I. PURPOSE & INTENT

This policy is designed to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the University of South Florida System (USF System) students, faculty, staff and the general public.

II. STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. All animals brought on to any USF System campus property must be under physical restraint. The animals must be under the complete control of and physically restrained by the owner/responsible party who is also responsible for ensuring the animal is safe and healthy.

B. Pet animals are to remain only on public places lawns and walking routes on campus and are not permitted in University patio areas adjacent to swim facilities, in spectator areas or recreational fields or facilities, such as racquet-ball and tennis courts, in dining or residence halls, inside USF System buildings, or at special events, except as provided in Section V, Exceptions.

C. The USF System will follow all federal and state laws with regard to accommodations.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

A. Approved Animal: The Office of Students with Disabilities Services (SDS) or Human Resources has determined the person with a disability has established their eligibility for reasonable accommodation and the animal's qualifications as a "Service or Assistance" Animal. The animal is an Approved Accommodation for the Eligible Person under the applicable laws.
B. Assistance Animals: As defined by The Fair Housing Act, Assistance Animals are animals that work, provide assistance, or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or animals that provide emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person’s disability. Assistance Animals perform many disability-related functions, including but not limited to guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue assistance, pulling a wheelchair, fetching items, alerting persons to impending seizures, or providing emotional support to persons with disabilities who have a disability-related need for such support. Some, but not all, animals that assist persons with disabilities are professionally trained. Other assistance animals are trained by the owners themselves and, in some cases, no special training is required. The question is whether or not the animal performs the assistance or provides the benefit needed as a reasonable accommodation by the person with the disability. Assistance Animals are not considered Service Animals and are not permitted in public spaces, classroom or work places.

C. Eligible Person: A person with a disability who because of a functional limitation of his/her disabiling condition requires a Service Animal to perform a task or function.

D. Emotional Support Animal: An animal whose sole function is to provide emotional support. Emotional support animals do not qualify as service animals under ADAAA and are not permitted on campus except to the extent the animals are considered Assistance Animals under the FHA as provided in Section (B) above.

E. Public Place – Areas on the University campus that are have no restricted access and open to the general public. Classrooms, employee office areas and residence hall require contractual arrangements with access permitted only within the terms of the contracts.

F. Responsible Party: Any person who owns the animal, brings the animal to campus, is training a service animal or is an Eligible Person as defined in section (C) above (there may be more than one Responsible Party and each or all may be held fully responsible for the animal). For SAIT the Responsible Party is the animal’s trainer and for Service Animals the Responsible Party is the Eligible Person as defined by this Policy.

G. Service Animal in Training: (SAIT) – A dog undergoing training by an approved trainer

B.A. Eligible Person: A person with a disability who because of a functional limitation of his/her disabling condition requires a Service Animal to perform a task or function.

H. Service Animal: As defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA), Service Animals are dogs or miniature horses that are individually trained to
do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service Animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task an animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability and must always be with and under the control of the Eligible Person. The Service Animal may not be left unattended. Animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADAAA.

C. Emotional Support Animal: An animal whose sole function is to provide emotional support. Emotional support animals do not qualify as service animals under ADAAA and are not permitted on campus except to the extent the animals are considered Assistance Animals under the FHA as provided in Section (E) below.

D. Assistance Animals: As defined by The Fair Housing Act, Assistance Animals are animals that work, provide assistance, or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or animals that provide emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person’s disability. Assistance animals perform many disability-related functions, including but not limited to guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue assistance, pulling a wheelchair, fetching items, alerting persons to impending seizures, or providing emotional support to persons with disabilities who have a disability-related need for such support. Some, but not all, animals that assist persons with disabilities are professionally trained. Other assistance animals are trained by the owners themselves and, in some cases, no special training is required. The question is whether or not the animal performs the assistance or provides the benefit needed as a reasonable accommodation by the person with the disability.

E. Approved Animal: The Office of Students with Disabilities Services (SDS) or Human Resources has determined the person with a disability has established their eligibility for reasonable accommodation and the animal’s qualifications as a "Service or Assistance" Animal. The animal is an Approved Accommodation for the Eligible Person individual under the applicable laws.

I. Therapy Animal: Therapy Animals are trained and registered by qualified Handlers/Responsible Parties who use the dogs for comfort and companionship and may be permitted on campus if (1) a dog is registered through Therapy Dogs International, Therapy Dogs Incorporated or Pet Partners and/or; (2) a dog is prescribed by a licensed Mental Health Professional, as a part of an ongoing psychotherapeutic
treatment or therapy program, and the individual provides the required specific documentation. Therapy Animals do not assist individuals with a disability to perform the activities of daily living and are not covered by statutes protecting and giving rights to Service Animals. An animal that is prescribed by a licensed Mental Health Professional as a part of an ongoing psychotherapeutic treatment or therapy program for the individual.

F. J. **University Official:** USF System Institution employees with responsibility for the administrative operations or maintenance of any area classroom or any USF System Institution properties.

