

Emotional Support Animal Guidelines 2020-2021

The University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown recognizes the importance of Emotional Support Animals (ESA) to individuals with a documented disability and establishes the following guidelines:

1. Student must register with the Office of Health and Counseling Services and submit an accommodation request to bring the ESA into on-campus housing. The request must include a direct link between the animal and the Owner's documented disability. Owner must personally meet with Office of Health and Counseling Services Executive Director to discuss his/her individual request. If the request for Emotional Support Animal is approved, Owner must receive written agreement from all residents of the room/apartment where the ESA will reside.
2. A request for an ESA must include a letter of recommendation from the student's treating professional (i.e. psychiatrist or physician, or licensed mental health professional). This recommendation should be part of the treatment plan and indicate the benefit provided by the specific animal. The documentation must indicate a direct correlation between the diagnosis and the need for that particular emotional support animal. The recommendation should also provide evidence of an existing and ongoing therapeutic relationship.
3. The following animals are considered acceptable ESAs:
 - A dog (recommended less than 40 pounds). The following must be submitted on or before July 31: 1) proof of flea prevention, 2) proof of spay/neuter, 3) proof of vaccinations for rabies, distemper, leptospirosis, Bordetella, and fecal OVA, and 4) parasite screening with negative result. Owner must provide evidence the ESA is licensed and wears its identification tag with its license number, proof of the microchipping process, including registration, rabies tag, and owner's cell number at all times. Additionally, the owner must certify the animal is housebroken.
 - A domestic cat (recommended at least one year old). The following must be submitted on or before July 31: 1) proof of flea prevention, 2) proof of spay/neuter, 3) proof of vaccinations for rabies and distemper, and fecal OVA, and 4) parasite screening with negative result, 5) proof of the microchipping process including registration. Owner must certify the animal is litter trained before bringing to campus.
 - A hamster
 - A guinea pig
 - A rabbit
 - If the animal is a dog, cat, small bird, rabbit, hamster, gerbil, other rodent, fish, turtle, or other small, domesticated animal that is traditionally kept in the home for pleasure rather than for commercial purposes, then the reasonable accommodation will be granted if the requestor has provided information confirming that there is a disability-related need for the animal. Reptiles (other than turtles), barnyard animals, monkeys, kangaroos, and other non-domesticated animals are not considered common household animals and therefore cannot be approved as an ESA
4. In addition to the items mentioned in guidelines #3 the following must be provided on or before July 31 (this applies to all ESAs): 1) completed and signed Authorized Animal Responsibility Agreement,

- 2) clear, full-bodied picture of the animal, 3) completed and signed Authorized Owner Emergency Contact, and 4) completed and signed Resident Agreement for Emotional Support Animal (if applicable).
5. A student is permitted to have only one ESA on campus.
 6. In the event that a roommate (or suite/lodge mate) does not agree to having an ESA in his/her room, the roommate will be given a new housing assignment.
 7. Owner is responsible for the care and supervision of the ESA and is required to maintain control of the animal at all times.
 8. The Owner must communicate with Housing and Dining Services if the care and keeping of the ESA becomes too great, or if the Owner removes the ESA from campus housing.
 9. ESAs may have access to Owner's room only and are not permitted in common areas of the apartment, lodge, residence hall or other areas of the University (e.g. other students' rooms or apartments, patios, library, academic buildings, classrooms, labs, Student Union, etc.). ESAs are not permitted to travel in any University vehicles or shuttles.
 10. ESAs may not be left overnight in University Housing to be cared for by any individual other than the Owner. If the Owner is to be absent from his/her residence hall overnight or longer, the animal must accompany the Owner or be picked up by the emergency contact.
 11. The Owner is responsible for ensuring that the ESA is contained, as appropriate, when the Owner is not present during the day while attending classes or other activities.
 12. In the event of an emergency, the university is **not** responsible for obtaining the animal from the residence. The name and contact information must be provided for an emergency contact who can retrieve the animal from campus in the event it must be removed. This individual must reside within a two-hour proximity to campus.
 13. The Owner is responsible to take care of and pick up the waste on University grounds and disposing of it properly and safely.
 14. Owner is financially responsible for the actions of the ESA including bodily injury or property damage.
 15. Owner is responsible for any expenses incurred for cleaning above and beyond a standard cleaning or for repairs to University premises (includes, but is not limited to, replacement of furniture, carpet, windows, wall coverings, etc.).
 16. The University is not responsible or liable, in any manner, for ESAs.
 17. The Owner is responsible for removal of the animal in the event of an evacuation.
 18. The Owner's room will be subject to unannounced monthly health and safety inspections to ensure it is sanitary and that the health and wellness of all occupants, including the animal, are well maintained.
 19. Any threat posed to a member of the campus community by an ESA will not be tolerated. If any aggressive or disruptive behavior is exhibited by the ESA, the Owner will be responsible for the ESAs immediate removal from campus. Examples of disruptive behavior include, but are not limited to, repeated barking or continuous noise, urinating/defecating on floors or walls, roaming the hallways, etc.
 20. All complaints about an ESA will be investigated by the Office of Housing and Dining Services or Residence Life in conjunction with Student Conduct and Campus Police.
 21. In the event of a medical emergency, including but not limited to the death of the animal while on campus, a local veterinarian or animal hospital must be contacted. In the case of an animal loss, due to death or simply choosing to not have the animal on campus, the Office of Housing & Dining Services must be notified immediately. No deceased animal is permitted to be buried anywhere on campus grounds and must be removed from campus immediately.

22. The University reserves the right to revoke ESA privileges if it is deemed the animal is being neglected or abused.

Please note: Returning students who have had an ESA in the past must reapply each year. Permission for an ESA is not automatically carried over from prior years.

Any violation of the above guidelines may result in immediate removal of the ESA from the University. Should the Emotional Support Animal be removed from the premises for any reason, Owner is expected to fulfill his/her housing obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.