

**PURCHASE COLLEGE**  
**OFFICE of DISABILITY RESOURCES**

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## **Purchase College 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 students 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)**

An Emotional Support Animal (ESA) is an animal that provides therapeutic emotional support for an individual with a diagnosed mental health disability. Unlike service animals that are trained to perform specific tasks that are important to the independence or safety of their disabled handler, ESAs are generally not trained to perform disability-specific tasks. Their therapeutic support is a function of their presence and interaction with the person with a disability. An ESA may be a dog, cat, rabbit, hamster, gerbil, or other small, domesticated animal that is traditionally kept in the home for pleasure. Generally, a dog must be at least 9 months of age to live on campus to assure that the dog is reliably housebroken, not disruptive to other residents, and has all of the shots necessary to make it safe to be around humans and other animals (that may be in residence). A “pet” is defined as an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. Residents are not permitted to keep pets in College housing, except small fish (which live submerged in water) in a tank no larger than 10-gallons.

ESAs may not be brought into College housing without expressed approval from both the Office of Disability Resources (ODR) and the Office of Residential 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 a [Public Accommodation Request](#). Students already registered with ODR should instead complete a [Supplemental Accommodation Request form](#). Upon receipt of initial request, ODR will provide the application containing both the student and the treatment provider portions. Once both portions have been submitted, the application will be reviewed. Students are encouraged to submit these materials as soon as practicably possible before moving into College housing. However, if the request for accommodation is made after the below submission dates, Purchase College cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the individual’s accommodation needs during the first semester or term of occupancy.

- **Spring Semester submit by: November 30<sup>th</sup>**
- **Summer Semester submit by: April 1<sup>nd</sup>**
- **Fall Semester submit by: June 1<sup>st</sup>**

If the need for the accommodation arises when an individual already resides in College housing, he/she should contact ODR and complete the steps to request an ESA as soon as practicably possible. Purchase College cannot guarantee that

it will be able to meet the accommodation needs during the semester or term in which the request is received. Students must obtain approvals from:

1. The Office of Disability Resources, for the accommodation of an ESA
2. The Office of Residential 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, or any time information or evidence is received that indicates that the accommodation(s) is no longer needed.

### **Step 1: Office of Disability Resources – Applying for the ESA Housing Accommodation**

1. If the student is new to requesting accommodations through ODR, they must submit their disability-related information to ODR via a [Public Accommodation Request](#). If the student is already registered with ODR, they must follow the steps to [submit a supplemental accommodation request](#). Once received, ODR will e-mail the student the below documents to their Purchase College e-mail address, for their review:
  - a. Emotional Support Animal Policy and Agreement
  - b. Application to Have an Emotional Support Animal in Campus Housing
  - c. Request for Information Re: Emotional Support Animal
2. The student should submit the completed **“Application to Have an Emotional Support Animal in Campus Housing”** and a signed copy of page 6 of the **“Purchase College Emotional Support Animal Policy and Agreement”** packet titled, **“Acknowledgement and Release of Information Consent Form”** to the ODR.
3. The student (or treatment provider) should provide ODR with the completed **“Request for Information Re: Emotional Support Animal.”** This form is to be completed by a reliable off-campus third party (psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, mental health worker, health care provider) who can verify that the student has a disability and that the requested ESA accommodation is necessary to provide the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy College housing. *Providing false information constitutes a violation of the Purchase College Student Code of Conduct and might result in disciplinary action.*
4. **After steps 1, 2, and 3 are completed, the ODR will review the student’s request.**
  - If the accommodation is **approved** by the ODR:
    - The student will be contacted via their Purchase College e-mail address to discuss the implementation of the ESA accommodation.
    - Once this process with ODR is complete the office will notify the Office of Residential and Student Life that the student has been approved for an accommodation of an ESA in campus housing.
  - If the accommodation is **denied** by the ODR:
    - 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 procedure for that appeals process via their Purchase College e-mail address.

