

Service and Emotional Support Animal Application

Students requesting an accommodation for an emotional support animal must complete this application. In addition, a separate form needs to be completed by the qualified professional who diagnosed the condition and who supports the accommodation requested (see guidelines). No accommodation will be approved until all forms have been completed and received by the Office of Disability Services. Please note that this information is confidential, and will only be shared with members of the Student Accommodations Committee as they consider the request. See Service and Support Animal Guidelines for application deadlines.

Date: _____

Name: _____ PRCC Student ID#: _____

Date of Birth: _____ PRCC Email: _____

Phone Number: _____ Classification: _____ Freshman _____ Sophomore

Requesting Accommodation for: _____ Fall Semester _____ Spring Semester

- Describe in detail the nature of your condition that is the basis for this request and how it has impacted your daily life.

- Specifically, what type of emotional support animal are you requesting and how does this animal provide support for the previously described condition.

I certify that all information within this application is accurate and complete and does not misrepresent my present condition. I understand that members of the Student Accommodations Committee may contact my diagnosing physician or other qualified professional for clarification of my condition and recommended accommodations. I authorize the Accommodations Committee to discuss, either in writing or orally, my accommodation(s) with appropriate administrators, faculty members, staff members, and/or third-party service providers on a limited, need-to-know basis for the purpose of providing and/or coordinating accommodations and services for me.

I understand that every request for accommodations is evaluated individually based on the submitted documentation.

Student Signature

Date

Service and Support Animal Guidelines

Pearl River Community College, being mindful of the health and safety concerns of the community, generally limits the presence of privately-owned animals on campus. However, the College is also committed to accommodate students and others with disabilities that require the assistance of service or support animals.

Animals are only allowed on campus when they are providing service or support to a member of the College or guest to campus as a reasonable disability accommodation. This policy applies to those individuals with disabilities who will be accompanied by a service animal or who will require a support animal while on campus.

Definitions of Assistance Animals

- *Service Animal:* ". . . any . . . animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair or fetching dropped items" (ADA as amended). If an animal meets the definition of a service animal, it is considered a service animal regardless of whether it has been licensed or certified by a state or local government or a training program. Service animals are generally dogs.
- *Support Animal:* An animal that is prescribed or otherwise documented by a healthcare or mental health professional as treatment for a disabled individual and that is beneficial in alleviating one or more identifiable symptoms or effects of that individual's disability.
- *Assistance Animal:* A service animal or a support animal.

Service Animals are permitted on campus when accompanied by...

Any student, guest or member of the public who has a disability as defined by the ADA. The person accompanying the animal may be asked by College staff (including Public Safety Officers) whether the animal is a service animal, and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform for the disabled person.

Support Animals are permitted on campus...

When a student with a disability has registered with the Office of Disability Services, provided disability documentation demonstrating the benefits provided by the support animal, and been granted an accommodation permitting the presence of the support animal on campus. Student use of support animals may be limited to defined areas of campus and will not be permitted in academic or recreational facilities.

Assistance Animals in College Housing

- It is highly recommended that any student who will be accompanied by a service animal in College housing register with the Office of Disability Services. When applying for housing, the student may be asked to disclose to Residence Life staff that they will be accompanied

by a service animal on campus, and to describe the animal and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform.

- Before bringing a support animal into college housing, a student must register with the Office of Disability Services and must submit a request to have the support animal. First year and transfer students must submit requests by May 1st for the fall semester. Continuing resident students must submit requests by April 1st for the fall semester. Spring requests are due by October 1st.
- If the application is not submitted by the application deadline, the students request must go before the Disability Committee for a decision.

Documentation for a Support Animal must include:

- A completed Emotional Support Animal Application.
- A letter from the student with an explanation of the need for the animal, the type of animal, a description of the animal and the animal's name, when the animal was prescribed, the date when the animal was acquired.
- Medical documentation of the student's disability that meets the PRCC documentation guidelines as maintained by the Office of Disability Services. Documentation must be current within six months of the application.
- Student requests will be reviewed by Office of Disability Services, and a recommendation will be made to Residence Life. The requesting individual will be notified in writing of the decision.

Responsibilities of All Persons with Disabilities Using Assistance Animals

- All animal owners are responsible for any damage caused by their animals on campus and must take appropriate precautions to prevent property damage or injury. The cost of care, arrangements and responsibility for the well-being of authorized animals are the sole responsibility of the owner at all times. **Assistance animals housed in College residences must be crated or caged when left unattended and must not be left unattended for more than a few hours. The length of time that an animal can be left alone depends on the species, breed, age, and temperament of the animal.** Assistance animals may not be left unattended in parked cars or tied or chained to poles, fences, etc. on campus.
- In order to be on campus, assistance animals must:
 - **Meet Legal Requirements:** All requirements for the presence of animals in public places (vaccinations, licensure, ID tags, etc.) mandated by state or local ordinances must be followed, including but not limited to: *Licensing:* The animal must meet licensing requirements and wear the tags if the animal is residing on campus. Students authorized to bring support animals to campus must provide documentation of licensing on an annual basis. Records of such are to be maintained by the Office of Disability Services.

