Operating Standard

Title: Animals on Campus **Number:** A7400.05
Type: Administrative
Responsible: Vice President of Administrative Services
Related Policies: A7400, A4000, A4300
Linked Operating Standards: A7300.00; A7400.00; A4000.10
Related Laws: ADA; Illinois Human Rights Act; Illinois Service Animal Access Act; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Related External Standards: US Department of Justice; Association of Higher Education & Disability; US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights
HLC Criterion: 1C, 2A, 4A

1.0 Statement

Shawnee Community College is committed to fostering a safe, accessible, inclusive, and welcoming learning and working environment for students, employees, visitors, and members of the community. In support of this commitment, the College recognizes the rights of qualified individuals with disabilities to utilize Service Animals as permitted under applicable federal and state law, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and applicable Illinois law.

The College also recognizes that Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) may be approved as a reasonable accommodation in limited circumstances through the College's established disability accommodation process.

2.0 Purpose & Scope

2.1 Purpose: To establish guidelines governing the presence of animals on College property, including service animals, emotional support animals, personal pets, and animals used for instructional or educational purposes. The OS outlines institutional expectations, approval processes, responsibilities, and conditions related to animals on campus to support accessibility, safety, health, and the orderly operation of the College.

2.2 Scope: Applies to students, employees, visitors, contractors, and guests utilizing or seeking to utilize animals on College property including instructional sites, facilities, grounds, and College-sponsored activities.

3.0 Definitions

Permitted Animal: An animal authorized or permitted on College property in accordance with this Operating Standard, including a Service Animal, Emotional

Support Animal, or Instructional or Educational Animal, or other animal specifically authorized by the College.

- **Emotional Support Animal (ESA)**: An animal that provides emotional support or other therapeutic benefits that alleviate one or more effects of an individual's disability. An ESA is not individually trained to perform work or tasks and is not considered a Service Animal under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Emotional Support Animals do not have the same public access rights as Service Animals and are permitted on College property only as authorized under this Operating Standard.

- **Instructional or Educational Animal**: An animal authorized by the College for academic instruction, laboratory use, training, clinical demonstration, research, or other approved educational activities under the supervision of authorized faculty or staff.

- **Service Animal**: A dog that is individually trained to perform work or tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In limited circumstances, a trained miniature horse may also be permitted in accordance with applicable law. The work or tasks performed must be directly related to the individual's disability. A Service Animal must remain under the control of its handler at all times through a harness, leash, tether, or other effective means of control, unless such devices interfere with the animal's work or the individual's disability prevents their use. If the handler becomes incapacitated, the Service Animal may perform trained tasks in response to the emergency, including seeking assistance, as appropriate to its training.

- **Psychiatric Service Animal:** A Service Animal that is individually trained to perform specific work or tasks for an individual with a psychiatric disability. Examples include interrupting or preventing harmful behaviors, reminding the handler to take medication, responding during a psychiatric episode, or guiding the handler to safety. A Psychiatric Service Animal is afforded the same rights and responsibilities as any other Service Animal under the ADA.

College Property: "College Property" includes all College-owned, leased, operated, or controlled buildings, grounds, classrooms, offices, parking areas, vehicles, instructional sites, and facilities used for College-sponsored activities.

Control of an Animal: "Control" means an animal is harnessed, leashed, tethered, caged, or otherwise effectively managed through voice, signal, or other appropriate means so that the animal does not disrupt operations or pose a threat to others.

Direct Threat: A “Direct Threat” means a significant risk to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated or reduced by reasonable modifications, practices, procedures, or auxiliary aids.

Disability: A “Disability” means a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, as defined by applicable federal and state law, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Fundamental Alteration: A “Fundamental Alteration” means a modification that substantially changes the essential nature of a program, service, activity, or operation of the College.

Pet: A “Pet” is an animal kept for ordinary companionship or recreation that is not a Service Animal, Emotional Support Animal (ESA), or approved instructional animal. Pets are generally prohibited on College property unless expressly authorized by the College.

Reasonable Accommodation: A “Reasonable Accommodation” means a modification, adjustment, or exception to a policy, practice, or procedure that enables a qualified individual with a disability to have equal access to College programs, services, activities, employment, or facilities, unless doing so would create an undue hardship, direct threat, or fundamental alteration.

Unauthorized Animal: An “Unauthorized Animal” means any animal present on College property that is not permitted under this Operating Standard or applicable law.

4.0 Procedures

The following procedures establish the requirements governing the presence of animals on College property, including Service Animals, Emotional Support Animals (ESAs), Instructional or Educational Animals, and other Permitted Animals. These procedures are intended to support accessibility, health, safety, and the orderly operation of the College while ensuring compliance with applicable federal and state law.

4.1 Service Animal Access

Individuals with disabilities utilizing a Service Animal may be accompanied by the animal in areas of College property where students, employees, visitors, participants, or members of the public are generally permitted, consistent with applicable federal and state law.

Prior registration, certification, or approval of a Service Animal shall not be required as a condition of access where otherwise permitted by law.

