

POLICY:	Animals on Campus
Effective Date:	November 2018
Updated:	July 2019, November 2020, August 2024
Next Review Date:	August 2026
Approving Body:	President and Vice-Chancellor
Sponsor/Contact:	Human Resources
Applies to:	Faculty, Staff, Students and Public

Introduction

The Animals on Campus Policy was developed to help ensure the health and safety of all members of the St. Thomas University community and to outline appropriate processes to follow for individuals wishing to bring an animal on campus.

Specifically, the Policy is intended to:

- reduce the risk of adverse health concerns to individuals;
- help ensure the adequate care and safety of animals on campus;
- reduce indoor air quality concerns;
- maintain the cleanliness of the buildings;
- reduce anxiety people may have towards animals while on campus; and
- provide the application/approval process to be followed with respect to requests for a Disability Support Animal or a Therapy Animal on campus.

Scope

The Policy applies to the entire St. Thomas University campus. This includes inside of buildings, campus grounds, and student residences.

Policy Statement

Animals are not permitted inside any buildings on campus unless approval has been granted in accordance with this Policy.

Definitions

Disability Support Animal – An animal that is required as part of an accommodation plan for a diagnosed disability. These animals can fall into two general categories:

- A service animal or guide dog, which has been trained to perform specific tasks in order to provide assistance to a person with a disability for that disability. While service animals are often associated with people who have visual impairments, they are used to assist with a number of physical and mental disabilities.
- An emotional support animal, which provides emotional support or comfort that alleviates one or more symptoms of a person's disability and is necessary for an individual's equal opportunity to participate in the university.

Therapy Animal – An animal that provides comfort to an individual who is not the animal's owner or caretaker. The use of Therapy Animals is most often associated with a specific event or session held on campus.

General Information Regarding Animals on Campus

Animals on Campus Grounds (Outside of Buildings)

Faculty, staff, students and members of the public bringing their animals on campus grounds (i.e., outside of buildings on campus) must adhere to the following conditions:

- animals are not to be tied up outside on campus;
- animals are not to roam free while on the grounds of the University;
- animals must be accompanied and restrained at all times either on a leash or in a portable cage; and
- the animals' owners are to adhere to all City of Fredericton by-laws including clean-up of waste.

General Information Regarding Disability Support Animals

The University will accommodate a person who requires a Disability Support Animal, unless doing so would result in undue hardship for the University. What constitutes undue hardship will depend on the specific circumstances. The University will consider both the needs of a person relying on a Disability Support Animal and other members of the University community who may be unable to be near the animal due to an allergy or phobia, and will attempt to find a balance. In some cases, it may be reasonable to limit a Disability Support Animal's access to some parts of the University for health reasons or a need to maintain a sterile environment (e.g. a food preparation area).

The University encourages an individual to identify their Disability Support Animal as such by using a special harness or vest. However, a special harness or vest is not required for the animal to be considered a Disability Support Animal and the University respects an individual's right to keep the fact that the animal is a Disability Support Animal from those who do not have a need to know.

No one should interact with a Disability Support Animal unless the animal's handler gives their approval. A distracted Disability Support Animal is unable to provide assistance for the person relying on the animal for a physical or mental disability.

It is important to note that if the animal is clearly identified as a Disability Support Animal, it is not appropriate for members of the University community (other than those involved in the approval process) to attempt to clarify the person's need for a Disability Support Animal or the function the animal performs. University representatives may request confirmation from the appropriate approving office (HR for faculty/staff, and Student Accessibility Services for students) on whether an animal's owner has been granted approval to have the animal in a University building.

A person relying on a Disability Support Animal has an obligation to maintain control of the animal. More specifically and where applicable, a Disability Support Animal must be under the care and control of their handler at all times (e.g., harnessed, leashed, caged, or tethered) unless doing so interferes with the work or task that it performs. In such cases, the person may apply for an exception to this requirement. In cases where an exception has been granted to the requirement that a person maintain physical control of an animal, the person must maintain control of the animal through another means approved by the University. The University may ask a person with a Disability Support Animal to remove the Disability Support Animal from the building or the St. Thomas University campus if it is deemed that the animal poses a risk to other students and/or faculty and staff members.

General Information Regarding Therapy Animals

Approval may be granted to bring a Therapy Animal to specific events or sessions. In such cases, the organizer must demonstrate that proper steps have been taken concerning liability insurance, allergies, and post-event cleaning. Approval will only be granted for a specific event or session and is not to be interpreted as on-going or long-term approval.

Approval Process

Approval Process for Disability Support Animals

Step 1 – Complete the Physician Statement Form and submit to the appropriate Office (see below). A person who is seeking accommodation for a Disability Support Animal has an obligation to respond to reasonable inquiries about the function the animal performs. To initiate this process:

Students, please contact Student Accessibility Services.

Faculty and staff, please contact the Director of Human Resources.

The office responsible for processing the accommodation request will consult with other units as necessary to explore possible accommodations, gain necessary approvals, and/or develop an accommodation plan.

A person with a Disability Support Animal is not required to disclose a diagnosis of their medical condition. Medical documentation only needs to indicate that the person has a disability and requires the use of a Disability Support Animal.

Step 2 – Upon receipt and acceptance by the appropriate Office of a duly completed Physician Statement Form, that office will then take steps to identify potential conflicts that may arise due to a disability support animal's presence on campus, including allergies and phobias of others who share the space. If such conflicts are identified, then attempts will be made to develop a mitigation plan which will balance the rights of all involved.

Step 3 – The appropriate Office will then work with the individual to complete an accommodation plan which includes signing a contract. The contract outlines the responsibilities of the animal's owner including treatment of the animal, upkeep, and rules that must be followed.

Approval Process for Therapy Animals

Faculty, staff, and/or students seeking approval to have a Therapy Animal inside a building on campus must contact the Director of Facilities Management to initiate the application process.

Note – The Animals on Campus Policy was developed with the assistance of resources available from the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission (e.g. Guideline on Accommodating People with Service Animals).