Procedures for requesting to have an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) in College Housing

An ESA may not reside in College Housing without the prior approval of the College. The Office for Disability & Access (ODA) and the Office of Residential Education (ResEd) collaborate on all ESA requests. Students planning to have their ESA reside in campus housing are required to follow the steps outlined below before bringing the animal to campus:

All required information for an ESA accommodation request must be submitted for consideration by:

- June 1 for the Fall semester
- October 1 for the Spring semester

Every effort will be made to accommodate requests received by the deadlines. After the above dates, ESA applications will be considered but will be subject to housing availability. The College cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the late applicant’s accommodation request. All housing requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Incomplete applications or those without disability documentation will not be considered.

Procedures:

1. **Apply to Housing:** Students must first apply for housing through Oberlin’s Office of Residential Education (ResEd) website using the following link: (If you currently live on campus, skip this step)

2. **Complete and submit the online ODA Application Form and Meet with ODA Staff**: [https://whitney.accessiblelearning.com/s-Oberlin/ApplicationStudent.aspx](https://whitney.accessiblelearning.com/s-Oberlin/ApplicationStudent.aspx)
   An ODA staff member will review your application and send instructions with the following steps by email, including link invitations to complete an online housing accommodation request form and schedule a meeting with an ODA staff member.

   *Make sure to indicate that you are requesting Housing or Dining accommodations on the Application Form.*

   **Students already registered with the ODA can log in to their AIM student portal. Select>Additional Accommodation Request Form > Housing Accommodation Request Form.**

3. **Submit Documentation of Disability**
   Please submit the ‘Emotional Support Animal Documentation’ Form completed by your licensed medical or mental health provider, a color photo of your animal, and a copy of your animal’s up-to-date vaccination records. After submitting the required documentation, an ODA
staff member will notify the student if the documentation and other paperwork are sufficient to move forward.

**Documentation Guidelines and Forms.**

**Pre-Approval Paperwork Checklist:**

- Provider Documentation Form for ESA Requests
- Color Photo of the Animal
- Copy of animal’s up-to-date vaccination records

**Documentation must be submitted to ODA Online or by the following options:**

**Snail Mail:**
Office for Disability & Access
Oberlin College & Conservatory
148 W College Street, Mudd Center, Room 205
Oberlin, OH 44074
Email: ODA@oberlin.edu
Fax: 440-445-5589

4. Schedule an Initial ESA Meeting

With sufficient documentation, an ODA staff member will instruct the student via email to schedule an appointment with an ODA staff member. During this appointment, the student will engage in the following process with an ODA staff member:

a. Provide self-reported information about their disability and the need for their ESA in College Housing.

b. Review of documentation of disability and animal records (described in step 3). Additional documentation may be needed from the student’s provider and ESA’s veterinarian. This may involve an ODA staff member contacting the student’s provider to obtain more information about the student’s disability and ESA’s impact. If this is necessary, an ODA staff will have the student fill out a release of information, granting permission to ODA to contact the provider.

5. **Review of Request:**

Applications will be considered through the ODA by the Housing/Dining Accommodation Review Committee (referred to as “The Committee”) after **ALL** requirements are completed as outlined above. The submitted documentation and the student’s self-reported information are used to evaluate the request. The Committee considers the student’s current symptoms and limitations, the severity of the condition/disability, potential alternative accommodations, and the appropriateness
and essential nature of the requested ESA. The Committee will review the request at The Housing/Dining Accommodation Review Committee Meeting, which occurs monthly. The student will be notified of The Committee’s decision via email within 7 to 10 business days following the meeting.

6. Required Follow-Up and Paperwork:

If the Committee approves that the ESA can reside in college housing, an ODA staff member will notify the individual of their provisional approval, pending completing the steps outlined below. The ESA cannot live on campus until the steps below are met and the student receives clearance from ResEd. Unapproved animals or animals without obtained clearance from ResEd found on campus will be removed from College Housing. All expenses for the care/boarding of the animal are the responsibility of the owner and may be charged to the student’s account if left unpaid. All vaccines and shots must be current for boarding.

a. The student is instructed via email to:
   1. schedule a follow-up appointment with ODA to review the ESA Policy, which outlines responsibilities for maintaining an animal in the student’s residence and
   2. provide Post-Approval Paperwork.

b. Once the follow-up appointment has occurred, an ODA staff member will notify ResEd of the ESA approval and provide copies of the signed ESA policy, the vaccine records, and a color photo of the animal and the Post-Approval Paperwork. **

c. A ResEd staff member will contact the individual by email to provide clearance to bring the animal to campus once all the paperwork is received. This email must be presented to hall staff upon move-in.

d. The individual must provide the following Post-Approval Paperwork to ResEd each year as applicable:

**Post-Approval Paperwork Checklist:**

- [ ] Signed ESA Policy
- [ ] Valid Lorain County Dog License* (if applicable)
- [ ] Roommate Agreement*
- [ ] Proof of Insurance*
- [ ] Up-to-date Vaccination Records*

*You are REQUIRED to ensure that ResEd always has a current copy of these documents. Failure to keep vaccinations and records current may result in removing the animal from College Housing.

**An approval does not automatically guarantee clearance to bring the animal to campus. ResEd will notify the individual when their ESA is cleared to reside in college housing. ESA cannot live on campus until ResEd sends clearance to the student. This clearance must be obtained each academic year.**
Any student to provide knowingly false information about whether they have a disability for any purpose, including, but not limited to, a request to be allowed to keep an animal on campus, may result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. Such violations subject the person to disciplinary sanctions under the Student Conduct Policies. Among other things, providing false information regarding one’s disability status adversely affects the ability of The College to respond to the legitimate needs of persons with disabilities.

Housing and Dining Accommodation Appeal Process

If the Housing Accommodation Review Committee finds that a requested accommodation is not necessary or unreasonable, the student may file a written appeal with the Accommodation Appeal Team. This team comprises campus leadership members who were not a part of the original decision and is led by the Assistant Vice President and Dean for Intercultural Engagement. Students will receive information about the reconsideration process upon receiving a denial notification. Students should be advised that there is only one reconsideration opportunity: the final decision regarding the request.

Process:

1. The student must submit a completed Appeal Form to the Center for Intercultural Engagement via email @ CIE@oberlin.edu within five (5) business days of receiving the decision email from ODA. The appeal will be considered only based on written materials, information, and documentation.

2. The appeal must be based upon one of the following criteria*:
   - Procedural error(s) made in consideration of the request
   - The Housing Accommodation Review Committee improperly or unfairly reviewed the original request

3. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Accommodation Appeal Team will review all the relevant information with the Appellate Review Team and provide a written response within five (5) business days, either granting the appeal or modifying the initial decision or denying the appeal and maintaining the initial decision. The Team’s decision shall be final.

Nothing in the policy shall prohibit a student who believes they may have been subjected to disability discrimination from utilizing Oberlin College & Conservatory’s Section 504 Grievance Procedures or pursuing a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights.

* Understand that if you have new information unavailable at the time of the original request, please submit it to the Office for Disability and Access for a re-review of your request. An appeal would not be appropriate in this case.