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## *Emotional Support Animals Policy & Procedure*

### *Office of Accessibility Services*

La Sierra University follows the most recent guidance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regarding emotional support animals (ESA). In accordance with HUD and the Fair Housing Act (FHA), La Sierra University has created the following guidelines for Emotional Service Animals in the University Housing.

**ESA Definition:** An Emotional Support Animal (ESA) is one that is necessary to afford the person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy University housing. An ESA may provide physical assistance, emotional support, calming, stability, and other kinds of assistance. ESAs do not perform work or task that would qualify them as a “Service Animal” under Americans with Disabilities Act.

La Sierra University is committed to compliance with state and federal laws regarding individuals with disabilities. All questions regarding Emotional Support Animals should be directed to

Office of Accessibility  
Services  
Sierra Vista Hall  
[www.lasierra.edu/accessibility-  
services](http://www.lasierra.edu/accessibility-services) Tel: 951-785-2452  
Email: [oas@lasierra.edu](mailto:oas@lasierra.edu)

### **ESA Approval Process**

In order to be considered for an ESA, a student must have a documented disability that requires an ESA accommodation. This is done to ensure that 1) the student has a disability; 2) the animal is necessary to afford the student an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling; and 3) there is an identifiable relationship between the student’s disability and the assistance the animal provides.

Students need to first register with the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) by completing the following steps:

1. The ‘ESA Request for Documentation’ form must be filled out by the student’s treating medical entity.
2. The ‘Intake Registration’ Form must be completed by the student.
3. The student must participate in an intake meeting with the OAS Coordinator.

Forms are available for download at [www.lasierra.edu/accessibility-services/](http://www.lasierra.edu/accessibility-services/)

All documentation must be submitted to the Office of Accessibility Services either via email at [oas@lasierra.edu](mailto:oas@lasierra.edu) or in person at Sierra Vista Hall (OACS).

Once an ESA is approved, an individual may keep an ESA as an accommodation in their assigned room within University housing. For students who wish to walk their animal on campus, there is a designated walking path, which is limited only to the street identified as 'Heritage Way' (visualization of the walking path is available in the appendix). On days where events are held in the 'Glory of God's Grace' Sculpture Plaza, which bisects the designated walking path, animals must not linger in the plaza.

Emotional Support Animals are **NOT** allowed in any other university buildings or grounds.

After OAS has approved the accommodation of a Service or Emotional Support Animal, the OAS Coordinator will send a copy of their approval letter to University Housing.

No animal will be permitted in residence halls or apartments that:

- Is not approved by the OAS office or,
- Is not approved by University Housing or,
- Poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or,
- Would cause substantial physical damage to the property of the University and other residents or,
- Would pose an undue financial and administrative burden to the University or,
- Would fundamentally alter the nature of the University's housing operations.

### **Restrictions of ESA Approval**

The University may exclude an Emotional Support Animal from University housing if;

- The animal is not housebroken;
- The animal would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others or University facilities;
- The animal is less than one year of age;
- The animal is not spayed/neutered;
- The animal is not fully vaccinated;
- The animal is not microchipped;
- The animal is not licensed (dog);
- The animal would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
- The animal would fundamentally alter the nature of a program or activity; or
- The animal is not being cared for by the student.

Students will be liable for damage caused by Emotional Support Animals in the same

manner they are responsible for personal damages to University property.

## **Deadlines**

The individual making the request for accommodation should complete and provide the Request Form to Accessibility Services as soon as practicably possible before moving into University housing. However, if the request for accommodation is made fewer than 30 days before the individual intends to move into University housing, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to meet the individual's accommodation needs during the first term of occupancy.

## **Standards for Approved Emotional Support Animals**

All approved Emotional Support Animals must comply with applicable laws regarding animals and their treatment and care, and must also meet the following standards:

### **Dogs and Domestic Cats**

- All required immunizations must be up-to-date throughout the animal's stay and a current copy of the immunizations must be on file at all times with OAS.
- Dogs must be licensed and a copy of the license must be on file with OAS (Riverside County Ordinance 630 Section 2 Mandatory dog licensing and vaccination).
- Animals must be implanted with an identifying microchip and a copy of the report must be on file with OAS (Ord. 6.08.130).
- Animals must be spayed or neutered. A copy of the veterinarian's report must be on file with OAS.
- A Certificate of Health signed by a veterinarian certifying the animal is healthy and free from any signs of infectious or contagious diseases, parasites, etc. must be on file with OAS.
- Collars and tags must be worn at all times. The dog must be kept on a leash at all times when outside the residence or apartment room. Dogs must never be allowed to run freely.
- Dogs must possess friendly and sociable characteristics. A specific dog can be restricted from the premises by the University Housing Director or designee based on any confirmed threatening or territorial behavior. Dogs that are classified as "Vicious Dogs" (Riverside County Ordinance 771, Section 2) and "Dangerous Dogs" (Ord. Chapter 6.16) will not be allowed.
- Dog obedience and training programs are highly recommended.

### **Any Other Animal**

Any other animal will be considered on a case by case basis by OAS or designee.

Animals defined as "Exotic Animals" in the Riverside County Ordinance Code 680, section 2.q (Exotic animal is defined as any animal which is not normally domesticated in the United States including, but not limited to, any lion, tiger, bear, non-human primate (monkey, chimpanzee, etc.), wolf, coyote, cougar, bobcat, ocelot, wildcat, skunk, boa, python, reptile, amphibian, bird, or venomous snake, irrespective of its actual or asserted state of docility, tameness or domesticity) are not allowed.

