

Reasonable Accommodation Policy for Assistance/Companion Animals

With advanced approval, a student with a disability may have an assistance/companion animal in their residence hall room or apartment bed space as a reasonable accommodation. The assistance/companion animal will only be allowed in the individual owner's residence hall room or apartment and bed space and not in other buildings on campus. In order to have an assistance/companion animal in the residence halls or apartments, students must request a disability-related housing/animal accommodation through [Student Accessibility Services](#). Students complete this agreement only after approval is received from Student Accessibility Services. The following is required:

1. For new students, the request for an assistance/companion animal should be made in writing (Using the application at the end of this packet) to the Residence Life Office or the Student Accessibility Services Office at the time of the housing deposit. For continuing students, the request should be made thirty days prior to housing sign-up for the following term.
2. The request must include documentation from a third-party professional (i.e. physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker) who has provided treatment to the student for the disability. The documentation should include:
 - a. Evidence of the disability and the DSM or medical diagnosis from a licensed professional related to the use of an assistance/companion animal. This includes: a. the dates of treatment and the date at which the diagnosis was first made;
 - b. The symptoms for which treatment was needed;
 - c. Treatments other than use of an assistance/companion animal that have been used for symptom reduction;
 - d. The date on which the use of an assistance/companion animal was prescribed.
 - e. Evidence of the connection between the diagnosis/symptoms and the use of the assistance/companion animal to treat or manage those symptoms.
 - f. Evidence that the student will not be able to use and enjoy the residence hall/apartments or to participate in the services or programs if the assistance/companion 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 must include a statement from a qualified veterinarian that the animal has received all appropriate vaccinations, is in generally good health, and can appropriately reside in a residence life environment without detriment to its health.
5. The presence of a companion animal cannot unduly interfere with the enjoyment of campus living facilities by roommates, suitemates and/or members of the College community. To the extent possible, the Residence Life Office will work with students in order to identify options that will allow for the presence of the companion animal while maintaining suitable living facilities for others.

The Student Accessibility Services Office and the Housing Accommodation Review Committee will consult with the Residence Life Office in making a determination on a case-by-case basis of whether the presence of an assistance/companion animal is reasonable. A request for an assistance/companion animal may be denied as unreasonable if the presence of the animal:

1. Imposes an undue financial and/or administrative burden to the University;
2. Fundamentally alters University housing policies;
3. Poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or would cause substantial property damage to the property of others, including College property.

BSU may consider the following factors, among others, in determining whether the presence of the animal is reasonable or in the making of housing assignments for individuals with assistance/companion animals:

1. The size of the animal is too large for available assigned housing space;
2. The animal's presence would force another individual from individual housing (e.g. serious allergies);
3. The animal's presence otherwise violates individuals' right to peace and quiet enjoyment;
4. The animal is not housebroken or is unable to live with others in a reasonable manner;
5. The animal's vaccinations are not up-to-date;
6. The animal poses or has posed in the past a direct threat to the individual or others such as aggressive behavior towards or injuring the individual or others;
7. The animal causes or has caused excessive damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear.

An assistance/companion animal must be contained and properly housed and restrained or otherwise under the control of the owner at all times. No owner shall permit the animal to go loose or run at large.

If an animal is found running at large, the animal is subject to capture and confinement and immediate removal from College housing.

The assistance/companion animal must be kept within the privately assigned individual living accommodations (e.g., room, suite, or apartment) except when taking the animal out for natural relief. When an assistance/companion animal is outside the private individual living accommodations, it must be in an animal carrier or controlled by a leash or harness. Assistance/companion animals are not allowed in any College facilities other than College residence halls (e.g. dormitories, suites, apartments, etc.) to which the individual is assigned.