

Assistant Animal(s)

Policy Statement:

Syracuse University is committed to providing fair and reasonable accommodations to all students residing in University Housing. Our commitment to the living and learning environment is central to our mission.

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, a postsecondary educational institution may not exclude an otherwise qualified student with a disability from any part of its programs or services, or otherwise discriminate against an applicant or student with a disability. Under the Fair Housing Act, persons with disabilities may request a reasonable accommodation of an assistance animal, including an emotional support animal in Housing when its use is necessary to afford a person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling and/or the common areas of a dwelling.

Service Animals:

Service Animals provide active support and are permitted to accompany the student/handler in all public areas at the University, with the possible exception of certain labs where protective clothing/gear is required.

If it is readily apparent that an individual has a disability and requires on-campus assistance of an animal that qualifies as a Service Animal, no further information will be requested.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a Service Animal, an individual may be required to provide the following information:

1. Advance notice to the Office of Disability Services or Housing Office requesting to have the service animal reside in University housing.
2. An individual may also be required to explain the work or task that the animal has been trained to perform, but the animal will not be required to demonstrate this task and no documentation of training will be required.

Emotional Support Animal(s):

Emotional Support Animals provide passive support and are permitted only in a student's room and common areas associated with the student's residence hall.

A request for an Emotional Support Animal will be treated as an accommodation request. To make such a request, a student must go through the Office of Disability Services and follow the procedures for this particular request.

Emotional Support Animals may not reside in housing without written approval from University Officials.

Requesting an emotional support animal:

A request for an Emotional Support Animal will be treated as an accommodation request; to make such a request, students must:

1. Complete the ODS registration form:
 - a. For incoming students: <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/prospective-current-students/>
 - b. For current students: <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/current-students-2/>
2. Provide relevant documentation from the appropriate healthcare provider of the specific disability(s) one is seeking an emotional support animal for.
 - a. In addition to the documentation, the provider includes a letter of support that supplements the disability documentation. The letter details the current professional/patient relationship and describes how the presence of an ESA over any other strategy or accommodation effectively mitigates the impact of the disability in order to enable the student to equally use and enjoy university housing.
3. Complete the Self-Assessment Survey that describes the functional impact of the disability in the educational/university environment AND include an explanation of how an emotional support animal will provide access to university living not otherwise possible. The student will also specify the type of animal that they wish to bring to campus.
4. The Office of Disability Services will review the registration/request, assign an ODS counselor, and notify the student via e-mail to set up an initial meeting with their counselor to discuss this and other potential classroom and testing accommodations deemed appropriate.
5. After the meeting, the ODS counselor will make an initial determination and forward all the information to be reviewed by the Housing Review Committee, which committee will make the final determination.
6. Students will be informed of this decision via their syr.edu email and if approved, The Housing Office will be notified as well.

The Office of Disability Services reserves the right to request additional information and/or recommend an alternate accommodation.

Considerations when seeking the approval for an Emotional Support Animal:

1. Does the person have a disability (i.e., a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities)?
2. Nexus between disability impact and ESA.
3. The relationship of student to healthcare provider.
4. Consideration for alternate accommodations.

Things to consider when contemplating an Emotional Support Animal as an accommodation in university housing:

- Time obligation related to care of specific species
- Time away from the animal, student schedule, lifestyle, other responsibilities
- Financial cost of food, supplies, veterinarian visits
- Previous ownership of species or anxiety an animal may experience in a new environment
- Caring for the animal during school breaks
- Travel
- Training of animal (housebroken or litter trained)

- Ideal time to bring it to campus

Appeal

For any accommodation request that is denied, or in the case of a student who has been given an alternate accommodation that is perceived to be inadequate, a student may appeal that decision to Aaron Hodukavich at ajhoduka@syr.edu, Director & ADA Coordinator of Syracuse University. We will make every effort to address appeals in a timely manner.

For Counselor and Committee Review:

Specific questions to determine the relationship of the student to the provider:

- How long have you been working therapeutically with students?
- What are you treating them for?
- Did you write the letter based on file review on your own diagnosis?
- Are you writing this as a response to a 'special request' for an ESA letter or did you prescribe this in conjunction with on-going therapies.

Specific questions for providers to determine the nexus of disability impact & ESA:

- What is the functional impact of the disability and how does the ESA mitigate that?
- What else has been prescribed to address this dysfunction/impact? Has any other strategy been attempted and/or discussed? If so, could you talk about that?
- Is this a trial therapy? How often and when will you be assessing if it is working?
- Was there a discussion around the commitment and responsibilities of caring for an animal on a college campus?

Questions for the Housing Review Committee:

- Is the student a qualified student with a disability?
 - What is the functional impact?
- Is the provider qualified in a field that relates to the type of disability?
- Has the relationship between the student and provider been determined to be a therapeutic one?
- Is the provider in a position to make a sound/appropriate recommendation?
 - Ex. How long have they been working together?
- What is the nexus between the disability impact and the ESA?
- Is there a clear rationale for the ESA?
- Is this evidence that the therapist considered other potential options/academic adjustments?