

POLICY ON ANIMALS (SERVICE, EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND PETS) ON CAMPUS

Office of Equal Opportunity

Applicability: This policy applies to all employees, faculty, students, and visitors to Tufts University campuses.

Revised: September 2025

POLICY STATEMENT

Tufts University recognizes the importance of service animals or emotional support animals (ESAs) for individuals with disabilities and has established the following guidelines for bringing animals on Tufts property. This policy is intended to ensure that people with disabilities, who require the use of service animals or ESAs to provide equal access, or as a reasonable accommodation, receive the benefit of the work or tasks performed by such animals and/or the therapeutic support they provide. Tufts is committed to allowing individuals with disabilities the use of a service animal or an ESA (*for those who reside in Tufts housing*) on campus to facilitate their full participation and equal access to the University's programs and activities, in accordance with applicable law and the rules set forth below.

Tufts welcomes animals on campus consistent with the procedures outlined in this policy but may exclude an animal from campus if it causes disruption, threatens the health or safety of others, or otherwise fails to meet the criteria set forth in this policy. The Tufts University of Veterinary Medicine on the Grafton, MA campus has an extension of this policy which governs their campus because they have various animals and requirements in their milieu. A link to this Grafton Campus policy will be added when it becomes available.

Information about The Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) Accommodation process as well as the Disability-Related Reasonable Accommodation Policy, which is the overarching policy to all accommodations including any related to animals, can be found on the OEO website at <https://oeo.tufts.edu/policies-procedures/accommodation-policies/>.

SERVICE ANIMALS

Tufts welcomes the presence of service animals on campus. A service animal is any dog or miniature horse that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks to accommodate a person with a disability.

Service animals are permitted to be anywhere on campus that the animal's handler is permitted to be, including indoor spaces; however, there may be some locations and activities where animals (including service animals) are not permitted for health and safety reasons, including:

- Research and teaching laboratories or clinics
- Mechanical rooms/maintenance closets
- Food service preparation areas
- Areas where there is a danger to the service animal

Access to these and other restricted areas may be granted on a case-by-case basis either by the Student Accessibility and Academic Resources (StAAR) Center (in the case of undergraduate or graduate students on the Medford/Somerville or SMFA campus) or by the OEO Accommodations Team (in the case of employees, professional school graduate students, patients, community members and visitors). If you are not sure whether these accommodation policies are applicable to your case or to someone who is requesting accommodation from you, please contact the appropriate office for further clarification.

Students on the Medford/Somerville and SMFA campuses who wish to notify the University about their use of a service animal as an accommodation or inquire further about access issues should contact the Student Accessibility and Academic Resources (StAAR) Center at staarcenter@tufts.edu or 617.627.4539.

Students on the Boston and Grafton campuses should contact their respective Student Services Office staff who handle accommodations, the list of which can be found on the [Accommodations](#) page of the OEO website (<https://oeo.tufts.edu/accommodations/request-accommodations/>), or the OEO Accommodations Team at Accommodations.OEO@tufts.edu.

Employees and other community members should contact the OEO Accommodations Team at Accommodations.OEO@tufts.edu.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS (ESA)

Tufts welcomes the presence of *approved* Emotional Support Animals (ESA) as a reasonable accommodation *for individuals with disabilities who reside in Tufts housing*. An ESA is any animal that is specifically designated by a qualified health care provider as necessary to afford an individual with a disability equal opportunity to use and enjoy their employment, educational experience and/or dwelling unit. Occasionally, the University may also bring ESAs to a central location on campus for the purpose of providing comfort to others, such as during exam time. Requests for ESAs are subject to approval, and ESAs must comply with university guidelines regarding health, behavior, and documentation.

Students seeking approval for an ESA to reside with them in Tufts housing on the Medford/Somerville or Boston SMFA campus, *must* make a request for reasonable accommodation with the Student Accessibility and Academic Resources (StAAR) Center.

All other individuals seeking approval for an ESA *must* make a request for reasonable accommodation with the OEO Accommodations Team.

PETS

A pet is any animal that is not trained or used as a service or assistance animal but, instead, is kept for ordinary recreation and companionship.

Pets are welcome to use public outdoor spaces on campus, subject to certain restrictions including the athletic fields on the Medford/Somerville campus and some of the grounds at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine in Grafton.

The University maintains a designated dog park at the Cummings School in Grafton, which consists of a 2-acre fenced off-leash park, located adjacent to the Cummings School Farm. Tufts Dog Park at the Cummings School is open to licensed, fully vaccinated and well-behaved dogs and their owners who have registered, agreed to the rules of the park and paid the required annual fee. For more information about the Tufts Dog Park at the Cummings School and to register, please go online at <https://vet.tufts.edu/dog-park>.

Where pets are permitted on campus, owners/handlers are expected to clean up after their animals. Pets visiting campus (outside of the designated dog park) must be always kept on a leash and may not be left unattended or tied to any objects. All damage caused by an animal is the responsibility of the owner/handler.

To maintain safety and avoid disruption, pets are not allowed inside indoor spaces owned or controlled by the University.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ANIMAL OWNERS/HANDLERS

Owners/handlers must comply with the following provisions regarding the behavior and care of animals on campus:

- Dangerous, poisonous or illegal animals are not permitted.
- The behavior, noise, odor, and waste of the animal must not exceed reasonable standards and these factors must not create an unreasonable disruption for community members (including staff, faculty, visitors, patients, students and/or residents). Complaints about animals will be addressed with the owner and may jeopardize the animal from being on our property.
- The animal must be vaccinated in accordance with local law and meet all other licensing requirements.
- The animal must be in good health and maintain good hygiene. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected, the owner/handler will be billed for the required pest treatment.

- From time to time, the University may use pesticides, pest control devices, de-icing materials, cleaning supplies, and other materials for the maintenance and operation of Tufts facilities. The University is not responsible for any harm to animals on campus caused by such materials.
- The owner/handler of a service animal is encouraged to voluntarily register the animal with StAAR or OEO. The owner/handler of an approved ESA is *required* to register the animal with StAAR or OEO. The University may provide registered animals with identification tags to display while on campus.
- The owner/handler is financially responsible for the animal, including for any bodily injury or property damage caused by the animal.

SANCTIONS

The owner/handler is responsible for assuring that the animal does not unduly interfere or adversely affect the routine activities of others. If the University determines that the animal threatens the health, safety, or property of anyone in the Tufts community, or that the approved animal is adversely affecting the University's programs and activities, Tufts will take appropriate measures, up to and including a determination that the approved animal may no longer be permitted on campus. If a service animal or ESA is banned from Tufts property, the individual with a disability will have the right to engage in an interactive process with the University to determine if effective participation can occur with other appropriate accommodations. The University is committed to engaging in an interactive process with individuals with disabilities to ensure reasonable accommodation.

EXCLUSIONS

This policy does not apply to animals used in approved University research.

This policy does not apply to animals used for teaching purposes in classes on campus, based on approved faculty requests for such use. Non-research animals used in classes should be approved by the Department Chair, Dean, and Risk Management Director, as appropriate.

The University may impose additional restrictions on the presence of animals in certain locations or at particular events.

QUESTIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Undergraduate and Graduate students on the Medford/Somerville campus as well as SMFA students with questions can contact the Student Accessibility and Academic Resources (StAAR) Center by e-mail at: staarcenter@tufts.edu, or by phone at: 617.627.4539.

Employees, professional students and other community members can contact the OEO Accommodation Team by e-mail at Accommodations.OEO@tufts.edu or by phone at: 617.627.3298.