

Title/Subject: **ASSISTANCE ANIMAL IN UNIVERSITY HOUSING POLICY**

Applies to:  faculty  staff  students  student employees  visitors  contractors

Effective Date of This Revision: November 7, 2019

Contact for More Information: Student Disability Services; Office of Residence Life

Board Policy  Administrative Policy  Procedure  Guideline

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**BACKGROUND:**

Central Michigan University is committed to fulfilling its obligations under state and federal laws, including providing reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities. This Policy governs the use of Assistance Animals as accommodations in University housing by persons with disabilities.

Requests for accommodation regarding an assistance animal shall be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be supported by sufficient documentation, as more fully described below.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to outline under what conditions, where, and when an assistance animal is permitted in University housing.

**DEFINITIONS:**

An Assistance Animal is an animal that provides emotional support or alleviates one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. The animal is necessary to afford a person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling when there is a disability-related need for the assistance provided by the animal and assistance from an animal is an integral part of a person's treatment process.

**POLICY:**

Assistance Animals are only allowed in the person's University housing residence, except to the extent that an Assistance Animal also qualifies as a Service Animal, in which case the Service Animal Policy applies. See Administrative Policy 13-3, [https://www.emich.edu/office\\_president/general\\_counsel/Documents/p13003.pdf](https://www.emich.edu/office_president/general_counsel/Documents/p13003.pdf)

The use of an Assistance Animal as an accommodation is determined by the Director of Student Disability Services ("SDS"). A resident desiring to use an Assistance Animal in University housing must be registered with SDS in advance; the animal should not be brought into University housing until a meeting with SDS has occurred and written approval for the animal granted. This policy applies to all forms of University housing. Assistance Animals are not pets; pets are prohibited in University housing.

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Authority: Robert O. Davis, President  
History: 2014-12-15; 2019-07-18  
Indexed as: Animal Policy; Emotional Support Animal, Support Animal

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**PROCEDURE:**

1. A resident wishing to use an Assistance Animal in University housing must identify and register with Student Disability Services (SDS) at least 30 days prior to moving into University Housing. Documentation of disability must be provided. SDS reserves the right to request additional documentation or clarification. See Documentation Guidelines at <https://www.cmich.edu/ess/studentaffairs/SDS/Pages/Documentation-Guidelines.aspx>
2. Each request will be considered individually. The resident will be notified in writing of the decision by the Director of SDS and, if the accommodation is approved, SDS will work with the resident and campus staff to facilitate the implementation of the accommodation.
3. Documentation of how and to what extent an animal has alleviated symptoms in the past is required. In addition, the student should be in ongoing or continuing treatment in addition to using the Assistance Animal. The animal must be old enough to be licensed in Isabella County.
4. As required by applicable local, state and federal law, the Assistance Animal must be immunized against diseases common to the type of animal. Dogs must have a current rabies vaccination and wear a rabies vaccination tag. Cats should have the normal shots required for a healthy animal. Local licensing and animal control requirements shall be followed. Records of all required immunizations must be provided to SDS before approval can be granted.
5. Assistance Animals other than dogs and cats must have an annual clean bill of health from a Michigan licensed veterinarian, documented by a vaccination certificate or written statement from the veterinarian, if a vaccination certificate is not available for that type of animal.
6. The University reserves the right to request documentation that the assistance animal is licensed and vaccinated and to have the animal examined by a licensed Michigan veterinarian of its choosing.
7. The University will prohibit a specific animal that poses a threat to the health or safety of others if that threat cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation; a resident requesting an Assistance Animal shall provide background to SDS regarding any history the animal has of biting or injuring others. The University will prohibit a specific animal that would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others or the University if said damage cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation. Also, if approval of an Assistance Animal poses an undue financial or administrative burden on the University, or would fundamentally alter the nature of University housing operations, approval shall not be granted.
8. The resident is responsible for the animal's behavior and care, including, but not limited to: costs of said care, maintaining control of the animal at all times and sanitary disposal of animal waste. The resident agrees the animal will be well cared for at all times, and not left alone or cared for by others overnight. The University can order the animal removed if the resident does not meet these requirements. Removal of the animal and any necessary cleaning, repairs and pest control required will be done at the expense of the resident responsible. The animal is to be crated when the resident is not present.
9. Assistance Animals are limited to University housing subject to the following prohibitions: common area, food service or food preparation areas, classrooms, or in any other campus building other than the resident's assigned dwelling space.
10. The resident receiving approval for an Assistance Animal will be expected to adhere to the same housing and student conduct policies as all other students.

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SDS may place other reasonable conditions or restrictions on the Assistance Animal depending on the characteristics and nature of the animal. Disputes or disagreements about a disability determination, appropriateness of an accommodation, should first be raised with the Director of Student Disability Services. If the matter cannot be resolved, an appeal should be submitted to the Office of Civil Rights and Institutional Equity.

*Central Michigan University reserves the right to make exceptions to, modify or eliminate this policy and or its content. This document supersedes all previous policies, procedures or guidelines relative to this subject.*