

## **GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE ANIMAL POLICY**

Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Institute of Technology) is committed to making reasonable modifications to its rules, policies, and practices as required by law to afford people with disabilities an equal opportunity to access its programs, services, and activities.

### **PETS**

A "pet" is any animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. Pets, with the sole exception of harmless aquatic fish in aquariums of 10 gallons or less, are prohibited indoors in the Georgia Institute of Technology Department of Housing's residence halls. Assistance animals (Service and Emotional Support Animals), as defined below, are not considered pets.

### **ASSISTANCE ANIMALS**

This policy applies to assistance animals that may be used by individuals with disabilities. The term "assistance animal" is the overarching term that refers to both Service Animals as well as Emotional Support Animals as defined below. Therefore, an assistance animal is an animal that either (1) works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability; or (2) provides emotional or other type of support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability.

### **GUIDELINES FOR GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY HOUSING COMMUNITY**

To ensure equal access and nondiscrimination of people with disabilities, members of the Georgia Institute of Technology community shall follow the below mentioned practices:

- Allow Assistance animals to accompany people with disabilities on campus, in appropriate places as specified below;
- Do not ask for details about a person's disabilities;
- Do not deliberately startle, tease, or taunt an Assistance Animal; and
- Do not separate or attempt to separate a person from his/her Assistance animal.

If you have a disability that may be affected by the presence of animals, please contact the Office of Disability Services. Georgia Institute of Technology is committed to ensuring that the needs of all people with disabilities are met and will determine how to resolve any conflicts or problems as expeditiously as possible.

### **SERVICE ANIMALS**

A "service animal" means any animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a Service Animal must be directly related to the person's disability. Examples of such work or tasks conducted by a Service Animal include but are not limited to:

- Guiding people who are blind
- Alerting people who are deaf
- Alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure
- Reminding a person with a mental illness to take prescribed medications
- Calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack
- Do not pet a Service Animal, as it distracts the animal from its work;

The provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship does not constitute work or tasks for the purpose of this definition. Species other than dogs or, in some cases, miniature horses, are not considered Service Animals for the purpose of this definition of a Service Animal.

Service Animals will be permitted to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of Georgia Institute of Technology's campus and facilities, including Housing, where students, members of the public, and other participants in services, programs or activities are allowed to go. Georgia Institute of Technology Department of Housing does not require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a Service Animal. Additionally, Georgia Institute of Technology cannot ask about the nature or extent of a person's disability to determine whether a person's animal qualifies as a Service Animal.

However, when it is not readily apparent that a dog is a Service Animal, Georgia Institute of Technology staff may make two inquiries to determine whether the dog qualifies as a Service Animal, which are:

- (1) Is the dog required because of a disability?
- (2) What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

A Service Animal which resides in the Georgia Institute of Technology Department of Housing residence hall must be housebroken (i.e., trained so that it controls its waste elimination, absent of illness or accident) and must be kept under control by a harness, leash, or other tether, unless the person is unable to hold those, or such use would interfere with the Service Animal's performance of work or tasks. In such instances, the Service Animal must be kept under control by voice, signals, or other effective means. Georgia Institute of Technology Assistance Animal Review Committee will assess requests for the use of animals by people with disabilities on a case - by - case basis. Requests should be submitted to the Georgia Institute of Technology Office of Disability Services and, consistent with applicable laws, Georgia Institute of Technology may make modifications in its policies to permit their use if they meet certain criteria and have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of people with disabilities.

## **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS**

An "Emotional Support Animal" is an animal that provides emotional or other support that ameliorates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Unlike Service Animals, Emotional Support Animals are not required to be trained to perform work or tasks, and they include species other than dogs. Only one Emotional Support Animal is allowed per student.

Emotional Support Animals must be at least one year old and weigh 40lbs or less. Dog breed restrictions include Pit bulls, Akitas, German Shepherd, Doberman Pinschers, Rottweilers, Huskies, Chow Chow or any wolf hybrid.

Emotional Support Animals are not allowed to accompany persons with disabilities in all public areas of Georgia Institute of Technology's campus and facilities, including Housing, as a Service Animal is allowed to do, but an Emotional Support Animal may reside in the student's room, but not in common space or hallways. Before an Emotional Support Animal can move into Georgia Institute of Technology Housing with a person with a disability, the Student must self-identify and provide the appropriate documentation to Georgia Institute of Technology's Office of Disability Services. The Student must also complete the "Accommodation Request due to a Disability" step in the online Housing application. The Assistance Animal Review Committee meets to review online applications for Assistance Animals for Fall in July, for Spring in November, and Summer in April. Online applications received after the review period will be considered for the following semester. The Assistance Animal Review Committee requires documentation from a licensed psychiatrist or psychologist, to provide sufficient information for Georgia Institute of Technology Assistance Animal Review Committee to determine: (1) that the individual qualifies as a person with a disability (i.e., has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities); and (2) that the Emotional Support Animal may be necessary to afford the person with a disability an opportunity to use and enjoy Georgia Institute of Technology Housing (i.e. that the animal would provide emotional support that would improve one or more symptoms or effects of the disability). Emotional Support Animals are not allowed indoors on Georgia Institute of Technology's campus other than in the student's room.