- **Be Under Control of the Owner:** The animal must be under full control of the owner at all times. Reasonable behavior is expected from all assistance animals while on campus. If a service dog, for example, exhibits unacceptable behavior, the owner is expected to employ appropriate training techniques to correct the situation. In addition:
 - When outside of the owner's residence, the support animal must be on a leash or caged at all times. It should never be permitted to wander the campus off leash even when accompanied by the owner. We strongly encourage service animals to be leashed.
 - The animal must be as unobtrusive as possible when in the presence of other members of the College community.
 - Animals must be house-trained. The animal must urinate or defecate in a litter box, in a cage, or outside.
 - Assistance animals are prohibited from kitchens and food preparation areas except those in apartment residence facilities.
 - *Consequences for misbehavior:* The assistance animal is held to the conduct and etiquette stated in this policy. The owner is fully responsible for all actions of the assistance animal. When an assistance animal is determined to be out of control or otherwise in violation of this Policy, the College will take appropriate action to protect the health and safety of its members. Consequences for animal misconduct may include, but are not limited to, muzzling a barking dog, refresher training for the animal and its handler, or removal from College facilities. If the actions of the animal result in a violation of the College Code of Conduct, the owner may be charged accordingly.

Conflicting Needs

It is common for persons to have a condition that precipitates an allergic reaction to animals. Persons (including College faculty or staff) who have asthma/allergy/medical issues when in prolonged close proximity with an authorized animal on campus are to be directed to make this known to the Office of Disability Services. The person making the complaint must provide verifiable medical documentation to support his/her claim. Action will be taken to consider the needs of both persons to resolve the problem as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The guidelines addressing such conflicting needs apply in the residence halls, as well. If there is an allergy/animal conflict within a residence hall that cannot be resolved between the two parties, then the Office of Residence Life and the Office of Disability Services will collaborate to reach a solution. It should be noted that if the first person that has been placed into the residence hall uses an authorized animal and another person with severe allergies then arrives, the first person would generally not be required to vacate College housing to accommodate the second person.

Damages

The owner is responsible for all damages that the assistance animal may cause while on campus. If a student's assistance animal causes damage to college property, the cost of the damage will be assessed and assigned to the student's bill and the use of the animal will be revoked.

Responsibility of Students using Support Animals on Campus

If the request to have a support animal on campus is approved, the requesting student must:

- Register the animal with the Office of Disability Services prior to the animal being on campus.
- At the start of each academic year, provide documentation to the Office of Disability services showing proof that the animal is licensed and in good health.
- Provide up to date (every six months) documentation from healthcare provider or mental health professional.
- Review and sign appropriate forms and agreements as requested at the start of each academic year.

Removal of Assistance Animals from Campus

In cases of imminent danger or threat to the animal or others, Public Safety Officers or On-Call Administrators may order the immediate removal of an assistance animal. Non-emergency removals may be authorized by the Vice President of Poplarville Campus and Student Services or designee. In such cases, the owner will be notified in writing that the animal must be removed, including the reasons for removal.

An assistance animal may be ordered removed from any area on the campus and may be prohibited from College facilities for the following reasons:

- **Disruption:** A owner may be directed to remove an assistance animal from a public or common area on campus when the animal is unruly or disruptive (e.g. barking, snapping, running around, bringing attention to itself, jumping up on people, escaping from cage or leash). If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the owner may be prohibited from bringing the animal to campus until the owner can demonstrate that s/he has taken significant steps to mitigate the behavior. Any animal that exhibits aggressive or unsafe behavior may be prohibited from College facilities.
- **Threatening behavior:** An assistance animal may be excluded from the campus when that animal's behavior or condition poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others including other assistance animals.

- **Ill health:** Assistance animals that are ill should not be taken into public or common areas on campus. An owner with an ill assistance animal may be asked to remove the animal from college facilities.
- **Uncleanliness:** Owners must ensure that their animals are kept in sanitary conditions, and are clean and well-groomed. An owner of an animal whose condition is excessively unclean or unsanitary (e.g., flea infested, foul-smelling and/or shedding excessively, urinating or defecating inappropriately) may be asked to remove the animal from college facilities.

