

## UNO Student Housing Emotional Support Animal Guidelines

The University of New Orleans recognizes that emotional support animals can play an important role in facilitating the independence of some individuals with certain types of disabilities. Therefore, per the Fair Housing Act, UNO does provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations for a documented student with a disability for an emotional support animal in residence housing. Set forth below are specific requirements and guidelines concerning the appropriate use of and protocols associated with emotional support animals. UNO reserves the right to amend these Guidelines as circumstances require.

### **Section I. Definitions**

#### **A. Emotional Support Animal**

An “Emotional Support Animal” is an animal whose sole function is to provide emotional support, comfort, therapy, companionship, therapeutic benefits, or to promote emotional well-being. Emotional Support Animals may not be brought into Student Housing without prior approval of the appropriate University officials. Each request will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as outlined in this Guidelines, considering the needs of the individual and the concerns of the University Community. A person qualifies for a reasonable accommodation if:

1. The person has a documented disability and has provided the required documents to the OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISABILITY SERVICES;
2. The animal is necessary to afford the person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy the residence halls; and
3. There is an identifiable relationship between the disability and the assistance the animal provides.

UNO will not permit emotional support animals if they would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others, would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others; would pose an undue financial and administrative burden; or would fundamentally alter the nature of the provider’s operations. For example, if a roommate has asthma, allergies or fear of the animal, it is not reasonable for the animal to live in that particular room/apartment. Efforts would be made to find an alternative housing arrangement for the owner of the emotional support animal, but it would be dependent on the time of the notification for the need for the animal and the availability of housing.

NOTE: Emotional Support Animals are not trained to assist an individual with a disability in the Activities of Daily Living and are therefore, NOT considered Service Animals under the criteria established by the ADA and do not qualify for the same legal protection.

#### **B. Pet**

A “Pet” is an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. A pet is not considered a Service Animal or an Emotional Support Animal. It is not covered by this Guidelines. Residents are not permitted to keep pets on university property or in university housing.

#### **C. Approved Animal**

An “Approved Animal” is an Emotional Support Animal that has been granted as a reasonable accommodation under these Guidelines.

#### **D. Owner**

The “Owner” is the student or other covered person who has requested the accommodation and has received approval to bring the “approved animal” on campus.

## **Section II. Procedures for Approval of Emotional Support Animals in University Housing**

Emotional Support Animals may be permitted on the campus of UNO on a case-by-case basis. Before bringing an emotional support animal onto campus, the requesting individual must submit a request and appropriate supporting documentation. A student who is living in on-campus housing (residence halls or apartments) must make a formal request to the Office of Disability Services (OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISABILITY SERVICES) for an accommodation.

The review process may take up to or more than thirty (30) days. Students should submit their request to OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISABILITY SERVICES at least thirty (30) days prior to the date the student would like to bring the animal into on-campus housing. This timeframe will allow for the Department Student Housing in collaboration with OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISABILITY SERVICES, to make the appropriate accommodations for the requesting student. While applications submitted after the thirty day deadline will be accepted and considered, there is no guarantee that UNO will be able to meet late applicants' accommodation request, including any needs that develop during the semester.

## **Section III. Documentation for Emotional Support Animal**

- A. Requests for an Emotional Support Animal in Student Housing require complete documentation to be submitted before review and rendering of a decision and/or recommendation. Documentation of the need for an Assistance Animal should follow these guidelines:

The documentation must be provided by a qualified evaluator. A qualified evaluator is a medical or mental health professional licensed in the state of the student's permanent residence or in the state of Louisiana. The documentation must include:

1. Verification of the individual's disability with evidence of an existing and ongoing therapeutic/professional relationship.
  2. Document that the ESA is part of a treatment plan (having met with and observed the student with a disability and their interaction with the specific assistance animal in question)
  3. Statement on how the need for the animal relates to the ability of the resident/student to use and enjoy the living arrangements provided by the University.
  4. The documentation must be dated within the last 6 months (some exceptions may apply).
- B. OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISABILITY SERVICES will review documentation and, if the OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISABILITY SERVICES determines a qualifying disability exists, it shall arrange a meeting with a Student Housing representative and the person requesting that an emotional support animal be housed in University housing. This Guidelines will be carefully reviewed with the person at that time to ensure that the person can abide by all sections of the UNO Emotional Support Animal Guidelines.

## **Section IV. Conflicting Needs/Health Concerns**

If an Emotional Support Animal request is granted, the OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISABILITY SERVICES and the Office of Student Housing will make a reasonable effort to notify certain members of the campus community living or working in close proximity to the animal. This notice will be limited only to information regarding the presence in the building as an accommodation to a student with a disability. There will be no disclosure of the student's disability or the specific reason the animal is required. The number of people provided notice of the animal will depend on the type of animal and on the type of housing the student is living in each academic year.

Individuals who have medical issues and are adversely affected by animals (e.g. respiratory diseases, asthma, severe allergies) are asked to contact OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISABILITY SERVICES and/or the Department of Student Housing if they are concerned about exposure to an Emotional Support Animal. The person may be required to provide verifiable medical documentation to support such claim. Reasonable Accommodation may be made to consider the needs of both persons to resolve the problem as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISABILITY SERVICES and the Department of Student Life and Conduct and the Office of Student Housing will collaborate, as needed, to help resolve any conflicts related to an Emotional Support Animal. All staff members will consider the needs and/or the appropriate accommodations of all residents involved.