Emotional Support Animal application process begins with the Student completing an online housing application and selecting the step "Accommodation Request due to a Disability". The steps must be completed, and the documentation uploaded:

- The annual proof of Fulton County Animal Licensing for Dogs, Cats, and Ferrets. All other Emotional Support Approved Animals require an annual clean bill of health from a licensed Veterinarian
- Proof of Liability Insurance coverage for the approved Emotional Support Animal
- Certificate of Vaccination and Health for Animal Accommodations
- Recent picture of Emotional Support Animal

You will also be asked that you have read and agreed to the terms of the Georgia Institute of Technology Department of Housing Service and Emotional Support Animal: Student's Responsibilities and Guidelines Agreement. If your request is approved, you and your roommates will be required to sign the Georgia Institute of Technology Department of Housing Service and Emotional Support Animal Roommate Agreement.

Approved Emotional Support Animals must be accepted by all roommates since a student's right to occupy their room/apartment without the presence of an animal shall take precedence over the right of the roommate to have an approved Emotional Support Animal. In the event no suitable rooms are available, Department of Housing reserves the right to terminate the Georgia Institute

of Technology Department of housing contract at the discretion of the Assistant Vice President & Executive Director of Housing.

Under no circumstances should an Emotional Support Animal be on campus in or around residence halls unless approved and in possession of the designated Georgia Institute of Technology Department of Housing Approved Assistance Animal Identification Card.

## **GUIDE AND HEARING TRAINEES**

Georgia law allows animals that are being trained to be dog guides for the blind, hearing assistance dogs, or assistance animals for persons with physical impairments to access Georgia Institute of Technology facilities, however, they are not allowed to reside in Georgia Institute of Technology Department of Housing.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES USING ASSISTANCE ANIMALS**

Georgia Institute of Technology is not responsible for the care or supervision of assistance animals. People with disabilities are responsible for the cost, care, and supervision of assistance animals, including: (1) compliance with any laws pertaining to animal licensing, vaccination, and owner identification; (2) keeping the animal under control and taking effective action when it is out of control; and (3) feeding and walking the animal, and disposing of its waste.

The Student must allow the approved assistance animal to rid itself of waste in the areas designated by the Department of Housing. The Student is responsible for ensuring clean up of the approved animal's waste. Waste disposal via plumbing is prohibited in Georgia Institute of Technology Department of Housing residence halls or apartments. Only service animals are permitted in North Avenue Apartments and the waste must be double bagged and placed in the outside trash receptacle. All waste matter including indoor animal litter and bedding, must be placed in a sturdy plastic bag and securely tied up before being disposed of in outside trash dumpsters. Litter boxes and cages should be placed on mats so that waste is not tracked onto carpeted surfaces. Failure to clean up after the assistance animal will result in fines and is subject to termination of the Georgia Institute of Technology Department of Housing Contract. Georgia Institute of Technology will not require any surcharges or fees for assistance animals. However, a person with a disability may be charged for damage caused by an assistance animal to the same extent that the Department of Housing would normally charge a person for the damage they cause. People with disabilities who are accompanied by assistance animals must comply with the same Department of Housing rules regarding noise, safety, disruption, and cleanliness as people without disabilities.

## **EXCEPTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS**

Georgia Institute of Technology may pose some restrictions on, and may even exclude an assistance animal in certain instances. As noted above, Emotional Support Animals are not allowed indoors on Georgia Institute of Technology's campus other than in the student's assigned Department of Housing residence hall. Persons with disabilities may request approval from the Office of Disability Services to have the Emotional Support Animal accompany them to other campus areas as a reasonable accommodation. Such requests will be considered on a case – by – case basis consistent with applicable laws.

Any animal may be excluded from an area in which it was previously authorized to be if; the animal is out of control and effective action is not taken to control it; the animal is not housebroken, or in the case of a support animal that deposits waste in a designated cage or litter box, the owner fails to clean such cage or box daily such that the cleanliness of the room is not maintained; or it poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be mitigated by reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures, or the provision of auxiliary aids or services. In considering whether an assistance animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, Georgia Institute of Technology Assistance Animal Review Committee will make an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment, current medical knowledge, or the best available objective evidence, to determine: (1) the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; (2) the probability that the potential injury will actually occur; and (3) whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, procedures, or the provision of auxiliary aids or services, will mitigate the risk. The Director of Compliance shall provide a written statement of explanation to any person with a disability if a determination is made that the presence of that person's assistance animal would fundamentally alter the nature of a program, service, or activity. In the event that restriction or removal of an assistance animal is determined to be necessary, the person with a disability will still be given the opportunity to participate in the service, program, or activity without having the assistance animal present. The above provisions on restrictions and exclusions are not intended to cover modification to reasonable accommodations. The reasonable accommodation process and modifications are covered by ADA Compliance Guide Section 504.