



Boston University Disability & Access Services

Service and Emotional Support Animals DAS Policies & Procedures -- Students

Animals are permitted on Boston University outdoor property, only if they are on a leash or otherwise under physical restraint so that the rights and safety of pedestrians are safeguarded. The University does not permit pets in any University residential buildings except as provided below. Students who bring pets or other unapproved animals into University residential buildings are subject to disciplinary action.

In accordance with federal and state laws, service dogs are permitted in University facilities with persons with documented disabilities. Emotional Support Animals (ESA) are permitted in specified student residential units if approved in advance by BU Disability & Access Services (DAS).

Non-emergency questions or concerns regarding Service Animals or Emotional Support Animals, or their handlers/owners, should be directed to DAS (for students) or Human Resources (for faculty/staff).

➤ What is a Service Animal?

A service animal (Service Animal) is any guide or signal dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, such as guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting persons with impaired hearing, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items. The service that the dog is providing must be directly related to the individual's disability. If a dog meets this definition, it qualifies as a Service Animal. Service Animals are not required to be licensed or certified by state or local governments or to wear a vest or harness.

Service Dogs may travel with their handler anywhere and everywhere they go on campus – including offices and clinics, academic spaces, fitness areas, dining and residence halls, and libraries – unless the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, is disruptive to the University community, or its presence fundamentally alters the program or space. Service Animals are not permitted in certain locations on campus including certain research laboratories, mechanical rooms, custodial closets, areas where protective clothing is necessary, areas where there is a danger to the animal, and meal preparation areas.

It is impermissible to request a demonstration of the work performed by a Service Animal or for any documentation of training. Only two questions may be asked of a person with a Service Animal:

- 1) Is this a service animal that is required because of a disability?
- 2) What task or work is the animal trained to perform for the person?

When communicating with a handler with a Service Animal, always speak to the handler first. The Service Animal is working and is **not a pet**. Immediately report any disruptive behavior of a Service Animal to Boston University Police Department. Do not attempt to separate a handler from his or her Service Animal.

➤ What is an Emotional Support Animal?

An Emotional Support Animal (ESA) is any animal (not just a dog) prescribed for a person with a significant diagnosed psychiatric disability. An ESA is not a pet, a Service Animal, or a therapy animal. An ESA may be requested by a student with a psychiatric disability as an accommodation in University housing. An ESA may be requested by a student with a significant diagnosed psychiatric disability to provide specific emotional support and comfort, thereby enabling the student to live in and participate in BU housing, programs and activities.

ESAs are permitted to reside in University student housing unless the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, is disruptive to the University community, or its presence fundamentally alters the program or space. The ESA must remain in designated areas within the student's residential building and unit (ESA is not permitted within the bathroom, shared meal preparation areas, or common spaces of the owner's residential unit except in transit, including lobbies, stairwells, or hallways). ESAs are not permitted in any University non-residential buildings, including but not limited to dining halls, classrooms, offices, laboratories, or recreation facilities.

Immediately report any disruptive behavior of an Emotional Support Service Animal to BU Residential Life. Do not attempt to separate an Emotional Support Animal from its owner.

SERVICE ANIMALS PROCEDURES (BU PROPERTY)

