

Support Animal Guidelines 2021-2022

The University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown recognizes the importance of Support Animals (SA) 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 SA into on-campus housing. The request must include a direct link between the animal and the Handler's documented disability. Handler must personally meet with Office of Health and Counseling Services to discuss his/her individual request. If the request for Support Animal is approved, Handler must receive written agreement from all residents of the room/apartment where the SA will reside.
2. A request for an SA 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 support animal. The recommendation should also provide evidence of an existing and ongoing therapeutic relationship.
3. The following animals are considered acceptable SAs:
 - A dog (**recommended** less than 40 pounds). The following must be submitted prior to bringing the animal to campus: 1) a current photograph of the animal and 2) proof of vaccinations for rabies, distemper, leptospirosis, Bordetella, and fecal OVA. Handler must provide evidence the SA is licensed and wears its identification tag with its license number, including registration, rabies tag, and handler's cell number at all times. Additionally, the handler must certify the animal is housebroken.
 - A domestic cat (**recommended** at least one year old). The following must be submitted prior to bringing the animal to campus: 1) a current photo of the animal and 2) proof of vaccinations for rabies and distemper, and fecal OVA. Handler 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 SA
4. In addition to the items mentioned in guidelines #3 the following must be provided prior to bringing the animal to campus (this applies to all SAs): 1) completed and signed Authorized Animal Responsibility Agreement, 2) clear, full-bodied picture of the animal, 3) completed and signed

Authorized Handler Emergency Contact, and 4) completed and signed Resident Agreement for Support Animal (if applicable).

5. A student is permitted to have only one SA on campus.
6. In the event that a roommate (or suite/lodge mate) does not agree to having an SA in his/her room, the roommate will be given a new housing assignment.
7. Handler is responsible for the care and supervision of the SA and is required to maintain control of the animal at all times.
8. The Handler must communicate with Housing and Dining Services if the care and keeping of the SA becomes too great, or if the Handler removes the SA from campus housing.
9. SAs may have access to Handler'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.). SAs are not permitted to travel in any University vehicles or shuttles.
10. SAs may not be left overnight in University Housing to be cared for by any individual other than the Handler. If the Handler is to be absent from his/her residence hall overnight or longer, the animal must accompany the Handler or be picked up by the emergency contact.
11. The Handler is responsible for ensuring that the SA is contained, as appropriate, when the Handler 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 Handler is responsible to take care of and pick up the waste on University grounds and disposing of it properly and safely.
14. Handler is financially responsible for the actions of the SA including bodily injury or property damage.
15. Handler 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, pest control, replacement of furniture, carpet, windows, wall coverings, etc.).
16. The University is not responsible or liable, in any manner, for SAs.
17. The Handler is responsible for removal of the animal in the event of an evacuation.
18. The Handler'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. The handler is responsible for maintaining control over the animal's behavior (for example, through excessive barking or other similar behavior, urinating/defecating on floors or walls, or roaming the hallways, etc.). Violation of this or any responsibility contained in this document will result in a written warning. More than than one written warning in an academic calendar year may result in removal of the animal from campus and/or disciplinary action against the student in accordance with other University policies.
20. Any threat posed to a member of the campus community by an SA will not be tolerated. If any aggressive or disruptive behavior is exhibited by the SA, the Handler will be responsible for the SAs immediate removal from campus
21. All complaints about an SA will be investigated by the Office of Housing and Dining Services or Residence Life in conjunction with Student Conduct and Campus Police.
22. 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.

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

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

If the University directs the animal be removed from campus, the Handler is expected to fulfill his/her housing obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.