Yeshiva University

Emotional Support Animal Policy and Request/Verification Forms*

Yeshiva University endeavors to provide equal access to student housing for individuals with disabilities as required by federal, state and city laws addressing non-discrimination and Fair Housing, including by providing reasonable accommodations that may include allowances for emotional support animals (ESAs). Accordingly, the University has created the following guidelines for ESAs in its Residence Halls.

General

Under the FHA, a person with a disability may keep an ESA in the individual's dwelling when there is an established need for the therapeutic nature of the animal that is connected to the individual's disability.

Accordingly, the University acknowledges that permitting an ESA that provides emotional support to a student with a mental health disability (as indicated in writing by an appropriate and relevant healthcare professional) may be a reasonable accommodation for the student in the University Residence Hall.

This Policy only addresses the presence of ESAs in University Residence Halls.

Qualifications for Reasonable Accommodation

A student may qualify for this reasonable accommodation if:

1) The student has a documented disability;

2) The animal is necessary to afford the disabled student an equal opportunity to use and enjoy his/her room in the University Residence Hall; and

3) There is an identifiable and documented nexus between the student's mental health disability and the assistance that the animal provides, determined by a reliable health care professional. (Please see the Provider Verification Form for an Emotional Support Animal Request.)

The University is concerned about the growing number of questionable website services that offer to create "ESA letters" for a set price, based on answers to an online survey, a limited phone consultation, or other electronic means. Such letters will rarely provide the information necessary to support a request for a reasonable accommodation, and are not viewed by the University as a reliable source of information.

* Updated August 2026. Yeshiva University reserves the right to amend this Policy and the attached Forms at any time.

Procedure

A student who wishes to explore bringing an ESA to live in a University Residence Hall should contact the University's Office of Disability Services (ODS) to learn about the kind of information that must be submitted to the University to request approval. In general, the student will be required to submit a completed and executed Emotional Support Animal Request Form and Provider Verification Form for an Emotional Support Animal Request (attached to this Policy). All information will be reviewed jointly by ODS and the University Housing and Residence Life staff (Housing).

The designation of an ESA must be determined by the University prior to bringing any animal to the University Residence Hall. It is advisable for the student to submit the ESA Request Form and Provider Verification Form at the same time as the student submits the Housing Application, giving a minimum of 60 days' notice prior to the desired move-in date so that the University can best accommodate the student and the animal, if it is approved. If the ESA Request Form and Provider Verification Form is submitted fewer than 60 days before the student intends to move into a University Residence Hall, the University cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the reasonable accommodation needs during the first semester or term of occupancy.

If the need for the reasonable accommodation arises while a student already resides in a University Residence Hall, he/she should promptly contact ODS and complete the ESA Request Form and Provider Verification Form as soon as practical. The University cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the reasonable accommodation needs during the semester or term of occupancy in which the request was received.

ODS and Housing will review the student's ESA Request Form, Provider Verification Form and other documentation; communicate with the appropriate professionals who can provide relevant information; and make determinations. The determination of whether or not an ESA will be permitted in a University Residence Hall will be made on a case-by-case basis.

ODS will promptly notify the student (generally within 7 business days) if the ESA Request Form, Provider Verification Form or other documentation does not have sufficient information for a determination to be made as to whether a reasonable accommodation is necessary. ODS may request additional information, including speaking directly with the professional who completed the Provider Verification Form.

No animal may be in a University Residence Hall at any time prior to the student receiving approval as a reasonable accommodation pursuant to this Policy. The student will be required to immediately remove any animal found in a University Residence Hall without authorization (or the University may have the animal removed at the student's expense and taken to an animal shelter or humane society location), and the student will be considered in violation of student disciplinary codes (and sanctions may be imposed).

ODS will notify the student if an ESA is approved. A Housing staff member will then contact the student for additional details and, along with the student's other residential life preferences or needs, determine a housing option for the student. Students should note that housing options may be taken into consideration as the University balances appropriate reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities with students who have allergies and/or animal fears. Consequently, advance notice of the

need for an animal is essential to the University providing a smooth transition for all students. The University reserves the right to assign the student a single room without a roommate upon availability.

ODS will notify the student if an ESA is not approved, and the student may contact ODS to discuss possible alternative reasonable accommodations.

