



Auburn University at Montgomery Emotional Support/Comfort Animal Policy for Students

The following policy is designed to provide guidance regarding the use of emotional support/comfort animals by enrolled students with disabilities on the campus of Auburn University at Montgomery.

An emotional support/comfort animal is an animal that has been recommended by a physician, psychiatrist, social worker or other mental health professional to provide emotional support to individuals with disabilities by alleviating a symptom or effect of the disability. An emotional support/comfort animal can include species other than dogs and may or may not be specifically trained to perform tasks. Emotional Support/Comfort Animals are not service animals. Under the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 2008 (FHAct), an emotional support/comfort animal is viewed as a “reasonable accommodation” in a housing unit that has a “no pets” rule. Unlike a service animal, an emotional support/comfort animal does not accompany a person with a disability at all times and is not granted access to places of public accommodation.

Students seeking to have an emotional support/comfort animal on campus are required to register their emotional support/comfort animal with the Center for Disability Services (CDS) by submitting an Emotional Support/Comfort Animal Registration Form, Service and Emotional Support/Comfort Animal Roommate Agreement Form, Accommodation Verification Form for Assistance Animals in University Housing (this is documentation verifying the disability-related need for the emotional support/comfort animal), and documentation of current vaccinations as required by law. As a general rule, emotional support/comfort animals are permitted in the following instances:

1. An emotional support/comfort animal may be permitted to reside with a student with a disability in AUM residential facilities if approved by CDS (see Campus Housing section).
2. An emotional support/comfort animal may be permitted in a classroom with a student with a disability if approved as a reasonable accommodation by CDS.

Generally, emotional support/comfort animals are not allowed to accompany students to University-owned or controlled buildings on campus. However, students with disabilities may request approval for an emotional support/comfort animal as a reasonable accommodation by contacting CDS.

Responsibilities of Students Using Emotional Support/Comfort Animals

If approved as a reasonable accommodation, the University permits emotional support/comfort animals subject to the following conditions:

1. The emotional support/comfort animal has the appropriate and current vaccinations. For example, dogs or cats require proof of current rabies vaccination and/or rabies tags.
2. Student will ensure the good conduct, health, care, and protection of their emotional support/comfort animal. For example, cleanliness of the dog or cat is essential with adequate preventative measures taken.
3. The emotional support/comfort animal should be house-broken (i.e. trained so that absent illness or accident, the animal controls its waste elimination).
4. The emotional support/comfort animal should be kept under control at all times. For example, if approved as a reasonable accommodation in a classroom setting, the animal must be on a leash, tether, or harness; or if approved as a reasonable accommodation in a residential facility, the animal would reside in the student's dwelling or could be secured in a crate/cage within a student's dwelling.
5. Student is responsible for any damage done by the animal and for the upkeep and cleanliness of any area traversed or occupied by the animal.
6. Student is responsible for the immediate removal and proper disposal of all fecal matter and other waste of the emotional support/comfort animal.
7. Student will allow CDS to take a photograph of the emotional support/comfort animal and allow CDS to share the photograph to appropriate AUM personnel, including, but not limited to AUM Campus Police, Housing, Library, etc. See Acknowledgement section for more details.
8. **Optional:** Student will receive an identification (ID) card with a photograph of the emotional support/comfort animal made through CDS. **ID cards are valid for one academic year only**, fall-summer semester, and will need to be updated at the beginning of fall semester and/or upon the student's return to school.
9. Student will be responsible for updating all emotional support/comfort animal documentation records on an **annual** basis, for example rabies vaccination records and/or other appropriate and current vaccinations.
10. The emotional support/comfort animal is permitted only for as long as the student has a disability-related need for the animal, during the approved semester or academic year. **Students must reapply each academic year.**

The University has the authority to remove an emotional support/comfort animal when the student or emotional support/comfort animal fails to meet the conditions of this document. An emotional support/comfort animal may be excluded from the campus if the animal is disruptive or poses a direct threat to the health and/or safety of others. The University and its employees shall be held harmless in the event that the animal damages property or causes harm to anyone on campus.

An emotional support/comfort animal may be required to wear protective gear or be denied access to sterile surgical rooms, areas with hazardous machinery, research laboratories containing chemicals or biological substance that could potentially harm an emotional support/comfort animal, on a case-by-case basis.