## Standards of Student Behavior

- Student must feed and provide attention to animal daily.
- Student must assess their animal's general health, behavior and overall welfare daily.
- Student cannot leave animals unattended overnight at any time.
  - If the student must be away, they must either take the animal with them, or make arrangements for them to be cared for elsewhere, which does not include other residence hall or apartment spaces.
- Student must remove feces (cat litter box contents and any solid animal waste), from University grounds, dispose of it in a plastic bag, and then place that bag in the garbage dumpsters outside. Animal feces may not be disposed of in any trash receptacle or through the sewer system inside any building on the La Sierra University campus and properties.
  - Cleanup must occur **IMMEDIATELY**.
- Student must promptly clean animal-accidents within the residence hall room or apartment using appropriate cleaning products.
- Students with cats must properly maintain litter boxes.
  - Cat litter box contents must be disposed of properly and regularly.
  - The litter box must be changed with new cat litter regularly as outlined by the manufacturer.
- Student must regularly and routinely clean floors, kennels, cages and litter boxes.
  - The odor of an animal coming from the residence hall room or apartment is **not** acceptable (see Cleaning and Damages section below).
- Students will notify University Housing staff immediately if the animal has escaped its confines.

## Standards of Animal Care

- Animals must remain in their crate at all times while the student is not present in the room.
- Animals are not permitted to be present in any other space aside from the student's assigned dorm/unit.
  - Animals must not be taken into the residence hall or property management offices, administrative offices, common spaces (bathroom, study spaces, etc.) or student living areas (friend's or adjacent dorm rooms/ units).
- Animals are not permitted to be in any other university buildings aside from the student's residential building.
- Animals are not permitted to be in any campus grounds aside from the designated walking path (can be found in Appendix), and the areas designated by dorm Deans (specific to each dorm).
- Any flea infestation must be attended to promptly by the University Housing contracted professional extermination company **at animal owner's expense**.
  - Students are expected to promptly notify University Housing staff and arrange for extermination when a flea problem is noted.
  - Animal must vacate the residence hall room or apartment until they are

cleared of fleas. A copy of a Veterinary report stating a clean bill of health must be on file with OAS for the animal to be eligible to return.

### **Standards of Animal Behavior**

- An animal must not be involved in an incident where a person experiences either the threat of or an actual injury as a result of the animal's behavior.
  - The animal owner will take all reasonable precautions to protect university staff and residents, as well as the property of the University and of the residents.
- Animals must not be allowed to disrupt others (e.g., barking continuously, growling, yowling, howling, etc.).
- Animals which constitute a threat or nuisance to staff, residents or property, as determined by the University Housing Director or designee, must be removed within 24 hours of notification.
- If University Security Department personnel determine an animal poses an immediate threat, animal control may be summoned to remove the animal.
  - If the behavior of an animal can be addressed by the owner and the owner can change the behavior of an animal so the pet does not have to be removed, then a written action plan must be submitted by the owner.
  - The action plan must outline the action to take place to alleviate the problems and also must give a deadline as to length of time the plan will take to complete. Any action plan must meet the approval of the University Housing Director or designee.
  - The day after the deadline for removal from the room/apartment, University Housing staff will do a residence hall room or apartment inspection to check for damages and infestation and then the mandatory cleaning and extermination will be scheduled as needed at the student's expense.
  - Any animal owner found not adhering to the removal directive will be subject to disciplinary action, which could include housing contract cancellation.
- All liability for the actions of the animal (bites, scratches, etc.) is the responsibility of the student. Violations concerning any of the aforementioned may result in the resident having to find alternative housing off-campus for the animal and, as warranted, may also result in a resident being in breach of their housing contract.

### **Cleaning and Damages**

- When the student moves out of their apartment or residence hall room, or no longer owns the animal, the apartment or residence hall room will be assessed to determine if damage to department property has been attributed to the animal.
  - The University maintains the right to conduct apartment or residence hall room inspections as necessary for the purpose of assessing damage caused by the animal or otherwise determines the resident's compliance with this procedure.

The animal owner has an obligation to make sure that the apartment or residence hall room is as clean as the original standard. If the apartment or room has carpeting, this also includes regular vacuuming, shampooing, and/or spot cleaning. Damages and extraordinary cleaning caused by the

animal are the responsibility of the resident. Replacement or repair of damaged items will be the financial responsibility of the owner and assessed by members of the University Housing staff.

**Student Emergency Absence**

In the event of an emergency necessitating a student's departure from their residence, thereby leaving their animal behind, it is imperative that the student assign a designated 'caretaker' for the animal. This designation is to be made during the student's intake meeting. A copy of the designated 'caretaker's' signature agreeing to this role will be needed on file with OAS. Additionally, students are required to provide an emergency contact person, whom the university will communicate with if the student remains absent for a period exceeding 24 hours.

Should the designated emergency contact fail to respond or choose to leave the animal at the university's residence for a duration surpassing 24 hours, the university reserves the right to engage a professional board and care facility for the animal, with all associated costs to be borne by the student. The student is obliged to endorse this release form during their intake meeting, thereby confirming their understanding and acceptance of these protocols.

**Student Signature**

I understand that it is my responsibility to uphold and meet the standards listed in this document. If these standards are not upheld, reevaluation of ESA and potential removal of a specific ESA and/or removal of ESA as an accommodation from dorm may take place, which will be determined by OAS and the Housing Staff.

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Student Name	ID Number
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Student Signature	Date
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## Appendix

The designated animal walking path is highlighted below in yellow.

