

Emotional Support Animal Policies and Procedures

Per the Fair Housing Act (“FHA”), Shippensburg University provides reasonable accommodations for an emotional support animal (“ESA”) in college housing. An emotional support animal is an animal that is necessary to afford a person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling when there is an identifiable relationship, or nexus, between the person’s disability and the assistance the animal provides. Typically, an emotional support animal is prescribed to an individual with a disability by a healthcare or mental health professional and is an integral part of a person’s treatment process.

Shippensburg University recognizes that an ESA can have a substantial role in therapy for a person with an emotional/psychological disability. To honor this need, the University has established the following emotional support animal policy. This policy is an agreement, between the college and the student, which places heavy responsibility on the student owner to humanely care for their emotional support animal while causing no disturbance or damage to the community or facility. To qualify, the animal must be medically necessary for the student’s ability to use and enjoy a residence hall room.

Information for the student:

1. To request accommodation, the student must meet the definition of a person with a disability under ADA and have that documentation on file with the Office of Accessibility Resources (“OAR”).
2. Accommodations are reserved for qualified students who have an impairment that limits one or more major life activities. The student is required to provide documentation from an appropriate medical/mental health professional that establishes: (1) the disability; and (2) a direct relationship between the identified disability and the need for the emotional support animal.
3. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Shippensburg University may consider the following factors, among others, as evidence in determining whether a requested ESA accommodation is reasonable or in the making of housing assignments for individuals with ESAs:
 - a. Whether the size of the animal is too large for available assigned housing space;
 - b. Whether the animal’s presence would force another individual from university housing (e.g. serious allergies);
 - c. The animal’s presence otherwise violates an individual’s right to enjoy their residential space;
 - d. The animal is not housebroken or is unable to live with others in a reasonable manner;

- e. The animal's vaccinations are not up-to-date;
 - f. The animal poses or has posed in the past a direct threat to safety or health of the individual or others, such as aggressive behavior towards or injuring the individual or others, or potential transmission of zoonotic diseases; or
 - g. The animal causes or has caused excessive damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear.
4. Generally, the presence of only one ESA will be approved for a student in order to fulfill the intent of the FHA requirements of providing support to a student with a mental health disability.
 5. The OAR will consider requests for university housing accommodations promptly. Please note that, if the request for an ESA accommodation is made after the established deadline for housing applications has lapsed, the OAR cannot guarantee the requested accommodation during the first term of occupancy.
 6. If the need for an ESA arises when an individual already resides in university housing, the student should contact OAR as soon as possible. Due to housing assignments and the administrative needs associated with processing requests for ESA accommodations, Shippensburg University cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the accommodation needs during the semester or term in which the request is received.
 7. Emotional support animals are only allowed within a person's residence in university housing; they are never permitted in other buildings or residence hall public spaces, except for transport in and out of a residence hall.
 8. Shippensburg University will consider requests for emotional support animals promptly. However, no emotional support animal may be kept in university housing at any time prior to the individual receiving approval as a reasonable accommodation pursuant to this policy.

Owner Responsibilities

The following are regulations that apply to all approved emotional support animals and their owners who live in the campus residence halls. All students with emotional support animals are expected and required to abide by these regulations. Any requests for exceptions must be discussed with the Director of Housing and Residence Life.

1. Residence Life staff and college personnel may enter a student's room as needed for maintenance, repairs, and in case of emergency or policy violations. This includes inspections during fire drills, hall closings, and during the academic year with or without notice. Inspections will be conducted as needed to ensure compliance with the emotional support animal policy and to investigate any complaints. Animals should be secured at all times when the student is not in the room for both the animal's safety and the safety of staff or emergency personnel.