Please note:

- The University will consider only those ESAs permitted by local and state laws and conforming to standards within this Policy.
- Generally, only one ESA will be approved for a student.
- Generally, only one ESA will be permitted in any given University Residence Hall unit.
- A student may be approved for an ESA but not for a requested animal, if the requested animal is deemed inappropriate for a University Residence Hall.
- The University has determined that, in most cases, the University Residence Hall setting is not an appropriate environment in which to raise a young puppy. Therefore, dogs must be at least 10 months of age, be spayed or neutered, and have received their first rabies vaccination before they will be considered as an ESA for a University Residence Hall.

In addition, the University may consider the following factors, among others mentioned in this Policy, as evidence in determining whether the presence of the animal is reasonable or in the making of housing assignments for students with approved ESAs:

1. The space needed for the animal is too large for available assigned housing space;
2. The animal's presence would force another student from their existing housing assignment (e.g. serious allergies);
3. The animal's presence otherwise violates other individuals' rights to peace and quiet enjoyment;
4. The animal is not housebroken or is unable to live with others in a reasonable manner;
5. The animal's vaccinations are not up to date;
6. The animal poses, or has posed in the past, a direct threat to the safety or health of the student or others on the University campus, such as aggressive behavior towards or injuring the student or others, or potential transmission of zoonotic diseases; or
7. The animal causes, or has caused, bodily injury or damage to the property of the University (beyond reasonable wear and tear) or others.

Moreover, the University may require the removal of an ESA from the University Residence Halls should any of the following apply:

1. The animal poses a direct threat to the safety or health of the student or others on the University campus, or causes bodily injury or damage to the property of the University (beyond reasonable wear and tear) or others;
2. The animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of a University program;
3. The student does not comply with his/her responsibilities set forth in this Policy; or
4. The animal or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the University community.

Student Responsibilities

The care and supervision of the ESA is solely the responsibility of the student. The student must be in full control of the ESA at all times. ESAs may not pose a direct threat to the safety or health of the student or others on the University campus, cause bodily injury or property damage (beyond reasonable wear and tear) or fundamentally alter the nature of the University operations. The ESA must be maintained and well-cared for (kept clean, free from fleas or ticks, etc.), and evidence of mistreatment or abuse may be grounds for removal of the ESA (as well as sanctions to the student under student disciplinary codes). Local and state ordinances and laws regarding animals apply, including requirements for immunizations, licensing, noise, restraint, and dangerous animals, and the student is responsible to know, understand and comply with these ordinances and laws. The University may request documentation of compliance with such ordinances and laws at any time.

An ESA's behavior, noise, odor and waste must not exceed reasonable standards for a well-behaved animal. These factors should not create unreasonable disruptions for other residents. If the noise (whining, barking or meowing) is excessive as judged by University staff, it is grounds to have the ESA removed from a University Residence Hall. ESAs may also be excluded from a University Residence Hall if the ESA behaves in an unacceptable way and the student does not control the ESA. Uncontrolled barking, aggression, jumping on other people, or running away from the student are some examples of unacceptable behavior for an ESA.

The student is responsible for immediately cleaning up and properly disposing of the ESA's waste in a safe and sanitary manner, and is responsible for having the equipment to do so. People who are physically unable to accomplish this task are responsible for arranging for it to be done and any costs that it incurs. Residential facilities (e.g., sinks, toilets, showers) may not be used to clean the ESA or any animal supplies/cages/litter boxes.

The student's room may also be inspected for fleas, ticks, or other pests, as necessary. If fleas, ticks, or other pests are detected through inspection, the student will be required to remove the animal and the room will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a University-approved pest control service. The student will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment above and beyond standard pest management in the University Residence Halls. The University shall have the right to bill the student's account for unmet obligations under this Policy.

ESAs are limited to the residential space (room) of the student except when exiting or entering the student's room for the ESA's natural relief. The student is responsible for ensuring that the ESA is contained as appropriate (caged or crated), when the student is not present during the day while attending classes or other activities. The University reserves the right to inspect the enclosure to be used in containing the ESA. When the ESA is outside the student's room, it must be in an animal carrier or controlled by a leash or harness.

An ESA may not be left overnight in a University Residence Hall when the student is not present, to be cared for by any individual other than the student. If the student is to be absent from his/her room overnight or longer, the ESA must accompany the student for arrangements off campus.

