

Guidelines for Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Accommodation Request Student/Employee Residing on UT Martin Property

Application guidelines for an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) accommodation on the UT Martin Campus:

1. Individual must be a UT Martin student or employee residing on UT Martin property.
2. Individual must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) by:
 - a. Providing documentation from a qualified health professional of a diagnosed disability.
 - b. Documentation must:
 - i. Be on professional letterhead and signed by the diagnosing professional.
 - ii. Contain valid state licensure or registration information. (ODS will verify)
 - iii. Indicate the length of time in treatment for the disability.
3. Submit verification that there is a disability-related need for an ESA (primarily dog or cat).
 - a. Provide documentation that an ESA is medically necessary and/or part of an ongoing treatment plan.
 - b. Describe why the student needs an ESA as an accommodation in terms of disability symptomology.
 - c. Explanation of what barriers will be reduced by having an ESA.
 - d. Evidence that an ESA will help or has helped the individual currently or in the past.
 - e. Statement of how important the ESA is for individual's wellbeing while living in a residence hall/campus housing.
4. Student/Employee accountability for ESA
 - a. Demonstrate a documentable need for an ESA annually.
 - b. Provide a letter to address both the individual's need and the responsibility they have for the care and wellbeing of the ESA.
 - c. Provide emergency contacts.
 - i. The first emergency contact should include one person who lives off campus who will take the animal off campus if there is an emergency and you are not able to be on campus. This person cannot be your roommate or anyone who lives on campus.
 - ii. The second emergency contact should be at least one person who lives on campus and can help if you are placed in quarantine or isolation due to Covid-19.

5. Upon approval of the ESA by ODS, the individual must:
 - a. Accept full responsibility for care and maintenance of the ESA. Evidence that the individual is not utilizing the ESA as prescribed may constitute a violation of guidelines.
 - b. Apply with Housing and abide by all guidelines and /or directives.
 - c. Emotional Support Animals are the responsibility of the authorized person only. The care and maintenance for the ESA shall not be transferred. This is a support animal for the authorized individual; it should be in his/her possession at all times when they are not in a classroom or other area prohibited to the ESA. Leaving an ESA on-campus with someone else for any length of time (nights, weekends, and/or holidays) is considered inappropriate use of this accommodation. By applying for and accepting responsibility for an ESA, you are stating that you need this accommodation daily, not as a convenience.
6. Violation of any UT Martin guideline or policy regarding the ESA use may result in forfeiture of the ESA accommodation.
7. In the event that an ESA accommodation is forfeited due to neglect/abuse of the animal or failure to follow the guidelines of ODS or UT Martin Housing, you will forfeit your right to be considered for another ESA accommodation.
8. If the ESA accommodation is voluntarily ended for any reason, the approved individual must notify ODS.
9. Approval for an ESA through the Office of Disability Services is the first step in a two-step process. Step two is entrance into an ESA contract with the Office of Housing. This second step is mandatory and shall be completed within 72 hours of receiving ODS approval of an ESA. Steps to ensure the ESA is in compliance with Housing regulations might include but is not limited to: proof of ESA immunizations, vet records, proper restraint system, and proper licensure of the ESA. Best practice is to contact the Office of Housing – Teresa Hibbard at 731-881-7737 or thibbard@utm.edu. Failure to complete the entire process of approval regarding an ESA accommodation will negate the approval process and require removal of the ESA from UT Martin Housing.

The Office of Disability Services will review the documentation and schedule an intake to determine approval for the ESA. If the ESA documentation is deemed appropriate for support, the request will be forwarded to Housing. Teresa Hibbard of Housing will contact you with a time to meet with her and go over the rules and contract. Both steps must be completed before your ESA is approved on campus. If you have any questions or concerns you may contact Disability Services at 731-881-7195 or DisabilityServices@utm.edu.

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