G. **Work or Tasks** – Examples of Work or Tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service Animals are working animals, not pets. The Work or Task an animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. **Responsible Party:** Any person who owns the animal, brings the animal to campus, is training a service animal or is an Eligible Person as defined in section () above (there may be more than one Responsible Party and each or all may be held fully responsible for the animal). For SAIT the Responsible Party is the animal’s trainer and for Service Animals the Responsible Party is the Eligible Person as defined by this Policy.

K.

**III. IV. PROCESS STEPS/GENERAL GUIDELINES**

A. In parts of the campuses where animals may be permitted, such animals must be kept securely controlled by a harness or leash not to exceed ten (10) feet in length. Animals are not permitted to run at-large on any streets, unimproved lots or premises within the boundaries of USF System Institution properties. Animals should not be tethered and left unattended.

B. An animal left unattended in a vehicle or any other area is to be reported to the Police Department for appropriate response. A person who leaves an animal unattended may be prosecuted.

C. The owner or Responsible Party, who wishes to bring an animal on campus for a one time display or special circumstance approved by or at the request of
the USF System institutions, must comply with USF System regulations or policies. This approval may require a certificate of insurance and animal health certificates.

D. If an animal disrupts the University educational process, administrative processes, or other campus function, the owner or responsible party must remove the animal immediately. In addition, the owner or responsible party will be held liable for any damage to person or property caused by the animal’s presence on the property.

E. The Responsible Party must remove the animal immediately. In addition, the owner or responsible party will be held liable for any damage to person or property caused by the animal’s presence on the property.

F. The Responsible Party must clean up all animal waste and dispose of that waste in outdoor trash receptacles. Individuals unable to do so may request specific accommodations. Animal waste is not to be disposed of in indoor trash receptacles.

G. Wild or feral animals are to be left alone. In the event the wild or feral animals appear to be a threat to human safety or property, the facilities manager may take appropriate action.

V. EXCEPTIONS

Types of Animals with Exceptions: The following animals and specific instances are an exception to [II. B.] above as they are permitted on USF System Institution properties so long as they are under the complete control of and physically restrained by the Responsible Party owner/responsible party and/or maintained as provided below:

A. Assistance Animals are permitted on campus with approval from the Office of Housing and Residential Education and must be contained within the private residential area (room, suite, and/or apartment) of at all times except when transported outside the private residential area in an animal carrier or controlled by leash or harness. Assistance Animals are not permitted in public spaces, classrooms, or work places unless they also meet the definition of Service Animal as provided by law and as permitted as part of an accommodation as provided in this Policy.

B. Law Enforcement Animals: Animals used for law enforcement or investigations on campus.
C. **Research Animals**: Animals identified and approved for designated research-related activity.

D. **Service Animals** will be permitted in public spaces and classrooms. Service Animals must be accompanied by the Eligible Person at all times and must not be left unattended either on campus, in a residence hall or place of employment. Service Animals in Training (SAIT) are permitted in or on public places pursuant to §413.08, Florida Statute and must be with the Responsible Party (for SAIT the Responsible Party must be the person training the animal). To the extent any USF System Institution provides for additional access for SAIT to a USF System Institution property that access is limited to the property of that USF System Institution. Any Responsible Party must be aware of each USF System Institution’s Policies with regard to SAITs. A SAIT may not be left unattended and must be accompanied by the Responsible Party at all times while on any USF System Institution property. This is to be distinguished from an Assistance Animals which may be left alone in a residential hall.—

E. **Therapy Animals**: Therapy Animals used as a therapy tool may be permitted on campus for a therapy session if the therapy is an integral part of a treatment process as prescribed by a licensed mental health professional with specific documentation required. Therapy Animals do not assist individuals with a disability to perform the activities of daily living. They are not covered by statutes protecting and giving rights to service animals. Approval of the presence of a therapy animal falls within the authority of the USF System regarding accommodations to a disability or the counseling center. Therapy Animals are defined as animals with a good temperament and reliable, predictable behavior. Therapy Animals used as an accommodation normally will be permitted within campus housing areas for their periodic visits. This is in addition to other areas where University USF System Institution’s programs are offered, as identified by the requestor and will need to meet all requirements of a Service Animal.

F. **Special Events**: As specific special events or limited programs approved by the University may require animals on campus, individuals may request approval for a special event or exception to this Policy using the Event Request process or contacting Human Recourses or Student Disability Services to request exceptions or permission to bring animals on to campus for the purposes of limited programs including those for stress relief, educational programs or limited special presentations.

Guidelines for all Exceptions: Animals with Exceptions: The following guidelines are provided as referenced in [V.] above:

A. **Accommodation Requests**: The USF System is committed to compliance with state and federal laws regarding individuals with disabilities. Members of the University community who seek reasonable accommodation for disabilities should contact the
Office of Students with Disabilities Services (students), Human Resources (employees) or Diversity & Equal Opportunity (visitors).

