



**Policy Number and Chapter:** 04.026 Administration

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**Policy Title:** Animals On Campus

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**Policy Statement.** The University of North Texas (UNT) is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for students, faculty, staff and visitors by managing the presence of animals on university property and in its facilities, while providing people with disabilities who use service and comfort animals the opportunity to receive the benefit of the tasks these animals provide or the therapeutic support they offer in accordance with the requirements of federal law.

**Application.** Students, faculty, staff, and visitors. This policy does not apply to animals used by law enforcement officers in the carrying out of their duties.

**Definitions.**

1. **Accommodations.** “Accommodations” means reasonable modifications or adjustments to the tasks, environment or the way things are usually done that enables individuals with disabilities to have an equal opportunity to participate in an academic program or job responsibilities. Broad categories of accommodations include changes to the application process to ensure equal opportunity to apply for program enrollment, changes to a position or workplace that will enable an employee to do their job, changes that enable a student with a disability to perform the essential functions of the academic program, or changes that enable a student with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of the program.
2. **Animal Exhibit.** “Animal Exhibit” means the display or use of a live animal in a public setting on university property for the purpose of entertainment, marketing, performance, presentation, or for purposes other than those defined by UNT policy.
3. **Comfort Animal.** “Comfort Animal” (also referred to as “Emotional Support Animal”) means an animal that provides emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship and that a health care provider has recommended as an accommodation for a student with a disability. The comfort provided by these animals does not constitute work or tasks and comfort animals are not service animals for purposes of this policy.
4. **Employee.** “Employee” means an individual holding a position with a non-student title, including staff, faculty, professional librarians, and employees under contract.
5. **Owner.** “Owner” means an individual with a disability who is the owner and user, or trainer of a service animal or comfort animal, or the owner or individual bringing an animal onto university property.
6. **Person with a disability.** “Person with a disability” means a person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities; who has a record of such impairment; or who is regarded as having such an impairment.

7. Pet. “Pet” means a domesticated or tamed animal that is kept as a companion. On-campus residents are not permitted to keep pets, other than fish, in university residence halls.
8. Service Animal. “Service animal” means a dog, or in rare situations, a miniature horse that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.
9. Student. “Student” means an individual who has applied for admission or readmission to the university; who is registered or enrolled in one or more courses for credit at the university; or who currently is not enrolled but has a continuing academic relationship with the university.
10. Therapy Animal. “Therapy Animal” means a dog that holds a current registration or certification, is on an animal-assisted therapy team with a qualified university employee and is being used in an official university program or service for a university purpose.

## **Procedures and Responsibilities.**

### **I. Service Animals.**

- A. **Access.** Service animals are allowed in university buildings, classrooms, residence halls, dining areas, recreational facilities, meetings, activities and events when accompanied by a person with a disability and the service animal is trained to provide, and does provide, a specific service to that person that is directly related to the person’s disability.
  1. Service animals may not be permitted if the animal poses a substantial and direct threat to the health or safety of others or when the animal’s presence will require a substantial alteration to the nature of a university program or service.
  2. The accompaniment of a person with a disability by a service animal in a location with health and safety restrictions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the appropriate department representative(s) in collaboration with the Department of Human Resources or the Office of Disability Access.
  3. A person with a disability will be limited to one service animal unless an additional animal is necessary to provide reasonable accommodation.
  4. Service animals in training that are accompanied by an approved trainer are allowed the same access to the university as fully trained service dogs, except, animals in training are not permitted to reside in university residence halls.
  5. University Residence Halls. A student with a service animal who intends to reside on campus with the animal, must notify the Department of Housing and Residence Life of the need for a service animal’s presence in advance of beginning residency. Such

notification allows the university to make appropriate arrangements and offer assistance prior to the student's arrival on campus.

**B. Inquiries Regarding Service Animals.** Individuals who are accompanied by a service animal must not be asked to identify the nature or extent of their disability. In regard to a service animal:

1. University officials will not inquire about the qualifications of a service animal when it is readily apparent that an animal is trained to do work or to perform a task for a person with a disability (*e.g.*, the dog is observed guiding an individual who is blind or has low vision, pulling a person's wheelchair, or providing assistance with stability or balance to a person with an observable mobility disability).
2. If it is not readily apparent that an animal is performing work or a task on behalf of an individual with a disability, university officials may only inquire:
  - a. Whether the animal is required because of a disability; and,
  - b. What work or task the animal has been trained to perform.
3. Individuals are not required to have a letter of accommodation to use a service animal at the university.
4. University officials will not require documentation of a service animal's certification, training or license as a service animal.

