

Emotional Support Animal Policy and Agreement

Purchase College follows the most recent guidelines from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regarding emotional support animals (ESAs). In accordance with HUD and the Fair Housing Act (FHA), Purchase College has established the following policy to assist in making decisions regarding the presence of ESAs in college housing for individuals with disabilities. This policy pertains to ESAs in campus housing only, and not to service animals or pets. Purchase College reserves the right to amend this policy at any time as circumstances require.

Section I: Emotional Support Animals (ESAs)

Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) provide necessary emotional support to an individual with a mental health or psychiatric disability that alleviates one or more identified symptoms of an individual's disability, but which are not considered Service Animals under the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. Any type of animal may serve a person with a disability as an ESA. A "pet" is defined as an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. Full-time professional staff can only have fish in an aquarium, and a limit of (2) caged pets (birds, hamsters, etc.), or up to two cats. A full-time professional staff wishing to have a pet in his/her apartment must submit a request in writing to the Assistant Dean of the Office of Residentil and Student Life before obtaining the pet.

ESAs may not be brought into College housing without expressed approval from both the Office of Disability Resources (ODR) and the Office of Residentil and Student Life (RSL). An ESA as a housing accommodation is approved for College housing only and will not be permitted in other College buildings (e.g. libraries, academic buildings, classrooms, labs, student center).

Section II: Requesting Emotional Support Animals in College Housing

An individual requesting permission to keep an ESA in campus housing should complete the steps below. ODR will accept and consider requests for ESAs in College housing at any time. The individual making the request for the ESA should complete and provide the "**Application to Have an Emotional Support Animal in Campus Housing**" and "**Request for Information Re: Emotional Support Animal**" as soon as practicably possible before moving into College housing.

Individuals must obtain approvals from:

1. The Office of Disability Resources, for the accommodation of an ESA
2. The Office of Residentil and Student Life, for permission to place a specific ESA in campus housing

All approvals are determined on a case-by-case basis. The college reserves the right to request updated documentation every academic year to verify the continued need for an ESA.

STEP 1: Office of Disability Resources – Applying for the ESA housing accommodation

- A.** The individual must indicate in writing to the Director of ODR their request to have an ESA in campus housing. Once received, the Director of ODR will e-mail the individual the **“Emotional Support Animal Policy and Agreement,”** **“Application to Have an Emotional Support Animal in Campus Housing,”** and **“Request for Information Re: Emotional Support Animal”** documents for their review.
- B.** The individual should submit the completed **“Application to Have an Emotional Support Animal in Campus Housing”** to the ODR.
- C.** The individual (or treatment provider) should provide ODR with the completed **“Request for Information Re: Emotional Support Animal”** to the ODR. This form is to be completed by a reliable off-campus third party who can verify that the individual has a mental health or psychiatric disability and that the requested ESA accommodation is necessary to provide the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy College housing.
- D. After steps A, B, and C are completed, the ODR will review the individual’s request.**
1. If the accommodation is **approved** by the ODR:
 - (a) The individual will be contacted via their Purchase College e-mail address to arrange a meeting to discuss the implementation of the ESA accommodation.
 - (b) Once the individual meets with the ODR, the office will notify the Director of Residential Services that the individual has been approved for an accommodation of an ESA in campus housing.
 2. If the accommodation is **denied** by the ODR:
 - (a) ODR will provide a written notification to the individual of the denial, the reasons for the denial, the right to appeal the decision, and the procedures for that appeals process via their Purchase College e-mail address.
 3. **Accommodations are not retroactive.** Approval for an accommodation of an ESA cannot be retroactively applied to violations of the Office of Residential and Student Life Professional Staff Manual. **Do not acquire an animal prior to approval from both ODR and RSL to have an ESA in campus housing.**

STEP 2: Office of Residentil and Student Life – Applying for placement of a specific ESA

