



Division of Student Affairs
Florida Atlantic University



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EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS

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*Alternate format is available upon request.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS

Florida Atlantic University (FAU) is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. Emotional Support Animals (ESA), also referred to as Therapy Animals or Comfort Animals, provide a measure of support and comfort to individuals with qualifying disabilities. ESAs are a prescribed part of therapy for emotional and psychological disabilities and serve to alleviate symptoms of the disability.

Unlike a service animal that has access to public places where pets are not typically allowed, an ESA has limited access to places of public accommodation. Under the Fair Housing Act (FHA), an ESA is viewed as a **reasonable accommodation** in a housing unit that has a *no pet* policy for its residents. Residence halls are considered as part of the FHA. Therefore, approved ESAs are allowed in residence halls, are restricted from access to all other campus areas, and can only leave the residence hall for nature breaks. ESAs are not allowed in classrooms, other campus buildings or residence halls, or campus events. ESAs must be under the control of their owner at all times, cannot be left alone overnight, and cannot be cared for by another student.

Students with disabilities who seek to bring an ESA to campus must adhere to the guidelines described in FAU's ESA policy as explained in this brochure. A student seeking an ESA accommodation may be approved for only one animal. Students are not permitted to keep ESAs in residential buildings without prior approval as a reasonable accommodation through Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Failure to comply with this process will result in a Code of Conduct violation and is considered a breach of the Housing Contract.

REQUEST AN ESA

An ESA is an animal that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. ESAs are not considered service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act. These support animals provide companionship, relieve loneliness, and sometimes help with depression, anxiety, and certain phobias, but **do not** have special training to perform specific tasks to assist people with disabilities.

To request an ESA, a student must complete the following steps:

1. The student must apply for services through SAS. To register for SAS services, please log into the portal using your FAU Net ID and password to complete the online Application for Academic Services. Be sure to click *Submit* at the bottom when completed:
<https://clockwork.fau.edu/ClockWork/user/intake/default.aspx>
2. The student must upload an ESA Verification Form from a *licensed psychologist or psychiatrist, a licensed clinical social worker, or a licensed mental health counselor.* Documentation is not accepted from other clinicians. For specific documentation requirements, refer to *Documentation Requirements* later in this brochure. Upload the ESA Verification Form in the online portal when completing the application process.
 - ESA Verification Form:
<http://www.fau.edu/sas/SAS-Brochures/ESA%20verification%20form%20Revised%2003-17.pdf>

3. The student must also submit an ESA Veterinarian Verification Form that must be completed by the ESA's veterinarian.
 - o ESA Veterinarian Verification Form:
<http://www.fau.edu/sas/Forms.php>
4. Once an application and the above mentioned documentation has been submitted, the SAS Associate Director will review within 48 business hours (this may vary during peak times).
 - a. If the documentation is insufficient, SAS will contact the student to explain why.
5. If the documentation is sufficient, the student will be assigned to an SAS Consultant.
6. The student will be contacted by the SAS Consultant to schedule an appointment for an intake interview with the Consultant.
7. The intake interview will give the student an opportunity to meet their SAS Consultant. The student will be asked to provide information about their experience of disability, barriers they have encountered, as well as effective and ineffective prior accommodations.
8. The student's appropriate accommodations will then be determined based on an interactive process between the student and the SAS Consultant. The student will also receive information about other support services available at FAU.
9. The Consultant will review the ESA Agreement with the student to explain the rules and expectations, in addition to all other University rules. This agreement form must be signed, and a copy is given to the student and to Housing and Residential Education.

SERVICE ANIMALS VERSUS EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS	
Service Animals	Emotional Support Animals (ESA)
Dogs or miniature horses.	Species not defined. Can be any species but typically is a dog or a cat.
Assists a person with a disability by performing a specific task	Alleviates symptoms of a disability, usually a psychological disability.
Trained to perform a specific task by a specialized organization	Not trained for a specific task by a specialized organization.
Must meet with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and submit proof of current vaccinations.	Must register with SAS by submitting an Application for Academic Accommodations, documentation (clearly linking the ESA to the disability), submitting proof of current vaccination records, and completing an intake appointment.
May be eligible for academic accommodations. If academic accommodations are requested, must register with SAS.	May be eligible for academic accommodations. If academic accommodations are requested, must register with SAS.
Unlimited campus access.	Restricted campus access. Limited to residence hall. May leave residence hall only for nature breaks.
Must be under the owner's control at all times.	Must be under the owner's control at all times. ESA care must be provided solely by the owner. ESA cannot be left alone or with anyone else overnight.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- In accordance with Florida State law (828.30), all dogs, cats, and ferrets (including Service Animals) on campus are required to have current rabies vaccines and wear rabies vaccination tags.
- **Florida State law 413.08 (6b) states that a person approved for a housing accommodation may be requested to provide proof of compliance with vaccination requirements.**
- Provide for the ESA's health care and daily needs.
- The ESA must be under the student's control at all times.
- The student approved for the ESA is the sole care provider for the ESA. No one else should care for the ESA.
- The ESA should not be left alone except for classes and academic-related activities. They should not be left alone overnight, weekends or holidays.
- Clean up after the ESA's nature breaks.
- Any damages caused by the ESA is the student's financial responsibility.
- Since ESAs are not service animals, they are not permitted in public places where animals are not allowed. ESAs must stay in the student's assigned residence hall and must not leave the residence hall except for nature breaks. ESAs are not allowed anywhere else on campus, including other residence halls, campus buildings, or campus events.