- **Accommodations are not retroactive.** Approval for an accommodation of an ESA cannot be retroactively applied to appeal previous pet violations through the Office of Community Standards. **Do not acquire an animal prior to approval from both ODR and RSL to have an ESA in campus housing.**

## **Step 2: Office of Residential and Student Life – Applying for Placement of a Specific ESA**

Once the accommodation of an ESA is approved by ODR, the student will work with the Office of Residential and Student Life from the Office of Residential and Student Life on the following steps. **Students cannot acquire an animal prior to approval from both ODR and RSL to have an ESA in campus housing.** If the initial approval to place a specific ESA in campus housing through RSL is made after the below submission dates, Purchase College cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the individual's accommodation needs during the first semester or term of occupancy.

- **Spring Semester submit by: November 30<sup>th</sup>**
  - **Summer Semester submit by: April 1<sup>st</sup>**
  - **Fall Semester submit by: June 1<sup>st</sup>**
1. A meeting will be arranged by the Office of Residential and Student Life with the student to review their specific ESA.
    - For all requests for ESAs, RSL shall consult with ODR 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.
    - The College may consider the following factors, among others, as evidence in determining whether the presence of the animal is reasonable in the making of housing assignments for individuals with ESAs:
      - The size of the crate/cage that is needed for the animal to be contained while the student is not in the room is too large for available assigned housing space;
      - The animal's presence would force another individual from individual housing (e.g. serious allergies);
      - The animal's presence otherwise violates individuals' right to peace and quiet enjoyment;
      - The animal is not housebroken or is unable to live with others in a reasonable manner;
      - The animal's vaccinations are not up-to-date;
      - 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;
      - The animal causes or has caused excessive damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear; or
      - The animal poses health risks from zoonotic diseases or safety concerns regarding containment that cannot be sufficiently mitigated for inclusion in the communal living setting.
    - ESAs are domesticated animals and most frequently are dogs or cats. Certain unusual animals pose unavoidable safety and/or public health concerns. Snakes, other reptiles, ferrets, rodents, and spiders fall into this category of animals. The release of such an animal could result in a direct threat to the health or safety of the other individuals living in the residence. These animals will not generally be approved as an ESA, unless there is a mitigating circumstance or reason to consider an exception.

- 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 student and Office of Residential and Student Life will carefully review the student's responsibilities pertaining to having an ESA in campus housing (see Section IV).
  3. If applicable, Resident Assistants (RAs) who are requesting to have an ESA in campus housing will have a conversation with the Office of Residential and Student Life to review the Residence Life Agreement and their performance guidelines, as it pertains to their role as an RA/employee with an ESA.
  4. The student's roommate(s) or apartment mate(s) will be notified by the Director of Residential Services, as appropriate, regarding the ESA being housed in their living environment.
  5. Should there be conflicting considerations that arise between the student approved for an ESA and the needs of roommate(s), apartment mate(s), and/or others in the residential hall community, such as health/allergy conditions or fear of the animal, either the student with the ESA or the non-approving roommate(s), apartment mate(s), or community member(s) may be moved to a different location based on space availability. This may occur at the initial approval stage of this process or if a conflict should arise in the future. The Office of Residential and Student Life will respond in a timely manner and will carefully consider options for all involved students.
  6. The Office of Residential and Student Life building staff will be notified (e.g., the Residence Coordinator and Resident Assistant) by the Director of RSL 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:

- Application to Have an Emotional Support Animal in Campus Housing (ODR)
- Emotional Support Animal Request for Information (ODR)
- Acknowledgement and Release of Information Consent Form (ODR and RSL)
- Emotional Support Animal Registration Form (RSL)
- Alternate Off-Campus Caregiver's Information (RSL)
- Required veterinary records, when appropriate for the animal (RSL)
- Licensing verification, if applicable (RSL)
- Photograph of the Emotional Support Animal (RSL)

### **Section IV: Responsibilities of Students Approved for Emotional Support Animals**

#### **Care and Supervision**

The ESA is the responsibility of the student, 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 student's ESA.

