

Office for Disability & Access

Procedures for requesting to have an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) in College Housing

An ESA may only reside in College Housing with the prior approval of the College. The Office for Disability & Access (ODA) and the Office of Residence Life (ResLife) collaborate on all ESA requests. An ESA must meet local health ordinances and be housebroken before being brought into residence. Our policy limits one ESA per student and one ESA per unit. We will consider exceptions to that policy on a case-by-case basis if there is a compelling reason to do so. Students planning to have their ESA reside in campus housing are required to follow the steps outlined below **before** bringing the animal to campus:

All required information for an ESA accommodation request must be submitted for consideration by:

- **June 1 for the Fall semester**
- **October 1 for the Spring semester**

Every effort will be made to accommodate requests received by the deadlines. After the above dates, ESA applications will be considered but will be subject to housing availability. The College cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the late applicant's accommodation request. All housing requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Incomplete applications or those without disability documentation will not be considered.

Procedures:

1. **Apply to Housing:** Students must first apply for housing through Oberlin's Office of Residence Life (ResLife) website using the following link: (If you currently live on campus, skip this step)

<https://oberlin.starrezhousing.com/StarRezPortalX/17166E2C/1/1/Home-Home?UrlToken=DFDE8757>

2. ***Complete and submit the online ODA Application Form and Meet with ODA Staff*:** <https://whitney.accessiblelearning.com/s-Oberlin/ApplicationStudent.aspx>. An ODA staff member will review your application and send instructions with the following steps by email, including link invitations to complete an online housing accommodation request form and schedule a meeting with an ODA staff member.

***Make sure to indicate that you are requesting Housing or Dining accommodations on the Application Form.**

****Students already registered with the ODA can access their AIM student portal. Select>Additional Accommodation Request Form > Housing Accommodation Request Form.**

3. **Submit Documentation of Disability**

Please submit the ‘Emotional Support Animal Documentation’ Form completed by your licensed medical or mental health provider, a color photo of your animal, and a copy of your animal’s up-to-date vaccination records. After submitting the required documentation, an ODA staff member will notify the student if the documentation and other paperwork are sufficient to move forward.

[Documentation Guidelines and Forms.](#)

Pre-Approval Paperwork Checklist:

- ___ Provider Documentation Form for ESA Requests
- ___ Color Photo of the Animal
- ___ Copy of animal’s up-to-date vaccination records

Documentation must be submitted to ODA Online or by the following options:

Snail Mail:

Office for Disability & Access
Oberlin College & Conservatory
135 W Lorain Street, Wilder Hall, Room 112
Oberlin, OH 44074

Email: ODA@oberlin.edu

Fax: 440-445-5589

4. Schedule an Initial ESA Meeting

With sufficient documentation, an ODA staff member will instruct the student via email to schedule an appointment with an ODA staff member. During this appointment, the student will engage in the following process with an ODA staff member:

- a. Provide self-reported information about their disability and the need for their ESA in College Housing.
- b. Review of documentation of disability and animal records (described in step 3). Additional documentation may be needed from the student’s provider and ESA’s veterinarian. This may involve an ODA staff member contacting the student’s provider to obtain more information about the student’s disability and ESA’s impact. If necessary, an ODA staff will have the student fill out a release of information, granting permission to the ODA to contact the provider.

5. Review of Request:

Applications will be considered through the ODA by the Housing/Dining Accommodation Review Committee (referred to as “The Committee”) after **ALL** requirements are completed as outlined above. The submitted documentation and the student’s self-reported information are used to

evaluate the request. The Committee considers the student’s current symptoms and limitations, the severity of the condition/disability, potential alternative accommodations, and the appropriateness and essential nature of the requested ESA. The Committee will review the request at The Housing/Dining Accommodation Review Committee Meeting, which occurs monthly. The student will be notified of The Committee’s decision via email within 7 to 10 business days following the meeting.

6. Required Follow-Up and Paperwork:

Suppose the Committee approves that the ESA can reside in college housing. In that case, an ODA staff member will notify the individual of their provisional approval, pending completion of the steps outlined below. The ESA can only live on campus once the steps below are met and the student receives clearance from ResLife. Unapproved animals or animals without obtained clearance from ResLife found on campus will be removed from College Housing. All expenses for the care/boarding of the animal are the owner’s responsibility and may be charged to the student’s account if left unpaid. All vaccines and shots must be current for boarding. Oberlin 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. Emergency personnel will determine whether to remove the animal and may not be held responsible for the care, damage to, or loss of the animal.

- a. The student is instructed via email to:
 - 1. schedule a follow-up appointment with ODA to review the ESA Policy, which outlines responsibilities for maintaining an animal in the student’s residence and
 - 2. Provide post-approval Paperwork.
- b. Once the follow-up appointment has occurred, an ODA staff member will notify ResLife of the ESA approval and provide copies of the signed ESA policy, the vaccine records, a color photo of the animal, and the Post-Approval Paperwork. **
- c. A ResLife staff member will contact the individual by email to provide clearance to bring the animal to campus once all the paperwork is received. This email must be presented to hall staff upon move-in.
- d. The individual must provide the following Post-Approval Paperwork to ResLife each year as applicable:

Post-Approval Paperwork Checklist:

- ___ Signed ESA Policy
- ___ Valid Lorain County Dog License* (if applicable)
- ___ Roommate Agreement*
- ___ Proof of Insurance*
- ___ Up-to-date Vaccination Records*

*You are REQUIRED to ensure that ResLife always has a current copy of these documents. Failure to keep vaccinations and records current may result in removing the animal from College Housing.

***An approval does not automatically guarantee clearance to bring the animal to campus. ResLife will notify the individual when their ESA is cleared to reside in college housing. ESA can only live on campus once ResLife sends clearance to the student. This clearance must be obtained each academic year.*

Any student who knowingly provides false information about whether they have a disability for any purpose, including, but not limited to, a request to be allowed to keep an animal on campus, may result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. Such violations subject the person to disciplinary sanctions under the Student Conduct Policies. Among other things, providing false information regarding one's disability status adversely affects the ability of The College to respond to the legitimate needs of persons with disabilities.

Housing and Dining Accommodation Appeal Process

Suppose the Housing Accommodation Review Committee finds a requested accommodation unreasonable or unnecessary. In that case, the student may file a written appeal with the Assistant Dean and Director of the Office for Disability & Access. Students will receive information about the reconsideration process upon receiving a denial notification. Students should be advised that there is only one reconsideration opportunity: the final decision regarding the request.

Process:

1. Request an appeal meeting with the Assistant Dean and Director of the Office for Disability & Access within five (5) business days of receiving the decision email from ODA. This meeting can be in-person, via Zoom, or a phone call.
2. The appeal **must** be based upon one of the following criteria*:
 - Procedural error(s) made in consideration of the request
 - The Housing Accommodation Review Committee improperly or unfairly reviewed the original request
3. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Assistant Dean and Director will review all the relevant information and provide a written response within seven (7) to ten (10) business days, either granting the appeal and modifying the initial decision or denying the appeal and maintaining the initial decision.

Nothing in the policy shall prohibit a student who believes they may have been subjected to disability discrimination from utilizing Oberlin College & Conservatory's Section 504 Grievance Procedures or pursuing a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights.

*** Understand that if you have new information unavailable at the time of the original request, please submit it to the Office for Disability and Access for a re-review of your request. An appeal would not be appropriate in this case.**