Generally, taking the ESA into bathrooms, laundry facilities, indoor recreational rooms, lounges, hallways, study rooms, or other areas of a University Residence Hall is not acceptable, and the ESA is not

allowed to roam freely in the University Residence Hall (other than in the student's room) or otherwise on campus grounds. In addition, the ESA generally cannot be taken into classrooms or other buildings on campus. If an animal is found running at large, the animal is subject to capture and confinement as well as immediate removal from University housing at the student's expense.

The student, not the University, is responsible for the actions of the ESA including, but not limited to, any bodily injury or property damage (beyond reasonable wear and tear). Students with ESAs are likely to be charged if additional cleaning or damage occurs as a result of having the ESA on campus. In addition, the University retains the right to have the ESA removed, at the student's expense, should the ESA become a direct threat to the safety or health of the student or others on the University campus, or due to other non-compliance with the requirements of this Policy.

The University shall not be required to provide care or food for any ESA including, but not limited to, removing the ESA during emergency evacuation for events such as a fire alarm. Emergency personnel will determine whether to have the ESA removed, and neither the University nor emergency personnel will be held responsible for the care, damage to, or loss of the ESA.

The student must provide ODS and Housing with an emergency contact person who will be willing to take the ESA in the event that something happens to the student and he/she cannot care for the ESA (including if he/she must isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19 or otherwise). Any person also residing in a University Residence Hall, whether a University student or staff, is not an appropriate choice for an emergency contact and generally will not be allowed.

The ESA is allowed in a University Residence Hall as long as it is necessary because of the student's disability. The student must notify ODS promptly in writing if the ESA is no longer needed or is no longer in residence. To replace an ESA with another animal, the student must follow the procedures set forth in this Policy to request an ESA. In addition, the request for an ESA will need to be updated each year.

If it is determined that an ESA must be removed from a University Residence Hall, the student must comply <u>within 48 hours</u> (or such shorter time frame as the University may deem necessary). If there are any extenuating circumstances that inhibit the student from removing the ESA within that time frame, he/she must discuss with Housing before that time frame has lapsed. If the student fails to remove the ESA within the stated timeframe, at the student's expense the University may have the ESA removed and taken to an animal shelter or humane society location. Failure to remove an ESA when required by the University will be considered a violation by the student of student disciplinary codes (and sanctions may be imposed).

Should the ESA be ordered removed from the University Residence Hall for any reason, the student is nevertheless expected to fulfill his/her housing and other obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

<u>The student must cooperate with University personnel in complying with this Policy. Failure to comply with any provision of this Policy will be considered a violation of student disciplinary codes (and sanctions may be imposed).</u>

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Director of Disability Services

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Tel: (646) 592-4132

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Yeshiva University Emotional Support Animal Request Form

To be submitted the student to the University Office of Disability Services.
Please contact them if you have any questions or otherwise require assistance in completing this form.

I am requesting to have an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) in my Residence Hall room at Yeshiva University. I have read the University's Emotional Support Animal Policy and understand and agree to comply with all of the rules and responsibilities set forth therein relating to my ESA. I understand and acknowledge that if I violate the Policy in any manner, in addition to any other remedies available to the University, I may be subject to sanctions under applicable student disciplinary codes, up to and including suspension or expulsion from the University.

In addition, I agree and acknowledge that the University:

1) Assumes no responsibility for the care or supervision of my ESA.

2) Retains the right to inspect my room and/or the ESA in its discretion and determine if the ESA should be removed.

3) Will have the ESA removed if it poses a direct threat to the safety or health of the student or others on the University campus or causes bodily injury or property damage (beyond reasonable wear and tear). I agree and acknowledge that I will be billed and responsible for any and all costs associated with removal of the ESA and any injury or damages caused by the ESA (beyond reasonable wear and tear).

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Please provide the following information:

- Animal's Name_____ Type of Animal_____

  Weight of Animal_____ Age of Animal_____

Please attach a current photo of the animal.

- Is the animal housebroken?

  _____No _____Yes

- Has the animal ever injured a person or other animal, or caused physical damage to property?

