



**STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES
AND RESIDENCE LIFE**

Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals in On-Campus Housing

POLICY STATEMENT

University of Detroit Mercy is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities, fulfilling its obligations under state and federal law. This procedure governs the use of emotional support animals as reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities in campus housing. The Fair Housing Act (FHA) identifies two types of assistance animals:

1. **Service animals.** One that will do work, perform tasks, and will provide assistance to its owner.
2. **Emotional Support Animals (ESA).** One that provides therapeutic emotional support for individuals with disabilities.

The health and safety of Detroit Mercy students, faculty, staff, Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals are paramount. Therefore, each request for an ESA accommodation will be carefully considered and approvals/disapprovals will be made on a case-by-case basis. Requests for an accommodation regarding an ESA must be supported by sufficient medical documentation for proper consideration of the request.

The University will not allow on-campus housing of any animal that:

1. Poses a threat to the health or safety of others.
2. Would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others.
3. Would pose an undue financial and administrative burden.
4. Would fundamentally alter the nature of housing operations.

Students living with service or ESA animals are expected to adhere to the same housing policies as all other residents in addition to this procedure. In all cases, the owner of the Service/ESA animal is responsible for its behavior. The animal's owner will be charged for any costs associated with cleaning, repairs, and/or pest control required due to the presence of the service/assistance animal, in any residence hall.

SERVICE ANIMALS

Definitions of Service Animals:

A service animal, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), is a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition, however there is a special provision of the ADAAA that permits miniature horses in some cases.

The work or task a service animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. The provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition. References to service animals herein refer to service animals as defined by the ADAAA.

Service Animals in Campus Housing:

- A student may reside with a service animal in campus housing if the person has a disability and the animal meets the definition of a service animal as states above.
- An individual with a disability who wishes to reside in housing with a service dog in training must be:
 1. Registered with SAS interactive process.
 2. Approved through the SAS interactive process.
 3. Service dogs in training are highly recommended to be twelve (12) months of age or older.
- The service animal is permitted to accompany the resident to all area of campus housing, dining facilities, academic buildings, athletic facilities, classrooms, labs, libraries, etc.), where students are normally permitted to go.
- The University may, however, prohibit the use of service animals in certain locations due to health or safety restrictions, where service animals may be in danger, or where their use may compromise the integrity of research. Exceptions to restricted areas may be granted on a case-by-case basis by contacting SAS interactive process.

Recommended Registration Process for Service Animals On-Campus Housing

- We strongly encourage the student who will utilize a service animal in housing to identify and register with SAS. This will enable the University to appropriately plan for the animal's presence in housing and provide the student with information about the full range of disability services as provided by SAS.
- We encourage that the student with a service animal meet with the Director of Residence Life to discuss guidelines for residing in housing with an animal. During the meeting, the student and Director of Residence Life will discuss the responsibilities listed in the procedure.
- In situations where it is not obvious that a dog is a service animal, staff may use the following questions to help them determine if the animal is a service animal under the ADA:

- Is it readily apparent that the dog is trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability? It is readily apparent when the dog is observed:
 - Guiding an individual who is blind or has low vision.
 - Pulling a wheelchair.
 - Providing assistance with stability or balance to an individual with an observable mobility disability.
 - If yes, further inquiries are necessary and inappropriate because the dog is a service animal.
 - If no, proceed to the next question.
 - Is the dog required because of a disability?
 - What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

Additional Information

- Although a service animal may sometimes be identified by an identification card, harness, cape, or backpack, such identifiers are not required and should not be requested or demanded for any service animal on campus.
- University employees should not question an individual about an accompanying service dog if the individual's disability is readily apparent and the function of the accompanying dog is clear.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL (ESA)

Definition of Emotional Support Animal (ESA)

An emotional support animal, as defined under the Fair Housing Act, is an animal that provides necessary emotional support to individuals with disabilities with a mental or psychiatric disability, but which is not considered a service animal under the ADA. References to emotional support animals herein refer to assistance animals as defined by the FHA.

