



## Animals on Campus

### POLICY CONTENTS

Scope  
Policy Statement  
Reason for Policy  
Procedures  
Definitions  
Additional Contacts  
Forms  
Related Information  
History

### Scope

This policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, visitors, and contractors at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (“UNO” or “University”) campuses. It governs the presence of Service Animals, Assistance Animals, Emotional Support Animals (ESAs), Therapy Animals, and pets in all buildings, facilities, grounds, and spaces owned or controlled by the University (hereafter referred to collectively as “property”). The policy does not apply to animals used in university sponsored research or instructional activities, which are governed by Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) guidelines.

### Policy Statement

The University is committed to complying with all federal and state laws addressing accessibility and accommodations for disabled individuals within an academic or workplace setting, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Nebraska Fair Employment Practice Act. While animals are generally prohibited in university facilities and at University related events, exceptions may be made for specific circumstances with prior approval in accordance with this policy. All animals must comply with local laws regulating licensing and vaccination requirements.

The policy distinguishes:

1. **Service Animals:** Defined under the ADA, permitted in all areas accessible to individuals with disabilities.
2. **Assistance Animals including Emotional Support Animals (ESA):** Permitted only in university housing under Fair Housing Act (FHA) provisions and subject to approval.
3. **Therapy Animals:** Permitted under a Pet Therapy Program and subject to approval.
4. **Other Animals and Pets :** Prohibited in University facilities and university activities and events, unless approved pursuant to the procedures identified in this policy.

Definitions below

### Reason for Policy

This policy ensures:

- Compliance with ADA, FHA, and other federal and state laws and regulations.

- Equal access for individuals with disabilities through the use of Service Animals and Assistance Animals.
- Health and safety for the campus community.
- Clarity on the responsibilities of individuals bringing animals to campus.
- Procedures related to the request and approval of animals on campus.

## Procedures

### 1. **Service Animals:** A dog or miniature horse trained to perform tasks for an individual with a disability.

- **Access:** Allowed in all areas open to the public or where their handler is permitted.
- **Approval:**
  - **Students** No prior approval required; handlers are encouraged to notify Accessibility Services for logistical support.
  - **Employees** Use of a service animal at work may be considered a reasonable accommodation under the ADA. Employees should follow the reasonable accommodation request process outlined in UNO's Accessibility and Compliance with Disability Accommodation Laws Policy.
  - **Public** No prior approval required
- **Control:** Must be leashed or under effective control (voice, signals).
- **Care:** Handlers are responsible for feeding, cleaning, and waste disposal.
- **Removal:** May be removed if the animal:
  - Behaves aggressively.
  - Is not housebroken.
  - Poses a direct threat to health or safety.
  - Is not otherwise under the care and control of the handler

### 2. **Assistance Animal (including ESA) in University Housing**

Students or employees who require an Assistance Animal while living in University housing must follow the outlined procedures to ensure a smooth and compliant accommodation process:

- **Submit a Formal Request:**
  - Contact the Accessibility Services Center (Students) or Human Resources (Employees) to initiate the accommodation process.
  - Provide documentation from a licensed healthcare or mental health professional that:
    - Confirms the individual's disability.
    - Explains the necessity of the Assistance Animal for mitigating one or more identified symptoms of the disability.
- **Documentation Requirements:**
  - Documentation must be recent and relevant to the requested accommodation.
  - It must establish a direct connection between the disability and the Assistance Animal's role.
  - The owner must provide proof of:
    - Up-to-date vaccinations from a licensed veterinarian.
    - Compliance with local licensing and animal control ordinances.
- **Review and Assessment:**
  - The Accessibility Services Center or Human Resources will evaluate the request to determine if the presence of the Assistance Animal:

- Is necessary for the individual's equal access to and enjoyment of University housing.
- Meets the criteria for reasonableness, including:
  - Size and space considerations in University housing.
  - Potential conflicts, such as allergies or fear of animals among roommates.
  - Animal behavior, such as aggression or property damage history.
- Consultation with Residence Life:
  - The Accessibility Services Center or Human Resources will collaborate with the Residence Life Office to determine housing arrangements.
  - When reasonable, room assignments may be made to accommodate the animal without imposing an undue burden on roommates.
- Approval/Denial Notification:
  - The individual will receive a written notice of approval or denial.
  - If approved, the notice will include any conditions or restrictions related to the animal's presence.
- Owners must renew and update documentation annually.
- Conditions for Presence in Housing:
  - Assistance Animals must:
    - Remain within the owner's assigned living space, except when being taken outdoors for natural relief.
    - Be under the owner's control at all times.
    - Be well-groomed, clean, and healthy.
  - The animal is not permitted in shared community spaces, including but not limited to:
    - Dining halls.
    - Classrooms.
    - Libraries.
    - Athletic or recreational facilities.
    - Clubhouses / community spaces within housing.
    - University events and activities.
- Responsibilities of the Owner:
  - Ensure proper care, including feeding, grooming, and waste disposal.
  - Abide by all housing rules unrelated to the disability.
  - Notify the Accessibility Services Center or Human Resources if the animal is no longer needed or has been replaced.
  - Maintain current licensing and vaccinations.
- Renewal and Compliance:
  - Owners must annually renew their approval for the Assistance Animal by providing updated proof of compliance with vaccination and licensing requirements. Approval is granted to an individual and a specific animal. It is non-transferrable. Any replacement animal must be approved through Accessibility Services in full compliance with this policy.

### 3. Therapy Animals

- A pet therapy program must be sponsored by a UNO department.

