



Sul Ross State University

Residential Living Assistance Animal Policy

Sul Ross State University recognizes the importance of assistance animals for residents with qualifying disabilities. This policy provides qualifying on-campus residents the reasonable accommodation to have a live-in assistance animal in the residence hall. This accommodation is meant to allow for full participation and equal access to the residential experience. Set forth below are specific requirements and guidelines concerning the appropriate use of and protocols associated with Assistance Animals in our residential living facilities. Sul Ross State University reserves the right to amend this policy at any time, as circumstances and laws require, with notice posted for the residents.

Section I. Definitions

A. Service Animal

"Service Animal" is defined by the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) as an animal that will do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Any animal being used as a service animal inside any University-controlled building should wear a harness or other identifying device to identify it as a service animal. The University reserves the right to request that an individual present documentation from the individual's veterinarian that the service animal is in good health and has current and up-to-date immunization records and is in compliance with all applicable state and local health laws. The individual may be asked to present updated documentation annually. **Falsely claiming a pet as a "service animal" is considered a misdemeanor and is subject to a \$300 fine and community service in the state of Texas.**

B. Approved Assistance Animal

"Approved Assistance Animal" (also called comfort or therapy animal) is an animal that enables a person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy student housing by alleviating the symptoms of the disability. Unlike a Service Animal, an Assistance Animal may not be trained and does not accompany a person with a disability at all times. Approved Assistance Animals will have approved access to the resident's unit. Approved Assistance Animals are not permitted in other areas of University housing or inside other campus buildings, with the exception of designated emergency evacuation areas on campus.

C. Pet

A "Pet" is an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. A pet is not considered an assistance animal and is not covered by this policy. Residents are not permitted to have pets in the residence halls, except for fish in a 10 gallon tank or smaller.

D. Handler

The "Handler" is the student who has requested the accommodation and has received approval from the Director of Residential Living at Sul Ross State University, to bring the Approved Assistance Animal into the residence halls.

Section III. Exceptions and Exclusions

The Residential Living Department at Sul Ross State University may place restrictions on, or may exclude an Assistance Animal. Restrictions, denial, or exclusions * will be considered on a case-by-case basis. An animal may be excluded if:

- 1) It exhibits disruptive behavior, its handler cannot control said animal, or does not take action to control it.
- 2) Its size is not conducive in relation to the size of the residence hall.
- 3) It is not housebroken.
- 4) It poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. An animal with a history of biting or aggression may be considered to pose such a threat.
- 5) Its presence fundamentally alters the nature of programs, services, or activities in student housing.
- 6) Other reasons as determined by the Director of Residential Living.

*Student grievances with relation to the denial or exclusion of an animal under this policy are referred to the Dean of Students' Office, University Center 211. The decision of exclusion from Residential Living will stand until the review of grievance is complete with the Dean of Students' Office.

Section IV. 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 Residential Living Department immediately. The handler and Approved Assistance Animal may be asked to move rooms if another resident in the current room or surrounding rooms are affected by the animal at any time with 48 hours notice. The student with the medical condition may also be asked to move rooms (instead of the handler and the Assistance Animal) with 48 hours notice. The final decision of whom moves will be at the discretion of the Director of Residential Living.

Section V. Non-Health Condition Reassignment Request

In the event that a roommate does not approve of the living conditions while residing with an animal, either the handler and Approved Assistance Animal or the non-approving roommates may be asked to move rooms with 48 hours notice.

Section VI. Handler's Responsibilities in Residential Living

1. The handler must have some means of identification present on the animal at all times, such as a collar with name of animal and of the owner.
2. The handler is responsible for assuring that the Approved Assistance Animal does not interfere with the fair and comfortable use for all whom reside in the Residential Living Community. The animal must be maintained in a manner that does not disturb other residents due to noise, odor, etc.
3. The handler is liable and responsible for the actions of the Approved Assistance Animal including bodily injury or property damage. The handler's responsibility covers, but is not limited to, cleaning or replacement of furniture, carpet, doors, windows, and wall covering. The handler is expected to cover these costs at the time of repair. Final charges may be assessed after the student and animal vacate the residential unit. As with all accounting processes, Residential Living will bill the handler's student account for these charges.
4. The handler must notify the Residential Living Department in writing if the Approved Assistance Animal is no longer in residence. To replace an Approved Assistance Animal, the handler must file an updated Assistance Animal Application form and submit shot records.
5. The handler's residence may be inspected for fleas, ticks or other pests during normal Health and Safety Inspections or as needed. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected, a University-approved pest control service provider will treat the residence facility using appropriate pest

control methods. The handler will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment beyond standard pest management in the residence facility.