- E. Next, the individual will work with the Director of Residential Services from the Office of Residentil and Student Life on the following steps. **Individuals cannot acquire an animal prior to approval from both ODR and RSL to have an ESA in campus housing.**

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1. A meeting will be arranged with the individual to review their specific ESA.
 - i. For all requests for ESAs, ODR shall consult with RSL in making a determination on a case-by-case basis of whether the presence of an ESA is reasonable. A request for an ESA may be denied as unreasonable if the presence of the animal: (1) imposes an undue financial and/or administrative burden; (2) fundamentally alters College housing policies; and/or (3) poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or would cause substantial property damage to the property of others, including College property.
 - ii. The College may consider the following factors, among others, as evidence in determining whether the presence of the animal is reasonable or in the making of housing assignments for individuals with ESAs:
 1. The size of the animal is too large for available assigned housing space;
 2. The animal's presence would force another individual from individual housing (e.g. serious allergies);
 3. The animal's presence otherwise violates individuals' right to peace and quiet enjoyment;
 4. The animal is not housebroken or is unable to live with others in a reasonable manner;
 5. The animal's vaccinations are not up-to-date;
 6. The animal poses or has posed in the past a direct threat to the individual or others such as aggressive behavior towards or injuring the individual or others; or
 7. The animal causes or has caused excessive damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear.
 - iii. Purchase College will not limit room assignments for individuals with ESAs to any particular building or buildings because the individual needs an ESA because of a disability.
2. The individual and Director of Residential Services will carefully review the individual's responsibilities pertaining to having an ESA in campus housing (see **Section IV**).
3. Should there be conflicting considerations that arise between the individual approved for an ESA and the needs of others in the residential hall community, such as health/allergy conditions or fear of the

animal, either the individual with the ESA or the non-approving community member(s) may be moved to a different location based on space availability. This may occur at the initial approval stage of this prRSLs or if a conflict should arise in the future. The Director of Residential Services will respond in a timely manner and will carefully consider options for all involved parties.

4. Community Engagement building staff will be notified (e.g., the Residence Coordinator and Resident Assistant) by the Director of Residential Services that an ESA has been approved, as appropriate.

Section III: Forms that must be submitted and approved prior to the ESA entering campus housing

An ESA **may not** reside in campus housing until the following forms and additional information have been submitted to and approved by the appropriate office:

1. Application to Have an Emotional Support Animal in Campus Housing (ODR)
2. Emotional Support Animal Request for Information (ODR)
3. Acknowledgement and Release of Information Consent Form (ODR and RSL)
4. Emotional Support Animal Registration Form (RSL)
5. Alternate Off-Campus Caregiver's Information (RSL)
6. required veterinary records, when appropriate for the animal (RSL)
7. licensing verification, if applicable (RSL)
8. photograph of the Emotional Support Animal (RSL)

Section IV: Responsibilities of Individuals Approved for Emotional Support Animals

A. Care and supervision. The ESA is the responsibility of the individual, who is required to maintain full control of the animal at all times. Purchase College will assume no responsibility/liability for the care of a individual's ESA.

1. An ESA must be contained in the individual's assigned room except to the extent the individual is taking the animal out for natural relief. The ESA must be on a leash or transported in an animal carrier when outside of the individual's room.
2. The individual is responsible for ensuring that the ESA is contained, as appropriate, when the individual is not present during the day while attending work or other activities.
3. ESAs are not allowed in any College facilities other than the living space to which the individual is assigned.
4. The individual is responsible for ensuring that the ESA does not interfere with routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for other residents.
5. ESAs may not become the responsibility of another individual living on campus. If the individual with an ESA leaves campus for a prolonged period of time, including overnight, either the animal must be taken with the individual or the animal must be cared for off campus.
6. The individual is responsible for ensuring proper cleanup of the animal's waste. Solid waste—including litter—must be placed in sturdy, securely tied bags before being disposed of in outside trash dumpsters.