2. The animal must be clean and good health. Animals to be housed in campus housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. Dogs must have had the general maintenance vaccination series against rabies, distemper, and parvovirus. Cats must have the general maintenance vaccination series for FVRCP and rabies, and should be tested for FeLV and FIV. All other animals must have had the appropriate vaccination series for that type of animal. All vaccinations must be current. Proof of vaccination must be filed with the OAR and updated after every veterinary visit and at the beginning of each academic year. All animals must be spayed or neutered. If an animal becomes ill, the resident is responsible for ensuring they receive necessary medical attention.
3. In addition to the provisions set forth in this policy, owners are required to comply with all applicable state and local laws and regulations relating to the health, housing, and maintenance of their ESA.¹
4. It is the expectation that owners pick up after their animals anywhere on university property. Animal waste must be bagged and disposed of in exterior trashcans. Animal accidents must be cleaned up promptly using appropriate cleaning products.
5. Any roommates or suitemates of the owner must be in agreement that the ESA may live in the room. If any roommates or suitemates do not agree, either the owner and animal or the non-approving roommates or suitemates may be moved to a more suitable location. This will be determined the Director of Housing and Residence Life.
6. Emotional Support Animals are not permitted in campus building space other than the assigned room of the student with whom they are registered. This includes all residence hall common spaces as well as academic buildings, administrative buildings, offices, suites, and student living spaces. Emotional support animals are not permitted in any common space other than for transport in and out of the building. When outside of a student's room for any reason, the animal must be fully under control using a carrier, harness, leash, etc. Students should remember to abide by Shippensburg borough leash laws while on public borough property.
7. The university provision for ESAs applies only to currently-enrolled students residing in University housing and it only applies to the owner's room. Unless otherwise permitted by law, guests are not permitted to bring animals into university residences, even if such visits are welcome by roommates and others.

¹ Pennsylvania state law requires any dog three (3) months of age or older to have a current dog license. Dog licenses are valid from January 1st through December 31st of the current year, even if purchased late in the year. All dogs and cats are required to be vaccinated as directed by the PA Department of Agriculture.

8. Emotional support animal owners must take reasonable precautions to prevent their animal from escaping their care. Emotional support animal owners must notify the Director of Housing and Residence Life within 12 hours of realizing that their animal has escaped. Emotional support animal owners are responsible for any action the college must take to locate/capture a missing animal as well as any damage their animal causes due to their escape.
9. The owner must make proper arrangements for the removal and care of an approved ESA while the residence halls are closed for breaks/holidays. The need to care for an approved ESA is not a valid reason for permission to stay on campus over a break or any other period when university housing is closed.
10. Emotional support animals should not be left alone for any period of time that would require outside assistance with animal care. If the owner must be away, the animal must be cared for off campus or taken with the owner, including weekends away from campus. The owner may not give access to their room to anyone to care for the animal. The university will not permit other individuals to access the owner's residential space for the purpose of animal care.
11. Emotional support animal owners must take reasonable precautions to prevent their pet from flea and tick infestation. Flea and tick infestations must be exterminated promptly through a professional extermination company determined by the college. **Housing and Residence Life will coordinate and work through the university pest control operator to provide the service.** Students are responsible for any and all extermination costs that may be required during their residency or upon move-out.
12. Shippensburg University will not ask for or require an individual with a disability to pay a fee or surcharge for an approved emotional support animal.
13. Emotional support animal owners are financially responsible for any and all damages caused by their emotional support animal. Damages may include but are not limited to bodily injury, property damage (including furniture, flooring, urine and feces stains or odors, etc.), cleaning beyond what is normally required, and any repairs that are deemed necessary after the owner and emotional support animal have vacated the residence hall. The university shall have the right to bill the individual's account for unmet obligations under this provision.
14. Please see Appendix A for a list of estimated repair/replacement costs for damage to university housing property/fixtures.
15. For a list of approximate costs for owning and caring for animals, please see: https://www.aspca.org/sites/default/files/pet_care_costs.pdf

16. Shippensburg University may require the individual to remove the animal from campus housing if:
 - a. The animal or the animal's presence create an unreasonable disturbance or interference with the campus community;
 - b. The owner fails to keep the ESA under effective control;
 - c. The approved ESA is no longer needed to assist with a disability;
 - d. The animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of a campus program;
 - e. Failure on the part of the owner to maintain a clean and healthy environment for the animal;
 - f. Inhumane treatment of the animal of any kind;
 - g. Substantial damage to college property;
 - h. The animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or causes substantial property damage to the property of others;
 - i. The owner does not comply with the regulations set forth in this policy; or
 - j. Shippensburg University discovers that false or misleading information was provided in the owner's application for approval of an ESA.