6. It is imperative that the Approved Assistance Animal is housed in an appropriate enclosure or kennel at all times while the handler is away. The enclosure must be of an appropriate size for the animal. Caged and kenneled animals are to be kept in appropriate cages with flooring and liner to prevent any damage to floors and to allow sanitary removal of pet waste.
7. Approved Assistance Animals may not be left in any Residential Living Unit to be cared for by another student. Animals must be taken with the student if they leave campus for a prolonged period.
8. Residential Living reserves the right to relocate handler and Approved Animal as necessary according to current contractual agreements.
9. The handler agrees that assistance animals are not allowed indoors on campus other than the handler's assigned residence hall unit (ex: LV1-101). When the handler is exiting the building with the Approved Assistance Animal, the handler MUST utilize the most direct route to do so.
10. The handler understands that Sul Ross State University reserves the right to remove an animal that is unruly or disruptive (e.g. barking, running around, jumping up on people, whining, squawking, scratching, chewing, being aggressive or not being properly housebroken, etc.).
11. Should the Approved Animal be removed from the premises for any reason, the handler is expected to fulfill his/her housing obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.
12. Care and supervision of the animal are the responsibility of the handler who benefits from the accommodation. The handler is responsible for the health and hygiene of the animal, including daily food, water, walks, and occasional grooming and baths, as may be required to keep animal odor to a minimum. Handlers should NOT use the sinks or showers in the residence hall to bathe the Approved Animal.
13. The handler is also responsible for ensuring the cleanup of the animal's waste and must toilet the animal in areas designated by Sul Ross State University. Indoor animal waste, such as cat litter, pee pads, etc., must be placed in a sturdy plastic bag and securely tied up before being disposed of in an outside trash receptacle, not the receptacles within the confines of the building. Litter boxes should be placed on mats so that waste is not tracked onto carpeted surfaces. Failure to clean up the waste of your Approved Assistance Animal will result in a fine up to \$400 per incident.
14. In accordance with local ordinances and regulations, the Approved Assistance Animal must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. Dogs must have current vaccinations, including rabies vaccination, and wear a rabies vaccination tag. Cats should have the normal shots required for a healthy animal. Local licensing requirements must be followed. All current vaccination records must be turned into Residential Living with a completed Assistance Animal Application as part of the application process.
15. When outside the handler's room, the Approved Animal must be on a standard restraint such as a collar and leash or in a carrying case, if appropriate for the animal, at all times and be in custody of the handler. This is during transit to outdoors, through public areas, and will be confined only to the owner's/handler's specifically assigned indoor location when not in transit.
16. Cruelty to animals is a violation of University policy, state, and local laws. Beating, neglecting, or otherwise harming an animal will result in the animal being removed, and probable denial of future application approvals.
17. Approved Assistance Animals are not allowed in any common area. The animal is to remain in the handler's residence unless it is to take the animal outside to eliminate waste, exercise, or to leave the premises. If the animal must leave the handler's apartment, all policies listed above still apply.

18. Other Conditions: Sul Ross State University may place other reasonable conditions or restrictions on the Approved Assistance Animals depending on the nature and characteristics of the animal.
19. Any violation of the above rules may result in immediate removal of the animal from Residential Living and may be reviewed through the judicial process.

