



Office of Access and Accommodations

Student Engagement & Achievement Center
Fort Valley, GA

Documentation Guidelines for Emotional Support Animals

Overview

Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) provide comfort and can help reduce the impact of a disability on everyday functioning. Under the Fair Housing Act (FHA), individuals with a qualifying disability may be eligible to keep an assistive animal as a reasonable accommodation in housing facilities that otherwise restrict or prohibit animals. At Fort Valley State University, ESAs are permitted only in campus residence halls and are not allowed in classrooms or other campus buildings.

To determine whether an ESA is an appropriate accommodation, our office requires documentation from a licensed provider who has had a professional relationship with the student for at least six months, is trained in the area of their disability, and is familiar with their needs.

Purpose of Documentation

A patient of yours has indicated that you are their treating provider and that you have recommended or prescribed an ESA to help manage their disability. To approve an ESA as an accommodation, the OAA must receive a letter from you addressing the requirements below.

Documentation Requirements

Please provide the letter on your professional letterhead, include the date, and sign it. The letter should address all of the following:

1. Student Information

- Full name and date of birth

2. Provider Information

- Name, title, professional license number, and type of license
- Contact information (address, phone number, email)

3. Clinical Information

- Mental health impairment(s) and date(s) of diagnosis
- Length of time you have been treating the student

4. Impact on Major Life Activities

- Describe how the impairment substantially limits at least one major life activity
- Include specific symptoms and how they affect the student's daily functioning

5. Description of the ESA

- State the specific type of animal for which the accommodation is sought (e.g., dog, cat)

6. Rationale for ESA as Accommodation

- Explain why the ESA is necessary for the student to have equal use and enjoyment of campus housing
- Describe how the animal alleviates one or more symptoms or effects of the disability
- The explanation should make clear the necessary support that the animal provides and that it is not simply a pet

Submission Instructions

The provider may email the completed letter directly to: accessandaccommodations@fvsu.edu.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Access and Accommodations at the above email.