

## **SUNY Cobleskill Residential Life Office**

### **Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Policy for Visitors/Guests in Residence Halls**

#### **PART A**

##### **General Considerations**

The College enforces a no-pet policy in its residence halls, College-owned apartments, and campus facilities. Exceptions are made for service and emotional support animals according to the guidelines outlined below.

##### **I. Definitions**

###### **Service Animals**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a “service animal” as any dog individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. This includes, but is not limited to, guide dogs for the blind, hearing dogs for the deaf/hard of hearing, and service dogs for people with physical disabilities and seizures disorders. Service dogs are not considered “pets” and are explicitly permitted in “No Pets Allowed” areas under state and federal civil rights laws.

Students who wish to host a visitor/guest who brings a service animal to campus should register the request for accommodation with the Accessibility Resources Office in the library. While the College reserves the right to require documentation that an animal used in campus facilities, or any SUNY Cobleskill housing facilities, is a service animal that falls under protections of federal and state laws, students whose visitors/guests have service animals are not required to fill out Part B of this application.

###### **Assistance/Companion Animals**

An “Emotional Support Animal” is a *pet* that is owned by an individual with a disability. An emotional support animal is not a service animal and unlike service animals, ESAs will not need to accompany the individual with the disability at all times. The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 protects the right of people with disabilities to keep animals for emotional support, even when there is a general “no pets allowed” policy.

##### **II. Reasonable Accommodation Policy for Emotional Support Animals**

With approval in advance, a student may host a visitor/guest with a disability and an ESA in the student’s residence hall bedroom as a reasonable accommodation. The ESA will only be allowed in the individual host’s residence hall bedroom and not in other buildings on campus. In order to have an ESA in the residence halls, the following is required:

1. The request for a visitor/guest with an ESA should be made in writing (Using Part B of this packet) to the Residential Life Office four business days prior to the requested visit start date.
2. The request must include contemporary (within three months of the animal's requested arrival on campus) documentation, using Part C of this packet, from a licensed health professional (i.e. physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker) who has provided treatment to the visitor/guest for the disability. The documentation should include:
  - i. Evidence of the disability and the DSM or medical diagnosis from a licensed professional related to the use of an assistance animal. This includes:
    - a. **the dates of treatment and the date at which the diagnosis was first made;**
    - b. **the symptoms for which treatment was needed;**
    - c. **treatments other than use of an assistance animal that have been used for symptom reduction; and**
    - d. **the date on which the use of an assistance/companion animal was prescribed.**
  - ii. Evidence of the connection between the diagnosis/symptoms and use of the assistance/companion animal.
  - iii. Evidence that the student will not be able to use and enjoy the residence hall or to participate in the services or programs if the assistance/companion animal is not allowed.
3. The request must include a physical description of the animal, including height and weight, and confirmation that the animal is housebroken or confined such that housebreaking is not necessary (e.g., fish in a fishbowl). Also include any equipment that will be needed for the care of the animal.
4. The request must include a statement from a qualified veterinarian that the animal has received all appropriate vaccinations and is in generally good health using Part D of this packet.

Once the complete request is submitted in writing to the Residential Life Office, it will be reviewed within two business days. You will be notified of the outcome of the review. The entire process must be completed in advance of any animal moving into a residence hall room.

### **III. Requirements of Owners of Emotional Support Animals**

Individuals with disabilities using ESAs are responsible for their animals at all times and must comply with the following requirements:

- The student and owner must have completed the requirements outlined in this procedure and have received the written authorization to have an animal in the residence hall room.
- The student and owner must supply all materials necessary for the care of the animal.
- The animal is recommended to wear a leash, collar, cape, harness, backpack or other appropriate visible identification that identifies in writing that the animal is an emotional support animal.
- The student and owner of the animal must be in full control of the animal at all times.
- The student and owner must ensure that the animal, if appropriate, is on a leash at all times.
- The student and owner must take responsibility for the behavior of the animal in private and public places, and for due care and diligence in the use of the animal on campus.

- The student and owner are responsible for any property damage caused by the animal.
- The student and owner must clean up after the animal, including the sanitary disposal of animal wastes.
- Use of animal shall not constitute a direct threat to the health and safety of others.
- The student and owner are responsible for the health of the animal.
- Approval for emotional support animals is for the specified visitation period only. Requests for approval in subsequent visitation periods may be made according to the timeline outlined above.

The College reserves the right to enforce all relevant rules for the use of such animals through the residence hall agreement and applicable state and federal laws. The College also reserves the right to revoke permission granted for the campus presence of any ESA whose owner or hosting student fails to follow the requirements set forth in this procedure.

**Roommate/Suitemate acknowledgement for sharing of SUNY Cobleskill residence with owner of a service or emotional support animal**

Names of visitor/guest/owner and roommate/suitemate: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of animal: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of approval: \_\_\_\_\_

By my signature below, I acknowledge that I will share my assigned SUNY Cobleskill housing with a roommate/suitemate that has a visitor/guest with an approved service or emotional support animal. I have read the SUNY Cobleskill Emotional Support Animal Policy (attached) and have an understanding of the expectations that must be upheld. Should I have any concerns regarding the behavior, location, or care of the animal, I will first discuss my concerns with my roommate/suitemate and the animal's owner. If I continue to have concerns I will contact the Residential Life Office.

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Roommate/Suitemate's Printed Name	Signature	Date
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Roommate/Suitemate's Printed Name	Signature	Date
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Roommate/Suitemate's Printed Name	Signature	Date
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Residence Life Office Contact Information:

126 Bouck Hall

(518)255-5215

[reslife@cobleskill.edu](mailto:reslife@cobleskill.edu)