- An ESA must be contained in the student'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 student's room.
- The student is responsible for ensuring that the ESA is contained, as appropriate, when the student is not present during the day while attending classes or other activities.
- ESAs are not allowed in any College facilities other than the living space to which the individual is assigned.

- The student is responsible for ensuring that the ESA does not interfere with routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for other residents.
- ESAs may not become the responsibility of another student living on campus. If the student with an ESA leaves campus for a prolonged period of time, including overnight, either the animal must be taken with the student or the animal must be cared for off campus.
- The student 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.
- The RSL may place reasonable conditions or restrictions on approved animals, depending on the nature and characteristics of the animal.
- When notifying the Resident Assistant or Resident Coordinator about the need to place a work request, the student with the ESA is responsible for noting that an approved ESA is in his/her room.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

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

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

### **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 student. The College reserves the right to bill the student's account for charges related to ESAs. In addition, this matter may also be referred to the Office of Community Standards.

### **Notification**

The student is responsible for immediately notifying ODR and RSL if:

- The animal is no longer residing in campus housing,
- The student is requesting that the approved animal be replaced by another ESA, or
- The student relocates to a different residence hall or apartment on campus.

### **Removal of the ESA**

The student may be required to remove the animal from campus housing if:

- There are any violations of student responsibilities,
- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others by being unruly, disruptive, and/or aggressive,
- The animal is not housebroken,
- The animal is destructive,
- The animal or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the College community, or
- 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 Office of Student Affairs. Should removal of the animal from campus housing occur, the student will be expected to fulfill any housing obligations for the remainder of the student's housing contract. If the student 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. The student will then be reported to the Office of Community Standards for violation of Purchase College's Student Code of Conduct.

## 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 and I will be required to fulfill my housing, academic, and all other obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

I furthermore give permission to the Office of Disability Resources and Office of Residential and Student Life to disclose to others impacted by the presence of my Emotional Support Animal (e.g., Office of Residential and Student Life staff, potential and/or actual roommate(s)/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.

Student’s Name: [Click or tap to enter name.](#)

Student’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: [Click or tap to enter a date.](#)

Office of Disability Resources Representative Name: [Click or tap to enter name.](#)

Representative’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: [Click or tap to enter a date.](#)

Office of Residential and Student Life Representative Name: [Click or tap to enter name.](#)

Representative’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: [Click or tap to enter a date.](#)

## **Student's Information**

Student's Name: Click or tap to enter name.

Student ID: Click or tap to enter ID number.

Phone Number: Click or tap to enter phone number.

Student's Campus Address: Click or tap to enter address.

## **Emotional Support Animal's Information**

Animal's Name: Click or tap to enter name.

Species: Click or tap to enter species.

Breed: Click or tap to enter breed.

Animal's Sex: Click or tap to enter text.

Spayed/Neutered? Yes: ☐ No: ☐

Color: Click or tap to enter color.

Age & Weight: Click or tap here to enter text.

Description of Animal: Click or tap here to enter text.

## **Alternate Off-Campus Caregiver's Information**

Student approved for the accommodation of an ESA in campus housing must provide contact information for an alternate caregiver who lives off campus, within a 3 hour distance from campus, and can care for the ESA if the approved student is unable to do so (e.g., unexpected hospitalization). ESAs may not become the responsibility of another student living on campus. Purchase College will assume no responsibility/liability for the care of a student's ESA.

Alternate Caregiver's Name: Click or tap to enter name.

Phone Number: Click or tap to enter phone number.

Alternate Caregiver's Address: Click or tap to enter address.

City/State: Click or tap to enter city and state.

Zip Code: Click or tap to enter zip code.



## **Additional Documents**

Please attach:

- 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
- A copy of your State's required animal license, if appropriate
- A photograph of the ESA