Emotional Support Animals in Campus Housing:

- The SAS office makes the determination if the ESA is qualified to reside in the UDM residence hall. This is a three-step interactive process.
- If an ESA accommodation is approved by the SAS office, the following applies:
 - The ESA must be contained within the student's privately assigned individual living quarters (room or suite) except to the extent the resident is taking the animal out for natural relief.
 - When the ESA is outside the resident's private living quarters, the animal must be in an animal carrier or controlled by a leash or harness.
 - The ESA is not permitted in other areas of the University (e.g., other campus housing locations, other student's rooms, dining facilities, academic buildings, athletic buildings and facilities, labs, libraries, etc.).
 - The student must have an established relationship with the ESA of at least 6 months prior to move-in date. This will help to ensure that the student is familiar with the ESA's behavior, habits, and needs, for the safety and well-being of the animal and the students and staff who work or reside in the residence halls.

- ESAs are required to be at least twelve (12) months of age unless an exception to this requirement has been approved by SAS.

How to Request an ESA ACCOMMODATION

The process for requesting an ESA accommodation should be completed at least 30 days prior to the student's move in date. Requesting an ESA Accommodation requires the three-step Interactive Process, as seen below, before a determination can be made if an ESA is qualified to reside on the UDM Campus, according to the ADAAA guidelines.

Step One: Complete the Initial Request Application

- Go to: udmercy.edu.
- Search: **Student Accessibility Services SAS**, (formally Disability Support Services, DSS.)
- On the Student Accessibility Services SAS, webpage, scroll down and click on the large box "REGISTERING FOR SERVICES."
- Follow the prompts to complete the initial application. This is "step one" of the request process. Every question must be answered in detail, or your application will not be accepted.
- Once the Initial Request Application is completed, the student will receive a letter confirming it was received and "step two" forms will be provided with directions on how they are to be completed at that time.
- Contact SAS if you have any questions.

Step Two: Complete ESA and Student Medical Forms.

- The SAS provides the student with two forms that must be completed.
- Form one must be completed in full, including all listed vaccine dates by the ESA's veterinarian.
- Form two must be completed by the student's licensed medical provider with whom the student has an established relationship.
- SAS reserves the right to request additional information from the student to substantiate a disability and/or need for the accommodation.

Step Three: The Accommodation Request Meeting

- Once the SAS receives the necessary documentation, the SAS will contact the student to schedule an Accommodation Request Meeting.
- During this meeting, we will have a two-way conversation about your disability and its impact in the academic setting and in daily living. It is a time when SAS will become familiar with a student's individual disability related needs.

RESIDENCE LIFE REQUIREMENTS

If the ESA is granted an approved accommodation from the SAS, the student is required to agree to and sign the Emotional Support Animal Agreement for Residence Life with the Director of

Residence Life, which will confirm that the student will abide by the Detroit Mercy Policies regarding ESAs.

- The Director of Residence Life (or designee) will go over the agreement with the resident and roommate/suitemates, if applicable.
- **The student is ONLY permitted to bring the animal to campus and into campus housing after receiving the official approval notification from SAS and meeting with the Residence Life Staff.**
- Any approved request to have an ESA in housing is only valid for one (1) academic year (fall, winter, spring/summer) and must be requested annually by completing the process in place at that time. Failure to complete the process each year will result in immediate removal of the animal from campus housing.
- Detroit Mercy may deny a request for an ESA in housing if the presence of the animal:
 - Poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others.
 - Causes substantial physical damage to the property of others.
 - Poses an undue financial and administrative burden.
 - Fundamentally alters the nature of housing operations.
 - Is not up to date on required vaccinations.
- The factors considered by the University in determining whether an ESA is suitable for on-campus housing include but are not limited to:
 - Whether the animal's presence would otherwise violate other individuals' right to peace and quiet enjoyment of their dwelling.
 - Whether the animal is housebroken and able to live with others in a reasonable manner.
 - Whether the animal's vaccinations are up to date.
 - Whether the animal poses or has posed in the past as a direct threat to the individual or others, such as injuring or acting aggressively.
 - Whether the animal is likely to cause or has caused excessive damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear.

Conflicting Disabilities

- Some people may have allergic reactions to animals that are substantial enough to qualify as disabilities. Residence Life Staff will make a reasonable effort to notify students in the room or suite where the approved animal will be located. In such situations, SAS, in cooperation with the Residential Life Office, will consider the needs of all affected persons requiring accommodations to resolve the problem as efficiently and timely as possible. If needed, the point of application for housing will be the determining factor for housing location.

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