**Responsible Party:** Students, faculty, staff, and visitors

**C. Responsibilities of Service Animal Owner.**

1. Service animal owners are financially responsible for damage or injury to others caused by their animal, including clean-up and disposal of animal waste and replacement or repair of property, and must take appropriate precautions to prevent property damage and/or injury to others while on university property.
2. If a service animal is disruptive in the classroom, a university official may ask the owner and their animal to leave the premises immediately.
3. Service animals must be under the control of the owner at all times. Any service animal found unattended on university property may be seized by animal control officers or other authorized persons. Owners are responsible for any impound and/or license fees required to secure the release of their animals.
  - a. A service animal should be on a leash when not providing needed service.
  - b. To the extent possible the service animal should be unobtrusive to other individuals and the learning, living, working environment.
  - c. A service animal may not be left tied or tethered out of the presence of its owner.
  - d. Service animals shall not be permitted to block aisles or passageways or fire egress.
  - e. To the extent possible the owner should ensure that the animal does not sniff people, dining tables or the personal belongings of others.
4. The cost of care, arrangements and well-being of a service animal are the sole responsibility of the owner including keeping the animal free from fleas and ticks or other pests that may cause infestation.

5. Cleaning up after a service animal is the sole responsibility of the owner. In the event that the owner is not physically able to clean up after a service animal, the owner must delegate this responsibility to another individual who is capable of meeting this requirement at the owner's expense.
6. The service animal owner is responsible for complying with any relevant city, county, and/or state license and leash laws while the service animal is on university premises.

**D. Exceptions and Interpretations.** Exceptions and interpretations related to section I of this policy (Service Animals) shall be made by the Vice President for Institutional Equity and Diversity or their designee.

**Responsible Party:** Owner of Service Animal

## **II. Comfort Animals.**

- A. **Access.** No comfort animal will be permitted in university housing without express prior approval from the Office of Disability Access and Department of Housing and Residence Life.
1. Approved comfort animals must be contained within the campus housing room of the owner, except when transported outside the residential area in an animal carrier or controlled on a leash or harness.
  2. A comfort animal is not permitted to accompany a university employee into his or her workplace, or any other university building, unless that building is the employee's assigned university residence.
  3. A comfort animal will be an unreasonable accommodation if the comfort animal presents an undue financial or administrative burden on the university, poses a substantial and direct threat to personal or public safety or constitutes a fundamental alteration of the nature of a service or program of the university.

**Responsible Party:** Office of Disability Access, Department of Housing and Residence Life, and Person with Disability

- B. **Requests for Comfort Animals.** Requests for accommodation with a comfort animal shall be made through the Office of Disability Access. Non-student employees who are required to live on campus as a condition of their employment will file their requests with Human Resources.
1. The approval process will require, in addition to other information,
    - a. Current and appropriate documentation from a physician or licensed mental health professional that:
      - i. verifies the student is a person with a disability;
      - ii. describes how the animal assists the individual; and
      - iii. shows the relationship between the individual's disability and the need for the assistance.
    - b. Veterinary records or other evidence acceptable to the Office of Disability Access verifying that the animal is in good health and is current with respect to all vaccinations, medications, or other health-related matters required or recommended by veterinarians regarding the breed or type of animal in question.

This includes verification of monthly flea prevention treatment for the animal as appropriate.

2. Students living in university housing will be permitted only one comfort animal at a time.
3. The approved comfort animal is allowed in university housing only as long as it is necessary for the resident's disability.
4. Comfort animal approval is for a specific animal; therefore, a student must request approval for a replacement animal if necessary. If an animal begins residency in a university residence hall prior to approval of the Office of Disability Access and the Department of Housing and Residence Life, the university may request the owner remove the animal from campus within 48 hours of notification. If the animal is not removed as requested university authorities may consider the animal a trespasser and contact the appropriate City of Denton authorities to remove the animal from campus. Any costs associated with removal of the animal from UNT property is the responsibility of the animal's owner.
5. Appeal of a denied request for a comfort animal may be made by filing an appeal with the Office of Equal Opportunity.

