



## **Service and Emotional Support Animals on Campus: What Students Who Have an Animal Should Know**

**What is the difference in a service animal and an emotional support animal?** **Service animals** (which, by law, can only be a dog or miniature horse) are *trained to perform a specific task(s) to assist a person with a disability*. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair or alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure. An **emotional support animal** (ESA) is a *companion animal* that a medical professional has determined *provides benefit for an individual* with a disability, it typically does not perform specific tasks.

### **SERVICE ANIMALS:**

- Service animals are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and are allowed in public places, such as classrooms. **However, service animals can be removed if they are causing a disturbance or are not housebroken.** Working service animals are the only type of animal allowed in public places. Playing with the animal is considered disruptive behavior. If you have been asked by UWG staff or faculty to remove an animal that is disruptive, you are expected to comply. If you fail to comply, UWG Police may be called.
- **If you live in a residence hall with a service animal, for your safety, and the safety of the community, you are expected to document your disability with Accessibility Services.** See the Accessibility Services website at [www.westga.edu/accessibility](http://www.westga.edu/accessibility) for documentation forms and guidelines. Registration certificates available for purchase through various websites DO NOT constitute appropriate documentation, and are often a scam. You will also be expected to meet with Housing and Residence Life to discuss the policies concerning having an animal in residence. Accessibility Services will provide the information for the appropriate person to contact in Housing.

- **You are strongly encouraged to register your service animal with Accessibility Services.** If a service animal has been registered with Accessibility Services, the animal will be provided with an ID card and the service animal will be listed on the student's Student Accommodation Report (SAR). For more information about the process, please visit the Accessibility Services website.

### **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS (ESA):**

- **ESAs are only allowed in residence halls** with the approval of Housing and Residence Life and the support of Accessibility Services. ESAs are not trained to the level of service animals and are not allowed in classrooms or other building on campus.
- **To acquire approval for your ESA in the residence hall you will first provide documentation to Accessibility Services.** See the Accessibility Services website at [www.westga.edu/accessibility](http://www.westga.edu/accessibility) for documentation forms and guidelines. Registration certificates available for purchase through various websites DO NOT constitute appropriate documentation, and are often a scam. Documentation will need to verify your diagnosis and include information from your care provider concerning your need for an ESA.
- **Once you provide documentation then you will schedule an appointment to discuss your need for an ESA with an accessibility counselor.** The counselor will then communicate to Housing and Residence Life if the request is supported.
- **If the request is supported by Accessibility Services, you will then need to schedule an appointment with Housing and Residence Life to discuss the policies concerning having an animal in residence.** The accessibility counselor will provide the information for the appropriate person to contact in Housing.
- **ESAs ARE NOT allowed in classrooms or other public buildings on campus.** ESAs are protected by the Fair Housing Act which allows them to live in campus residence halls with the appropriate documentation and approval. ESAs are not protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and therefore may not access classrooms, labs, and other buildings.