

MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY POLICY					
Policy #:	02-0009				
Name of Policy:	Employee Service Animal and Emotional Support Animal Policy				
Date of Last Revision:	July 2023	Initial Date of Approval:		Initial Effective Date:	
Policy Owner	Human Resources				
Policy/Chapter Sections	Definitions Employee Request for Service Animals Employee Request for Emotional Support Animals Accommodation Process General Standards for the Disapproval/Approval of Assistance Animals and Responsibilities of Handler/Owner General Standards for the Removal of Service Animals or the Disapproval/Removal of Emotional Support Animals Responsibility of Handler/Owner				
Date of Next Review:	July 2026				

1.0 PURPOSE

The University supports the use of service and emotional support animals on campus by employees with disabilities in appropriate circumstances and in accordance with this policy. Employees with questions about the use of service animals or emotional support animals should refer to this policy and visit the Human Resources office located in the Hearnes Hall RM 217, or via phone at 417-625-9527. This policy applies to all employees at the University.

2.0 SCOPE

The university-level policy applies to all Missouri Southern State University employees.

3.0 POLICY

Definitions

This policy incorporates the definitions of Service Animals, Emotional Support Animals, Owner, and Handler under the University's Student Service Animal and Emotional Support Animal Policy.

Employee Requests for Service Animals

Employees with a disability who wish to utilize a service animal as a reasonable accommodation in a University office or other areas of campus buildings not open to the general public must submit the request to Human Resources at least 30 days before the animal is needed.

Employee Requests for Emotional Support Animals

Employees who wish to bring an ESA onto campus must go through the reasonable accommodation process with Human Resources. Human Resources will determine whether approving a particular ESA in the workplace is a reasonable accommodation that will enable the employee to perform the essential functions of the position. What constitutes a reasonable accommodation will vary depending on the circumstances of each case. In evaluating alternatives for accommodations, the preferences of the employee are considered, but the ultimate decision regarding the type of accommodation, if any, is made by Human Resources.

Accommodation Process

When the University receives a request from an employee to bring a service animal or emotional support animal (hereafter referred to collectively as “assistance animal”) to work, the University will engage in an interactive process with the employee to gather information, understand the nature of the employee’s functional limitations, and identify accommodations that would effectively enable the employee to perform their essential job functions. The University will consider the feasibility of the employee’s request and the likelihood that the animal in question will successfully enable the employee to perform essential job functions that they otherwise would be unable to perform.

When making employee assistance animal determinations, the University may require documentation that identifies the following:

1. The nature or extent of the employee’s impairment or health condition related to the request for the assistance animal.
2. How the impairment or health condition prevents the employee from completing the essential job functions.
3. The expected duration of the limitations.
4. How the assistance animal will help the employee perform their essential job functions.

The University may deny an employee’s request to bring an assistance animal to work if the specific animal in question would impose an undue hardship on the University, meaning the assistance animal would cause significant difficulty or expense. For example, if the assistance animal is unduly disruptive to the workplace or fundamentally alters the nature or operation of the University’s business, the University may deny the request.

The University’s determination that an assistance animal would cause an undue hardship must be based on an individualized assessment of the current circumstances, including:

- (a) the cost of allowing the assistance animal;
- (b) the type of facility in which the assistance animal would be allowed;
- (c) the financial resources of the facility, including the number of people employed and the effect of the assistance animal on the facility’s resources;
- (d) the facility’s operations, including the functions of the workforce and geographic spaces; and
- (e) the assistance animal’s impact on operations.

The University may deny an employee’s request to bring an assistance animal to work if there is another reasonable accommodation that would enable the employee to perform the essential job functions as effectively as the assistance animal would.

General Standards for the Disapproval/Removal of Assistance Animals and Responsibilities of Handlers/Owners

Decisions to remove an assistance animal will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account all surrounding circumstances. In addition, employees who are handlers/owners of an approved assistance animal are responsible for following University policy related to animals on campus and are responsible for caring for and controlling their animal.

This policy incorporates all relevant provisions of the University's Student Service Animal and Emotional Support Animal Policy regarding the situations under which assistance animals may be removed from campus (Section IV) and the responsibilities of owners/handlers for their assistance animals (Section V) - excerpt from Student Handbook. Please click [here](#) to review the student handbook.