It is the student responsibility to inform others that the animal is an emotional support/comfort animal and should not be petted, bothered, harassed, or fed. The use of a collar or harness that identifies the animal as an emotional support/comfort animal is strongly recommended to communicate the animal's status.

Requirements for Faculty, Staff and Students

If an emotional support/comfort animal has been approved by CDS as a reasonable accommodation in a classroom setting and/or housing unit, members of the AUM community are responsible for the following:

1. Allowing emotional support/comfort animals to accompany the person with the disability to class and to a campus-sponsored event or activity.
2. Allowing emotional support/comfort animals to reside in the student's dwelling in University housing.
3. Not separating or attempting to separate a student from his/her emotional support/comfort animal.
4. Not distracting the emotional support/comfort animal in any way. For example, do not feed, pet, startle, or interact with the emotional support/comfort animal without the student's permission.
5. Clarifying an animal's status as an emotional support/comfort animal should be directed to the Center for Disability Services by calling 334-244-3631 or emailing cds@aum.edu.

Campus Housing

Students planning to live in AUM Housing with their emotional support/comfort animal should notify CDS within a reasonable amount of time (preferably 60 days so the needs of the student and emotional support/comfort animal can be considered when housing arrangements are made) before the move-in date. Students are required to submit an

Emotional Support/Comfort Animal Registration Form, Service and Emotional Support/Comfort Animal Roommate Agreement Form, Accommodation Verification Form for Assistance Animals in University Housing (this is documentation verifying the disability-related need for the emotional support/comfort animal), and documentation of current vaccinations as required by law to CDS for review and approval. In addition, students need to indicate on their Housing Application that they are requesting permission to have an emotional support/comfort animal reside with them. If the animal is approved to reside in AUM Housing, the animal may be restricted to only housing areas, and may not be allowed in other University-owned or controlled buildings. If approved, AUM Housing needs at least a two-day notification from CDS before the emotional support/comfort animal can move into AUM Housing.

In AUM Housing, students and emotional support/comfort animals will be subject to the following:

1. The student is responsible for the immediate removal and proper disposal of all fecal matter and other waste of the emotional support/comfort animal. For example, litter boxes need to be cleaned daily and fecal matter disposed of in outside garbage bins/containers Litter Genie, and not flushed down a toilet; training pads discarded daily in outside garbage bins/containers; or in areas designated by Housing and CDS.
2. In residence halls, the emotional support/comfort animal must be under the control of the student.
3. Emotional support/comfort animal is permitted only in the student's dwelling.
4. Students are responsible for any damage done by the animal and for the upkeep and cleanliness of any area traversed or occupied by the animal.
5. Student must not leave the emotional support/comfort animal overnight in AUM Housing to be cared for any other individual (for example a roommate) other than the student. If the student is to be absent from the room overnight or longer, the emotional support/comfort animal must accompany the owner. The emotional support/comfort animal may not remain in AUM Housing during all college break periods when the student is required to vacate AUM Housing.
6. Student must **provide AUM Housing and CDS a name of a non-resident emergency contact** who will be responsible for the emotional support/comfort animal if the student is incapacitated.
7. The emotional support/comfort animal is permitted in University housing only for as long as the student has a disability-related need for the animal, during the approved semester or academic year. **Students must reapply each academic year.**
8. See *Responsibilities of Students Using Emotional Support/Comfort Animals* section for further responsibilities.

Emergency Evacuation in Housing

For the safety of the animal, the student must evacuate the emotional support/comfort animal from the residence hall each time the fire alarm is activated. If the student is not present during an unscheduled fire alarm or other emergency situation, there is no expectation that a hall staff member or other resident will risk their own safety for the animal. However, with permission of the student, a notation may be made by Housing that there is emotional support/comfort animal in the room so that other staff members on call can notify the fire department so that they may take any appropriate action. Emergency personnel will determine whether to remove the emotional support/comfort animal and may not be held responsible for the care, damage to, or loss of the emotional support/comfort animal.

Health and Safety Inspections in Housing

Housing conducts Health and Safety Inspections on a monthly basis. Please be advised that Health and Safety Inspection notifications will be sent to residents by email and will be posted throughout Resident Halls. Please be advised that you do not have to be present for this inspection. However, in order to ensure the safety of Housing staff and of your emotional support/comfort animal, please ensure that you are either present to control your animal or crate/cage your emotional support/comfort animal during this time. If other arrangements need to be made, contact Housing staff.

