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# Animals on Campus - Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals

## Animals on Campus

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (the "University" or "UNC") is committed to providing equal access to its classrooms, research facilities, public spaces, and housing for all of its community members, including students, employees, and visitors. The University recognizes the importance of Assistance Animals for individuals with disabilities; in accordance with applicable federal and state law, individuals with disabilities may be accompanied by their Service Animals on all UNC premises where members of the public or participants in services, programs, or activities are allowed to go. Emotional support animals (ESA) are considered an accommodation and ESA requests are subject to the accommodation determination process and [policy](#) [1].

The [Animals on Campus Policy](#) [2] is primarily intended to apply to animals, including but not limited to, Service Animals, Emotional Support Animals and Pets. This policy does not apply to animals used in the course of University business and approved by the Director of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS), such as Department of Public Safety working dogs; animals permitted in residence halls by Department of Housing and Residential Education (DHRE) policy; or research animals. Policies and procedures regarding research animals can be found at UNC Research.

UNC recognizes the importance of Service Animals as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), and of Emotional Support Animals (ESAs), supported by the Fair Housing Act. The university is committed to allowing individuals with disabilities the use of a Service Animal on campus to facilitate their full participation and equal access to the University's programs and activities. UNC is also committed to allowing ESAs, necessary to provide individuals with mental health disabilities an equal

opportunity to use and enjoy University housing. Following are the specific requirements applicable to an individual's use of an ESA in University housing; it does not apply to service animals as defined by the ADA.

### **With particular regard to Emotional Support Animal (ESA) accommodation requests:**

Although it is the policy of UNC that individuals are generally prohibited from having animals of any type in University housing, UNC will consider a request by an individual with a disability for an exemption from this prohibition as a reasonable accommodation to allow an ESA that is reasonable and necessary because of a mental health disability. However, no ESA may be kept in University housing at any time prior to the individual receiving approval as a reasonable accommodation.

An Emotional Support Animal (ESA) is an animal that provides therapeutic emotional support for an individual with a diagnosed mental health disability. Unlike service animals that are trained to perform specific tasks that are important to the independence or safety of their disabled handler, ESAs are generally not trained to perform disability-specific tasks. Their therapeutic support is a function of their presence and interaction with the person with a disability. ESAs are not pets, but they typically are animals commonly kept in households as pets. An ESA may be a dog (most common), cat, small bird, rabbit, hamster, gerbil, fish, turtle, or other small, domesticated animal that is traditionally kept in the home for pleasure. Under guidelines from HUD, reptiles (other than turtles), barnyard animals, monkeys, and other non-domesticated animals are not considered common household animals. Exceptions to these guidelines regarding animals serving as ESAs will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The question in determining if an ESA will be allowed in University housing is whether or not the ESA is necessary, because of the individual's disability, to afford the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy University housing, and its presence in University housing is reasonable. However, even if the individual with a disability establishes necessity for an ESA and it is allowed in University housing, an ESA is not permitted in other areas of the University (e.g. dining facilities, libraries, academic buildings, athletic buildings and facilities, classrooms, labs, individual centers, etc.).

As of November 2019, The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has been asked to investigate websites that purport to provide documentation from a health care provider in support of requests for an ESA. The websites in question offer documentation that is not reliable for purposes of determining whether an individual has a disability or disability-related need for an ESA because the website operators and health care professionals who consult with them lack the personal knowledge that is necessary to make such determinations. Also, please be aware that ARS neither requires nor recognizes an ESA "license", "certificate" or "vest" as the basis for establishing the legitimacy of an ESA.

### **Emotional Support Animal (ESA) documentation should include statements specific to:**

1. the existing and continuing diagnostic and therapeutic relationship you have with your provider
2. your provider's specific diagnosis of the condition and its severity
3. the methodology used to arrive at this diagnosis
4. the functional limitations resulting from this diagnosis and a clear articulation of how the animal will mitigate these functional limitations
5. the observations, evaluations or means by which the provider has determined that an ESA would be a reasonable accommodation
6. the provider's confirmation that the ESA has been prescribed for treatment purposes and as part of a care or treatment plan and is necessary to help alleviate symptoms associated with your condition and how it will be critical in allowing you to use and enjoy university housing services.

### **Animal Guidelines and Expectations:**

Below are specific requirements and guidelines that must be adhered to in order for a Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal to be accommodated within Carolina Housing. The University reserves the right to amend these guidelines and expectations as needed in its sole discretion.

#### **Section I: Standards for Animals within Residence Halls**

1. Residents approved for a Service Animal (SA) or Emotional Support Animal (ESA) within University housing must comply with all applicable University policies and local, state and federal laws regarding animals and their treatment and care including, but not limited to, the following:
  1. Town of Chapel Hill, NC Code of Ordinances
  2. Orange County Animal Care and Control Ordinance

3. Environment, Health and Safety Manual - Chapter 02.07: General Policies - Animals on Campus University Policy - <https://unc.policystat.com/policy/5921447/latest/> [2]
4. The resident may only keep an approved animal; no substitutions or additions are permitted without reapplying for approval of a new animal
5. ESAs are generally approved for specific residence hall rooms only
6. Carolina Housing has the ability to relocate a resident and approved animal as necessary according to current contractual agreements

## 2. Canine/Feline

1. Must submit a Vet Certification which confirms:
  1. Immunizations are current
  2. Rabies vaccination is current
  3. Animal has been spayed or neutered.

