

## Procedures and Guidelines for Requesting Emotional Support Assistance Animal in Residence Hall

For purposes of this procedure, the following terms have the following meanings:

*“Assistance animal”* means an animal that has been determined necessary to mitigate the effects of a physical or mental disability by a physician, psychologist, physician’s assistant, nurse practitioner or licensed social worker. Unlike a service animal, an assistance animal does not assist a person with a disability with the activities of daily living or accompany the person at all times.

*“Owner”* means an individual who receives a disability accommodation for the use of assistance animal.

### Required Documentation

Students seeking an accommodation for the presence of an assistance animal must provide the following supporting documentation.

#### A. Documentation of student’s disability from health care provider

Verification of the individual’s disability from a licensed physician, psychologist, physician’s assistant, nurse practitioner, or social worker (individually and collectively “health professional”). Verification shall be in the form of a letter from the health professional, on letterhead, signed and dated, preferably within the prior six months, that includes the following information:

1. The length of time the health professional has been working with the student;
2. Diagnosis/description of student’s disability, as relevant for ESA request;
3. A description of the animal and whether it was specifically prescribed as treatment for the student’s verified disability; how long student has had specific animal;
4. How the animal serves as an accommodation for the verified disability, including the symptoms that will be mitigated by the presence of the animal, and any evidence that the animal has benefitted the student;
5. How the need for the animal relates to the ability of the student to use and enjoy a college’s residential housing;
6. The degree of importance to the student’s well-being that the animal be in residence on campus;
7. Whether the full-time sole responsibility of caring for an animal in residential housing will cause stress or otherwise negatively affect the student’s ability to succeed in a college environment;
8. Any consequences related to the disability that may result if the accommodation is not approved; possible alternatives if accommodation is not approved;
9. Any other pertinent information requested.

#### B. Documentation of assistance animal from veterinarian’s office

A licensed veterinarian shall provide a statement on letterhead attesting that the named animal is in good health and is suited to living in a residence hall, including the following information:

1. Proof of required immunizations as required; or address health/risk of communicable disease;
2. If applicable, note whether animal neutered/spayed, housebroken;
3. Suitability of animal for confined, communal living, including:

- a. consideration of size of dorm room, need for physical exercise;
  - b. ability to be left alone in dorm room while student attends class, meals, etc., including sensitivity to environmental noise, animal behaviors including barking, whining, or destruction of property when left alone;
  - c. that animal is well-behaved and will not damage college or personal property, inflict injury on any person or create a nuisance, including but not limited to excessive noise, annoying, disruptive or threatening behavior;
  - d. clean and pest-free: odor free, minimal shedding/ dander (hypoallergenic coat preferred)
4. Affirm that the vet and student have discussed plan for animal care, including these guidelines:
    - a. Animal is sole responsibility of owner, including care, feeding, and waste disposal;
    - b. Animal must remain in student's residence room and is not permitted in hallways or common rooms – except direct transit from student room to hallway/exit;
    - c. Student must have a plan for animal care in case of absence from campus, illness, or other circumstances that interfere with student's ability to be fully responsible. Student may not leave animal under care of other students or staff.
    - d. Student should be prepared to meet financial obligations of pet ownership, including cost of food and supplies, including HEPA air filter;
  5. Animal should be licensed annually, as relevant.

**C. Letter from student agreeing to meet the following requirements while on campus:**

The student needs to agree to these statements and provide detail about items C & D below:

- a. Animal is sole responsibility of owner, including care, feeding, and waste disposal;
- b. Animal must remain in student's residence room and is not permitted in hallways or common rooms – except direct transit from student room to hallway/exit;
- c. Student must have **a plan for animal care in case of absence from campus**, illness, or other circumstances that interfere with student's ability to be fully responsible. Student may not leave animal under care of other students or staff.
- d. Student should be **prepared to meet financial obligations of pet ownership**, including cost of food and supplies, including HEPA air filter for allergenic animals.

In addition to observing these rules, the owner shall be responsible for the actions of the animal, including bodily injury and property damage. The owner shall be responsible for any resulting expenses as well as for any expenses required due to costs incurred in cleaning that are above and beyond a normal cleaning, including pest control services. The college shall have the right to bill the owner for any financial obligations attributable to the animal. The owner is also responsible for clean-up and proper disposal of the animal's waste.

**Application Deadlines for Housing Accommodations Requests with COMPLETE DOCUMENTATION**

The student requesting accommodation should provide all required documentation to Accessibility Services before these deadlines: **August 1** (fall housing) or **December 1** (spring housing) or **May 1** (summer housing).

- Accessibility Services, 123 Maine Hall, EMCC, 354 Hogan Road, Bangor, ME 04401
- As email attachment to [ACCESS@emcc.edu](mailto:ACCESS@emcc.edu)
- Via fax: 207-974-4883