

Guidelines for Emotional Support Animals

The Catholic University of America is committed to making reasonable and appropriate accommodations that afford all students barrier free access to University housing under the Fair Housing Act. The University recognizes that Emotional Support Animals or Therapy Animals (hereafter called “Emotional Support Animals”) help certain residents with disabilities obtain equal access to and enjoyment of University housing.

An Emotional Support Animal is an animal that may provide physical assistance, emotional support, calming, stability, and other kinds of support. An Emotional Support Animal is not a “Service Animal” (the University’s Service Animal policy is found here:

<http://policies.cua.edu/eo/serviceanimals.cfm>). An Emotional Support Animal is also not a pet, which is an animal kept for ordinary companionship.

If a resident (1) has a disability, (2) an Emotional Support Animal is necessary to afford that resident an equal opportunity to use and enjoy University housing, and (3) there is an identifiable relationship between the disability and the assistance or support the animal provides to the resident, then the resident may request an Emotional Support Animal. The University will approve an Emotional Support Animal as an accommodation consistent with the Guidelines below. No Emotional Support Animal may be in a residence hall without having it been approved in writing as an accommodation for the resident by the Office of Disability Support Services (“DSS”).

Requesting an Emotional Support Animal

- A resident is encouraged to call the DSS at 202-319-5211 to schedule an appointment to discuss the residents request for an accommodation. A resident must make a written request to DSS at least sixty (60) days prior to the start of the semester.
- A resident requesting an Emotional Support Animal must provide documentation from a licensed physician, psychiatrist, social worker, or licensed mental health professional establishing the need for the accommodation. The letter must be written within six (6) months of the request and must indicate the disability, specifically prescribe an Emotional Support Animal, and note what type of animal is recommended and that the animal will provide emotional support that alleviates one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of an existing disability.
- The following Licensing Requirements for a requested Emotional Support Animal must be provided to DSS prior to the animal being approved as an accommodation:
 1. Proof of up-to- date vaccinations against diseases common to that type of animal, such as

rabies and distemper;

2. Proof of sterilization (spaying or neutering);
3. Clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian; including a certification that the animal does not have fleas; and
4. If the Emotional Support Animal is a dog, each dog over four months old must have a DC license and wear it on a collar at all times. (Licenses can be obtained through the District of Columbia's Department of Health).

The above requirements are ongoing and must be kept current.

- If an animal is approved as an accommodation by DSS for a resident, the housing office and the Dean of Students will be notified. The housing office will in turn notify the other residents on the floor or community where the individual with the Emotional Support Animal resides. The University will do its best to accommodate other residents that have a medical condition that would be affected by the Emotional Support Animal or have a reasonable safety concern.
- Exotic animals or those animals that pose a disease threat to humans will not be allowed on campus, nor will any animal prohibited by [D.C. Code § 8-1808 \(h\)](#) be allowed to be kept on campus.
- Like classroom and testing accommodations, a resident is required to request this accommodation every semester. If a student with an Emotional Support Animal does not follow these Guidelines for future semesters, the Emotional Support Animal accommodation may be denied.
- The student will be given a letter of accommodation verifying the approval of the Accommodation from the University. The letter of accommodation should be retained by the student so that she or he can provide it as proof of the approval of the accommodation in the event that it is questioned. The letter will specifically state that the animal has been approved to accompany the student in his or her residence hall.
- Should the student determine the Emotional Support Animal is no longer needed, Disability Services must be notified. If the student wishes to replace one Emotional Support Animal with another, a new application and review of the request must be submitted.

Requirements for the Emotional Support Animal

The following requirements must be met by residents with Emotional Support Animals. If the following requirements are not met, the University may remove the Emotional Support Animal from the residence halls in its discretion. If an Emotional Support Animal is removed from the University for any reason, the Owner is still required to fulfill any remaining payment obligation on Owner's housing contract.

- The University may place other reasonable conditions or restrictions on an Emotional Support Animal depending on the nature and characteristics of the animal.
- Emotional Support Animals are only permitted in an individual's University residence, and campus areas approved by the Housing Office. The animal is not allowed in University classrooms, labs, library, or dining facilities.

- All Emotional Support Animals must be under the control of the resident who has had the animal approved as an accommodation by DSS (hereafter referred to as "Owner"). The Owner is responsible for taking all reasonable precautions to protect members of the University community and University property.
- The Emotional Support Animal must never leave the residence hall room except under the control of the owner. This means the animal must be on a leash or in a carrier or cage. The owner is liable for all actions of the animal and should be in total control of the animal at all times.
- The Emotional Support Animal must be properly cared for and nourished.
- The Emotional Support Animal must act appropriately and be under control. If an Emotional Support Animal is removed from campus because of inappropriate behavior or because the Emotional Support Animal is not under control, the animal may only return to the University if it can be demonstrated that the animal's inappropriate behavior has been addressed and the animal is under control.
- An Emotional Support Animal may not pose a risk to the health and safety of individuals. This might include, but is not limited to, the animal's illness, lack of cleanliness, and presence in an inappropriate area that might put the animal or others at risk, or aggressive behavior.
- Cleaning up the waste or any mess left by an Emotional Support Animal is the sole responsibility of the Owner. Emotional Support Animals must be house trained and must urinate or defecate outside; training pads or "puppy pads" are not permitted in residence halls. The animal's waste must be removed by placing the waste in a closed container and depositing it in an appropriate outdoor waste receptacle.
- Any cost incurred by the University to eradicate fleas, clean up a mess or repair property damage caused by an animal is the responsibility of the Owner. The Owner will be billed by the University for such costs.
- All liability for the actions of the animal (bites, scratches, running away, etc.) are the responsibility of the Owner. The University encourages Owners to consider appropriate liability insurance.
- If the Owner leaves the University overnight, the Emotional Support Animal must be removed from the residence hall.
- The Owner will notify the Resident Assistant and Community Director if the Emotional Support Animal escapes.
- The University is not liable if the Emotional Support Animal escapes from the Owner's room.
- The Owner of an Emotional Support Animal in a residence hall will provide to the Resident Assistant and Community Director the emergency contact information of an individual who will be on call to care for the animal in the event the Owner is unable to care for the animal.
- The Owners' residence may be inspected for fleas, ticks or other pests once a semester or as needed. The applicable housing office for the residence hall will schedule the inspection. If fleas, ticks or other pests were detected during inspection, the residence will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a University approved pest control service. The Owner will be

billed for this service and the approved animal will not be allowed back in the residence hall until the owner provides proof that a veterinarian has treated the animal for the condition.

Questions or concerns about these guidelines should be addressed to:

Office of Disability Support Services

The Catholic University of America

Pryzbyla Center 127

620 Michigan Avenue, NE Washington, DC 20064

202-319-5211 cua-dss@cua.edu

February 2017