POLICY

Service, Assistance, Emotional Support or Therapy Animals in Slippery Rock University Residence Hall Facilities

Policy

Service Animals are generally allowed to accompany their handlers in residences and any public spaces where their handlers are permitted. Emotional Support and Visiting Therapy animals may be allowed in specified areas of the University with advanced approval.

All animals are the responsibility of their handlers and should be under their control (in proximity to the handler and responsive to commands, in harness, leashed or in a carrier) at all times. An animal’s behavior is considered the handler’s behavior; the animal will be held to the same basic standard of conduct as their handlers. If they are disruptive to university business or community behavioral expectations for educational, medical and residential environments, handlers may be asked to correct the animal’s behavior or remove it from the environment. If an animal is vicious and/or attacks another person, the handler will be adjudicated according to the student code of conduct as if they were the attacker. A copy of the student code of conduct is attached here: SRU Student Code of Conduct.

Please refer to the Service Animal and Emotional Support Animals addendum for clarification of the terms used within this policy.

Procedures

Service Animals

Service Animals are generally allowed to accompany their handlers anywhere their handlers are permitted on campus (exceptions may exist in areas requiring protective equipment or clothing for access).

If a Service Animal’s role is not apparent by observation, it is permissible to ask the handler:

- “Is the dog required because of a disability?”
- “What work or task is the dog trained to perform?”

Students planning to live in a campus residence and utilize a Service Animal or Assistance Animal, are required to provide Housing and Residence Life and the Office of Disability Services, prior to the animal arriving to campus a brief statement indicating:

- You are a person with a disability and will be using a Service Animal
- The primary service tasks the animal performs
- All Service Animals are required to have had an appropriate medical exam within the past year and current vaccinations. Please submit a vaccination certificate or letter
identifying your animal and indicating a clean bill of health and up to date vaccinations from your veterinary health provider. Please refer to the addendum: Animals Health and Wellbeing in the Residence Halls.

Students are required to arrange a meeting with the Office of Disability Services to submit all documentation.

- The Office of Disability Services may be contacted by phone (724)738-4877 or by emailing disabilityservices@sru.edu

- Scan and e-mail the completed documents prior to the meeting to disabilityservices@sru.edu. Please also bring hard copies of the documents to the meeting.

More information related to Service Animals can be found on the ADA website ADA Service Animal Information

If you have questions, would like assistance planning for a Service Animal on campus, or have a concern about your treatment and access when accompanied by your Service Animal contact the Office of Disability Services at disabilityservices@sru.edu, or by calling the main office line at (724) 738-4877. Please indicate you are calling to request a meeting regarding your Service Animal.

Service Animals in Training
Service Animals in Training are not recognized by federal law; therefore, not covered under the ADA. Service animals in training will be discussed on a case-by-case basis with the handler. All documentation, as noted above, will be required. The handler must submit a vaccination certificate or letter identifying your animal and indicating a clean bill of health and up to date vaccinations from your veterinary health provider.

Service Animals in Training under the Pennsylvania Human Rights Act Section 954 are recognized if the animal meets the definition of a service animal under the Pennsylvania dog law. A service dog is defined as “any dog which has been or is in the process of being trained as a guide dog, signal dog, or has been trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, pulling a wheelchair or fetching dropped items.”

If you have questions or need assistance with a Service Animal in Training on campus contact the director of Disability Services at disabilityservices@sru.edu.
Emotional Support Animals
Emotional Support Animals can be a reasonable accommodation. An approved Emotional Support Animal is allowed, when under the control of its handler, in the handler’s room or common spaces within the residence. Emotional Support Animals approved for the residential setting are not permitted in other buildings or common areas of any of the facilities. To establish reasonable accommodations:

Students may schedule an appointment directly with the Office of Disability Services

The Office of Disability Services may be contacted by phone (724)738-4877 or by emailing disabilityservices@sru.edu

Alternatively, when applying for university residences, the student may include a request for an Emotional Support Animal as an accommodation by providing the Housing Office and the Office of Disability Services with a short letter from an appropriate licensed mental health professional that:

• Identifies you and states that you have a disability

• Describes the animal (i.e. a Standard Poodle)

• Affirms that having the animal described alleviates identified impacts of your disability or serves a defined role in treatment.

• All Emotional Support Animals are required to have had an appropriate medical exam within the past year and current vaccinations. Please submit a vaccination certificate or letter identifying your animal and indicating a clean bill of health and up to date vaccinations from your veterinary health provider.

Students are required to arrange a meeting with the Office of Disability Services to submit/review all documentation. This meeting is required before any ESA animals can be brought to campus

• The Office of Disability Services may be contacted by phone (724)738-4877 or by emailing disabilityservices@sru.edu

• Scan and e-mail the completed documents prior to the meeting to disabilityservices@sru.edu. Please also bring hard copies of the documents to the meeting.

