EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL POLICY

Bucknell University recognizes the importance of Emotional Support Animals (ESA) to individuals with disabilities and has established this policy to govern the presence of Emotional Support Animals on campus. The University may amend this policy at any time, with or without prior notice, so please check this site for the most up-to-date policy before bringing an ESA to campus.

This policy includes information about the following:

- Definitions
- Requesting an ESA in University Housing
- Conflicting Health Conditions
- Owner’s Responsibilities in University Housing
- Maintaining an ESA at Bucknell University
- Removal of an ESA
- Acknowledgement, release and signature
- Roommate Acknowledgement
- ESA Registration Form

PLEASE NOTE: Bucknell University prohibits pets and other animals in University housing. This policy provides a mechanism for an individual with a disability to seek a reasonable accommodation from that prohibition. Please do not request an ESA if you are not an individual with a disability. If you are an individual with a disability and have a Service Animal, please see the University’s Service Animal Policy.

For all ESA inquiries, please contact: Heather Fowler, Director
The Office of Accessibility Resources
212 Carnegie, Lewisburg, PA 17837
Phone: 570.577.1188 Fax 570.577.1826
hf007@bucknell.edu

DEFINITIONS

Disability
A disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment.

Service Animal (also called “Assistance Animal”)

A “Service Animal” is a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Dogs may be permitted as a Service Animal. In certain circumstances, miniature horses may also qualify as Service Animals. Other animals, whether wild or domestic, do not qualify as Service Animals.

- The work or tasks performed by a Service Animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. Examples of work or tasks include guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, pulling a wheelchair, or assisting an individual during a seizure.
- Animals whose sole function is to provide emotional support, comfort, or companionship do not qualify as Service Animals.

Emotional Support Animal

An “Emotional Support Animal” (ESA) is not a pet. It is an animal that provides emotional support which alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability and/or provides emotional support to persons with disabilities who have a disability-related need for such support. There must be an identifiable and medically indicated relationship between the individual’s disability and the emotional support the animal provides. Unlike a Service Animal, an ESA may not accompany a person with a disability at all times. The law permitting Emotional Support Animals applies ONLY for access to University housing, meaning and individual’s assigned room/living space. ESA’s are not permitted in other areas of the university. ESA’s approved under Federal Housing regulations are not permitted in other areas of the University.

Pet

A Pet is an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. A pet is not considered a Service or Emotional Support Animal. Please review the Animals on Campus and in Campus Buildings policy for further information.

Owner

An ESA’s “Owner” is the member of the Bucknell University community with a disability who has received approval for use of the Emotional Support Animal.

REQUESTING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS IN UNIVERSITY HOUSING
NOTE: Emotional Support Animals may not be brought into University housing without express written approval from the OAR. The University cannot guarantee that it will be able to approve an applicant’s request to bring an ESA into University housing.

- The student must make a formal request to the Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR) no later than 90 days before the start of the semester for which the presence of an ESA is requested in advance of the semester the ESA is requested for. To make this request, the individual must submit the documentation of a disability to be reviewed by the OAR Director. Given housing limitations, the University’s ability to approve a request may be significantly decreased when the request is not timely submitted (including when the need for an ESA develops after the deadline). In the event that an individual requests approval of an ESA without meeting this time frame and one or more current roommates do not approve, Housing Services will make every effort to find another location for the individual to reside with the ESA. If another location is not available, the individual may have to wait to bring the ESA to campus until another housing assignment can be made, which may mean waiting until the next semester commences and/or being assigned to a single room.

- Documentation of the need for an Emotional Support Animal should come from a physician, psychiatrist, social worker, or other licensed mental health professional (not a family member). The documentation must be on professional letterhead and signed by the treating professional, and include the state that the professional is licensed (see below under Professional License), and must be dated within the last 6 months. The letter must indicate the disability, specifically prescribe an ESA, and note what type of animal is recommended. The letter should also indicate that the animal will provide emotional support that alleviates one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of an existing disability.
  - Professional license: Pennsylvania law requires that practitioners be licensed in this state in order to treat PA residents. For the purposes of this documentation, practitioners must be licensed either in Pennsylvania or in the student’s home state, if that is where the treatment is occurring.
  - Recommendation for the ESA must be part of a treatment plan with evidence of an existing and presumably ongoing therapeutic relationship.

NOTE: Information written on a prescription pad is not an appropriate format for documentation.

- An Animal Wellness Examination must be completed by a licensed veterinarian and submitted to the OAR prior to approval. This examination must list appropriate shots, age, weight, name and overall health of the animal.

- Upon OAR’s approval of an ESA, Housing Services, Residential Education, and Facilities building staff, and any other key personnel as well as potential or current roommates will be notified as appropriate.
ESA’s are not permitted in University facilities beyond the student’s approved housing (e.g., libraries, academic buildings, classrooms, labs, student center, food services etc.).

If a student is requesting an ESA be permitted in other areas of the University, the student must follow the Registration and Documentation Guidelines for an accommodation of the No-Pets policy under the ADA.

- The approval of an Emotional Support Animal is animal-specific. If a student intends to replace an Emotional Support Animal, a new request and updated/current supportive documentation must be submitted to the OAR.

