



OGLETHORPE

UNIVERSITY

Emotional Support Animals may not be brought into campus housing without prior written express approval of university officials. Emotional Support Animals may be considered for living in the student's assigned residence hall; however, they are not permitted in other areas of the University. Guests of any resident may not bring an assistance/emotional support/therapy animal into a residence hall.

- A. The procedures for requesting Emotional Support Animals in University-owned housing are as follows:
1. A student requesting permission for an Emotional Support Animal in housing must make contact with the Accessibility Services Office prior to submission of any documentation.
 2. A student requesting permission for an Emotional Support Animal in housing must make a formal request, in writing, to Accessibility Services using the documentation guidelines below.
 3. Once documentation is submitted to the Accessibility Services office, Accessibility Services will convene the Housing Accommodations Committee to review all submitted documentation.

Please note: Accessibility Services may request a meeting with the student seeking the accommodation prior or after reviewing their documentation as a part of the interactive process.

- B. In order to provide enough time for consideration, students should submit a request at least thirty (30) days prior to the date on which the resident seeks to have the animal in the residence hall. Requests submitted fewer than thirty (30) days in advance will be considered, but are not guaranteed to be reviewed by the students desired date.
- C. The University will require documentation from a presently treating physician, psychiatrist, or other mental or medical health professional (not related to the student) certifying the nature of the disability and/or that the Emotional Support Animal is part of a prescribed treatment plan for the disabling condition and alleviates symptoms or effects of a disability. Documentation should generally include the following information:
1. The "Disability Verification Form – ESA Version" (available from the Accessibility Services Office)
 2. A letter from the current provider that follows the guidelines below:
 - a. Verification must include a specific diagnosis of the student's disability from a presently treating physician, psychiatrist, or other mental or medical health provider. The treatment provider must be qualified to make the diagnosis and must be currently treating the student for the disability for which they are requesting an Emotional Support Animal;

- i. The University defines a presently treating physician, psychiatrist, or other mental/medical health provider as someone who has seen the student within the last calendar year, and can provide an assessment of services rendered to the student to document that the ESA is a part of a current treatment plan.
 - 1. Statement on how the specifically identified animal assists the student regarding the use of campus housing; and serves as an accommodation for the identified disability.
 - 2. The provider must be aware of the animal, aware of the animal's functional limitations, services provided, and document those in the letter.
- b. Statement regarding the relationship between the student's disability and the relief the specifically identified emotional support animal provides. There must be a clear, direct link established between the condition and the specifically identified Emotional Support Animal.
- c. The provider should explain how this connection supports a student's ability to live on-campus, and the connection to the on-campus housing limitations posed by the disability of the student.
- d. The documentation must be on official letterhead and signed and dated within the last academic year.

Oglethorpe University does not accept documentation from online service providers that are not sufficient to reliably attest to a non-observable disability, or disability related need for an assistance animal. Oglethorpe recognizes that many providers are available online, and render services through virtual platforms, however, a clear established relationship must occur, and be evident through the documentation provided.

- D. The University reserves the right to talk with the professional regarding the documentation with student consent. If needed, students will be asked to grant permission for the current provider to discuss their patient records with the university.
- E. If an ESA request is not approved Accessibility Services will work with student to explore other reasonable accommodation requests.
- F. Upon approval of an Emotional Support Animal, residential building staff will be notified as appropriate.
- G. Upon approval of an Emotional Support Animal, the student's roommate(s) or suitemate(s) will be notified to solicit their acknowledgment of the approval, and notify them that the approved Emotional Support Animal will be residing in the assigned living space.
- H. The following conditions must be met and documentation provided to Accessibility Services to be kept on file. Should there be concern over the Emotional Support Animal's health or registration status, the University reserves the right to ask for records pertaining to these items at any time. Owners must be able to produce them within 48 hours.
 - 1. Vaccination: In accordance with local ordinances and regulations the Emotional Support Animal must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. The State of Georgia requires that all dogs and cats three months of age or older be vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian. Dogs and cats should wear vaccination tags.
 - 2. Routine Treatments: In order to minimize potential disturbances to the community, when appropriate to the Emotional Support Animal, Owners should administer preventative flea and tick medication on a regular basis.

3. Health: Emotional Support Animals, other than cats and dogs, to be housed in campus housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. Documentation can be a vaccination certificate for the animal or a veterinarian's statement regarding the animal's health. The University has authority to direct that the Emotional Support Animal receive veterinary attention.
4. Registration: The DeKalb County animal ordinance requires all dog, cat, and ferret owners in DeKalb County to register their animals. This is a requirement regardless of Service or Emotional Support Animal status for the animal. Proof of registration is required. More information is available at www.dekalbanimalservices.com

Any approval for a specifically identified Emotional Support Animal on campus as listed in Animal Identification section contained within this policy is only for the designated academic year and will need to be renewed annually.

Renewal Process Will Involve:

1. A renewal of roommate/suitemate agreement contained within this policy.
2. Student is responsible to submit any documentation listed in section C that is not current with the new academic year.
3. Student is responsible to submit any documentation listed in section L that is not current with the new academic year.
4. In order to provide enough time for consideration, students should submit a renewal request at least thirty (30) days prior to the date on which the resident seeks to have the Emotional Support Animal in the residence hall.