

Requesting a Support Animal in Student Housing at UC Santa Cruz

UC Santa Cruz values diversity and inclusion. We welcome students with disabilities who require service animals and support animals (often referred to as an Emotional Support Animal, ESA) to manage daily living. This document will provide guidance for the process of registering a service animal and requesting an ESA in student housing.

Please review the UCSC Service and Support Animal Policy at <https://policy.ucsc.edu/policies/student-affairs/dss-0003.html> for definitions of a support animal, a service animal, and other useful information.

It is recommended that students interested in having an ESA in campus housing meet with the DRC director to discuss the process. Call 831-459-2089 to make an ESA appointment.

Generally,

the presence of only one ESA will be approved for a student, in order to fulfill the intent of the FHA requirements in providing support to the student with a mental health disability.

Students or visitors who have questions about having a support animal on campus grounds (outside of housing) can contact the DRC at: 831-459-2089. Service dogs **do not** need to be approved by the DRC as a reasonable accommodation. A service animal identification vest or harness is not required.

Steps for Requesting a Support Animal

Part 1: Personal Statement from Student

1. What type of animal are you requesting (dog, cat, hamster, etc)?
2. Where do you live or plan to live on campus? (This information is needed to make clear where to send the accommodation recommendation. In some cases, it will be where you are applying to live (college, University Center, Family Student Housing, Graduate Housing, the Village, etc).
3. How does this animal address your symptoms?
4. Is the animal part of a comprehensive treatment plan? Please explain.

Part 2: The following information will be needed from a licensed therapist or licensed mental health professional.

1. Is the student diagnosed with a diagnosis specifically found in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) 5?

2. What is the nature/functional limitations of the disability?
3. Is this an animal that you specifically prescribed as part of treatment for the student, or is it a pet that you believe will have a beneficial effect for the student while in residence on campus?
4. What disability-related symptoms will be reduced by having the ESA?
5. Is there evidence that an ESA has helped this student in the past or currently?

Notice:

Consistent with other U.S. colleges and universities (members of the Association on Higher Education and Disability), UCSC does not accept some licensed provider's letters of verification of disability-related need for an Emotional Support Animal. UCSC recommends that the student should have an established treatment relationship with a licensed provider before seeking an ESA recommendation. The Disability Resource Center does not recommend paying a fee for an ESA letter. **We reserve the right to request additional information from the recommending licensed professional.**

Next Steps

The DRC will review the documentation when the student's personal statement and the licensed care provider's response to the above prompts are received. Allow ten business days for the determination to be made. Once the determination is made (standards are met), the DRC will email the Director of Housing to relay the recommendation for the ESA. A copy of that email will be sent to the student. If the standards are not met, the DRC will communicate that the approval was not made. New documentation can be submitted if the earlier documentation did not meet the standards set forth in this document.