**NOTE:** Exotic animals or those animals that pose a disease threat to humans will not be allowed on campus.

**CONFLICTING HEALTH CONDITIONS**

Students with medical condition(s) that are affected by animals (e.g., respiratory diseases, asthma, severe allergies) are asked to contact the OAR if they have a health or safety related concern about exposure to an ESA. The University is prepared to also reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities who will be impacted when living in proximity to ESAs.

**OWNER’S RESPONSIBILITIES IN UNIVERSITY HOUSING**

- The Owner must abide by current city, county, and state ordinances, laws, and/or regulations pertaining to licensing, vaccination, and other requirements for animals. It is the Owner’s responsibility to know and understand these ordinances, laws, and regulations. The University has the right to require documentation of compliance with such ordinances, laws, and/or regulations, which may include a vaccination certificate and proof of licensure.

- An Owner will be charged for any damage caused by the ESA beyond reasonable wear and tear. The University may inspect Owner’s living area for fleas, ticks or other pests, as necessary and consistent with the room entry policies. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected through inspection, the University will treat the areas as appropriate. The Owner will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment necessitated by the presence of the ESA, including by applying such charges to the Owner’s University account.

- The Owner is responsible for ensuring that the ESA does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence area.

- The animal MUST be completely house trained—for dogs: trained to urinate and defecate outside. No training pads allowed.
● The Owner is responsible for the actions of the ESA including financial obligations of bodily injury.

● The ESA is allowed in University housing only as long as it is necessary because of the Owner’s disability. The Owner must notify the OAR in writing if the ESA is no longer needed or is no longer in residence.

● ESAs must be contained within the privately assigned residential areas at all times, except when transported outside the private residential areas in an animal carrier or controlled by leash or harness.

● ESAs may not be left overnight in University Housing to be cared for by any individual other than the Owner. If the Owner is to be absent from the Owner’s residence hall overnight or longer, the animal must accompany the Owner.

● The Owner must provide contact information for an alternative caregiver/emergency contact who will take responsibility of the ESA and remove it from campus should the Owner be unable to care for it (e.g. hospitalization, accident). The caregiver/emergency contact must reside OFF campus and must be available to remove the ESA in a timely manner appropriate for the animal species and needed care. Dogs must be removed within 6 hours. All other animals must be removed in no more than 12 hours. In instances where it is determined the ESA needs care not being provided to ensure immediate health and well-being, the University reserves the right to have the animal removed from university housing. The University may have an ESA removed from university housing if it is not removed in a timely manner as specified in this policy.

● The Owner is responsible for ensuring that the ESA is contained, as appropriate, when the Owner is not present during the day while attending classes or other activities.

● Housing Services may relocate Owners and ESA’s to other housing consistent with University policy.

● Owners must continue to abide by all other residential policies.

● Owner’s must provide written consent for the OAR to disclose information regarding the request for and presence of the ESA to those individuals who may be impacted by the presence of the animal including, but not limited to, Residence Education personnel and potential and/or actual roommate(s)/neighbor(s). Such information shall be limited to information related to the animal and shall not include information related to the Owner’s disability.

MAINTAINING AN EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL AT BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY

Care and Supervision
• Care and supervision of the ESA are the responsibility of the Owner, who must maintain control of the animal at all times.

• Bucknell personnel shall not be required to provide care or food for any ESA including, but not limited to, removing the animal during emergency evacuation for events such as a fire alarm. In the event of an emergency, appropriate personnel will determine whether to remove the animal and may not be held responsible for the care of, injury to, or loss of the animal.

• In the case of an emergency, the Owner must have a back-up plan including a caretaker’s name and number to provide the OAR, Housing Services, and Residential Education.

• The Owner is required to ensure the animal is well cared for at all times. Any evidence of mistreatment or abuse may result in immediate removal of the ESA and/or discipline for the responsible individual.

• The Owner is also responsible for ensuring the cleanup of the ESA’s waste and, when appropriate, must toilet the ESA in outdoor areas designated by the University. All animal waste, including cat litter, must be placed in a sturdy plastic bag and securely tied up before being disposed of in the appropriately labeled outside trash containers. Litter boxes must be placed on mats so that waste is not tracked onto carpeted surfaces. All bathing/washing care of ESA’s must take place off campus.

**Animal Health and Well-being**

• Vaccination: The ESA must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. Dogs must have current vaccination against rabies and wear a rabies vaccination tag. Cats should have the normal shots required for a healthy animal. Local licensing requirements must be followed.

• Health: ESAs must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. Documentation should be an Animal Wellness check from a veterinarian regarding the ESAs health. The University has authority to direct that the ESA receive veterinary attention, but has no obligation to do so.

• Licensing: The University may require documentation showing that the ESA is properly licensed.

• Leash: An ESA must be on a leash (if appropriate).

• Other Conditions: The OAR may place other reasonable conditions or restrictions on an ESA depending on the nature and characteristics of the animal.

**REMOVAL OF THE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL**

The University may remove an ESA if there is substantial objective evidence that the ESA:
1) poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or causes substantial property damage to the property of others;
2) the animal’s presence results in a fundamental alteration of the University’s programming;
3) the Owner does not comply with the Owner’s Responsibilities set forth above; or
4) the animal or its presence creates an unreasonable disturbance in or interference with the Bucknell community.

If the ESA is required to be removed from the University for any reason, the Owner is still required to fulfill housing obligations for the remainder of the academic year.