

Service and Emotional Support Animals
Student Campus Housing Policy
Rhodes College

Rhodes College is committed to compliance with state and federal laws regarding individuals with disabilities. Rhodes recognizes the importance of Service and Emotional Support Animals to student residents with disabilities and has established the following policy and guidelines regarding Service and Emotional Support Animals. Rhodes reserves the right to amend this policy as circumstances require.

College faculty, staff, and students may ask two questions of a person with an animal: (1) Is the animal required because of a disability? (2) What work or task has the animal been trained to perform? Generally, staff will not make inquiries about a service animal when it is readily apparent that an animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability.

Section I. Definitions

A. Disability

“Disability” is defined as a physical or mental condition or impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. These limitations may include caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and learning.

B. Service Animal

A “Service Animal” is a dog or miniature pony that has been individually trained to do work and perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a documented disability. Service Animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a Service Animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. Examples of such work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting a person with a visual impairment with navigation or other tasks, alerting a person with a hearing impairment to the presence of people or sound, providing physical support and stability assistance to a person with a mobility impairment, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting a person during a seizure, or retrieving items. The provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship does not constitute work tasks under this definition. Service animals are generally allowed to accompany their handlers anywhere their handlers are permitted on campus (exceptions may exist in areas requiring protective clothing or equipment for access).

C. Emotional Support Animal

An “Emotional Support Animal” is an animal that provides comfort to a person with a disability upon the recommendation of a healthcare or mental health professional. The comfort from an Emotional Support Animal serves to alleviate one or more identified symptoms or effects of a resident’s documented disability. Unlike a Service Animal, an Emotional Support Animal does not assist a resident with a disability with activities of daily living, nor does it accompany the resident at all times. Emotional Support Animals may be considered for access to campus housing, but they are not permitted in other areas of the college (e.g., library, academic buildings, classrooms, labs, etc.).

D. Pet

A “Pet” is an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. A Pet is not considered a Service or Emotional Support Animal. Pets are not covered by this policy. Student residents are not permitted to keep pets, other than fish, on college property or in on-campus housing.

E. Approved Animal

An “Approved Animal” is a Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal that has been granted as a reasonable accommodation under this policy.

F. Owner

The “Owner” is the student resident or other covered person who has requested the accommodation and has received approval to bring the “Approved Animal” on campus.

Section II. Procedures to have an Emotional Support Animal in campus housing

- A. A student requesting to keep an Emotional Support Animal in campus housing must make a formal request to the Office of Student Accessibility Services (901-843-3885) and submit an Emotional Support Animal Verification Form.
- B. In order to be considered for approval, there must be a link between the animal and a documented disability. Emotional distress resulting from having to give up an animal because of a “no pets” policy does not qualify a person for an accommodation under federal law.
- C. Requests must be made in a timely manner. Incoming students requesting to have an Emotional Support Animal in campus housing should submit their request and supporting documentation to Student Accessibility Services by June 1 for review and determination before the beginning of fall semester and by November 1 before the beginning of spring semester. Returning students should submit paperwork by March 1. While applications after these dates will be accepted and considered, Rhodes cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet late applicants’ accommodation needs.
- D. Student Accessibility Services reviews each request on a case-by-case basis.
 - 1. If the request is approved, the student requesting that an Emotional Support Animal be housed in campus housing will meet with both Student Accessibility Services and Residence Life to carefully review this policy and to sign a release form giving permission for Campus Safety and Physical Plant to be informed of the animal’s location.
 - 2. If the student is dissatisfied with the determination of their accommodation request and/or has new information or concerns, the student will have the opportunity to request reconsideration.