According to Florida State Law 413.8 "A person who knowingly and fraudulently represents herself or himself, through conduct or verbal or written notice, as using a service animal and being qualified to use a service animal or as a trainer of a service animal commits a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 217 775.083 and must perform 30 hours of community service for an organization that serves individuals with disabilities, or for another entity or organization at the discretion of the court, to be completed in not more than 1 year."

10. The SAS Consultant will then send an accommodation letter to Housing and Residential Education for the ESA along with a copy of the ESA Agreement Form and the ESA Veterinarian Verification Form.
11. If the student wishes to replace the approved ESA with another animal, the student must submit a new ESA Verification Form and ESA Veterinarian Verification Form for review along with additional documentation from the clinician that verifies the medical need for a different animal.
12. Remember, the ESA's vaccinations must be updated within a certain timeframe (as indicated by the veterinarian), and it is the student's responsibility to submit an updated ESA Veterinarian Verification Form within one week of the vaccination expiration date. In addition, the student must provide an updated Veterinarian Verification Form annually at the time the student's housing contract is renewed.

Deadlines

Deadlines to apply for an ESA / housing accommodation are June 1 for the fall semester and November 1 for the spring semester. After these dates, applications are accepted, but FAU cannot guarantee the accommodation request can be met, even with proper documentation. Housing accommodations are subject to room availability. Please review the Housing brochure located on the SAS website: <http://www.fau.edu/sas/Brochures.php>

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

- A student requesting an ESA must **submit an ESA Verification form** from a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist, a licensed clinical social worker, or licensed mental health counselor ONLY. <http://www.fau.edu/sas/SAS-Brochures/ESA%20verification%20form%20Revised%2003-17.pdf>. For example, a pediatrician or a family physician would not be an appropriate clinician to provide documentation for an ESA. *Documentation from other clinicians / providers is not accepted.*
- Additional documentation submitted must be on official letterhead and should be signed and dated within the last two years.
- Include a specific DSM-5 diagnosis, a statement of the student's current condition, the date and a summary of the most recent evaluation, and the expected duration of the condition.
- State the current impact of, or functional limitations, imposed by the condition on the student's living situation.
- Explain how the condition relates to the student's request for an ESA. There must be a direct link established between the functional limitations of the condition and the requested ESA.
- Documentation must clearly state a specific recommendation for an ESA, that the ESA is necessary to treat the condition, which major life activities are substantially limited by the disability, and which disability symptoms are alleviated by the ESA.
- Include evidence the provider is currently treating the student for the condition for which the ESA is requested.
- **Submission of a completed Veterinarian Verification Form:** <http://www.fau.edu/sas/Forms.php>.

NOTE: It may take one to two weeks for the Application for Academic Accommodations to be processed, even with adequate documentation. If the documentation submitted is inadequate, the processing time will increase

HOUSING ASSIGNMENT

If the ESA request is approved, SAS will write a letter to the Department of Housing and Residential Education (DHRE) specifying a recommendation of an ESA. DHRE will then determine a specific room assignment. There is no need to reapply every year for an ESA accommodation, though the student's room assignment may change from year-to-year; however, an updated Veterinarian Verification form must be submitted each time the student signs a Housing contract. SAS has no influence on a specific room, residence hall, or roommate assignment. DHRE should be contacted for questions or concerns about a specific room assignment and/or a housing contract.

ROOMMATE / SUITEMATE NOTIFICATION FOR THE PRESENCE OF AN ESA

Housing and Residential Education will need to inform the roommate(s), suitemates, and/or floor mates of the presence of the student's approved ESA to make necessary housing changes that may be required based on the presence of the ESA.

CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS

Students who have questions or concerns about any matter or policy affecting their use of an emotional support animal should contact Student Accessibility Services at **561.297.3880** or accommodations@fau.edu.
