



# GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY™

## **Service Animals and Assistive Animals Policy**

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For the purpose of this policy, the term “accommodation animal” refers to “service animals,” “emotional support animal”, “assistive animals” and “necessary assistance animals” as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, Fair Housing Act, and other applicable laws.

Any resident student wanting an accommodation animal to live in Grand Canyon University Housing must complete the Steps to Accommodations process. Their request needs to include an explanation of the disability-related need for the animal, the types of tasks, if any; the animal is trained to perform, as well as a description of the animal, including type and the animal’s name. Students who obtain approval to have an accommodation animal in University housing will be required to sign and abide by the Resident Responsibilities.

Grand Canyon University will accept, consider and make best efforts to fulfill the request for reasonable accommodations in University housing at any time. However, if the accommodation request is made after July 1st (for Fall semester) or after December 1st (for Spring semester), GCU cannot guarantee that they will be able to meet the individual’s housing accommodation needs during the scheduled term of occupancy. All housing is based on availability.

The University limits this accommodation to one animal per dwelling unit in order to ensure the safety of the animals that reside on the GCU campus. With the exception of a trained service dog, the animal should not be in residence unless/until the request is approved. Please note that the approval of a request is animal-specific and is not transferable to another or different animal. Multiple students cannot “share” an emotional support animal as the animal is part of an individual’s on-going care plan.

### **Service Animal:**

Per the ADA 2010 Revised Requirements, service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. If the animal is a trained service dog trained to perform service tasks, then the student’s Request for Accommodations must answer two questions:

- (1) Is this a service animal that is required because of a disability?
- (2) What work or tasks has the animal been trained to perform?

### **Therapy/Emotional Support Animals:**

If the animal is not a dog, or the animal (even if a dog) is not trained to perform service tasks but is an emotional support animal, then the student needs to request a Housing Accommodation for the assistive animal through the Student Disability Services office. In this case, the student’s Request must answer these two questions:

- (1) Does the student (asking to live with the animal) have a disability – i.e., a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities?
- (2) Does the resident making the request have a disability-related need for an assistance animal?

When the disability and/or disability-related need for the animal are not readily apparent, the student will be required to also provide supporting documentation in the form, their qualified licensed provider documenting the disability and/or disability-related need for the animal as part of their ongoing care plan. **Note:** As outlined in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s 2020 guidance, “Some websites sell certificates, registrations, and licensing documents for assistance animals to anyone who answers certain questions or participates in a short interview and pays a fee” and these types of documents are not acceptable as supporting documentation. This type of documentation may not provide sufficient information for approval of the student’s request. The appropriate medical provider should be familiar with the individual’s



# GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY™

disability and the necessity for the accommodation as part of an individualized ongoing care plan and outlining the following:

- a) Verification of the disability the animal is supporting, and
- b) How the animal serves as an accommodation for the verified disability, and
- c) How the need for the animal relates to the ability of the student to use and enjoy the living arrangements available through the University, and
- d) The type of animal(s) for which the reasonable accommodation is sought, and
- e) The letter is subject to the Documentation Criteria as outlined in the Steps to Accommodations.

Emotional Support Animals are prescribed for a specific individual as part of their ongoing care plan. Just like any prescription this is meant for the specific individual and cannot be shared by multiple people. Therefore, an Emotional Support animal can only be approved for one (1) student and the approval is not transferable to other individuals. Anyone seeking an Emotional Support Animal must go through the Steps to Accommodations process.

Please note that Therapy/Emotional Support animals are restricted to the residence area where the student resides only. They cannot go to class or to other communal areas of the University including the Library, the Arena, sports fields, the Rec Center, Canyon Activity Center (CAC), Campus Fitness Centers, Thunder Alley, Classroom buildings, Pool area, etc. Emotional Support Animals can accompany their owner at eateries with outdoor seating, but pursuant to FDA Food Code: 6-501.115, they may not be seated inside, or go inside of eateries on campus.

It is strongly recommended that if a student needs short term care for their animal, they make off campus arrangements. The approved animal is restricted to the student's specific dwelling and assigned space. Due to building access rules and roommates' rights to the space, having someone come in to care for your animal not always feasible. GCU staff and fellow students (including roommates) shall not be required to provide care or feeding for any approved animal.

## **GCU Sponsored Travel**

Individuals with approved Emotional Support Animals are not allowed to bring the ESA's with them on any GCU sponsored travel. GCU sponsored travel is for University related competition or business purposes. Since the ESA designation limits the animal to an individual's dwelling under HUD, the animal would be restricted from accompanying the individual while traveling and would have no access to the business/competition related event.

