

# Emotional Support Animal Guidelines

Shepherd University is committed to making reasonable accommodations to its rules, policies, and practices as required by law to afford students with disabilities an equal opportunity to access housing and any associated amenities, including granting reasonable accommodations for Emotional Support Animals.

An Emotional Support Animal (ESA), as defined by the Fair Housing Act (FHA), may provide a person: emotional support, calming, stability, and other kinds of support in a housing environment. Permission to have an ESA on campus allows for students with disabilities an equal opportunity to engage in residential life and be successful on Shepherd University's campus. Under FHA, there must be an identifiable relationship between the student's disability and the assistance or support the ESA provides in a residential setting. As opposed to a service animal, an ESA is not specifically trained to perform tasks for a person with disabilities. An ESA provides companionship and comfort and are therefore not considered Service Animals under the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Once a student has been approved for an ESA, they are then considered to be an *owner*. To become an owner, a student must complete the following checklist:

- Submit the **Accommodation Request Form (including supporting documentation)**
  - This can be found on RamPulse and on the Accessibility Services Website under Student Resources
  - More information about supporting documentation can be found in the Documentation Guidelines on the Accessibility Services Website under Student Resources
- Submit the **Emotional Support Animal Policy - Owner**
  - This can be found on the Accessibility Services Website under Animal Resources and on RamPulse
- Submit **Veterinarian Information**
  - This can be found on the Accessibility Services Website under Animal Resources
  - There is a student (owner) portion and a veterinarian portion
  - Please have the veterinarian or owner submit to [accessibility@shepherd.edu](mailto:accessibility@shepherd.edu)
- Submit the **Emotional Support Animal Roommate Agreement**
  - This can be found on RamPulse and on the Accessibility Services Website under Animal Resources
  - The owner should notify their roommate(s)/suite(s) about the ESA and ask them to fill out this form

The owner will be notified whether or not their accommodation has been approved and only then will the owner be permitted to have their ESA in their room.