

Animals in the Library Policy

Mercer University is committed to providing an inclusive and respectful learning environment for all students, faculty, and staff, including individuals with disabilities. Therefore, in accordance with university policy, as well as federal and state laws, Service/Emotional Support Animals are allowed to accompany their Handlers (an individual with a disability) and Partners (a person engaged in the training of service animals) in all unrestricted areas of Mercer University, including Mercer University Libraries.

All animals must be in full custody and control of their handler while inside library facilities. No pets or animals other than service animals (or service animals in training) are allowed in Mercer University Libraries. Owners of pets will be asked to remove them from the library.

Handlers and users of service animals are not required to show papers or documentation to prove a disability. Service animals are not required to be identified by a special harness or collar. Handlers are not required to remove their service animal from the library unless the presence, behavior, or actions of the animal constitute an unreasonable risk of harm to property or persons.

Terminology & Definitions (as per [Mercer's Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals Policy](#))

- *Emotional Support Animal (ESA)*: any animal providing emotional support, well-being, or comfort that eases one or more identified symptoms or effects of a documented disability. Emotional support animals may also be referred to as comfort or therapy animals. Emotional support animals are not individually trained to perform specific work or tasks.
- *Handler*: the individual with a disability, as defined under federal and state law, who uses a service animal to perform a work or task directly related to the individual's disability. A Handler may also be a personal care attendant who handles the animal for a person with a disability.
- *Partner*: a person engaged in the training of a service animal for the purpose of accompanying a Handler.
- *Pet(s)*: any animal kept for ordinary use and companionship that does not meet the definition of a Service Animal or ESA.
- *Service Animal*: any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the Handler's disability.
- *Service Animal in Training*: any dog trained by a trainer identified as an agent or employee of a school for a seeing eye, hearing, service, or guide dog.