



Service and Support Animal Policy for Students

Lander University seeks to meet the needs of its students with disabilities in accord with pertinent federal and state laws, including the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008, and anti-discrimination laws of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This policy is designed to provide guidance regarding the use of Service and Support Animals by enrolled students with disabilities on the Lander University campus.

Definitions

Lander University defines a **Service Animal** as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. In some cases, a miniature horse may be permitted as a Service Animal. Other animals, whether domestic or wild, do not qualify as Service Animals. Examples of such work or tasks may include guiding a person with impaired vision, alerting a person with a hearing impairment, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with a mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, and/or performing other duties. Service Animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a Service Animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as Service Animals.

It is the policy of Lander University to generally allow service animals in its buildings, classrooms, residence halls, meetings, dining areas, recreational facilities, activities, events, and other places to which the general public is invited where the animal is accompanied by a qualified individual with a disability who indicates the service animal is trained to provide, and does provide, a specific service to the individual that is directly related to his or her disability.

Support Animals (sometimes called "Therapy Animals") provide companionship, relieve loneliness, and sometimes help with depression, anxiety, and certain phobias, but do not have special training to perform tasks that assist people with disabilities. Support animals are not Service Animals even if prescribed by a physician or therapist. While they may be considered for access to University housing and Counseling Services, they are not permitted in other areas of the university, such as academic and administrative buildings, classrooms, labs, athletic facilities, Food Service/Dining areas, and the Student Center.

Non-domesticated, wild, dangerous, poisonous, and/or illegal animals are not permitted. Housing and Residence Life does not permit rodents, arachnids, reptiles and other exotic animals in University housing given the health and safety issues unique to the type of animal and shared student housing.

In order to receive permission to have a support animal in University Housing or counseling services, the student must go through the Student Disability Coordinator. Only **ONE** support animal per student is allowed.

A **pet** is an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. A pet is not considered a Service Animal or a Support Animal. It is not covered under this policy. Individuals are not permitted to keep pets on campus including in University housing, other than fish in an aquarium.

An **Approved Animal** is a Service or Support Animal that has been granted as an accommodation by this policy. The **Owner** is the student or other covered person who has requested the accommodation and has received approval to bring the approved Service or Support Animal onto campus.

To receive approval for having Service or Support Animals on campus, students should begin by registering for Disability Services in the Wellness Center. Students must secure and complete a request form and provide appropriate documentation. Upon receipt of this documentation staff in the Office of Disabilities will initiate a conversation with the owner about the University's policy and procedures for use of Service or Support Animals on campus. All documentation is due to the Office of Disabilities by May 1st for new students and February 1st for returning students. Documentation submitted later will be considered, Lander University will make a good faith effort to provide reasonable accommodations, but may not be able to guarantee that appropriate residential provisions will be completed within that semester.

Service and Support Animal Guidelines

Student requests for disability accommodations, including requests to have a service animal accompany a student on campus are approved by the Student Disabilities Coordinator through an accommodation request and review process. When it is not readily apparent that the service animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, the following inquiries may be made: (1) "Is this a service animal that is required because of a disability?" and (2) "What work or tasks has the service animal been trained to perform?" If a student requests an accommodation and the need for the accommodation is not obvious, written documentation from a doctor or other professional with knowledge of the person's functional limitations may be required. Decisions regarding requests for service animals on campus will be made in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and guidance. Lander University provides appropriate adjustments to students living on campus with a documented disability.

As a general rule, pets are forbidden in on-campus housing. However, the Department of Housing and Residence Life will allow a support animal if certain conditions are met in accordance with the applicable laws, regulations, and guidance. Students seeking assistance animals in University housing must have a disability and have a disability-related need for an assistance animal. The student will be asked to provide documentation verifying:

- That she or he has a disability;

- That the animal is necessary to afford the person with a disability an equal access to the University's educational program; and
- That there is an **identifiable relationship or nexus** between the disability and the assistance the animal provides.

Upon approval, Residence Life staff will be notified as appropriate. Also, the student's roommate(s), suitemate(s), or those otherwise sharing the living space will be notified of the approval. All roommates, suitemates, or others sharing living space are requested to sign an agreement acknowledging that the Service Animal will be in the residence with them. In the event that one or more of these persons does not consent, Residence Life will reach a resolution of the matter through an interactive process with the appropriate participants. A sign in the residence hall will serve as notification of the animal's presence.

The student should complete the following process to request and receive approval under this policy:

- Register for Disability Services with the Office of Disabilities.
- Complete *Request for Housing Accommodation* form.
- Submit *Emotional Support Animal Request for Information* form (to be completed by mental health provider) for approval of emotional support animal.
- Provide evidence that the animal is in good health and has been vaccinated against diseases common to that breed of animal as recommended by the American Veterinary Medical Association. Veterinary records attesting to that fact must be submitted to the Office of Disabilities prior to the animal taking residence.
- Meet with the Director of Housing and Residence Life or her/his designee prior to the animal taking occupancy in order to review the agreement and expectations.
- Review and sign the *Housing and Residence Life Service and Support Animal Agreement*.
- Strictly abide by the *Housing and Residence Life Service and Support Animal Agreement*. Failure to comply with the terms of this agreement could result in disciplinary charges and/or removal of animal from campus.

Residence Life may **exclude** a Service Animal or Support Animal from a campus residence if:

- 1) The animal is out of control and its handler does not take effective action to control it;
- 2) The animal is NOT housebroken;
- 3) The animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others;
- 4) The animal causes substantial physical damage to the property of others;
- 5) The animal poses an undue financial and administrative burden, or
- 6) The animal results in a fundamental alteration of the University's program(s).

When it is not readily apparent that the service animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, the following inquiries may be made:

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

Questions related to the use of service animals on Lander University campus by students should be directed to the Student Disabilities Coordinator via email, kshannon@lander.edu, or phone (864)388-8885 or Lander University Police at (864)388-8222. Decisions regarding student requests for service animals on campus will be made by the Student Disabilities Coordinator in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and guidance.