Section III. Procedures to have a Service Animal in campus housing

- A. A student requesting to keep a Service Animal in campus housing must make a formal request to the Office of Student Accessibility Services (901-843-3885).
- B. Requests must be made in a timely manner. Incoming students requesting to have a Service Animal in campus housing should submit their request and supporting documentation to Student Accessibility Services by June 1 for review and determination before the beginning of fall semester and by November 1 before the beginning of spring semester. Returning students should submit paperwork by March 1. While applications after these dates will be accepted and considered, Rhodes cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet late applicants’ accommodation needs.
- C. Student Accessibility Services reviews each request on a case-by-case basis.
 - 1. If the request is approved, the student requesting that a Service Animal be housed in campus housing will meet with both Student Accessibility Services and Residence Life to carefully review this policy and to sign a release form giving permission for Campus Safety and Physical Plant to be informed of the animal’s location.
 - 2. If the student is dissatisfied with the determination of their accommodation request and/or has new information or concerns, the student will have the opportunity to request reconsideration.

Section IV. Responsibilities and guidelines

A. Responsibilities

1. The Owner is responsible for assuring that the Approved Animal does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence hall community or cause difficulties for students who reside there.
2. The Owner is financially responsible for the actions of the Approved Animal including bodily injury or property damage. The Owner's responsibility covers, but is not limited to, replacement of furniture, carpet, window, wall covering, and the like. The Owner is expected to cover these costs at the time of repair and/or move-out.
3. The Owner is responsible for any expenses incurred for cleaning above and beyond a standard cleaning or for repairs to college premises that are assessed after the student and animal vacate the residence. The college shall have the right to bill the student account of the Owner for unmet obligations.
4. The Owner must notify Student Accessibility Services and Residence Life in writing if the Approved Animal is no longer needed as an Approved Animal or is no longer in residence. The Owner must file a new request in order to replace an Approved Animal.
5. Care and supervision of the animal are the responsibility of the individual who benefits from the Approved Animal's use. The Owner is required to maintain control of the animal at all times (in proximity to the Owner and responsive to commands, in harness, leashed, or in a carrier). An animal's behavior is considered the Owner's behavior; the animal will be held to the same basic standard of conduct as their Owner. If the animal is disruptive to college business or community behavioral expectations for educational environments, the Owner may be asked to correct the animal's behavior or remove it from the environment.
6. The Owner is responsible for ensuring the cleanup of the animal's waste and, when appropriate, must toilet the animal in areas designated by the college consistent with the reasonable capacity of the Owner. Indoor animal waste, such as cat litter, must be placed in a sturdy plastic bag and securely tied up before being disposed of in outside trash dumpsters. Litter boxes should be placed on mats so that waste is not tracked onto carpeted surfaces. The Owner shall take measures to minimize any offensive animal odors within the residential area and to ensure that there are no detectable animal odors in the hallway or immediate surrounding residential areas.
7. In cases of emergency, the college and emergency services personnel will focus on human life and will not return to buildings solely to rescue animals.

B. Guidelines

1. Service Animals may travel freely with their Owner throughout campus housing and other areas of the college (exceptions may exist in areas requiring protective clothing or equipment for access) and are required to be adequately groomed and free from offensive odors. Service Animals shall be kept on a harness, leash or other tether at all times, unless the Owner is unable to use such a tether due to a disability or the use of a tether would interfere with the animal's ability to safely and effectively perform its duties. A Service Animal must wear a leash, harness, cape, or other visible marker that identifies it as a Service Animal, at all times, when on campus.
2. Emotional Support Animals must be contained within the privately assigned residential area (room, suite, apartment) at all times, except when transported outside the private residential area in an animal carrier or controlled by leash or harness. When outside the residence, the Owner of an Emotional Support Animal shall carry proof that the animal is an Approved Animal.
3. The Owner's residence may be inspected for fleas, ticks or other pests as needed. Residence Life will schedule the inspection. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence will be treated using

approved fumigation methods by a college approved pest control service. The Owner will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment above and beyond standard pest management in the residence halls.

