



## Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Policy

### Definition & Purpose

While Service Animals (SA) and Emotional Support Animals (ESA) both are commonly used by individuals with disabilities, they each possess their own set of policies, rules, and restrictions. Failure to abide could result in violation of Oregon Tech Student Code of Conduct. **Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) are not Service Animals and are not evaluated or treated in the same manner.**

This policy is specific to **Emotional Support Animals (ESA)** which can include a range of animal types and will provide emotional support and/or companionship to an individual with a disability. ESA require an approved housing accommodation through the Disability & Testing Services (DTS) office.

DTS staff will determine, on a case-by-case basis, and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, whether an individual's request for an ESA is reasonable. In the case that a request for an ESA is approved by DTS, exceptions will be made to the Housing and Residence Life Animal Policy.

The accommodation provides an exception to policies that prohibit animals from residing in Oregon Tech on-campus housing. It is provided to students whose ESA is considered a "reasonable accommodation" for an individual with a disability per HUD 24 CFR Part 5 ("Pet Ownership for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities"), at the determination of the Disability & Testing Services (DTS) office.

### Student Responsibility

The student has full responsibility for the Emotional Support Animal (ESA). Additionally:

- Student must register with Disability & Testing Services (DTS) and have the ESA accommodation approved by our office.
- Student must provide the following information about their ESA to DTS prior to their ESA being approved:

- Animal's name and gender
  - Animal type / breed
  - Animal's age and size/weight
  - Picture of the animal
  - Vaccination records; if ESA does not require vaccinations (ex. Some reptiles), then veterinary records showing animal is in good health
  - A local contact who is available to care for the ESA in case of an emergency that makes the student unable to care for the ESA (ex. A roommate, peer, friend, other person residing within the Klamath Falls area)
- ESA may not move in until a week after the accommodation has been approved, unless special permission is granted by the Housing & Residence Life (HRL) staff. (Ex. An ESA approved on a Friday would not be able to move into campus housing until the following Friday, unless permission is granted by HRL office for earlier move-in for the ESA).
  - An ESA is approved for the university-housing environment only; specifically, the student's room. ESAs are not to be taken into other campus buildings or in communal areas within the residence hall/housing.
  - Student holds sole responsibility for cleaning up after the ESA. All ESAs must be potty trained or in a cage/terrarium (as appropriate) where their cleanliness can be maintained promptly.
  - If necessary for the ESA to be out in public areas (to potty, exercise, transportation to/from vet appointment, etc.) they must always be under the student's control (leash, carrier, cage, etc.).
  - Any expenses resulting from damage to university and/or peer property created by an ESA will be the responsibility of the owner. Consult the HRL office for any details on their policies.
  - Student is responsible for informing DTS and HRL offices of any changes in the ESA's status

## ESA Requirements

An ESA can be a variety of animal or breed, but it must meet these requirements:

- Have a documented, established, therapeutic relationship with the student. (Ex. Student cannot be approved for a future animal that they do not have yet.)
- ESA must be old enough to be vaccinated at the direction of their veterinarian (if applicable); we require Rabies vaccination for all applicable animals and strongly recommend specific vaccinations for animal health/well-being, though defer to veterinary professional for recommended vaccinations:
  - Dog = DHPP/DAPP
  - Cat = FVRCP
  - Rabbits = RHDV2
- When vaccinations are not required for your ESA, we will still require documentation from your ESA's veterinarian ensuring that they are in good health. We believe that the ESA's health will have a direct impact on your own health, which is why we require this documentation.
- ESAs are subject to local vaccination, registration, and licensure requirements, where applicable. (Ex. dogs who permanently reside in Klamath County are required to be registered with the county; if your permanent address is in another county/state, the animal must abide by those requirements.)
- An ESA must not display any behaviors or noises that are disruptive to others such as barking, whining, growling or other behaviors that could be considered aggressive. Behavioral issues can be grounds for having the ESA removed from university-owned housing.