B. **Approved Accommodations on Campus**: USF System Institution officials will determine, on a case-by-case basis, and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, whether such an animal meets the definition of Service or Assistance Animal and the terms of any is a reasonable accommodation on campus. In doing so, the USF System must balance the needs of the individual with the impact of animals on other campus patrons. Where it is not readily apparent that an animal is a Service Animal as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA), or an Assistance Animal under the Fair Housing Act (FHA), the USF System may require sufficient information and documentation to enable the Office of Students with Disabilities (SDS) (student requests) or Human Resources (employee requests) to establish eligibility for reasonable accommodations and the animal’s qualification as a Service or Assistance animal under the applicable laws.

C. **Registration**: The University encourages persons with Service Animals that will be on campus more than five (5) consecutive or non-consecutive days (within an academic year) to register with the USF System Institution as follows: Students register with Student Disability Services; employees register with Human Resources; and visitors may contact Diversity & Equal Opportunity. In the event the Service Animal is needed in classrooms, residence halls or offices not open to the general public, the Service Animal must be registered as an accommodation with the appropriate office. All Service Animals must meet the criteria set by those offices which may include documentation of current applicable immunizations and vaccinations; documentation of a clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian; and requirements that the animal display valid rabies vaccination tag and state and/or county license or registration. Registration must be complete 30 days prior to occupancy for residential student requests.

---**Verification of Animal Status**: To determine if an animal meets the Service Animal exception of this Policy. A USF System Institution official may ask two questions: (1) is the animal a Service Animal required because of a disability; and (2) what work or task has the animal been trained to perform? USF System Institution officials cannot ask about a person’s disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the animal, or ask that the animal demonstrate ability to perform the work or task described. However, if a person is requesting a specific accommodation that includes a service animal, the University may request appropriate documentation and medical verification to process the accommodation request.

C: D.
D.E. Behavior and Supervision: All animals including any of the animals falling in the Exceptions section of this Policy service animals must not be unruly or disruptive, be in ill health or unclean. An animal may be removed from USF System Institution property if the animal is a direct threat to the health and safety of others, or if the animal is disruptive or out of control. The USF System Institution may temporarily or permanently exclude any animal including any of those listed as Exceptions service animal at the discretion of the facilities manager, EH&S or emergency personnel.

E. Responsible Party Duties: The Responsible Party shall bear the full costs associated with any injury to persons, or damage to property, caused by a service animal and bear full liability for any action of the service animal.

F. Assistance Animals meeting the criteria of B1-B5 must be contained within the private residential area (room, suite, apartment) at all times, except when transported outside the private residential area in an animal carrier or controlled by leash or harness. Assistance Animals are not permitted in public spaces, nor classrooms, nor work places unless they also meet the definition of service animal as provided by law.

Service Animals meeting criteria B1-B5 will be permitted in public spaces and classrooms. The owner or trainer must be with a service animal or SAIT at all times. The service animals must be accompanied by the Eligible Person at all times and must not be left unattended either on campus, in a residence hall or place of employment.

SAIT meeting criteria in B1-B5 are permitted in or on public places pursuant to § ____, Florida Statute. SAIT may not be left unattended and must be accompanied by its trainer at all times while on any USF System property. (Note: unlike an assistance animal which may be left alone in a residential hall, the owner or trainer must be with the service animal or SAIT at all times).

G.F. Therapy Animals:
Therapy animals used as a therapy tool may be permitted on campus for a therapy session if the therapy is an integral part of a treatment process as prescribed by a licensed mental health professional with specific documentation required. Therapy animals do not assist individuals with a disability to perform the activities of daily living. They are not covered by statutes protecting and giving rights to service animals. Approval of the presence of a therapy animal falls within the authority of the USF System regarding accommodations to a disability or the counseling center.

Therapy animals are defined as animals with a good temperament and reliable, predictable behavior. Therapy animals used as an accommodation normally will be permitted within campus housing areas for their periodic visits. This is in addition to other areas where University programs are offered, as identified by the requestor and will need to meet all requirements of a Service Animal.

D.C. Research Animals

Animals identified and approved for designated research-related activity.

VI. EMERGENCY ACTION

If an animal on campus is exhibiting dangerous or destructive behavior, or if an animal appears to be stray or abandoned, please notify the appropriate Law Enforcement Officer (LEO). The LEO will notify the appropriate Agency (Hillsborough County Animal Services, Florida Wildlife Control or other appropriate party). If the animal is deemed a threat, the LEO will take appropriate emergency action.

VII. COMPLAINTS

Any complaints regarding the application of this policy with regard to the ADA or other equitable application of this process may be made to the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity.

VIII. CONSEQUENCES

The consequences for violation of this policy include but are not limited to:
A. Students in violation of this policy may be referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for disciplinary action in accordance with the University’s student disciplinary procedure.

B. Staff violators may be referred to their supervisor. Faculty violators may be referred to their chair or appropriate unit head. In addition, all other Human Resources policies will apply.

C. Non University violators or any University person may be referred to the University-USF System Institution Police and restricted from University property.

Current Responsible Office*: Administrative Services

*Refer to the appropriate Responsible Office website for a current name of the Vice President or other Responsible Officer.

History: New 3-20-13, Amended (technical) 8-18-15; 7-13-17.