

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS

Section: Assignments

Policy: University Housing accommodates emotional support animals (ESAs) in accordance with University Policy.

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to identify procedures associated with requests for emotional support animals in the on-campus residence halls, apartments and townhomes/homes.

Scope: Applies to all residents (i.e., students, staff and visiting scholars) with emotional support animals who reside in University Housing.

Definition: An emotional support animal is defined as 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. Pets are not considered emotional support animals.

Procedure:

- I. Students who wish to have an ESA in their residence hall or apartment first must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to obtain approval for the animal. This approval is limited to one ESA and is granted for only one year at a time. Staff and visiting scholars who wish to have an ESA reside in their on-campus apartment first must obtain approval for the animal from Faculty and Staff Relations. This approval is limited to one ESA and is granted for only one year at a time.
- II. The DRC will notify the associate director for assignments and contracts when a student has registered with the DRC and approval for the ESA has been granted. Faculty and Staff Relations shall provide the associate director for assignments with the identities of staff and visiting scholars who have been approved to have an ESA reside in their on-campus apartment after the registration requirements have been completed.
- III. ESAs are allowed in a resident's assigned University Housing unit only after approval has been received from the DRC or Faculty and Staff Relations and all housing-related paperwork described in this policy has been completed and submitted.
- IV. Upon receiving notification, the associate director for assignments and contracts or her/his designee will send the resident a copy of the housing policy and the ESA agreement form.
- V. The resident will complete the agreement form and submit it to the associate director of assignments and contracts. The associate director will update a file on the shared drive and notify appropriate housing staff.
- VI. If the assignment is in a double room, apartment or suite where a roommate will also reside, the Housing Assignments Office will notify the roommate that an ESA will reside in the room. No information as to the purpose of the ESA will be disclosed to the roommate.
- VII. The resident must notify the Housing Assignments Office in writing (housing@uga.edu) if the ESA is no longer in residence and re-register with the DRC (students) or Faculty Staff Relations (staff or visiting scholars) if a different ESA is needed mid-year.

VIII. Resident Responsibilities:

- a. All ESAs must be treated humanely, including being housed in acceptable conditions (e.g., appropriately sized crate or carrier, ability to move freely in the assigned space).
- b. The resident must complete and email the ESA Agreement form to the associate director for assignments and contracts at housing@uga.edu or deliver it to the Housing Assignments Office prior to the animal residing with the resident.
- c. The resident is restricted to keeping the approved ESA within his or her assigned room/apartment unless the resident is leaving the building with the animal for care or other purposes.
- d. The resident is responsible for ensuring the ESA does not interfere with the daily operations of the residential facility or cause difficulties for other residents who reside and work there.
- e. The resident agrees that sensitivity to individuals with allergies and to those who fear animals is important to ensure the integrity of the academic and residential community.
- f. The resident is responsible for properly containing and disposing of all animal waste. Outdoor animal waste must be immediately retrieved by the resident, placed in a plastic bag and securely tied before being disposed of in outside trash dumpsters.
- g. The resident agrees to continue to abide by all University Housing policies and procedures in accordance with the University Housing contract and Community Guide, including those regarding room condition and damages.
- h. The ESA must be under the direct control of the resident on leash/harness or other means facilitating control upon leaving a resident's room or apartment. The resident is responsible for ensuring that the ESA is contained appropriately when not present in the residence unit for class, work, or other activity.
- i. The resident is prohibited from transferring control of the ESA to another person even momentarily, requesting the assistance of other persons in supervising or controlling their ESA or otherwise leaving the presence of their animals for any period of time except as provided by this policy or other UGA policies.
- j. The resident must ensure his or her animal is clean and well-groomed and kept in a healthy environment.
- k. Per university policy, the resident shall be liable for any and all resulting costs when an animal causes damage to University Housing facilities or property or causes injury to persons.

IX. Animal Health and Behavior:

- a. ESAs will be permitted provided that their behavior, noise, odor and waste does not exceed reasonable standards for a well-behaved animal and that these factors do not create unreasonable disruptions to the residential community.
- b. ESAs must be in compliance with state and local laws regarding health, vaccination and care of the particular type of animal.

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