All roommates and/or suitemates of the Owner must sign an agreement acknowledging that the Emotional Support Animal will be living in the residence with them. If one or more roommates or suitemates does not approve of the Emotional Support Animal, then either the owner of the Emotional Support Animal, or the non-approving roommate(s) or suitemate(s), may be moved to another location, as determined by the Office of Student Housing.

#### **Section V. Responsibilities of Animal Owners in University Housing**

1. The Owner is responsible for assuring that the Approved animal does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for students who reside there.
2. The Owner is financially responsible for the actions of the Approved animal including bodily injury or property damage. The Owner's responsibility covers but is not limited to replacement of furniture, carpet, window, wall covering, and the like. The Owner is expected to cover these costs at the time of repair and/or move-out.
3. The Owner is responsible for any expenses incurred for cleaning above and beyond a standard cleaning or for repairs to University premises that are assessed after the student and animal vacate the residence. The University shall have the right to bill the Student account of the Owner for unmet obligations.
5. The Owner's residence may be inspected for fleas, ticks, or other pests once a semester or as needed. The applicable housing office for the residence hall will schedule the inspection. If fleas, ticks, or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a university-approved pest control service. The Owner will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment above and beyond standard pest management in the residence halls.
6. Emotional Support Animals must be contained within the privately assigned residential area (room, suite, apartment) at all times, except when transported outside the private residential area in an animal carrier or controlled by leash or harness.
7. Approved animals may not be left overnight in Student Housing to be cared for by another student. Animals must be taken with the student if they leave campus for a prolonged period.
8. Student Housing has the ability to re-locate Owner and Approved Animal as necessary according to current contractual agreements.
9. The Owner agrees to abide by all other residential policies. Reasonable accommodation which may constitute an exception to a Guidelines that otherwise would prohibit having an animal does not constitute an exception to any other Guidelines.
10. Any violation of the rules may result in immediate removal of the animal from the University and may be reviewed through a review with Student Housing and the Office of Student Accountability, Advocacy and Disability Services and the Owner will be afforded all rights of due process and appeal as outlined in that process.
11. Should the Approved Animal be removed from the premises for any reason, the owner is expected to fulfill his/her housing obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

## **Section VI. Guidelines for Maintaining an Approved Animal at UNO**

### **A. Care and Supervision:**

1. Care and Supervision of the animal are the responsibility of the individual who benefits from the Approved Animal's use.
2. The person is required to maintain control of the animal at all times.
3. When the student is not in the residential area, the animal should be stored in a crate or carrier. This will allow Housing staff routine access to the residential facilities for maintenance and other routine tasks without posing risk to the animal.
4. The person is also responsible for ensuring the cleanup of the animal's waste and, when appropriate, must toilet the animal in areas designated by the University. Indoor animal waste, such as cat litter, must be placed in a sturdy plastic bag and securely tied up before being disposed of in outside trash containers. Litter boxes should be placed on mats so that waste is not tracked onto carpeted surfaces.

### **B. Animal Health and Well-being**

1. **Vaccination:** In accordance with local ordinances and regulations, the animal must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal.
2. **Health:** The animal must be in good health. Animals to be housed in Student Housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. The University has authority to direct that the animal receive veterinary attention. Animals (where appropriate) must be spayed or neutered prior to being brought to campus. UNO reserves the right to request documentation of the applicable procedure.
3. **Leash:** If appropriate the animal must be on a leash, unless the leash would inhibit the animal's ability to be of service.
4. **Other Conditions:** OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISABILITY SERVICES or the Department of Student Housing may place other reasonable conditions or restrictions on the animals depending on the nature and characteristics of the animal.

### **C. Requirements for Faculty, Staff, Students, and Other Members of the University**

Members of the University community are required to abide by the following practices:

1. They are not to touch or pet an emotional support animal unless invited to do so.
2. They are not to feed an emotional support animal.
3. They are not to deliberately startle, tease, or otherwise distract an emotional support animal.
4. They are not to separate or attempt to separate an owner from his emotional support animal.
5. They are not to inquire about details regarding a person's disability. The nature of a person's disability is a private matter.

### **D. Removal of Approved Animal**

The owner of an emotional support animal may be asked to remove the animal from University facilities if the owner or animal fails to comply with this Guidelines. The following describes behaviors which may result in the removal of the animal:

1. **Disruptive Behavior:** An animal may be removed if its behavior is unruly or disruptive (e.g. barking, jumping on people, growling, running around, and exhibiting aggressive behavior). If such behavior persists, the owner may be prohibited from bringing the animal on campus until the owner takes significant and effective remedial steps to mitigate the animal's behavioral problems.

2. **Uncleanliness:** Animals are required to be housebroken. Owners must also ensure that their animals are kept clean and well-groomed. Animals that are excessively unclean (e.g. repeated soiling of facilities, flea-infested, foul-smelling and/or shedding excessively) may be excluded from University facilities.

**E. Damage**

Owners of Approved Animals are solely responsible for any damage to persons or University property caused by their animals.

The University of New Orleans is not responsible for loss, damage to, or death of the animal.

**F. Areas Off Limits to Emotional Support Animals**

Due to the fact that emotional support animals are not service animals, they are only permitted within residential housing. The animal may not accompany the student to class, library, dining services areas, fitness center, classrooms, or other areas of campus.

I have read and understand my responsibilities as an emotional support animal owner as outlined above. Should I fail in my responsibilities, I understand my approved accommodation may be suspended and/or I may be charged with a violation of student policies.

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Disability Services Representative:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Housing Representative:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_