



Animal Guidelines for Housing

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, including the presence of Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) in campus housing in accordance with the Fair Housing Act. These guidelines are intended to assist University personnel in evaluating whether the presence of an ESA in University Student Housing constitutes a reasonable accommodation and can be approved without posing a health or safety risk, creating an undue burden, or causing a fundamental alteration.

These guidelines apply specifically to ESA requests made through the disability accommodations process. Service animals, as defined under the ADA, are generally permitted in University Student Housing without prior approval and are not subject to these guidelines except in limited circumstances involving direct threat or fundamental alteration. All animals (including service animals) must comply with the [University's Policy on Pets and Animals](#). The University reserves the right to deny or rescind approval of an ESA, or to require reassignment to an alternative housing unit, where reasonable and appropriate.

All ESA accommodation requests are reviewed through an individualized, interactive process facilitated by the ACCESS department. In determining whether an ESA may be reasonably accommodated in University Student Housing, University staff will consider the factors outlined in these guidelines to ensure decisions are consistent, lawful, and responsive to the needs of the residents.

1. Health or Safety Risks

The presence of an ESA may be denied if it poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others based on an individualized assessment using objective evidence about the specific animal's behavior or condition. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Animals that are venomous or pose a toxic risk to humans or other animals;
- Animals with spines or quills that cannot be safely contained;
- Animals with known communicable diseases, or those without required vaccinations;
- Animals with a documented history of aggressive behavior;
- Wild or exotic animals that pose an inherent safety risk in the housing environment.

2. Unsuitability for the Housing Unit

An animal may not be approved if it cannot be reasonably accommodated in a specific housing unit due to space, safety, sanitation, or programmatic limitations. When evaluating housing suitability, the University will consider not only the species and size of the animal,

but also the total number of animals and residents in the unit, as well as the combined effect on cleanliness, health, safety, and roommate compatibility. For example:

- Animals whose size, mobility needs, or care requirements exceed what the unit can safely or reasonably accommodate, particularly in smaller or shared living spaces;
- Tanks or enclosures that impede emergency egress or movement, unreasonably limit usable space, or significantly increase the risk of property damage;
- The cumulative impact of multiple animals and/or multiple residents in the same unit, where the total number of animals would result in sanitation challenges, an undue administrative or operational burden, an unreasonable impact on usable space, or a fundamental alteration to the residential environment;
- Conflicting disability-related accommodations, such as co-residents with allergies or phobias or incompatible assistive animals, that may require a change in rooms (where available) for approval;
- Livestock or other species that are not appropriate for residential living environments;
- Animals that would violate applicable health or safety codes or pose unreasonable sanitation challenges;
- Animals that require physical alterations to the housing unit that cannot be reasonably implemented;
- Requests for animals in designated allergen-free housing areas.

3. Risk of Substantial Physical Damage

Animals may be denied or restricted if, based on prior behavior or reasonable prediction, the animal is likely to cause substantial, unreasonable, or unmitigable physical damage to a housing unit. This determination will be based on an individualized assessment of the specific animal, the proposed housing assignment, and the feasibility of mitigating the risk. The University will not deny an ESA based on the possibility of minor damage or typical wear and tear. Examples of situations that may warrant denial include, but are not limited to:

- Animals with a known history of destructive behaviors, such as chewing, scratching, urinating/defecating inappropriately (e.g., outside of a litter box or designated area);
- Animals that are not housed in a secure tank or enclosure (such as cats, dogs, etc.), may not be permitted in carpeted units if:
 - The animal is not fully housebroken (e.g., puppies, kittens, or animals still in training);
 - The animal has a known history of property damage through behaviors such as scratching, urination, or spraying; or
 - Other relevant factors indicate a substantial and unmitigable risk of property damage in the proposed housing unit.
- Requests involving live feeder insects or animals such as crickets, cockroaches, or rodents that present infestation or containment risks;
- Animals that are not adequately treated for fleas, mites or other pests that may lead to damage or infestation.

4. Behavioral Concerns or History

An ESA may be denied if the animal's past behavior, training status, or medical history indicates that its presence would likely result in disruption, substantial property damage, or interference with the peaceful enjoyment of the housing environment. Additionally, an ESA may be denied if the owner has previously failed to appropriately care for an animal on campus or has failed to comply with the Animals on Campus Policy. This determination will be made based on an individualized assessment of the specific facts and circumstances. In addition to concerns identified in other sections herein (e.g., risk of substantial physical damage), examples of concerns that may justify denial include, but are not limited to:

- Chronic noise issues (e.g., barking, howling) or persistent odor problems that interfere with the residential experience of other occupants or violate housing standards;
- Documented failure to respond to attempts to train or mitigate the behavior;
- Aggressive or unpredictable behavior not attributable to a temporary medical conditions;
- Failure of the owner to appropriately care for the animal, including veterinary care, maintaining the animal in a safe, clean, and human condition, and feeding, grooming, and exercising the animal;
- Failure of the owner to appropriately manage animal waste, resulting in sanitation issues or property damage;
- Repeated violations of housing policies or behavioral standards, or the [University Policy on Pets and Animals](#) by the owner.