

PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING A SERVICE OR ASSISTANCE ANIMAL IN A RESIDENCE HALL

A student with a disability who wants to bring a service or assistance animal to live on campus is subject to the definitions and regulations of the recent amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Fair Housing Act (FHAct), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974.

Service Animals

The ADA defines a service animal as “any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA “(ADA 2010 Revised Requirements, US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, *Disability Rights Section*). ADA provides a separate provision regarding miniature horses.

Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered unless these devices interfere with the service animal’s work or the individual’s disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

- 1) The student must make a request in advance to the Students with Disabilities Services Office at 209A Alumni Hall, 607-436-2137, <http://www.oneonta.edu/development/sds/handbook.asp> to allow a thorough review and to make appropriate arrangements.
- 2) That request must state that the dog is a service animal that is required because of a disability and describe the work or task that the dog has been trained to perform.
- 3) The staff at the SDS Office will provide the information to the staff in Residential and Community Life and to the Facilities Department to make the necessary arrangements.

Assistance Animals

With advance approval, a student with a disability may have an assistance animal in her/his residence hall room as a reasonable accommodation. The student will be responsible for cleaning up after the animal unless she/he is physically incapable of providing such care. The assistance animal will not be allowed in campus buildings other than the residence hall. If there is no one who will room with the student and the assistance animal, the student may be liable for the cost of a single.

- 1) The request must be made in advance to Residential Community Life, <http://www.oneonta.edu/development/reslife/options.asp>, to allow a thorough review; an animal that is brought to campus without advance approval will not be allowed into a hall. The request should be made at the point that the housing deposit is submitted (for new students) or January 1 (for continuing residents).

2) The request must include documentation from a licensed mental health professional (i.e., psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker) who has provided treatment for the disability and must include the following.

A. Evidence of the disability and the DSM diagnosis related to the use of an assistance animal; the dates of treatment and the date at which the diagnosis was first made; the symptoms for which treatment was needed; treatment(s) other than use of an assistance animal that have been used for symptom reduction; and the date on which the use of an assistance animal was prescribed.

B. Evidence of the connection between the diagnosis/symptoms and the use of the support animal.

C. 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 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 will be reviewed by a committee that is composed of representatives from Residential Community Life, the Counseling Center, the Health Center, Facilities and Administration, and the Office of Student Development.

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