

Policy: PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING AN EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL FOR OU HOUSING

Note: Application must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the student's move-in date (with limited exceptions). No animals may be on campus until the Emotional Support Animal is approved.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Students' rights under the Fair Housing Act are protected when students seek to bring an Emotional Support Animal ("ESA") to live on campus. A student must demonstrate, through medical documentation as well as responsible behavior, that the student has a diagnosed disability in which an ESA Accommodation will be beneficial for the student while in university housing. All necessary documents can be found online on the Ottawa University Disability Services page.

The process takes up to two weeks from the time the Request Form and Medical Provider Form are submitted to the ADA Coordinator or designee. This policy will streamline the process so these requests can be completed in a timely manner.

Definitions:

Emotional Support Animal ("ESA"): An ESA is a type of assistance animal that is recognized as a "reasonable accommodation" for a person with a disability under the federal Fair Housing Act (FHAct, 42 U.S.C.A. 3601 et seq.). The assistance animal is not a pet according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Medical Provider: A Medical Provider is a physician, licensed physician assistant, licensed advanced practice registered nurse or a person licensed, registered, certified or otherwise authorized to practice by the behavioral sciences regulatory board. As used in this Policy, a Medical Provider must be one who has an established therapeutic relationship with the student seeking approval of an ESA.

ADA/504 Coordinator: The ADA Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the policies and procedures developed by the campus comply with federal, state, and college requirements. The ADA Coordinator serves as a resource to those with disabilities who believe that they are not receiving appropriate accommodations or that they are being treated in a discriminatory manner. In addition, the ADA Coordinator may set aside or modify an accommodation that is under dispute.

ESA Designee ("ED"): The employee designated by the ADA Coordinator to make determinations on applications for ESAs. This person will accept the ESA request application, collect documentation, interview the student, coordinate and conduct required interviews, and make the determination on the application. The current ED can be found on the Ottawa University Disability Services page.

Policy Statement:

1. There are three required documents: ESA Policy, ESA Rules, and ESA Request Form/Medical Provider's Form.

2. A student must first review both the ESA Policy and the ESA Rules.
3. Students should note that the Request Form must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the first day of residency. Completion of the approval process takes at least 2 weeks. No animal is permitted on campus without approval by the ED.
4. Once the Policy and Rules documents are reviewed, the student must complete the Request Form and submit it to the ED, who will then schedule a meeting.
5. The student must be prepared to submit the Medical Provider Form.
 - a. The Medical Provider Form must be filled out by a Medical Provider (see the definition of a Medical Provider *above*). *Note that the Ottawa University Counselors cannot complete this form.*
 - b. Documentation from a third party that is not a Medical Provider and has not examined the student but certifies the animal as an ESA **is not** a substitute for the Medical Provider Form.
6. The ED will review the documentation and determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether to approve the student's request for an ESA. In making this determination, the ED will consider the needs of the student and the impact of the animal on the campus community. In some cases, the ED may ask for additional medical documentation.
7. Note that if the animal is found to have been staying in campus housing prior to written approval by the ED, this will be a conduct violation and will be considered as one factor in whether the student is a responsible animal owner.
8. The ED will consult with other university offices, such as the Residential Life Coordinator or other Residential Staff, to determine if there are any student conduct issues that may indicate an inability of the student to effectively provide a safe environment for the ESA and those in the campus community. If the student is an athlete, the ED may speak with the student's coach to discuss the impact of travel and team requirements on the student's ability to adequately care for the ESA.
9. The ED will meet with the student to discuss the type of animal and the specific animal to ensure that it meets the campus criteria for approved animals in housing.
10. If the ESA is approved:
 - a. The student must review and sign the ESA Agreement and other forms as appropriate.
 - b. The student must meet with Residential Life Staff. The ED will inform the Residential Life Staff that the ESA is approved. The student will make an appointment to review the policy and specific details and requirements for having the animal in university housing. The residential designee will sign the ESA Agreement at that time.
11. Roommate Agreement: Where applicable, roommates will meet with Residential Life Staff and sign the Roommate Agreement before the animal is moved into housing. Students should know that the housing options may be limited as the university balances appropriate accommodations against students with disabilities with students who have allergies and/or animal fears, or other possible issues.
12. Move-in approval: Housing will give the owner a move-in date for the animal. The student must provide all supplies necessary for the animal at the time the animal is moved into housing. This includes, for example, where applicable:

- a. Cage/crate, leash, tie-down
 - b. Bedding
 - c. Litter box/potty pads, etc.
 - d. Food, bowls
 - e. Toys
13. Should changes in the housing assignment for the owner or roommates occur, the owner of the ESA is responsible for notifying the ED of the change; the residential life staff and/or ED will meet with the individual to discuss the arrangements. It is a violation of the ESA policy if the owner does not notify the ED of these changes. Violations of this policy are considered conduct violations.
14. As appropriate to the type of animal, the following documents must be provided to the ED before an animal is approved to move into campus housing:
- a. Current (within 6 months) well-animal check from a licensed veterinarian
 - b. Current vaccination records including rabies, and spay/neuter records; note that there will be no exception for lack of rabies vaccination, regardless of the age of the animal
 - c. Copy of city license, if required for the type of animal
 - d. Photo of animal and owner together
15. Appeal from Denial of Accommodation
If ED determines a request for an ESA be denied, the ED will contact the student and provide the reasons for the denial, the right to appeal, and the procedures for an appeal. The student may also use the grievance procedure provided under the general university grievance procedure by submitting their appeal to the ADA Coordinator.
16. The Application must be renewed each Fall. To be clear, if your application was granted in Summer or Spring, you must still reapply in Fall.

Effective Date: *April 29, 2022.*