- The UNO department sponsoring the Therapy Animal is responsible for any costs related to the event and any damage caused by any UNO employees, students, or visitors of the pet therapy program event.
- The UNO department sponsoring the event must assign a UNO employee to be present during the entire pet therapy program event to monitor, ensure all applicable policies and guidelines are followed, make certain any Therapy Animal excrement has been cleaned and the area disinfected, and to clean and remove any hair as a result of the Therapy Animals shedding.
- The representative is responsible for immediately contacting the UNO Police and Public Safety Department for assistance, to report an injury to a UNO employee, student, volunteer, or visitor, or to report any damage to UNO property during a pet therapy program event.
- All Therapy Animal program events must be clearly marked and provide adequate notification to individuals passing by to ensure their own health and safety.

#### **Therapy Animal Criteria**

- Each Therapy Animal must be up to date on their respective vaccinations and have a completed certificate of vaccinations form.
- Therapy Animals must be on leashes and under the control of their handler the entire time they are on UNO property and/or at the event location.
- Authorized Therapy Animals are limited to dogs and cats. Therapy Animals must be at least one year of age.
- Therapy Animals must be well-groomed (including trimmed, filed toenails and clean teeth) and cleaned prior to each event which shall include proper bathing and/or being wiped with a wet washcloth to remove dander and saliva from the Therapy Animal's coat.
- A UNO employee or student's personal Pet is not classified as a Therapy Animal unless the individual and their Pet are officially registered and certified with a pet therapy organization recognized by UNO.

#### **Handler Criteria**

- Handlers must be a member of a pet therapy organization recognized by UNO, agree to follow all applicable University of Nebraska and UNO Policies, and agree to the terms and conditions contained in the University of Nebraska at Omaha Pet Therapy Services Agreement.
- Each handler may handle only one (1) Therapy Animal at a time while participating in a pet therapy program event.
- Handlers must transport Therapy Animals in a pet carrier or kept on a four (4) foot or shorter leash at all times when on UNO property and/or at the event location.
- Handlers must accept full responsibility for the pet therapy program animals including but not limited to proper disposal of excreta (i.e. double bagged and placed in a waste container outside the building or transported off UNO property), cleaning and removal of hair as a result of Therapy Animals shedding, and up-to-date and accurate information on their Therapy Animal's Certificate of Vaccinations form.

#### **Pre-Event Requirements**

- Prior to each pet therapy program event, the sponsoring department must ensure with Business and Finance that the respective pet therapy organization has been recognized by UNO and handlers contracted with the University and provided all necessary documentation including an approved certificate of insurance and an executed contract.
- At least ten (10) days prior to the potential pet therapy program event and after receiving all required contractual documents, the sponsoring department shall schedule the event in accordance with the "Regulations on the Use of University Facilities and Grounds."

#### **4. Other Animals and Pets on Campus**

**Prohibition:** Not allowed in University facilities except for approved events or circumstances.

- Full-time Live-In Residence Life Coordinators may seek approval for a pet through the Housing and Residence Life processes and should contact their supervisor for more information.

- Groups or organizations wishing to hold an event including animals of any kind must seek and receive approval from Business and Finance or designee prior to the event
- The sponsoring department shall schedule the event in accordance with the “Regulations on the Use of University Facilities and Grounds.”
- Requests must be in writing and include:
  - Name of the campus organization making the request
  - Safety plans and waste management procedures.
  - Name and cell phone number of the contact person who will be in charge of the animal(s) during the event.
  - Name and cell phone number of the staff or faculty member who will be present during the event.
  - Specific location of the event (building and description of the physical space where it will be located).
  - Day and time of the event.
  - Purpose of the event, benefactors, and stakeholders.
  - Name and contact information for the owners/handlers of the animals.
- Requesters must agree to the following:
  - May utilize an outdoor space with a back-up plan for adverse weather, approved by Environmental Services for that location.
  - Not block pedestrian traffic-flow.
  - Pick up any waste or garbage during and following the event.
  - Ensure animals are attended to, are never left alone, and are on a leash, harness or otherwise under the control of the owner/handler at all times.
  - Provide a certificate of insurance for the animals.
  - Maintain documented approval from the director or department chair, college/unit, and Business and Finance
  - Maintain presence of a University employee who is sponsoring the organization/event and who will serve as a responsible party during the entirety of the event.

## Definitions

- **Assistance Animal:** Includes ESAs, provides support for a disability but does not require training.
- **Emotional Support Animal (ESA):** An animal providing emotional support alleviating symptoms of a mental health condition.
- **Pet:** A non-assistance animal kept for companionship or pleasure.
- **Service Animal:** A dog or miniature horse trained to perform tasks for an individual with a disability.
- **Therapy Animal:** Therapy animals are uniquely trained cats or dogs that participate in animal-assisted interventions such as animal assisted therapy, education, and activities. The trained handler partners with a trained therapy animal, working as a team, to assist other people.

## Additional Contacts

Contact	Phone	Email
ADA/504 Coordinator	402.554.2120	civilrights@unomaha.edu
Accessibility Services Center	402.554.2872	unoaccessibility@unomaha.edu
Business and Finance	402.554.2621	ckirchner@unomaha.edu
UNO Reservations	402.554.3301	unoreservations@unomaha.edu
Environmental Services	402.554.3600	unofacilities@unomaha.edu

UNO Police and Public Safety	402.554.2648	unopublicsafety@unomaha.edu
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## Forms

[Pet Therapy Program Agreement](#)

## Related Information

[University of Nebraska at Omaha Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee \(IACUC\)](#)

[UNO Campus Policy: Accessibility and Compliance with Disability Accommodation Laws](#)

[University of Nebraska Board of Regents Policy 3.1.2: Accessibility and Compliance with the Disability Accommodation Laws](#)

[University of Nebraska at Omaha Notice of Nondiscrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Non-Retaliation](#)

[Regulations on the Use of University Facilities and Grounds](#)

## History

This is a new draft policy

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