When it is not readily apparent that an animal is a Service Animal, College personnel may ask only:

- Whether the animal is required because of a disability; and
- What work or task the animal has been trained to perform.

College personnel shall not:

- Request medical documentation regarding an individual's disability;
- Require proof of training or certification for the Service Animal;
- Require the Service Animal to wear identifying equipment, tags, or markings; or
- Inquire about the nature or extent of the individual's disability, except as otherwise permitted by law.

Individuals utilizing a Service Animal are encouraged, but not required, to notify the appropriate College office in advance when doing so may assist with accessibility planning, emergency preparedness, or access to specialized environments. Advance notification shall not be required as a condition of access to areas generally open to students, employees, visitors, or members of the public.

Requests involving access to restricted, clinical, laboratory, research, food preparation, or other specialized environments may require an individualized assessment to determine whether reasonable modifications are appropriate while maintaining legitimate health, safety, instructional, or operational requirements.

Any restriction or exclusion of a Service Animal shall be based upon an individualized assessment of the specific circumstances and shall be consistent with applicable law.

4.2 *Emotional Support Animal Requests*

Individuals seeking to utilize an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) on College property as a disability-related accommodation must submit a request through the College's established disability accommodation process prior to bringing the animal onto College property, unless otherwise authorized by the College.

Requests shall be evaluated on an individualized basis by the appropriate College office in accordance with applicable federal and state law, considering the individual's disability-related need, the requested accommodation, the location where the animal is requested, and any legitimate health, safety, or operational considerations.

Authorization of an ESA, when approved, shall be limited to the specific circumstances, locations, or activities identified through the accommodation process and does not provide general public access rights equivalent to those afforded to Service Animals.

Individuals approved to utilize an ESA remain responsible for complying with this Operating Standard, including all applicable handler or owner responsibilities, health and safety requirements, and behavioral expectations**.**

4.3 *Instructional or Educational Animals*
Animals may be utilized on College property for instructional, educational, laboratory, clinical, research, demonstration, or other College-sponsored activities when their use directly supports the College's educational mission and has been authorized by the appropriate College official.

The faculty or staff member responsible for the instructional or educational activity shall ensure that:

- The educational purpose for the animal's presence is appropriate to the activity or program;
- Appropriate measures are implemented to protect the health, safety, and welfare of students, employees, visitors, and the animal;
- The animal remains under appropriate supervision and control at all times;
- Applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and College policies are followed; and
- Reasonable efforts are made to address accessibility, health, or safety concerns that may arise for participants.

The College may limit, relocate, or prohibit the use of an Instructional or Educational Animal in a particular location or activity when necessary to address legitimate health, safety, operational, or accessibility concerns. Any such determination shall be based on the specific circumstances and, when applicable, an individualized assessment.

4.4 *Handler/Owner Responsibilities*
The handler or owner of a permitted animal is responsible for maintaining appropriate control, supervision, and care of the animal at all times while on College property. Permitted animals must be properly supervised and may not be left unattended unless otherwise authorized by the College.

Handlers and owners are responsible for ensuring that permitted animals are housebroken and do not create health, safety, sanitation, or operational concerns for the College community. The handler or owner shall promptly clean and properly dispose of any animal waste in a sanitary manner and is responsible for any cleaning, sanitation, or property damage resulting from the animal’s presence on College property.

Failure to maintain appropriate control, sanitation, or compliance with this Operating Standard (OS) may result in the removal of the animal from College property and/or revocation of approval, consistent with applicable law and College procedures.

***4.5** Allied Health and Nursing Students*
Students with disabilities who require the use of a Service Animal while participating in Allied Health, Nursing, laboratory, simulation, or clinical experiences shall work with the College's designated accessibility office and the applicable academic program to determine reasonable accommodations. Accommodations shall be evaluated on an individualized basis while considering applicable federal and state law, patient safety, infection prevention and control requirements, clinical site policies, and essential program requirements.

5.0 Guidelines

***5.1**. Animal Health and Vaccination Requirements*
All Permitted Animals shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws governing animal health, vaccination, licensing, and public safety. Service Animals shall not be required to provide documentation of vaccination, licensing, or health status as a condition of access, except as otherwise permitted by law. The College may require verification of compliance with applicable health or licensing requirements for Emotional Support Animals, Instructional or Educational Animals, or other Permitted Animals when reasonably necessary to protect the health and safety of the College community.

***5.2** Supervision and Attendance*
Permitted animals must remain under the supervision and control of the handler or owner at all times while on College property.

***5.3** Animal Behavior Expectations*
Animals on College property must not:

- Exhibit aggressive behavior;
- Repeatedly vocalize, growl, or create unreasonable noise disruptions;
- Interfere with instructional activities or workplace operations;
- Jump on individuals;
- Block paths of travel or exits; or
- Cause unsanitary conditions.

***5.4** Damage to Property*
The handler or owner may be financially responsible for damage caused by permitted animals to College property or the property of others.