17. I understand that failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including a conduct referral to the Dean of Students office.

18. Should the animal be removed from the premises for any reason, the owner is expected to fulfill his/her housing obligation for the remainder of the housing contract.

19. Residents with an ESA are responsible for ensuring that their animal does not interfere with the community or create difficulties for fellow students. Any concerns within the community should be brought to the Director of Housing and Residence Life for discussion and assistance in resolving. Irresolvable concerns may result in the emotional support animal being banned from housing.

20. The owner must notify the Director of Housing and Residence Life in writing if the ESA will no longer be living in the residence hall. If a student wishes to bring a different ESA into to the residence hall, they must file a new request.

21. If at any time an owner can no longer care for their emotional support animal or is no longer permitted to keep the animal in the residence hall, they must find a humane home for it.

22. The owner will provide emergency contact information should the owner be unable to care for the ESA at any time. A current university student or university personnel (unless the university personnel are the parents/guardians of the student) are not appropriate choices for an emergency contact.

Standards of Care

1. Students are expected to feed, exercise, and care for their animal appropriately to ensure their health and humane treatment. Animals require daily food and attention, as well as daily assessment of their general health, behavior, and overall welfare. Students with emotional support animals are responsible for humanely caring for their animal. Failure to do so will be treated as a violation of this policy.
2. Students with ESAs are required to clean up after their animal as outlined. Additional care may be required depending on the animal; students are responsible for this care and for maintaining a clean, healthy, and humane living environment for the animal and students in the vicinity.
3. When cleaning the cages/aquariums/habitats of emotional support animals, care must be taken to ensure that no bedding, excrement, litter, gravel, sand, or cedar chips are dumped down any drains. All solid debris must go in the designated exterior trashcan. Once solid debris is removed, the container can be washed in the slop/mop sink-never in the kitchen or bathroom sinks or tubs. Clogged sinks from animal debris may result in damage fines.
4. All fabrics or materials laundered in the campus laundry machines must also be free of animal debris. Recurring repairs as a result of animal debris may result in damage fines and/or removal of the ESA.
5. Shippensburg University personnel shall not be required to provide care or food for any ESA including, but not limited to, removing the animal during an 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.
6. The individual must provide written consent for Accessibility Resources to disclose information regarding the presence of the emotional support animal to those individuals who may be impacted by the presence of the animal including, but not limited to, Residence Life personnel and potential and/or actual roommate(s)/suite(s). Such information shall be limited to information related to the animal and shall not include information related to the individual's disability.
7. Shippensburg University will not retaliate against any person because that individual has requested or received a reasonable accommodation in university housing, including a request for an emotional support animal.
8. Exotic wildlife is prohibited to live in University-owned housing. In Pennsylvania, exotic wildlife includes all bears, coyotes, lions, tigers, leopards, cheetahs, cougars, wolves and any crossbreed of these animals.

9. If an ESA request is denied by the Director of OAR, the requesting student may appeal that denial by submitting a written appeal to the Chief Equity, Inclusion, and Compliance Officer within seven (7) calendar days from the date the decision is sent to the student

Deadlines and Submissions

In order to ensure that appropriate accommodations are received, the student requesting the ESA should complete the approval process at least six (6) weeks prior to the start of the term in which the emotional support animal will be present on campus. After the deadline has passed, accommodations cannot be guaranteed for the upcoming term.

Any approval under this procedure is valid for one (1) academic year. A student wishing to have an ESA for a subsequent year must notify OAR of their desire to continue utilizing the ESA accommodation when the housing and placement process begins for the upcoming academic year. The university requires an owner to sign the ESA procedure annually.



Office of Accessibility Resources

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Appendix A

Estimated repair/replacement costs for damage to university housing property/fixtures.

Door frame damage	\$75
Door replacement	\$145
Carpet Replacement	\$150
Painting	\$50 per wall
Furniture	\$85-\$600, depends on the item
Special cleaning	\$25 Traditional hall, B, C, E suite units \$50 D and F suite units
Flea Treatments	\$275 per room (includes the 2 required treatments)

*Subject to change based on labor and time