

Name of Policy: Service and Emotional Support Animals
Source: Student Affairs
Date Revised: August 2017
Form to Complete: N/A

Policy:

KCAI recognizes the importance of service and emotional support animals to students with disabilities. The following policies are intended to create an educational and campus environment that allows those students who depend on service and emotional support animals equal access to our facilities, programs, and activities.

I. Definitions

Service Animal – The ADA has defined “service animals” as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks that are directly related to a person’s disability. An example would be a sight dog that assists in navigation, or a dog that alerts the hearing impaired to the presence of sound. Other examples include the retrieval of items and assistance with stability and balance for individuals with mobility impairments, alerting and protecting an individual with a seizure disorder before and during a seizure, and preventing and disrupting impulsive or destructive behavior for individuals with psychiatric and neurological disabilities.

Emotional Support Animal – An emotional support animal has been defined as an animal that alleviates the symptoms of an identified disability, without meeting the ADA’s definition of a service animal.

II. KCAI Policy and Procedure Regarding Service Animals

Policy:

Service animals that meet the ADA’s definition will be allowed in all buildings and to attend all events and campus activities, except in situations where the animal poses a substantial threat to public health and safety, and situations where the animal’s presence either alters the nature of the program or service, or where the environment itself poses a threat to the service animal’s health. These determinations will typically be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the directors of the programs in question, and KCAI’s Disabilities and Academic Support Coordinator.

Responsibility for Damage, Injury, and Cost of Care

Students are responsible for any damage or injury caused by their animals and are expected to take appropriate precautions. Students are also responsible for the cost of care, and any arrangements involving the animal's well being.

The animal should be kept on a leash at all times, except in circumstances where a leash would hinder the task that the animal is trained to provide. In such circumstances, the animal should be trained to respond to the voice commands of the student or the animal's handler. It's also recommended that the animal wear some type of commonly recognized identification that identifies the animal as a working animal.

Students are required to clean up and dispose of the waste created by their animals. If the student is incapable of fulfilling this responsibility, then the student is responsible for hiring someone to do so.

Failure to Meet Certain Obligations May Result in the Removal of the Animal

Any animal that proves disruptive within a learning, working, or living environment will be escorted from the premises, along with the student, until the student can regain control of the animal's behavior. If disruptive behavior continues to occur over an extended period of time, the student may be prohibited from bringing the animal into university facilities until able to demonstrate that significant steps have been taken to address the cause of the disruption.

Any animal that is not house broken will also be removed from the premises, as will any animal that is determined to pose a direct threat to the health or safety of those around it. Any animal that is determined to be threatened by a basic lack of care will also be removed.

Any animal that displays aggressive behavior (excessive growling, biting, etc.) will be subject to removal.

Shared Living Arrangements and Conflicting Disabilities

If students with a service animal are assigned to shared living arrangements, the roommates or suitemates of those students will be asked to sign an agreement allowing the service animal to reside in the room or suite. In the event that a student refuses to sign the approval, then either the student-owner and animal, or the dissenting student, will be invited to move to a different location. Decisions of this type will be made on a case-by-case basis, and will be determined by the availability of various living arrangements at the time of the decision.

There may also be students who have allergic reactions to the animal in question. If those reactions are severe enough to qualify as a disability, then the students involved, Campus Housing, and the Disabilities and Academic Support Coordinator will work toward a resolution of the problem.

Service Dogs in Training

A dog being trained as a service animal, when accompanied by a trainer and identified as such, will be treated in the same way as a service animal who has completed its training. Handlers of service dogs in training must also adhere to the requirements outlined above,

and are subject to the same obligations, and to the same consequences should those obligations be neglected.

Procedure:

Students with service animals should be prepared to describe the work that the service animal has been trained to perform, as well as to provide documentation of the animal's vaccinations and licensing. Licensing is required of all cats, dog, and ferrets that reside within the limits of Kansas City, MO, and is not an ordinance specific to service animals.

Information on licensing your animal can be found at <http://kcmo.gov/neighborhoods/animals/licenses/>. The typical fees that accompany animal licensing are waived for service animals, as written in section 14.22 of the city's code of ordinances.

Students are also encouraged to notify Campus Housing and Disability Services upon acceptance to KCAI. Advanced notice of the presence of a service animal will allow for more flexibility regarding a student's housing requests, while early correspondence with the Disabilities Coordinator will ease the student's transition from secondary to post-secondary education.

III. KCAI Policy Regarding Emotional Support Animals

Policy:

Access to a properly documented emotional support animal is protected under The Fair Housing Act, and will be allowed in campus housing, except in situations where the animal poses a substantial threat to public health and safety, or situations where the animal's presence creates an undue financial or administrative burden for the school. Emotional support animals, unlike service animals, may not be allowed to accompany the student to other events and facilities.

All other policies, requirements, and obligations that apply to service animals also apply to emotional support animals. It should be noted that neither service animals nor emotional support animals should be left by their owner for extended periods of time. If travel involving an overnight stay is required, and if the animal is not to accompany the student, then the student is responsible for arranging for the animal's care.

Procedure:

Students requesting the presence of an emotional support animal should be prepared to provide appropriate documentation from a physician or mental health professional. The documentation should include a statement regarding the student's disability, an explanation of how the animal will lessen the effects of the disability, and a recommendation that the animal be allowed to reside with the student in campus-directed housing. All documentation should be submitted to the Disabilities and Academic Support Coordinator. Once the documentation is received, the Disabilities Coordinator will contact the student to review the documentation, and if the documentation is considered appropriate, the student and Coordinator will discuss the necessary arrangements involved in bringing the animal to campus.

