**Student Assistance Animal Policy**

**Policy Statement**

This policy is designed to inform constituents regarding the definition, processes and guidelines surrounding assistance animals.

**Audience**

The Student Assistance Animal Policy applies to all students and visitors to St. Edward’s university. Human Resources is responsible for the [policy](http://think.stedwards.edu/hr/sites/think.stedwards.edu.hr/files/2015%20SEU%20Handbook%20Secured%20E%20Final.pdf) regarding assistance animal accommodations for all university employees.

**Definitions**

An **assistance animal**, also known as a companion, therapy, comfort or emotional support animalis an animal that provides emotional support which alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person’s disability. An assistance animal is prescribed to an individual with a disability by a healthcare or mental health professional. Unlike a service animal, an assistance animal does not assist a person with a disability with activities of daily living or accompany that person at all times.

**Compliance**

An assistance animal may be considered in conjunction with access to university housing, but **they are not permitted in any other interior spaces of the university (e.g. libraries, academic buildings, classrooms, dining areas, labs, work areas, student centers, etc.)**. Students found in violation of this policy are subject to the Student Code of Conduct. Also, students will be liable for damage caused by assistance animals in the same manner they are responsible for personal damages to university property.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Director of Student Disability Services – Is responsible for student education regarding this policy and all questions regarding service and assistance animals should be directed to Student Disability Services (SDS). SDS will also be responsible for reviewing requests and documentation related to a student seeking an assistance animal in university housing.

Associate Director for Residence Life – Is responsible for the implementation of the accommodation for an assistance animal in university housing, including: assigning housing, completing residential agreements and contracts, and reviewing vaccination documentation.

Dean of Students – Is responsible for student education regarding this policy and/or enforcement of any violation of this policy by a student.

**Policy Standards and Guidelines**

**Assistance Animal Policy**

In accordance with the Fair Housing Act (FHA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Student Disability Services (SDS) at St. Edward’s University engages in an interactive and collaborative process with students in order to determine eligibility for reasonable accommodations, including the use of an assistance animal in university housing.

Under the FHA, a person may keep an assistance animal in her/his residence hall or campus apartment as a reasonable accommodation if:

1. The individual has a disability;
2. The animal is necessary to afford the individual with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy campus housing; and
3. There is an identifiable relationship between the disability and the assistance the animal provides.

Assistance animals are allowed only in the residence hall or campus apartment to which the individual with a disability is assigned by Residential Life. In making a decision whether to permit an assistance animal, the university shall inquire:

1. About the nature or extent of a student’s disability that substantially limits a major life activity;
2. If the assistance animal is necessary for the student to use or enjoy his or her residence;
3. About the relationship between the student’s disability and the relief that the animal provides; and
4. Require veterinary verification of vaccines for the animal.

#### Responsibilities of Individuals with Assistance Animals

The university is not responsible for the care or supervision of an assistance animal. Individuals with disabilities are responsible for the control of their assistance animals at all times and for ensuring the immediate cleanup and proper disposal of all animal waste. Individuals must comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including vaccination, licensure, animal health and leash laws, as well as the university’s rules in lease provisions regarding vaccination, licensure, leash control, cleanup rules, animal health, and community relationships.

The university may exclude an assistance animal from university housing if the animal is not housebroken; would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others or university facilities; would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others; would fundamentally alter the nature of a program or activity; or is not being cared for by the individual. Students will be liable for damage caused by assistance animals in the same manner they are responsible for personal damages to university property.

**Procedures**

Students wishing to have an assistance animal in the residence halls based on a disability should follow the Housing Accommodation procedure below.

**Housing Accommodation/Exemption Requests**

**NOTE:**Prior to requesting an accommodation, students must be **ELIGIBLE** for on-campus housing by completing any applications required by Residence Life (e.g., Online Housing Application) as well as complying with all Residence Life deadlines (e.g., housing application deadline, room reservation fee deadline, etc.).

1. During the Online Housing Application process, students must indicate a need for a housing accommodation or exemption based on a disabling condition.

2. Once you have indicated a need, you will be directed to complete the Housing Accommodation Request Form

3. Students must provide documentation from an appropriately qualified professional that makes evident the current impact of the disability as it relates to the accommodation(s) requested. SDS strongly encourages providers to use the [Disability Verification Form for Housing Accommodations](https://stedwards.box.com/shared/static/id0rppgyjmctsd3yatmgulgmqdf95b8f.pdf" \t "_blank).

**NOTE:** If you are unable to amend your Housing Application for the term you wish to be accommodated, please [c](mailto:sds@stedwards.edu?subject=Housing%20Accommodation%20Information%20Request&body=Name%3A%0AID%3A%0AClassification%20%28Freshman%2C%20Transfer%2C%20Returning%2C%20International%29%3A%0AAre%20you%20currently%20living%20on%20campus%3A%0AIf%20so%2C%20what%20is%20your%20current%20campus%20housing%20assignment%3A%0A%0A)[ontact SDS](mailto:sds@stedwards.edu?subject=Housing%20Accommodation%20Information%20Request&body=Please%20complete%20the%20following.%0A%0AName%3A%0A%0AID%3A%0A%0AClassification%20%28Freshman%2C%20Transfer%2C%20Returning%2C%20International%29%3A%0A%0AWhich%20semester%20are%20you%20interested%20in%20a%20housing%20accommodation%3A%0A%0AAre%20you%20currently%20living%20on%20campus%3A%0A%0AIf%20so%2C%20what%20is%20your%20current%20campus%20housing%20assignment%3A%0A%0AList%20other%20comments%20or%20questions%3A).

**Forms**

[Disability Verification Form for Housing Accommodations](https://stedwards.box.com/shared/static/oxhgwu6pmhyj7ku5ojkhs3rmin0t77jn.docx)

**Related Regulations, Statutes, and Related Policies**

The Assistance Animal Policy is in accordance with the Fair Housing Act.

**Contacts**

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| **Contact** | **Telephone** | **Email** |
| Student Disability Services | 512-448-8561 | sds@stedwards.edu |

**Document History**

This section must contain the following dates or placeholders for future dates:

* Effective Date: March 2017
* Last Revised Date: February 3, 2017