Should an owner's assistance animal be removed from campus and prohibited for any reason, the Office of Disability Services may afford the owner the option of replacing the assistance animal or continuing to attend the College with other reasonable accommodations but without an assistance animal on campus.

Public Etiquette by the Assistance Animal

The animal:

- Must not initiate contact with someone without the owner's direct permission.
- Must not display any behaviors or noises that are disruptive to others, such as barking, whining, or growling; scratching doors or chewing on furniture or personal belongings of others.
- Must avoid excessive personal grooming in public settings.
- Must not block an aisle or passageway.
- Must be trained not to be attracted to food that may be in common areas.
- Be housetrained when accompanying the owner inside campus facilities.

An owner may be issued a verbal or written warning by College staff whenever an assistance animal exhibits poor etiquette on campus. Such warnings will be documented on a Public Safety Incident Report or report filed by a Residence Life Staff member, depending upon the circumstances surrounding the behavior. All such reports will be sent to the Vice President of Poplarville Campus and Student Services. Following an etiquette warning, the owner is expected to take action to train the animal to prevent reoccurrence of the offending behavior. If etiquette warnings for animal misconduct are repeatedly issued to an owner, the assistance animal may be ordered removed from College facilities, or the owner may be subject to disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct.

Areas of Safety

It may be considered unsafe for assistance animals to be present in certain areas of College facilities, or during specific educational or recreational activities on campus. Each place or activity will be considered as to its risk potential by a team of individuals, including the Office of Disability Services, the area director or professor, and the college risk management team. The Office of Disability Services will arrange reasonable accommodations when it is determined unsafe for the assistance animal to accompany a disabled student in one of these areas or College activities.

Appeal Procedures

A decision to deny approval of an assistance animal or to remove a previously approved animal may be appealed in writing to the Vice President of Poplarville Campus and Student Services. Appeals must state a specific reason(s) for why the owner believes the request should be reconsidered. The Assistant VP may consider records and information relevant to the owner's reconsideration request, whether submitted by the owner or obtained from any College office or staff person, including Office of Disability Services and the Public Safety Office. Decisions on assistance animal appeals shall be issued in writing and shall be the final administrative actions of the College.

If the owner believes the denial or removal of an assistance animal may be discriminatory, or a denial of a reasonable accommodation under the protections afforded to disabled students under federal law, the owner may submit a written complaint to the Director of Disability Services. If an owner alleges discrimination based upon a protected category in an appeal letter, the Vice President of Poplarville Campus and Student Services shall refer the appeal to the Director of Disability Services for a confidential investigation. The Director of Disability Services' administrative decision shall be the final actions of the College.

Contacts

- Office of Disability Services: Ms. Tonia M. Seal (tmoody@prcc.edu)
- Office of Student Services: Dr. Jeff Long (jlong@prcc.edu)
- Office of Residence Life: Mrs. Camelle Williams (cawilliams@prcc.edu)

Emotional Support Animals in PRCC Student Housing Agreement

Owner:

- Is responsible to attend and be in full control of the emotional support animal at all times. The emotional support animal shall have a harness, leash, tether or be transported in an appropriate enclosure whenever it is outside of the residence hall room where it will be housed.
- In shared living spaces, the emotional support animal should be in an appropriate container if the owner is not in the room with the animal.
- Is responsible for following all rules related to the restrictions of animals from buildings on the campus other than their residence hall.
- Is responsible for the costs of care necessary for the emotional support animal's well-being. The arrangements and responsibilities for the care of an emotional support animal are the sole responsibility of the owner at all times, including regular bathing and grooming, as needed.
- Is responsible for not leaving the emotional support animal unattended for an unreasonable length of time.
- Is responsible for independently removing or arranging for the removal of the emotional support animal's waste. Waste must be disposed in a sealed bag in the designated trash area of the residence hall.
- If the comfort animal voids on the floor or carpet anywhere inside a residence hall, the student is responsible to clean up promptly to the best of their own ability, as well as submit a work request with Facilities Management for the area to be properly disinfected. The student must pay all costs associated with such clean up. Dogs must be housebroken and accidents should be infrequent.
- Is responsible for complying with local and state licensing laws for animal rights and owner responsibilities. Emotional support animals should be current with immunizations and wear a rabies vaccination tag if appropriate.
- Animals must leave campus with the student if student leaves overnight and during all holidays/breaks if the student leaves campus.
- Is responsible for paying for any damage to the college property or pest treatment caused by the animal.
- Animals must be bathed on a regular basis to prevent odor/fleas in dorm room.
- Must abide by all applicable residential policies, including room inspections.

Student Signature

Date