Emotional Support Animal Policy

Definition of an Emotional Support Animal

An Emotional Support Animal (ESA) is an animal that provides emotional support and comfort to an individual with a disability. Emotional Support Animals are not considered Service Animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Emotional Support Animals are not trained to work or perform a task for the benefit of the individual with a disability related to activities of daily living.

Please see our Service Animal Policy for more information.

Unlike a Service Animal, Emotional Support Animals are only allowed in the student’s place of residence. They cannot accompany the student wherever they go. As a result, Emotional Support Animals are subject to restriction from any area with a no-pets policy.

Plymouth State University’s Pet Policy.

Qualifying for an Emotional Support Animal at PSU

Students may qualify for this accommodation if:

- The student has a documented disability;

- There is an identifiable relationship between the disability and the accommodation request, specifically that the Emotional Support Animal alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of the student’s disability; AND

- The Emotional Support Animal is necessary to afford the student an equal opportunity to use and enjoy University housing.
Requesting an Emotional Support Animal at PSU

All requests for Emotional Support Animals within PSU housing will be individually determined, on a case by case basis. The determining factors on whether or not an Emotional Support Animal will be allowed in University housing are: is the ESA necessary to afford the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy University housing, and is the ESA’s presence in University housing reasonable.

Requests for Emotional Support Animals should be directed to the Campus Accessibility Services Coordinator in the Center for Student Success. Decisions regarding Emotional Support Animals will be jointly reviewed and decided by the Campus Accessibility Services Coordinator and Residential Life.

Requests for an emotional support animal should be made as early as possible. Review of requests may take up to 30 days.

Documentation Requirements

Documentation is required to establish that the ESA is necessary for the student to live in University housing.

Documentation Forms:

- Psychiatric Disability Provider Form
- Emotional Support Animal Request Information Form

The student may be asked to provide an authorization to allow the Campus Accessibility Services Coordinator to communicate directly with the third-party provider. Please see Campus Accessibility Services Information Release Form for more information. Please see our website for complete documentation guidelines.

Reasonableness Guidelines

Plymouth State University, in consultation with the student and Residential Life, as appropriate, may consider the criteria below in determining whether the presence of the ESA is reasonable in making housing assignments for students:

- Whether the animal poses (or has posed in the past) a direct threat to the individual or others;
- Whether the animal causes (or has caused) excessive damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear;
- Whether the size of the animal is too large for available assigned housing space;
- Whether the animal’s presence would force another individual from assigned housing (e.g. allergies);
• Whether the animal’s presence violates other residents’ right to peace and quiet
  enjoyment;
• Whether the animal is housebroken or is unable to live with others in a reasonable
  manner.

**Owner’s Responsibilities**

Students granted the accommodation of an ESA in University housing are subject to the
following rules and expectations, in addition to any other University rules and regulations not
specifically related to assistance animals.

• The animal must not be unruly, disruptive, or a direct threat to the health and safety of
  others. The animal must be under the owner’s control at all times.
• To the greatest extent possible, the animal must be unobtrusive to other residents.
• The owner is responsible for being aware of the animal’s need to relieve itself and act
  accordingly.
• The owner is responsible for cleaning up after the animal and appropriately disposing of
  its waste. Trash receptacles designated for animal waste should be used where available.
• If the animal must exit the owner’s room or apartment, it must stay in close proximity
  (i.e. leashed, or in a carrier) of the owner and under their control at all times.
• The care and supervision of the animal is the sole responsibility of the owner. The
  animal may not be left overnight in University housing to be cared for by any individual
  other than the owner. If the owner is away from assigned housing overnight, the animal
  must accompany the owner. The owner is responsible for ensuring that the animal is
  contained, as appropriate, when the owner is not present during the day while attending
  class or other activities.
• The animal is restricted to the owner’s residence (room, suite, or apartment) and is
  prohibited from common areas including, but not limited to lounges, study rooms and
  dining areas.
• The owner is responsible for any damage caused by the animal to University property or
  the property of others. The University will have the right to bill the owner’s account for
  any unmet obligations.

**Emergency Situations**

Plymouth State University personnel shall not be required to provide care or food for any
Emotional Support Animal including, but not limited to, removing the animal during emergency
evacuation for events such as a fire alarm. Emergency personnel will determine whether to
remove the animal and may not be held responsible for the care, damage to, or loss of the animal.
Removal of an Emotional Support Animal

Emotional Support Animals may be asked to leave Plymouth State University housing if any of the Reasonableness Guidelines are implicated or Owner’s Responsibilities listed above are violated. The University will only permit those emotional support animals that conform to the standards within this policy. The owner must abide by any applicable local or state ordinance, law or regulation pertaining to licensing, vaccination, and other requirements for animals residing in housing. The University may require documentation demonstrating compliance with such regulations.

PSU Grievance Procedure

Plymouth State University is committed to providing appropriate accommodations and services to qualifying individuals with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 including changes made by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. Contact Title IX and 504 Coordinator, Janette Wiggett (603) 535-2206, if you believe your rights have been violated or are a person dissatisfied with a decision concerning an Emotional Support Animal.

If a request has been granted for an ESA, the approval has been granted for that specific animal only for the designated academic year. Requests for another animal or subsequent housing assignments must follow the same procedures, as outlined in this policy and will be determined following the same guidelines.

Questions related to the use of Emotional Support Animals on campus should be directed to the following departments:

Contacts

Student Concerns
Lindsay Page, Campus Accessibility Services Coordinator
603-535-2482
lbpage@plymouth.edu

Visitor Concerns
Katie Caron, Manager, Campus Environmental Health & Safety
603-535-2409
krcaron@plymouth.edu

504 Coordinator
Janette Wiggett, Title IX and 504 Coordinator
603-535-2206
jitwiggett@plymouth.edu
Resources

Americans with Disabilities Act

Fair Housing Act


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