the provider will be reviewed to determine the following:

1. The provider is licensed as a mental health provider in PA or the student's home state;
2. The provider is not a General Practitioner, Physician's Assistant, or nurse, unless *additionally licensed* as a mental health provider;
3. The student is a person with a documented disability (a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities);
4. The ESA being requested is necessary to afford the student, as a person with a disability, an equal opportunity to use and enjoy the on-campus housing facilities; and
5. There is an identifiable relationship between the disability and the support that the ESA provides.

Students whose requests are approved will be permitted to have **one** ESA in residence (in other words, one animal per student). **Students may not bring ESAs to their residence until they have been notified that their request has been granted and they have submitted an Animal in Residence Agreement to the Office of Residence Life and Housing Services.** If a request is denied, the student and the appropriate office will engage in the interactive process and discuss alternative accommodations.

2. Roommate Conflicts

The University reserves the right to reassign the student handler to a space to accommodate the ESA, if there is a potential impact on a roommate(s). This move will only accommodate the student handler and not the roommate(s). If a different room is unavailable, the animal must be removed until a room is found.

In suite style residences, ESAs must always be under the control of the handler, including in common areas. If there are two students with animals in the same suite, the animals may be restricted to each handler's bedroom if conflicts arise.

c. ESAs in the Workplace

For live-in professional staff, an ESA is only permitted in their residential space, not their workspace, and must go through the same process as students to have an ESA approved. Other employees must have a workplace barrier and proceed with an accommodation request.

IV. Misrepresentation

Students who misrepresent a pet as an emotional support animal, a service animal, or a service animal in training will be investigated for fraud and dishonesty and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for violations of the Student Conduct Policies, including but not limited to Policies 16 and 18. Misrepresentation could also be a violation of Pennsylvania law. As such, students may be referred to the University's Department of Public Safety for investigation as deemed appropriate.

V. Therapy Animals

Trained therapy animals are allowed on campus only as a part of an approved therapy animal program.

VI. Pets

Pets generally are not permitted in or on any controlled space on University property and are permitted only in outdoor areas open to the public. The University permits pets in public spaces provided that the owner:

- Follows local and state laws related to animal control.
- Does not allow the animal to enter controlled spaces.
- Assumes full responsibility for any damage or injury caused by the animal.
- Controls and properly supervises the animal at all times (e.g., animals must be restrained by a leash or other appropriate device that does not exceed 6 feet in length or other device which allows the owner to maintain control of the animal; not tether the animal to stationary objects; etc.).
- Ensures that animal waste is cleaned up immediately and disposed of properly.
- Follows laws prohibiting abuse, neglect, and cruelty to animals. Any evidence of mistreatment or abuse may result in immediate removal of the animal, referral to Student Conduct, and/or referral to law enforcement where appropriate.
- Ensures the animal is in good health. If the animal appears visibly ill, the handler may be directed to seek veterinarian services for the animal or be asked to remove the animal from University property.

Pets are not allowed in offices or classrooms. Only fish in aquariums no larger than ten gallons are allowed as follows:

- Within employee workspaces, such aquariums are allowed only with the express advance, written authorization of the handler's manager/supervisor. At any time, a manager may revoke approval for such an aquarium, requiring its immediate removal from the workspace; and
- The handler has responsibility for maintaining the aquarium in a clean and sanitary manner and for any damage caused by the aquarium. Animals other than fish are not allowed in such aquariums.

VII. Other Animals

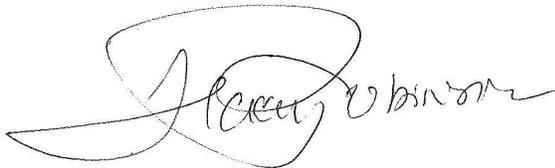
This policy does not apply to animals being used in clinical research settings or certified animals accompanying law enforcement personnel. Fish and aquariums are not allowed in WCU Housing unless approved as an ESA.

For exceptions not covered in this policy or questions, individuals should contact the Vice President for the Division for Access, Compliance, and Engagement or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance.

Reviewed by: Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance

Policy Owner: Vice President – Division for Access, Compliance, and Engagement (ACE)

Approved by:



Dr. Tracey Robinson, Vice President, Division for Access, Compliance and Engagement
March 20, 2025

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Appendix A

Requirements for all animals on campus

- Animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with a Service Animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices.
- The handler must maintain control of the animal at all times.
- Animals must meet all state laws and local ordinances regarding vaccinations and proper licensure.
- The handler is responsible for the actions of the animal. These actions include bodily injury and property damage and may require financial compensation.
- The handler is responsible for caring for and supervising the animal, which includes toileting, feeding, grooming, flea and tick preventions, and veterinary care.
- The handler is responsible for waste cleanup. If the handler is not able to physically pick up the animal waste, they must hire or establish someone who is able to complete the task. The waste must be properly disposed of in a trash receptacle.
- The handler is responsible for instructing others on appropriate interactions with the animal and setting clear and respectful expectations.
- The handler should ensure that the animal does not approach and sniff others, dining tables, or personal belongings of others.
- The handler must assure that the animal does not block emergency exits or aisles.
- The animal must display good behavior and not disrupt others unless alerting the handler as appropriately trained.

Appendix B

Additional Requirements for Animals in WCU Housing

- If the handler is unable to effectively control the animal, or if the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, the permission to keep that animal in WCU Housing will be rescinded.
- Dogs must wear a current rabies vaccination tag. All animals must be tagged with contact information for the owner, if possible.
- Animals must wear any tag issued by the Office of Residence Life and Housing.
- Dogs and cats must be spayed or neutered.
- Recommended vaccinations and annual examinations must be completed and provided to the Office of Residence Life and Housing, along with proof of spay or neuter and good health.
- The Office of Residence Life and Housing has the right to request updated veterinary verification annually, or at any time during the animal's residency.
- The handler is responsible for instructing roommates and dorm-mates on appropriate interactions with the animal and setting clear and respectful expectations.
- The handler is responsible for excessive noise or behavior that is disruptive to others.
- The handler cannot leave the animal unattended overnight or for an extended period of time beyond normal working/class hours.
- The handler certifies that the animal is housebroken or will be crated when not present in the unit. The handler is responsible for sanitary clean-up measures.
- The handler will not allow the animal to be neglected or abused.
- The handler will not allow the animal to produce or raise offspring while on campus.
- The handler will bear sole financial responsibility for the actions of the animal including damage that requires replacement of furniture, carpets, blinds, etc. The handler is expected to cover all costs of returning the unit to the same condition it was in at move-in. This may include cleaning all carpets and furniture to remove pet odors, dander, hair, etc. This applies to all areas of the unit, common areas, outdoor landscaping, and other outside improvements. If items cannot be satisfactorily repaired, the handler will be charged for the complete replacement.
- The handler understands permission may be rescinded for a particular animal if the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others, that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation.

Permission to have an animal in residence may be rescinded if:

- The handler does not provide the Animal-in-Residence Agreement or other requested information.
- The handler does not provide veterinary verification that the animal is healthy and spayed or neutered.
- The handler does not provide current vaccination records, if applicable.
- The animal does not wear an ID tag and rabies tag, if appropriate
- It is found by the Office of Student Conduct that the animal was misrepresented as an ESA, Service Animal, or Service Animal in Training.
- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. (for example, “displaying vicious behavior towards residents, guests, workers, or students;” or “has a documented history of biting.” *PHRC Guidance*)