Maintenance in Housing

Please be advised that you do not have to be present for maintenance. However, in order to ensure the safety of Maintenance staff and of your emotional support/comfort animal, please ensure that you are either present to control your animal or crate/cage your emotional support/comfort animal during this time. If other arrangements need to be made, contact Housing staff.

Conflicting Disabilities

If another person on campus has a covered disability under the ADA and that person is impacted by the presence of an emotional support/comfort animal, a request for assistance should be made to CDS. All facts surrounding the contact will be reviewed and an effort to resolve the disability-related needs/accommodations of all persons involved will be made.

If others complain about the emotional support/comfort animal and there has been no violation or incident, the student should explain that the emotional support/comfort animal is necessary and that federal law protects (FHAct and/or Section 504) the right of the person to be accompanied by the emotional support/comfort animal.

The University follows all applicable laws and regulations to protect the health and safety of the campus community and those animals which it permits on campus. Any individual who

believes that he/she is being denied a reasonable accommodation, should immediately inform the Director at 334-244-3754 or email CDS at [cgs@aum.edu](mailto:cds@aum.edu).

Any conflicts between emotional support/comfort animal student/owner and others on campus should be referred to the Director at 334-244-3754 or email CDS at cgs@aum.edu. Anyone in violation of this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

Registering an Emotional Support/Comfort Animal with the Center for Disability Services

For Housing, the student must register the emotional support/comfort animal with the Center for Disability Services (CDS) by completing the following forms:

1. Emotional Support/Comfort Animal Registration Form
2. Service and Emotional Support/Comfort Animal Roommate Agreement Form
3. Accommodation Verification Form for Assistance Animals in University Housing
4. Documentation of current vaccinations as required by law

The emotional support/comfort animal is not permitted in AUM Housing until final written approval has been provided by CDS to AUM Housing. In addition, the emotional support/comfort animal is permitted AUM University Housing only for as long as the student has a disability-related need for the animal, during the approved semester or academic year.

Students must reapply each academic year.

Submit all completed forms to CDS located in 147 Taylor Center, by fax at 334-244-3907, by email at cgs@aum.edu, or mail to: AUM-CDS, P.O. Box 244023, Montgomery, AL 36124-2023.

For a classroom setting, the student must register the emotional support/comfort animal with the Center for Disability Services (CDS) by completing the following forms:

1. Emotional Support/Comfort Animal Registration Form
2. Documentation verifying the disability-related need for the emotional support/comfort animal (see CDS Documentation Criteria at: <http://www.aum.edu/center-for-disability-services/documentation-criteria>)
3. Documentation of current vaccinations as required by law

Submit all completed forms by fax at 334-244-3907, by email at cgs@aum.edu, or mail to AUM-CDS, P.O. Box 244023, Montgomery, AL 36124-2023.

Acknowledgement

Emotional Support/Comfort Animal Approved in a Classroom Setting:

I acknowledge I have read, understand and will abide by the requirements outlined and I agree to provide additional information if required to complete my request for a reasonable accommodation under the Emotional Support/Comfort Animal Policy for Students.

I understand as a reasonable accommodation in a classroom setting, my instructors will be notified about my emotional support/comfort animal in my CDS accommodation memorandum.

Optional - I give permission to CDS to disclose to others impacted by the presence of my emotional support/comfort animal, specifically Campus Police, Library, Wellness Center, Athletics and The Roost, that I will have an emotional support/comfort animal. I understand that this information will be shared with the intent of preparing for the presence of the emotional support/comfort animal and/or resolving any potential issues associated with the presence of the emotional support/comfort animal. (Initials _____)

Individual Signature

Date

Disability Services Representative

Date

For Students Living in AUM Housing:

I acknowledge I have read, understand and will abide by the requirements outlined and I agree to provide additional information if required to complete my request under the Emotional Support/Comfort Animal Policy for Students.

I give permission to the Center for Disability Services to disclose to others impacted by the presence of my emotional support/comfort animal, specifically Residence Life staff, Campus Police, potential and/or actual roommate(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 emotional support/comfort animal and/or resolving any potential issues associated with the presence of the emotional support/comfort animal.

I further recognize that the presence of the emotional support/comfort animal may be noticed by others visiting or residing in University Housing and agree that staff may acknowledge the presence of the animal, and explain that under certain circumstances emotional support/comfort animals are permitted for persons with disabilities.

Individual Signature

Date

Disability Services Representative

Date