**Responsible Party:** Office of Disability Access, the Department of Housing and Residence Life, Office of Equal Opportunity, and student with disability

**C. Comfort Animal Requirements.**

1. **Vaccinations.** Comfort animals must have required vaccinations or license pursuant to local law. Dogs must wear a rabies vaccination tag.
2. **Licensing.** The owner must abide by current city, county and state ordinances, laws, and/or regulations pertaining to the licensing, vaccination, and other requirements of animal ownership applicable to the owner's species of comfort animal. It is the owner's responsibility to know and understand all applicable ordinances, laws, and regulations in addition to university policies applicable to their comfort animal. The university has the right to request documentation of compliance with such ordinances, laws and/or regulations, which may include presentation of vaccination certificate(s), registration or licensing documentation.
3. **Types of Animals:** Generally, dogs and cats are commonly requested as comfort animals; although other animals may serve in this capacity. For the health and safety of residents, the university is not required to grant non-domesticated or unique animals such as snakes, reptiles, barnyards animals, moneys, spiders, or other insects as reasonable accommodations.
4. **Age.** Comfort animals must be at least six months of age.
5. **Documentation.** The university reserves the right to require updated veterinary records or other evidence of the health of the animal at any time.
6. **Annual Verification.** Completion and submission of forms with accompanying records to verify current subscription for comfort animal and vaccination and good health of the comfort animal must be provided prior to each fall term of residence to the Department of Housing and Residence Life. No comfort animal will be permitted in university housing without annual submission of the above described documents.

If the animal is returned to campus without submission of the appropriate documentation to the Department of Housing and Residence Life, the university may request the owner remove the animal from campus within 48 hours of notification. If the animal is not removed as requested, university authorities may consider the animal a trespasser and contact the appropriate City of Denton authorities to remove the animal from campus. Any costs associated with removal of the animal from UNT property are the responsibility of the animal's owner.

7. **Factors for Consideration for Comfort Animals.** To ensure that the presence of a comfort animal does not pose an undue hardship or fundamentally alter the living environment, and to make housing assignments for individuals approved to use comfort animals, the university will consider appropriate factors including the following:
- a. Whether the size of the animal is appropriate to the available assigned housing space.
  - b. Whether the animal's presence would force another student from individual housing (*e.g.*, serious allergies).
  - c. Whether the animal exhibits aggressiveness or makes excessive noise, such that its presence jeopardizes other individuals' rights to peace and quiet enjoyment of the residence hall.
  - d. Whether the animal is housebroken and has required vaccinations or licenses pursuant to local law.
  - e. Whether the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or potential transmission of zoonotic diseases exist that cannot be effectively mitigated.
  - f. Whether the animal threatens to cause or historically has caused substantial damage to the property of others, including to the university.
  - g. Whether use of the comfort animal would place an undue hardship or burden upon the university.
  - h. Whether the presence of the comfort animal will fundamentally alter the living environment.
  - i. Whether the presence of the comfort animal would result in activities that are in violation of Housing community policies or procedures.

**Responsible Party:** Owner of an approved comfort animal

- D. Responsibilities of Comfort Animal Owner.** The owner of a comfort animal approved as an accommodation in a university residence hall must:
1. Abide by all Housing and Residence Life policies. The owner is responsible for assuring that the comfort animal does not interfere with the operation of the residence hall, cause undue difficulties for other residents, or fundamentally alter the living environment.
  2. Assume full responsibility for cleaning up after a comfort animal, including disposal of all animal waste in accordance with guidelines established by the Department of Housing and Residence Life and not allow odor, noise, or other animal behavior to disturb other residence hall residents.
  3. Assume full financial responsibility for damage or injury caused by the comfort animal, including but not limited to replacement of furniture, carpet, windows and

wall covering. Expenses related to property damage will be charged at the time of repair or move-out.

4. Assume full financial responsibility for any expense incurred for cleaning above and beyond a standard cleaning, and for any costs related to pest control or pest mitigation.
5. Assume full financial responsibility for the cost of care, arrangements and well-being of the comfort animal.
6. Provide for the supervision of the comfort animal when the owner will be away for more than a reasonable time period, as determined by the appropriate university staff based on the totality of the circumstances. Comfort animals may not be left in the care of another resident for extended time periods. Animals must leave campus during all university breaks if the student leaves campus.
7. Notify the Office of Disability Access and Housing and Residence Life Office if the comfort animal is no longer needed or is no longer occupying university housing with the resident.