4. All roommates or suitemates of the owner must sign an agreement allowing the Approved Animal to be in residence with them. In the event that one or more roommates or suitemates do not approve, either the owner and animal or the non-approving roommates or suitemates, as determined by Residence Life, may be moved to a different location.
5. Vaccination: In accordance with local ordinances and regulations the animal must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. For example, dogs must have current vaccination against rabies and wear a rabies vaccination tag. Local licensing requirements are followed.
6. Health: Animals to be housed in campus housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. Documentation can be a vaccination certificate for the animal or a veterinarian's statement regarding the animal's health. The college has authority to direct that the animal receive veterinary attention. Local licensing law is followed.
7. Licensing: The college reserves the right to request documentation showing that the animal has been licensed.
8. Approved Animals may not be left overnight in campus housing to be cared for by another student. Animals must be taken with the Owner if they leave campus for a prolonged period.
9. Residence Life has the ability to relocate Owner and Approved Animal as necessary according to the housing contract.
10. The Owner agrees to continue to abide by all other residential policies. Failure to comply with the responsibilities and guidelines outlined in this policy may result in immediate removal of the animal from the college and may be reviewed through the college's judicial process.

Section V. Removal of Animals from Campus

Rhodes College may require the Owner to remove an Approved Animal from campus housing if:

- the animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or causes substantial damage to the property of others, including college property;
- the animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of a college program;
- the Owner fails to comply with the responsibilities and guidelines set forth above; or
- the animal or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the Rhodes community.

Student Accessibility Services will base such individualized determinations upon the consideration of the behavior of the particular animal and resident on a case-by-case basis, and in consultation with Residence Life, the resident, and other parties as appropriate. The college will not base this determination on speculation or fear about the harm or damages an animal may cause. Any removal of an Approved Animal may be appealed to the Vice President of Student Life, as outlined in the Student Accessibility Services Procedures.

Should an Approved Animal be removed from campus premises for any reason, the Owner is expected to fulfill their housing obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

Section VI. Resident Owner Acknowledgement and Release of Information Consent

By my signature below, I verify that I have read, understand and will abide by the guidelines outlined in the Student Campus Housing Policy for Service and Emotional Support Animals at Rhodes College.

I understand that if I fail to meet the requirements set forth in this policy, Rhodes College has the right to remove the Approved Animal and I will be nonetheless required to fulfill my housing, academic, and other obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

I furthermore give permission for Student Accessibility Services to disclose to others impacted by the presence of my Approved Animal (e.g., Residence Life, Physical Plant, Campus Safety, potential and/or actual roommate(s)/neighbor(s)) that I will be living with an animal as an accommodation. I understand that this information will be shared with the intent of preparing for the presence of the Assistance Animal and/or resolving any potential issues associated with the presence of the animal. I understand that this information shall not include information related to my disability. I will hold Rhodes College harmless from any liability for disclosing such information.

I further recognize that the presence of the Approved Animal may be noticed by others visiting or residing in college housing, and I agree that staff may acknowledge the presence of the animal and explain that under certain circumstances Service and Emotional Support Animals are permitted for persons with disabilities.

Resident Owner Signature	Printed Name	Date
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Accessibility Services Representative	Printed Name	Date
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Residence Life Representative	Printed Name	Date
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I do ____ / do not ____ give permission to have a small marker placed by my residence hall door knob indicating the presence of a service/emotional support animal inside the room. The marker will consist of a symbol that is known only to campus staff and is meant to serve as a reminder to those staff entering the room for maintenance or emergency reasons.

Please list two **Emergency Contacts** who would be able to care for the Approved Animal, in the event that you are unable to respond.

Name	Relationship	Phone number
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Name	Relationship	Phone number
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Section VIII. Approved Animal Registration Form

Please complete the form below and submit the following:

- 1- The Veterinarian's verification that the animal has had all Veterinary-recommended vaccinations to maintain the animal's health and prevent contagious disease.
- 2- A copy of the state animal license, if appropriate.
- 3- A picture of the animal.

Owner's Name:	
Owner's R #:	
Owner's Address:	
Cell Phone:	
Work Phone:	
Animal's Name:	
Type of Animal:	
Physical Description of Animal:	
Other Relevant Information:	