## 3. Other Animals

1. Determinations are made on an individual case-by-case basis.
2. Verification of an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian confirming the animal is free from communicable diseases. Required immunizations will be determined pursuant to guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## Section II: Standards of Behavior by Animal and Owner

### 1. Health and care standards must be maintained as follows:

1. The owner is solely responsible for the animal's well-being including, but not limited to, regular feeding, watering, bathing, grooming, daily care and veterinary services.
2. The owner must take the animal with them or make arrangements for the animal to be cared for off campus if the owner is away from their residence overnight. Animals cannot be left in room/apartment alone or in someone else's care at any time.
3. Collars and tags must be worn at all times.

### 2. Sanitary standards must be maintained as follows:

1. Animal must be fully housebroken, or litterbox trained.
2. The owner is solely responsible for immediate and proper animal clean up.
3. Feces must be removed from University grounds by securing waste in a plastic bag, and by placing it in the outside garbage dumpster. Animal feces may not be disposed of in any trash receptacle or through the sewer system inside any building.
4. Litter boxes must be properly maintained and remain within the owner's assigned residence hall room or apartment bedroom. Litter box contents must be disposed of properly and regularly, and litter changed regularly as outlined by the manufacturer. To protect floors, litter boxes should be placed on mats that are large enough for the animal to walk off after using the litter box and catch any spilled litter.

5. The owner is solely responsible for regular and routine cleaning of floors, kennels, crates and cages. An odor of an animal emanating from the residence is not acceptable.
6. Bathing of the animal must occur off campus.
7. Any flea, tick or other pest infestation will be remedied at the owner's expense. Carolina Housing will make appropriate arrangements for extermination with applicable costs charged to the owner's student account. Animal owners are encouraged to take precautionary measures such as: flea and tick medications as prescribed by a veterinarian, flea and tick prevention collars, and/or regular bathing with flea and tick shampoos.

### **3. Safety and Behavior Expectations**

1. Animals must possess friendly and sociable characteristics.
2. The owner of the animal is solely responsible for:
  1. any damage to persons or property caused by the animal, including damage to the property of other residents. All liability for the actions of the animal are the responsibility of the owner. Owners should consider appropriate liability insurance.
  2. the animal during a fire alarm, fire drill, natural disaster, or emergency situations requiring building evacuation.
3. Animals must not be disruptive to the campus community (i.e., excessive barking, growling, howling, squawking, etc.).
4. ESAs must be caged or crated when the owner is not in the room/apartment.
5. The owner must disclose the animal's presence if University personnel must enter the room in the performance of their duties to ensure that such individuals are aware that there is an animal present and the animal must be crated or caged during the visit. The University is not liable if an animal escapes during one of these visits.
6. Lobbies, stairwells and other public areas may be used by ESAs as a pass-through only, as these are public areas, and the animal must be leashed, caged or tethered while in these areas.

### **4. Section III: Cleaning and Damage**

1. Per the Carolina Housing License Contract, it is the resident's responsibility to maintain the condition of the space, flooring, and furniture. The resident must return the room, flooring and furniture, in the same condition it was in at the time of move-in. The resident/animal owner is solely responsible for any damage to University property caused by the animal. This shall include the repair or replacement of any furniture, and any cleaning beyond what is routinely done for any room at the time of vacating. This may include, but is not limited to, extra steam cleaning of all floors, furniture and other fabrics, the abatement of fleas and other pests, and deodorization of the space. Charges will be posted on the resident/animal owner's student account.
2. At the termination of the Carolina Housing License Contract, or when the animal is no longer in the space, the residence hall room or apartment will be

assessed to determine if damage was caused to property by the animal. Carolina Housing reserves the right to inspect the space more frequently if damage is suspected or if there are concerns related to the owner's compliance with any of the items identified in this document.

#### **5. Section IV: Violations**

1. Concerns related to an approved ESA or SA should be reported to Residence Hall Staff. Any allegations of violations to standards and guidelines related to an approved ESA or SA will be addressed in accordance with student conduct processes. Carolina Housing and the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service will work collaboratively to determine appropriate sanctions.
2. Acknowledgment of this document will give Carolina Housing the authority to notify any parties that may be impacted by the presence of the animal. These parties may include but are not limited to the Carolina Housing staff, facilities services team members, emergency services. Carolina Housing will also notify any applicable roommates and/or suite mates that share space with the person with a SA or ESA. No information as to the purpose of the ESA will be disclosed to the roommates and/or suite mates, and will be shared with University employees only in accordance with FERPA.

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**Source URL:** <https://ars.unc.edu/accommodations/animals-campus-service-animals-and-emotional-support-animals>

#### **Links**

[1] <https://unc.policystat.com/policy/4733759/latest/>

[2] <https://unc.policystat.com/policy/5921447/latest/>