General Standards for the Removal of Service Animals or the Disapproval/Removal of Emotional Support Animals

Decisions to remove a service animal or disapprove/remove an ESA will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account all surrounding circumstances. However, the following general standards reflect reasons why an animal may be removed or disapproved:

- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. For example, the animal displays aggressive behavior towards others or has a serious illness.
- The animal causes or would cause substantial physical damage to the property of the University and other community members, including but not limited to students, faculty, staff, and visitors.
- The animal poses an undue financial and administrative burden to the University.
- The animal would fundamentally alter the nature of the University's educational and/or business operations.
- The animal is out of control and the handler/owner does not take effective action to control it. If the out-of-control behavior happens repeatedly, the handler/owner may be prohibited from bringing the animal into University facilities until the handler/owner can demonstrate that s/he has taken significant steps to mitigate the behavior.
- The animal is not housebroken.
- The animal is defined as a dangerous wild animal according to the Revised Statutes of Missouri.
- The animal is considered a high rabies-risk animal as defined by the Missouri Department of Health and Social Services.
- The handler/owner does not abide by their responsibilities as outlined in this policy.

The University considers the following factors in determining whether to approve the presence of an ESA in its facilities:

- The size of the animal and whether it is too large for the classroom, office, or relevant space.
- Whether the animal's presence would force another individual from using that space (e.g., serious allergies).
- Whether the animal's presence would be disruptive to the academic or work environment.
- Whether the animal is housebroken.
- Whether the animal's vaccinations are up to date.

- Whether the animal poses or has posed in the past a direct threat to the individual or others, such as injuring or acting aggressively.
- Whether the animal causes or has caused excessive damage to University facilities.

When an animal has been properly removed pursuant to this policy, the University will work with the handler/owner to determine reasonable alternative opportunities to participate in the University's services, programs, and activities without having the animal on the premises.

Responsibilities of Handlers/Owners

Laws, Ordinances, and Policies: Handlers/owners are responsible for complying with all state laws and local animal ordinances and are subject to all University policies.

Proper Identification: All animals are subject to local licensing and registration requirements.

Health and Vaccination: Animals must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. All vaccinations must be current. These animals must wear a rabies vaccination tag, and in the case of ESAs, vaccination documentation must be provided to Student Disability Services or Human Resources prior to the animal being allowed into any facilities.

Caring for the Animal: The cost of care, arrangements, and responsibilities for the well-being of the animal are the sole responsibility of the handler/owner at all times. The University will accept no responsibility for the care of any animal covered by this policy.

Animals must be kept clean and well groomed. University facilities may not be used for this purpose.

Animals cannot be left unattended for an extended period of time. Animals cannot be confined to a vehicle, tethered, or abandoned at any time.

Keeping the Animal Under Control: The animal should be fully controlled by the handler/owner, including responding to voice and/or hand commands (if this can reasonably be expected of the type of animal at issue). If an animal is found loose or unattended, the animal is subject to immediate removal.

Being Responsible for Damage Caused by the Animal: Handlers/owners are personally responsible for any damage caused by their animals and must take appropriate precautions to prevent property damage. The handler/owner will be required to pay for any damage caused by the animal.

Being Responsible for Waste: Cleaning up after the animal is the sole responsibility of the handler/owner and it must be done immediately. Waste must be bagged and discarded in outdoor receptacles. No waste may be flushed down toilets or discarded in interior waste bins. In the event that the handler/owner is not physically able to clean up after the animal, it is then the responsibility of the handler/owner to seek the assistance of someone capable of cleaning up after the animal.

Leash Requirements: Service animals should be on a leash at all times unless the owner is unable to use a leash due to a disability or the use of the leash would interfere with the animal's ability to perform its duties. In that case, the owner must be able to control the service animal by other

effective means such as voice controls or signals. ESAs must be on a leash or in a carrier while on University property.

Observing Good Animal Etiquette: To the greatest extent possible, the handler/owner should ensure that the animal does not display behaviors or make noises that are disruptive or frightening to others, unless it is part of the service being provided to the handler (e.g., barking to alert the handler of danger).

Emergency Situations: The handler/owner is expected to follow all University procedures for emergency evacuation and participate in emergency evacuation drills. Individual needs must be arranged in advance with appropriate University personnel. An emergency contact will be necessary to ensure the animal is cared for in the event the owner is unable to provide care.

Other Conditions and Restrictions: In response to a particular situation, the University reserves the right to impose other reasonable conditions or restrictions on the use of service animals and ESAs as necessary to ensure the health, safety, and reasonable enjoyment of University programs and activities by others.

4.0 HISTORY

February 2024 – updated to new format; minor grammatical corrections, added Student Handbook as related document.

5.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Student Handbook](#)