## Request Process

Below is the process if a student, who is not already registered with Disability & Testing Services (DTS), requests to bring their ESA into on-campus housing:

1. Student applies for DTS through the Access Information Management (AIM) system to initiate our interactive process for accommodation approval; available to all students via TechWeb ("Accommodations – Student").
  - a. If the student is only requesting an ESA accommodation, they should use the Housing Accommodation application from the available options
  - b. As part of the application, the student will need to:
    - i. attach/upload documentation supporting the therapeutic need for an ESA, if available

- ii. provide information about the animal including name, type, breed, size, age, image, veterinary records showing vaccination history (if applicable); vaccination records are required prior to an ESA moving into university housing and also to continue living in university housing.
2. The student will meet with their DTS Advisor who will review their application, documentation, and records. The student will have an opportunity to answer any questions their Advisor might have and also ask any additional questions they may have about the accommodation.
3. The DTS Advisor will present the information provided by the student and their notes and the DTS office will collaboratively determine if the student's request is reasonable and approved, or if additional information/documentation is needed.

If the accommodation is approved, the ESA cannot move into campus housing for one week (7 calendar days), to allow the Housing & Residence Life (HRL) team time to perform any tasks within housing in preparation for the ESA's arrival. Permission for the student to bring the ESA to campus sooner than one week is at the discretion of the HRL office.

## **ESA Request Process if Already Registered with DTS**

If student is already registered with DTS with other accommodation, they do not need to engage in the full interactive process above. They should contact their DTS Advisor to make an appointment to discuss the addition of the ESA accommodation. Additional documentation will likely be required, if previous accommodation approval was based on documentation that didn't address the ESA specifically (ex. prior documentation addressed only academic barriers).

## **Exclusion of ESA**

An ESA may be excluded from the campus when that animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or itself, or if it is out of control of the owner. When an ESA is reported by students, staff, or administration, as committing infractions for exclusion, the infraction will be treated on an individual basis through a collaborative review process of university stakeholders.

If the exclusion determination is made, the owner may be directed to remove the ESA from the campus housing, and the animal may return when/if the behavior has been remediated. Determination of exclusion of an ESA, whether permanent or temporary, will be accomplished through a collaborative process including the student, Disability &

Testing Services, Housing & Residence Life, Campus Safety (if animal poses a threat to other people), and any other relevant departments/university representatives.

## Emergency Situations

This section pertains to responsibilities of each party in an emergency:

### Student Responsibility

In the event of an emergency where the student can respond and participate (ex. fire drill, evacuation, etc.), the student is responsible for caring for and keeping possession of the ESA. They should not be left behind in the residence.

In the event of an emergency where the student is not responsive or cannot participate (ex. student is hospitalized or otherwise unresponsive), the student is responsible for identifying a person in the Klamath Falls area to care and keep possession of the ESA (ex. Roommate, friend, classmate, family member, etc.). This contact is shared with DTS and HRL staff so the person can be contacted in this type of emergency.

### University Responsibility

In the event of an emergency, the Emergency Response Team (ERT) that responds should be informed and trained to recognize ESAs and to be aware that the animal may become disoriented from the smell of smoke in a fire or laboratory emergency, from sirens or wind noise, or from shaking and moving ground. The owner and/or ESA may be confused from the stressful situation, and the ERT should be aware that the ESA may react in a protective/defensive manner and, in its confusion, is not to be considered harmful. The ERT should make every effort to keep the Assistance Animal with its owner. However, the ERT's first effort should be toward the owner; this may necessitate leaving the Assistance Animal behind in certain emergency evacuation situations.

Oregon Tech is not responsible for the emergency response facilitated by outside entities or first responders.

## ESA and Student Allergies

It is common for people to have an allergic reaction to some animals. The consideration for the potential allergic reaction to other students in campus housing should be minimized by having the ESA reside only in the student's room unless out for a specific purpose (to potty, exercise, etc.). If a student with an approved ESA is assigned a roommate with an allergy to their ESA, the Housing & Residence Life office should be contacted immediately to facilitate a change of roommates. DTS and HRL offices collaborate with housing accommodations (including ESAs) which help prevent conflicting roommate pairings.