7. The RSL may place reasonable conditions or restrictions on approved animals, depending on the nature and characteristics of the animal.
8. When placing a work request, the individual with the ESA is responsible for noting that an approved ESA is in his/her room.

B. Health and wellbeing. Local ordinances regarding animals apply to ESAs, including requirements for immunization, licensing, noise, restraint, at-large animals, and dangerous animals.

1. Dogs must wear a license tag and a current rabies vaccination tag.
2. Animals housed in campus housing must have a clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian, when appropriate for the animal.

C. Financial responsibility. Any cost for the actions of the ESA—including, but not limited to, bodily injury, property damage, pest control and/or non-standard cleaning—must be met by the individual. The College reserves the right to bill the individual for charges related to their ESA.

D. Notification. The individual is responsible for immediately notifying ODR and RSL if:

1. the animal is no longer residing in campus housing, or
2. the individual is requesting that the approved animal be replaced by another ESA.

E. Removal of the ESA. The individual may be required to remove the animal from campus housing if:

1. there are any violations of responsibilities,
2. the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others by being unruly, disruptive, and/or aggressive,
3. the animal is not housebroken,
4. the animal is destructive,
5. the animal or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the College community or
6. other situations that may arise that negatively impact the campus environment.

Any removal of the animal will be done in consultation with the Office of Disability Resources and may be appealed to the College's ADA Compliance Officer. If the individual is told to remove the animal from campus and has not done so within 48 hours of notification, the College reserves the right to remove the animal and take it to the nearest humane society location.

Acknowledgement and Release of Information Consent Form

By my signature below, I verify that I have read, understand and will abide by the requirements outlined here and I agree to provide the additional information required to complete my **“Application to Have an ESA in Campus Housing”** and **“Request for Information Re: Emotional Support Animal”** under the College’s Emotional Support Animal Policy.

I have read and understand the Emotional Support Animal Policy and Agreement and I agree to abide by the requirements applicable to Emotional Support Animals. I understand that if I fail to meet the requirements set forth in the Policy, Purchase College has the right to remove the Emotional Support Animal.

I furthermore give permission to the Office of Disability Resources to disclose to others impacted by the presence of my Emotional Support Animal (e.g., Office of Residentil and Student Life, potential and/or actual neighbor(s)) that I will be living with an animal as an accommodation. I understand that this information will be shared with the intent of preparing for the presence of the Emotional Support Animal and/or resolving any potential issues associated with the presence of the Emotional Support Animal.

I further recognize that the presence of the Emotional Support Animal may be noticed by others visiting or residing in College Housing and agree that staff may acknowledge the presence of the animal, and explain that under certain circumstances Emotional Support Animals are permitted for persons with disabilities.

Faculty/Staff’s Signature

Date

Office of Disability Resources Representative

Date

Office of Residentil and Student Life Supervisor

Date

Emotional Support Animal Registration Form

Faculty/Staff's Information

Individual's Name

Phone Number

Individual's Campus Address

Emotional Support Animal's Information

Animal's Name

Species

Breed

Animal's Sex

Spayed/Neutered?

Color

Age & Weight

Description of Animal:

Alternate Off-Campus Caregiver's Information

Faculty/staff approved for the accommodation of an ESA in campus housing must provide contact information for an alternate caregiver who lives off campus and can care for the ESA if the approved individual is unable to do so (e.g., unexpected hospitalization). ESAs may not become the responsibility of another individual living on campus. Purchase College will assume no responsibility/liability for the care of a individual's ESA.

Alternate Caregiver's Name

Phone

Alternate Caregiver's Address

City/State

Zip Code

Additional Documents

Please attach 1) a licensed veterinarian's verification that the animal has a clean bill of health and all veterinary-recommended vaccinations to maintain the animal's health and prevent contagious disease, as required by local ordinances and regulation and when appropriate for the animal; 2) a copy of your state's required animal license, if appropriate; and 3) a photograph of the ESA.