Service Dogs are permitted to travel with their owner as they provide a specific service as outlined in the Department of Justice guidance. If traveling without your animal is an issue, please connect with Student Disability Services to explore other alternative accommodations.



# GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY™

## **Guidelines for Approved Assistive Animals Living on the Grand Canyon University Campus**

The following guidelines apply to all approved disability-related accommodation animals and their students who live in GCU Housing.

### **Animal Behavior**

1. An Exception to the Residential Pet Policy is granted for accommodation animals provided that their behavior, noise, odor and waste do not exceed reasonable standards and that these factors do not create unreasonable disruptions for students, faculty or staff.
2. Dangerous, poisonous, venomous, and/or illegal animals are not permitted. Certain species are governed by additional laws and outside entities, and may be prohibited from living on the GCU campus.
3. The approved accommodation animal must be contained within the private residential area (room, suite, apartment, or enclosed balcony) at all times. If the Owner is going to be absent from their assigned dwelling, it is the sole responsibility of the Owner to ensure the animal is secured (crated, kenneled, or confined) and safely contained in an appropriately sized enclosure. When being transported outside the private residential area, the animal must be in a carrier or controlled by leash or harness at all times (City of Phoenix Code 8-14).
4. In accordance with behavior expectations, assistive animals must remain on the ground (have 4 paws on the floor) or be carried by their owner, unless completing specific tasks to aid handler.

### **Animal Health and Well-Being**

1. Accommodation animals must be fully and completely vaccinated per Maricopa County standards for their species and have a clean bill of health to maintain the animal's health and prevent contagious diseases. Documentation of appropriate vaccinations are due at the time the Request. Grand Canyon University reserves the right to request updated vaccination verification during the animal's residency.

All animals must have a clean bill of health from a qualified veterinarian professional in order to live in GCU Housing.

2. Animals that live on GCU's campus fall under the licensure and health requirements for Maricopa County. Proof of compliance with those rules and regulations is part of the documentation required for approval of an assistive animal.

Please visit the following link for more information: <http://www.maricopa.gov/pets/>

3. All accommodation animals that reside on the GCU campus are required to have the appropriate GCU issued identification cards. Service Dogs that accompany non-residential students to class or other GCU events are welcomed to obtain a GCU issued identification card as well, but are not required to do so.

### **Animal Cleanliness**

Residents are responsible for properly containing and disposing of all animal waste, including but not limited to:

1. Indoor animal waste, such as cat litter, must be placed in a sturdy plastic bag and tied securely before being disposed of in outside trash dumpsters. Litter boxes should be placed on mats so that feces and urine are not tracked onto carpeted surfaces. For example, litter boxes should be in an agreed upon spot within the student's assigned dwelling.
2. Outdoor animal waste, such as dog feces, must be immediately retrieved by resident, placed in a plastic bag and securely tied before being disposed of in outside trash dumpsters.



# GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY™

3. With respect to common areas, the University reserves the right to designate specific sites indoors/outdoors for elimination of animal waste and to prohibit (even if there is immediate clean up afterwards) animal waste in any other common area. Animals are not permitted to use the synthetic turf (fake grass), including some living area courtyards. The event lawn in front of the arena, NCAA facilities or practice fields, or Club Sports fields are prohibited.

The University utilizes a third party vendor for identification of improperly disposed of animal waste. (Please see DNA Registry Disclosure for additional details.)

## **Animal Cruelty and Neglect**

In accordance with AR13-2910 (Cruelty to Animals; Interference with Working or Service Animals), the University outlines the following. The Owner is required to ensure the animal is well cared for at all times. Evidence of any individual (not limited to the owner) inflicting mistreatment, neglect, abuse, or threatening to harm the animal may result in University disciplinary action for the responsible individual and/or potential removal of the animal.

This statute includes the ability for the University's Police to take possession of any animal being mistreated, abused, neglected, abandoned, or threatened with harm.

The University will report any animal abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities, in addition to applicable disciplinary actions under the Student Code of Conduct or the appropriate respective Human Resources process.

