



DISABILITY & LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

Procedures for Requesting an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Accommodation

The information that follows describes the process for requesting an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) as an accommodation for a qualifying disability.

Emotional support animals (ESA) are animals that are necessary to afford people with disabilities with an equal opportunity to use and enjoy on-campus housing. ESAs are only permitted in the individual's assigned residential room and outdoor spaces, if appropriate, under the proper handling. These animals are not permitted in other campus buildings. When the animal is transported outside the private residence areas, it must be in an animal carrier, on a leash or harness, and controlled at all times.

Students who feel it is necessary to have an ESA on campus **must first register with the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) in order to begin the process.** The DLRC and Residence Life work in collaboration on all ESA requests and require a 30-day notice period in order to do its due diligence by gathering and verifying the necessary documentation. An ESA will not be permitted in a residence hall until both the DLRC and Residence Life have completed their review processes and have approved the student's request for an ESA.

A student requesting an ESA must provide the DLRC with appropriate medical documentation from his or her treatment provider. The documentation must clearly identify a relationship between the student's disability and the assistance provided by the ESA. The documentation must include a signed statement, on professional letterhead, from the person's physical or mental healthcare provider or licensed therapist. The provider or therapist must be familiar with the professional literature concerning the assistive and/or therapeutic benefits of assistance animals for people with disabilities. DLRC documentation forms can be useful and can be found on the DLRC webpage:

<http://www.saic.edu/lifeatsaic/wellnesscenter/disabilityandlearningresourcecenter/disabilitydocumentationrequirementsandforms/>

At a minimum, the letter must include the following items:

1. The provider's diagnosis of the student's condition.
2. The provider's professional opinion that the condition significantly affects a major life activity.
3. The provider's professional opinion that the ESA has been prescribed for treatment purposes and is necessary to help alleviate symptoms associated with the person's condition and/or to help the person use and enjoy university housing services.
4. The provider's description of the support/s that the ESA will provide.

5. Any additional rationale or statement that SAIC may need to reasonably understand the basis for the professional opinion.

DLRC staff will review the documentation to determine eligibility for the ESA request. In order to determine eligibility, the DLRC staff member may need to speak directly to the student's healthcare provider or therapist, in which case the student will need to sign an *authorization to exchange information* form which is provided by the DLRC.

Once eligibility is determined and the accommodation request approved by the DLRC, the student must then satisfy the Emotional Support Animal Residence Life Registration Requirements found here:

<http://www.saic.edu/sites/default/files/Emotional-Support-Animal-Guidelines-Acknowledgement-Information-Form.pdf>

The DLRC is located at 116 S Michigan Ave Suite 13 and can be reached at 312 499-4278 or dlrc@saic.edu.

***The DLRC strictly follows the confidentiality guidelines set forth in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).**