Section VII. Procedure for Requesting Housing Accommodations

Assistance Animals may not be brought into the student housing facility without expressed approval of the Director of Residential Living. Approval can only be given when the application process has been completed and an approval email from the Director of Residential Living has been received. Persons found with an animal in campus housing prior to completing the application process will be fined \$400 for every incident and become ineligible to request an Assistance Animal. All requests should be made at least 30-60 days before the start of a semester. Requests submitted closer to Fall Move-In may not be reviewed until September. Requests may take two-weeks to process once all applicable paperwork has been submitted. Approved requests are for one academic year only and will need to be submitted before the beginning of each academic year. The following process should be followed in approving assistance animals:

1. **DO NOT** bring the animal onto campus until the full application process is complete!
2. Make an appointment with the Counseling & Accessibility Services Office located in Ferguson Hall 112, and bring documentation of the existing diagnosed disability to the appointment. Your physician's letter should include your diagnosis, how the animal mitigates related symptoms, and the number of visits that the physician has had with you in relation to this need.
3. Provide a copy of the vaccination record for the animal, showing that the requested assistance animal is up to date on all vaccinations including rabies, bordatella, distemper, parvo, and a completed and signed Assistance Animal Application to the Office of Residential Living.
4. Next, set-up a meeting with the Director of Residential Living or designee to review your application for an assistance animal.
5. Check your Sul Ross student email account for notification from the Director of Residential Living before taking any further action. **DO NOT** bring the animal on campus until you have received an approval email from the Director. Residential Living estimates a two-week approval process period before notification. However, the wait time may be longer depending on circumstances. **DO NOT** bring the animal onto campus until you receive approval. Bringing the animal into Residential Living before receiving approval **WILL** result in a \$400 fine, removal of the animal from the property, and ineligibility of having an Assistance Animal for a year.

Section VIII. Check-list for an Assistance Animal

Review the considerations below and check all that apply.

- Do you have a diagnosed disability?
- Does your assistance animal mitigate or reduce the symptom(s) of your disability?
- Do you have documentation of the above two questions?
- What is the time obligation related to the care of the specific species you want?
- What is your schedule, lifestyle, and responsibilities?
- Have you considered the financial cost of food, supplies, veterinarian costs, etc.?
- Have you thought about how you will care for the animal during break periods (must be off-campus)?
- Do you travel? If so, who will take care of the animal when you are traveling (must be off-campus)?

- Is the animal trained, especially housebroken? If the animal is not housebroken, you may lose the privilege of having it on-campus. Your housing deposit will be forfeited. You will also be charged for cleaning or other damage charges.
- Have you spoken to your roommate about the possibility of having an assistance animal?
- Have you considered that your animal will only be allowed in your unit and surrounding outdoor space?
- Have you considered the species, age, breed, sociability, and needs of the animal you are considering bringing?

Filling out this application is not an automatic guarantee of an assistance animal.

The Director of Residential Living will contact you via your Sul Ross email account as to the status of your request. If the request for an assistance animal is denied by the Director of Residential Living then the student making the request can submit a written appeal to the Dean of Students' Office within 10 business days from the date of the Director's written notification. Failure to file an appeal within the 10 day time frame will mean that the Director's decision will be active until the end of the academic year.

Residential Living Assistance Animal Application

First _____ Middle _____ Last _____

Student ID Number _____ Date of Application _____

Building _____ Room number _____ (_____) _____
Phone number _____

Local Emergency Contact for Assistance Animal (REQUIRED)

The person listed below must live within 30 miles and be ready to take the animal in case an emergency arises where the applicant cannot take care of their Assistance Animal for a short amount of time. This contact must reside off-campus.

First _____ Middle _____ Last _____

Phone Number (_____) _____

Proposed Assistance Animal Information

What is the animal's name? _____ Type of animal: _____

Is the animal considered dangerous? Yes No Does the animal have a history of aggression? Yes No

Description of Proposed Assistance Animal (Please attach photo)

(e.g. black short haired dachshund 14 years old, chipped and collar with nametag)

Checklist (fill in the blanks):

- Do you have a diagnosed disability? _____
- Does your assistance animal mitigate or reduce the symptom(s) of your disability?

- Do you have documentation of the above two questions? _____
- What is the time obligation related to the care of the specific species you want?

- What is your schedule, lifestyle, and responsibilities? _____
- Have you considered the financial cost of food, supplies, veterinarian costs, etc.? _____
- Have you thought about how you will care for the animal during break periods (must be off-campus)? _____
- Do you travel? If so, who will take care of the animal when you are traveling (must be off-campus)? _____

