



Policy Number: I.25  
Policy Level: Operating Policy  
Originally Issued: May 14, 2018  
Reviewed: September 14, 2020  
Reviewed: November 9, 2022  
Revised: January 13, 2025

Policy Owner  
Associate Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services  
Policy Implementation:  
Director of Student Wellness and Accessibility

# Animals on University Property

## I. Policy Statement and Purpose

Athens State University is committed to providing a safe and healthy instructional environment and workplace to meet the needs of employees, students, and citizens of the community. In doing so, the University regulates the kinds of animals allowed onto university-owned or controlled property. This policy is to identify the distinction between those animals permitted on and those excluded from university property.

## II. Definitions and Authorizations

### Service Animals

A service animal is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act as a dog or miniature horse individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Work or tasks the service animal performs must be directly related to the handler's disability.

**Service animals**, including those in the process of training through a recognized training facility, **may accompany** a person with a disability or a person training the animal in public facilities and accommodations or places to which the general public is invited (e.g. academic buildings, administrative office), as long as the animal is under control.

Requests for permission to have a service animal on university property, including residential facilities, must be made to the Director of Student Wellness and Accessibility. An identifying tag for the service animal's collar indicating the animal is an approved service animal will be provided. ([\*Guidance and Recommendations for Faculty and Staff Regarding Service Animals\*](#))

Therapy, companion, and support animals are not service animals under the ADA Service Animal Policy.



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### **Support/Therapy Animals**

Support/therapy animals are animals that provide therapeutic benefits to individuals with a disability and are prescribed by a physician or licensed mental health professional. Unlike service animals, support/therapy animals require no specific training and do not provide specific service with activities of daily living - as their mere presence with the individual mitigates the effects of the disability. Unlike service animals, **support/therapy animals are generally prohibited in indoor areas considered public** including, but not limited to, community bathrooms, lounges, dining centers, computer labs, classrooms, office workspaces, and nonresidential facilities on campus.

The Fair Housing Act requires Athens State residential facilities to allow reasonable accommodations involving support/therapy animals. Requests for permission to have a support/therapy animal in the residential facility must be made to the Director of Student Wellness and Accessibility. An identifying tag for the collar indicating the animals is a support/therapy animal and is permitted in the residential facility but not in other campus buildings will be provided.

### **Working Animals**

Working animals are animals used: a) in academic courses or for education and research purposes; b) for law enforcement and rescue purposes; or c) under the direction of licensed mental health professionals employed by the university for therapeutic purposes on-site at the Counseling Center or in public spaces. **Working animals are permitted on campus by authorized individuals.** The applicable Vice President will determine if and when working animals are permitted on campus and will obtain a tag from the Director of Student Wellness and Accessibility

### **Companion Animals/Pets**

Companion animals/pets are animals living with individuals for purposes of pleasure, leisuretime activity, and companionship. Generally, **companion animals** (with the exception of fish) **are not allowed inside university property and during certain events.** Exceptions are provided for: a) the University President's residence; b) University-owned houses; and c) approved university programs involving animals (the applicable Vice President will determine if and when companion animals are permitted and the type of companion animals permitted).



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### III. Responsibilities of Individuals with Animals on Campus

Owners and keepers of animals on campus are responsible for their animals at all times. This responsibility includes complying with all state laws and local animal ordinances, as well as all University policies and guidelines including the following requirements:

- Providing appropriate restraint, control, and supervision of animals at all times.
- Providing animals with appropriate care, including food, water, shelter, health care, and humane treatment.
- Cleaning up and disposing of all animal waste (both indoors and outdoors) in a timely and effective fashion.
- Confining animals when leaving them alone in a university-owned residence, and not leaving animals alone for an extended time period.
- Not allowing odor, noise, damage, or other behavior of animals that disturbs others or damages university grounds, facilities, or property.
- Having animals wear current identification and vaccination tags when applicable. In accordance with the [Code of Alabama 3-7A-3](#) the animal must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal.

The University may place other reasonable conditions or restrictions on animals brought to campus, depending on the nature and characteristics of the animal.

### IV. Conditions Prohibiting Animals on Campus

An animal may be prohibited from or required to leave a facility on campus if the animal's behavior or presence poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. For example, an animal that displays aggressive/vicious behaviors toward people may be excluded.

Animals may be prohibited in areas where their presence fundamentally alters the nature of a program or activity or is disruptive. Examples include, but are not limited to, research labs, areas requiring protective clothing, and food preparation areas.

An animal may be prohibited if the owner/keeper does not adhere to Section III of this policy, or if the animal substantially interferes with the reasonable use of housing or public accommodation by others.



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Animals that have been abandoned or found within university facilities that are not a part of a university-sponsored program may be impounded and/or placed with a third party, at the expense of the owner or individual who claims the animal.

## **V. Responsibility for this Operating Policy**

### **Policy Owner**

As part of the initial approval of this policy by the President and subsequent to the original dissemination of the policy, the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs is the policy owner for the ongoing evaluation, review, and approval of this policy. Subsequent reviews and revisions to this policy must be in accordance with approved operating policy procedures and processes.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or more frequently as needed by the Policy Owner. Revisions will be reviewed/affirmed by the Cabinet and approved by the University President. This policy will be updated/published in the University's Policy Library.

### **Responsibility for Policy Implementation**

The President has assigned the responsibility of implementing this policy to the Director of Student Wellness and Accessibility, under the direction of the Associate Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services.