  _____No _____Yes

  If Yes, please provide details:

Emergency Contact Person (person who can and will take care of the animal off campus as needed, including if the student must isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19 or otherwise):

Name_____

Cell Phone_____

Email_____

Vaccination information: The ESA must be immunized against disease common to that type of animal. For example, a dog or cat must have proof of a current rabies vaccination. **Verification must be provided to the Office of Disability Services (ODS).**

Date of documentation_____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: If approved, I give permission to ODS or University Housing to disclose to others impacted by the presence of my ESA (e.g., Residence Life staff, potential and/or actual roommates, neighbors that I will be living with) information regarding the request for and presence of the ESA. I understand that this information will be shared with the intent of preparing for the presence of the ESA and/or resolving any potential issues associated with the presence of the ESA.

I further recognize that the presence of the ESA may be noticed by others visiting or residing in University Housing and agree that should my request be approved, the staff may acknowledge the presence of the animal, and explain that under certain circumstances, ESAs are permitted for persons with disabilities.

Should the ESA be ordered removed from the premises for any reason, I understand that I am expected to fulfill my housing and other obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

I understand that my request for an ESA will need to be updated each year.

Signature of Student:_____

Name of Student (printed):_____

College/School:_____

Student ID:_____

Email:_____

Cell Phone:_____

Date:_____

Yeshiva University

Provider Verification Form for an Emotional Support Animal Request
To be submitted to the University Office of Disability Services

STUDENT - Please complete and sign below before presenting to your mental health provider:

By signing below, I consent to allowing my mental health provider to share with the University any information relevant to my need for an Emotional Support Animal in my Residence Hall room at Yeshiva University, as set forth on this form or as otherwise contemplated by the University's Emotional Support Animal Policy.

Name of Student:_____

College/School: _____ Student ID:_____

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

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To Be Completed by Provider:

(The health care provider need not use this specific form, but all the information requested here is necessary for the institution to have in order to consider the request for an ESA; the form is provided as a convenience.)

Proposed ESA:

Animal's Name_____ Type of Animal_____

Weight of Animal_____ Age of Animal_____

The above-named student has indicated that you are the (CIRCLE AS APPROPRIATE:)

Physician

Psychiatrist

Mental Health Worker: (Please specify: _____) who has suggested that having an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) in a University Residence Hall will have therapeutic benefit in alleviating one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of the student's mental health disability. (Note: Generally, the University will only accept documentation from professionals in the State of New York or the students' home state who have personal knowledge of the student, consistent with their professional obligations. Letters purchased from the internet for a set price rarely provide the information necessary to support an ESA request.)

Note: 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 for sale documentation that is generally not deemed reliable for purposes of determining whether an individual has a disability or disability-related need for an ESA because the website operators and related health care professionals lack the personal knowledge that is necessary to make such determinations.

So that we may better evaluate the request for a reasonable accommodation, please answer the following questions:

Please provide the following information about the student's disability: (Note: A person with a disability is defined as someone who has physical, medical, mental, or psychological impairment.

What is the nature of the student's mental health impairment?

Does the student require ongoing treatment?

When did you first meet with the student regarding this mental health diagnosis? _____

When did you last interact with the student regarding this mental health diagnosis? _____

Please provide the following information about the proposed ESA: (Note: The University may approve the request for an ESA but not be able to approve the specific animal requested by the student because of other constraints.)

Is this an animal that you specifically prescribed as part of the treatment for the student, or is it a pet that you believe will have a beneficial effect for the student while in residence on campus?

What specific symptoms will be reduced by having an ESA, and how will those symptoms be mitigated by the presence of the ESA?

Is there evidence that an ESA has helped this student in the past or currently?

Importance of ESA to Student's Well-Being

In your opinion, how important is it for the student's well-being that an ESA be in residence with the student on campus? What consequences, in terms of disability symptomology, may result if the accommodation is not approved?

Have you discussed the responsibilities associated with properly caring for an animal while engaged in typical college activities and residing in campus housing? Do you believe those responsibilities might exacerbate the student's symptoms in any way? (If you have not had this conversation with the student, we will discuss with the student at a later date.)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. If we need additional information, we may contact you at a later date. We recognize that having an ESA in a University Residence Hall may qualify as a reasonable accommodation, but the practical limitations of our housing arrangements and potential undue burden/hardship on the University, as well as the potential implications for students with disabilities, make it necessary to carefully consider the impact of the request for an ESA on both the student and the campus community.

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Please provide your contact information, sign and date this form, and return it to: rkohn1@yu.edu; and akelsen@yu.edu

Provider contact information:

Name: _____

Office Address:_____

_____

_____

Telephone:_____

Email address:_____

Signature:_____

License #:_____

Date:_____