**E. Exceptions and Interpretations.** Exceptions and interpretations related to Section II of this policy (Comfort Animals) shall be made by the Vice President for Student Affairs or their designee.

**Responsible Party:** Owner of an approved comfort animal, university authority

### **III. Therapy Animals.**

#### **A. Therapy animals:**

1. are only allowed on campus for clinical, outreach, and educational purpose;
2. are only permitted in the UNT Counseling Center, UNT College of Education Consortium for Animal Assisted Therapy, or locations approved by UNT Risk Management Services (RMS);
3. must always be accompanied by a qualified handler. The handler is solely responsible for maintaining control of the animal and ensuring it is not used around persons who have contraindication to the presence of animals (*e.g.*, allergies, fear of animals, religious beliefs); and
4. if used on campus for educational purposes, must comply with UNT Policy 13.001, Animal Care and Use.

**Responsible Party:** Risk Management Services, Counseling Center

### **IV. Pets.**

Pets are permitted on campus grounds if the animal is under the direct control of a responsible person and restrained by a leash that does not exceed 6 feet in length, or is in an appropriate animal carrier, crate, cage or kennel. Pets are not allowed in campus buildings or any portion of buildings where campus business is being conducted, including residence halls, except as approved by the Department of Housing and Residence Life.

### **V. Animal Exhibits.**

Live animal exhibits are permitted on campus for purposes as defined in this policy. A live animal exhibit must be sponsored by a university department, approved by the Vice President of the sponsoring unit, and approved by Risk Management Services. A written request to bring a live animal exhibit onto university property must be submitted to Risk Management Services at least ten (10) business days prior to the date of the exhibit.

**VI. Animal Removal.** The university may request an owner remove service animals, comfort animals, or pets from campus for reasons that include but are not limited to the following:

- A. **Failure to properly control the animal:** The owner does not or cannot take effective action to control the animal. Improper animal behaviors that should be controlled include but are not limited to barking, growling, nipping, snapping, biting, lunging or jumping at people or other animals. The owner of an animal deemed to be out of control may be prohibited from bringing the service animal onto university property. Comfort animals meeting these criteria may be excluded from university residence halls until the owner can demonstrate that they have taken significant steps to mitigate the behavior.
- B. **Non-Housebroken Animal:** The animal is not housebroken (*i.e.*, trained so that it controls its waste elimination).
- C. **Animal Care:** It is determined by university officials that the animal's owner has failed to properly care for the animal. An owner must ensure that the animal, and its environment, are maintained in a healthy, clean manner. Instances of suspected abuse of an animal will be referred to the Dean of Students, the Office of Human Resources or other appropriate authority.
- D. **Direct Threat:** The animal is determined to be a substantial and direct threat to the health and safety of individuals. A direct threat may be based upon the poor health or hygiene of the animal, the behavior of the animal, or the presence of an animal in a sensitive area such as certain laboratories or mechanical or industrial areas.
- E. **Fundamental Alteration:** The presence of an animal fundamentally alters a university program by requiring a significant alteration to the essential nature of the services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations offered.
- F. **Damage or Harm:** The animal causes damage or harm to persons or property.
- G. **Responsibilities:** The owner violates any of the responsibilities outlined in UNT policy.

**VII. Conflicting Disabilities.**

In circumstances where the presence of a service animal or comfort animal in university housing may substantially impair another individual's physical or mental wellbeing, such as but not limited to allergies or phobias, the university will consider the needs of both persons in meeting its obligations to reasonably accommodate all disabilities and to resolve the problem as efficiently and expeditiously as possible. Conflicting disabilities involving students should be referred to the Office of Disability Access. Conflicts involving employees should be referred to Human Resources.



**VIII. Appeals and Grievances.**

Any individual who feels that they have been improperly denied the ability to bring or maintain an animal on university property, may file an appeal with the university ADA Coordinator within the Office of Equal Opportunity at [oeo@unt.edu](mailto:oeo@unt.edu) or (940) 565-2759 or refer to [OEO Web Site](#) for further information.

**References and Cross-references.**

UNT Policy 05.033, Staff Employee Discipline and Involuntary Termination

UNT Policy 06.025, Faculty Misconduct and Discipline

UNT Policy 13.001, Animal Care and Use

[City of Denton Department of Animal Services](#)

**Forms and Tools.**

Process for a Comfort Animal in Campus Housing

[UNT Housing Handbook](#)

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| <b>Policy Contact:</b> | Elizabeth With |
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