***5.5** Conflicting Accessibility Needs*
The College recognizes that the presence of an Permitted Animal may conflict with the disability-related needs of other individuals, including those with allergies, asthma, or similar medical conditions. When such conflicts arise, the appropriate College office, such as Human Resources or the designated ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, shall

conduct an individualized assessment and implement reasonable accommodations, as appropriate, to address the needs of all affected individuals in accordance with applicable federal and state law.

5.6 *Temporary Exclusion During Emergencies or Safety Concerns*

Consistent with applicable law, the College reserves the right to temporarily restrict or remove animals from specific locations or activities during emergency situations, safety incidents, construction activities, or other circumstances where the animal's presence may create a legitimate safety concern. Any such action will be based on an individualized assessment of the specific circumstances.

5.7 *Misrepresentation of a Permitted Animal*

Misrepresenting an animal as a Permitted Animal may result in removal from College property and may constitute a violation of College policies and applicable law

5.8 *Interaction with Service Animals*

Members of the College community shall not interfere with, distract, or otherwise interact with a Service Animal without the permission of the handler, except as necessary to respond to an emergency.

5.9 *Transportation and Vehicles*

Animals permitted under this OS may accompany individuals in College-operated transportation or vehicles where required by law and where doing so does not create a safety hazard.

6.0 Appeals & Grievances

Individuals who disagree with a determination made under this Operating Standard, including decisions regarding the approval, denial, restriction, or removal of a Permitted Animal, may seek review through the applicable College grievance or accommodation process.

- **Students** should follow the College's student grievance procedures or disability accommodation appeal process through the designated accessibility office.
- **Employees** should follow applicable Human Resources procedures for workplace accommodations.
- **Visitors or members of the public** may submit concerns to the Vice President of Administrative Services or the designated ADA/Section 504 Coordinator for review.

7.0 Roles & Responsibilities

Vice President of Administrative Services (VPAS) is responsible for the overall administration and operational oversight of this OS, including coordination of

accessibility, campus safety, facilities operations, risk management, and institutional compliance.

Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) is responsible for coordinating the authorization and oversight of Instructional or Educational Animals used in academic programs, laboratories, clinical experiences, research, demonstrations, and other instructional activities.

Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA) is responsible for implementing this OS as it relates to students, including coordinating disability accommodation processes involving Emotional Support Animals (ESAs), collaborating with the designated ADA/Section 504 Coordinator regarding Service Animal accommodations, providing student guidance and education, and resolving student-related issues arising under this Operating Standard.

Executive Director of Human Resources (EDHR) or designee is responsible for coordinating employee accommodation processes involving Service Animals, Emotional Support Animals, and other disability-related accommodation requests within the workplace.

Campus Security is responsible for supporting the safe and orderly implementation of this OS, responding to concerns involving Permitted Animals, and coordinating with the appropriate College officials when safety or compliance issues arise.

Employees and Members of the College Community are expected to support an accessible and inclusive environment, respect the rights of individuals utilizing Permitted Animals, and comply with this OS.

8.0 SCCES Connections

This Operating Standard supports the Student Success and Employee Engagement Elements within the SCCES framework by contributing to:

- Promoting a safe, accessible, and inclusive learning and working environment;
- Supporting compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulatory requirements;
- Contributing to employee and student support systems that foster equitable access to College programs, services, activities, and facilities; and
- Providing operational guidance that supports continuous assessment and improvement of institutional practices and campus operations.

9.0 Monitoring Report Connections

Implementation of this Operating Standard may be reviewed through institutional monitoring, compliance, safety, accessibility, and operational assessment processes to

support continuous improvement and effective service delivery across Shawnee Community College.

Monitoring activities may include review of:

- Accessibility and accommodation requests involving animals on campus;
- Animal-related incidents, safety concerns, or operational disruptions;
- Complaint or grievance trends associated with permitted or unauthorized animals;
- Compliance with applicable federal and state laws and institutional procedures;
- Emergency response or facilities-related concerns involving animals on College property; and
- Operational outcomes associated with accessibility, inclusion, campus safety, and institutional effectiveness.

Information associated with this Operating Standard may be incorporated into applicable institutional monitoring reports, operational reviews, SCCES assessment activities, incident reports, and continuous improvement processes, as appropriate.

10.0 Oversight & Review

This Operating Standard will be reviewed at least every three (3) years, or sooner as required by legal, regulatory, accreditation, or institutional needs.

Oversight of this standard is coordinated by Administrative Services, with support from the Facilities Team. Revisions shall follow the College's Shared Governance processes, with documentation maintained in the applicable change log.

Change Log	Governance Unit: Administrative Services Council
Date	**Description of Change**
05.14.26	New Operating Standard Developed
05.14.26	Legal Reviewed
07.29.26	Updated, Clarified Definitions; Additional Procedures and Restrictions. Added Appeals & Grievance Section and Further Clarified Roles & Responsibilities. Sent to Executive Leadership for Dispersal for Second Read.
08.27.26	Approved by Executive Council