## **Removal of Assistance Animal**

Grand Canyon University may require the individual to remove the animal from University Housing if:

1. The animal or owner violates the standards for behavior and cleanliness as outlined in this policy and in the Resident Responsibilities.
2. The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or causes substantial property damage to University property or the property of others.
3. The animal or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the University community.
4. The animal does not have official approval from the Student Disability Services office to be in University Housing or on the University campus. Removal of an animal from University property will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

## **Denied Requests**

Requests for an assistive animal as a disability-related accommodation may be denied if granting the request would constitute an undue financial or administrative burden, or would fundamentally alter the nature of the housing option. In addition, animal accommodation requests may be denied if:

1. The specific assistance animal in question poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation, or
2. The specific assistance animal in question would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation. Breed, size, and weight limitations are not applicable to an assistance animal, or



# GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY™

3. If the individual is unwilling to accept an alternative housing placement option offered based on availability or if there are not available housing options to meet the accommodation request. Grand Canyon University will review each Emotional Support Animal request on a case by case basis. The University may also consider if the animal's presence would force another individual from individual housing (e.g. severe allergies, fear of the animal).

## **Grievance Process**

Students may submit a request for their denial to be reviewed, as outlined in the Accommodation Grievance Procedure outlined under the Student Disability Services policies.

## **Unapproved Animals**

Having any animal on the GCU Campus prior to official approval may result in immediate removal of the animal from Campus property, until official approval, and may be subject to:

1. Community Service Hours
2. Monetary fines
3. Code of Conduct referral

## **DNA Registry Disclosure**

As part of the University's efforts to ensure responsible animal ownership and community standards for all students, the University utilizes a third party vendor. The third party vendor is a company that specializes in DNA registry for waste management.

All dogs residing in University housing are required to complete the DNA registration upon their approval. In order to provide a DNA sample, the owner will be provided a DNA collection kit, which will be used to cheek swab the dog's mouth in the SDS office with SDS staff present. The SDS Office will then provide the materials collected to the dog registration company. The registry will be kept by Student Disability Services and only used for the purpose of identifying the perpetrator of animal waste on GCU property that is not appropriately disposed of. Failure to provide a swiipe sample may result in a referral to Code of Conduct for failure to comply with a reasonable University directive.

The University pays for the registration, set up costs of the animal in the vendor's registration system, and testing of collected animal waste. Waste matching to any approved animals on campus will result in specific owners being subject to all clean-up costs, a referral to Code of Conduct and a \$200 fine for failure to properly dispose of waste on campus. Owners will be provided with the test result for any positive match.

The University reserves the right to request Service Dogs that accompany commuter students or staff to campus to register their dogs if a waste problem is identified in a nonresidential area of campus.



# GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY™

## **Resident Responsibilities**

1. The student is responsible for assuring that the accommodation animal does not interfere with the routine activities of their fellow resident students or cause unreasonable difficulties for student, faculty or staff. Residential community living requires respect for the needs of residents with allergies and those who may fear animals.
2. The student is financially responsible for all consequences caused by the actions of the accommodation animal, including bodily injury or property damage which may necessitate replacement or repair of damaged furniture, carpet, drapes, or wall covering, etc. If an accommodation animal causes substantial physical damage to the property of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by reasonable accommodation, the animal may be excluded from living in the residence.
3. The University shall have the right to bill the student's account for unmet obligations arising for damage caused by an accommodation animal).
4. The student's place of residence may be inspected for fleas, ticks or other pests once per semester or as needed. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a university-approved pest control service.
5. The student must notify Student Disability Services in writing if the accommodation animal is no longer needed as an accommodation or is no longer in residence within 48 hours. By removing the animal from residence, the student is in-turn declining their previously approved accommodation to have the animal on campus.
6. Even if the student previously obtained permission for an accommodation animal, the student must file a new request for accommodations if s/he wishes to bring in a new/different accommodation animal in substitution of the previous accommodation animal.
7. The University has the ability to relocate resident and accommodation animal as necessary provided the new site is consistent with the terms of the current contractual agreement.
8. All roommates or suitemates of the student are provided a copy of the Service Animal/Assistive Animal Policy. All students assigned to any University Housing Unit have equal rights to the space. In the event that one or more roommates or suitemates do not consent to be housed with the animal, either the student and animal, or the non-approving roommates or suitemates if they volunteer, may have housing reassigned to a more suitable location as determined by the Student Disability Services and Housing.
9. GCU staff, and fellow students including roommates or suitemates are not required to provide care of feeding for any animal. It is the responsibility of the approved student to manage and care for their accommodation animal.
10. Student agrees to continue to abide by all other residential policies. An exception to a policy that otherwise prohibits having an animal does not constitute an exception to any other policy.
11. Any violation of the above rules will be reviewed through the University's Code of Conduct on a case by case basis, and the resident will be afforded all rights of due process and appeal as outlined in that process.

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(Student Signature)

(Date)