• A representative from the Housing Office will also be present during this meeting to go over all housing-related policies and procedures as related to emotional support animals. A copy of all materials mentioned above will also be supplied to the Housing Office.
• All housing related personnel that will be in direct contact with the student and emotional support animal will also be notified of the emotional support animal’s presence and location.

• The student must also sign the memo of understanding, indicating understanding of all policies as related to the emotional support animal protocol and procedures.

• A roommate agreement must also be signed by all students assigned to the room.

• E-mail and scan the completed documents prior to the meeting to disability services@sru.edu. You may also bring the documents to the scheduled meeting. Please have hard copies available so they can be copied for filing purposes.

• ESAs are not permitted on-campus until all documentation is signed and completed.

Denial of a request for an Emotional Support Animal may be based on insufficient documentation of disability or the need for an emotional support animal as an accommodation; concerns about zoonosis; or demonstrated behavioral concerns.

Visiting Therapy Animals
Visiting Therapy Animals may be allowed access to specific facilities with permission from the program/office occupying the facilities. You can arrange assistance with this process by contacting the Office of Disability Services Office at disabilityservices@sru.edu or (724) 738-4877.

Events Involving Animals (not teaching or research)
In order to adequately address the special safety concerns when animals are present on campus, the following procedures apply to event requests for activities that include live animals:

• The sponsoring organization must provide a written plan that documents how it will minimize risks to humans and animals including: the names, qualifications, and training of the individuals responsible for the animals; provisions for handling animal waste; provisions for hand washing for anyone handling the animals; emergency medical procedures in the event of illness or injury; any other steps the organization will follow to minimize risks

• The sponsoring organization must notify the Institutional Officer for Animal Welfare, Dean of Health, Environment, and Science, prior to the event and provide the written risk management plan.
• The sponsoring organization must provide the facility manager of the event venue with the written risk management plan. The facility manager will determine the appropriate facilities depending on the event and the risk management plan.

If you have questions or concerns related to these policies, please contact The Office of Disability Services by phone (724)738-4877 or by emailing disabilityservices@sru.edu or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee by phone 724.738.4846 or by email iacuc@sru.edu.

**Pennsylvania Exotic Wildlife Policy**

These Pennsylvania statutes represent the state's exotic pet laws. "Exotic wildlife" includes all bears, coyotes, lions, tigers, leopards, jaguars, cheetahs, cougars, wolves and any crossbreed of these animals. The commission may issue a permit to a person to act as an exotic wildlife dealer. No permit shall be granted by the commission until it is satisfied that the provisions for housing and caring for the exotic wildlife and protection for the public are proper and adequate and in accordance with the standards which may be established by regulations. It is unlawful to release any exotic wildlife into the wild, fail to exercise due care in safeguarding the public, or recklessly engage in conduct that places another person in danger of attack from exotic wildlife (Animal Law.info, 2016).

No student shall live on-campus with an exotic animal even with the proper documentation of exotic wildlife permit. The above Pennsylvania statute only recognizes dealers of these animals and not for use of any other purpose.

**Miniature Horse as Emotional Support Animal or Service Animal**

There is a fundamental difference between a Service Horse and an Emotional Support Horse (ESH). It is a Federal offense for anyone to require documentation from anyone using a Service Horse, but people with an ESH are required to provide a doctor’s certification, confirming a mental health diagnosis or indicating a need to have an emotional support animal on-campus.

Miniature horses have been recognized as therapy animals. Miniature horses have the right to act as mobility aids, pulling wheelchairs and steadying those who could not walk without external support. (GuideHorse.com)
The request to bring a miniature horse must be given well in advance of the student’s attendance so the university has proper time to prepare facilities for the animal.

The same policies apply to bring an emotional support horse to campus. Students must provide all documentation and veterinary certification indicating the animal is healthy and able to live on-campus.

**Sanctions**
Violations of the above policy will be adjudicated according to the student code of conduct. Moreover, on-campus residents may be subject to additional sanctions, including, but not limited to, removal from housing.

An animal’s behavior is considered the handler’s behavior; the animal will be held to the same basic standard of conduct as their handlers. If they are disruptive to university business or community behavioral expectations for educational, medical and residential environments, handlers may be asked to correct the animal’s behavior or remove it from the environment. If an animal is vicious and/or attacks another person, the handler will be adjudicated according to the student code of conduct as if they were the attacker.

**Responsibility for Implementation**

The Office of Disability Services, in conjunction with the Office of Residence Life, is responsible for approving all requests for service, assistance, emotional support or therapy animals to reside on campus. The Office of Residence Life is responsible for ensuring that any on-campus resident who has been approved to have an animal in campus housing follows all Residence Life and Student Code of Conduct policies.

**Scope of Policy Coverage**
This policy applies to all members of the Slippery Rock University community and includes: students, staff, faculty and campus guests.