➤ General University Requirements for Service Animals and Handlers

- **Control:** The Service Animal must be on a leash and under the full control of the handler at all times when outside of the handler's residential unit. In limited circumstances, a Service Animal may be utilized for specified portions of the day based on the specific disability and direct needs of the handler. The handler is not permitted to leave a Service Animal attended overnight or to assign supervision of a Service Animal to any other BU student or a staff member, including in emergency situations.
- **Notice:** The University will post a notice in the residence to alert the community of the presence of an animal.
- **Emergency Plan:** Handler must provide DAS with an updated formal emergency plan regarding the evacuation of the Service Animal should the handler become unable to care for the Service Animal. This plan **must** include the name, contact information and plan for removal of the Service Animal.
- **License and Tags:** The Service Animal must wear owner identification, current license, current rabies vaccination, and other required tags from local authorities at all times.
- **Vest/Harness:** Although not required, handlers are strongly encouraged to have a professional "vest" on the Service Animal during all working hours.
- **Care and Health:** The handler is solely responsible for the care and supervision of a Service Animal while on University property. The Service Animal must be in good health. Service Animals in University housing and rental properties must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. The Service Animal must have current vaccinations and immunizations against diseases common to that type of animal. All Service Animals must wear a current rabies vaccination tag. The Service Animal will be free of fleas and ticks.
- **Sanitation:** The Service Animal must be housebroken. The handler must (1) always carry equipment sufficient to clean up the Service Animal's feces whenever the Service Animal and handler are on BU property; and (2) be responsible for the proper disposal of the Service Animal's feces and for any damage caused by the waste or its removal.
- **Disruption:** The handler of an unruly or disruptive Service Animal (e.g., excessive barking, running around, disruptive to the environment of others, aggressive behavior, excessive odor, or nipping) may be asked to remove the Service Animal from University facilities. If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the University may require the handler to take significant steps to mitigate the behavior before bringing the Service Animal into any University facility. Mitigation may include muzzling a barking animal, obtaining refresher training for both the Service Animal and the partner, or other appropriate measures.
- **Responsibility for Damage:** The handler is financially responsible for any damage, loss or expense caused by a Service Animal to University or third party property as well as any injury the Service Animal causes to another person or animal.
- **Removal of ESA:** An ESA may be removed from University premises if, in the University's judgment, the ESA and/or handler fail to abide by any of the above requirements or the ESA otherwise:
 - Poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others
 - Causes significant damage to property
 - Acts in a manner that is disruptive to the student's housing environment causing other students to be restricted in their use and enjoyment of the dwelling
 - Is no longer necessary because the student's disabling condition no longer exists.

➤ Procedure for Having a Service Animal in BU Housing

1. Students must register with DAS
2. Students must complete **Student Acceptance of Responsibilities for Service Animal In Housing Form**, which requires:
 - ✓ Veterinarian annual statement of well-being and current vaccination records
 - ✓ City of Boston dog license
 - ✓ Emergency Plan
 - ✓ Student/Handler Agreement

➤ Procedure for Having a Service Animal in BU Rental Properties

1. Students must register with DAS.
2. Students must complete Student Acceptance of Responsibilities for Service Animal In BU Real Estate Form which requires:
 - ✓ Veterinarian annual statement of well-being and current vaccination records
 - ✓ City of Boston dog license
 - ✓ Emergency Plan
 - ✓ Student/Handler Agreement

**EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS
PROCEDURES (BU HOUSING and RENTAL PROPERTIES)**

➤ **General University Requirements for Emotional Support Animals (ESA) and Owners**

- **Control:** Owner must be in full control of the ESA at all times and on a leash or in a cage/crate at all times when outside of the owner's residential unit. The ESA must remain in designated areas within the student's residential building and unit (ESA is not permitted within the common spaces of the owner's residential unit except in transit, including lobbies, stairwells, or hallways). The ESA is not permitted in any University non-residential buildings, including but not limited to dining halls, classrooms, offices, laboratories, or recreation facilities. The owner is not permitted to leave an Emotional Support Animal unattended overnight or to assign supervision of a Emotional Support Animal to any other BU student or a staff member, including in emergency situations.
- **Notice:** The University will post a notice in the residence to alert the community of the presence of an animal.
- **Emergency Plan:** Owner must provide DAS with an updated formal emergency plan regarding the evacuation of the ESA should the owner become unable to care for the ESA. This plan **must** include the name, contact information and plan for removal of the ESA.
- **License and Tags:** For canine and feline ESAs, the ESA must wear owner identification, current license, current rabies vaccination, and other required tags from local authorities at all times.
- **Vest/Harness:** The ESA is not permitted to wear a vest or any other labeling denoting service duties.
- **Care and Health:** The owner is solely responsible for the care and supervision of an ESA while on University property. The ESA must be in good health. ESAs in University housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. The ESA must have current vaccinations and immunizations against diseases common to that type of animal. All feline and canine ESAs must wear a current rabies vaccination tag. The ESA will be free of fleas and ticks.
- **Sanitation:** The ESA must be housebroken. The owner must (1) always carry equipment sufficient to clean up the ESA's waste whenever the ESA and owner are on BU property; and (2) be responsible for the proper disposal of the ESA's waste.
- **Disruption:** The owner of an unruly or disruptive ESA (e.g., excessive barking, running around, disruptive to the environment of others, aggressive behavior, excessive odor, or nipping) may be asked to remove the ESA from University facilities. If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the University may require the owner to take significant steps to mitigate the behavior before bringing the ESA into any University facility. Mitigation may include muzzling a barking animal, obtaining refresher training for both the ESA and the partner, or other appropriate measures.
- **Housing Assignment:** ESAs are permitted in all BU residences. In multiple occupancy units, each roommate/suitemate must sign the Emotional Support Animal Roommate/Suitemate form.
- In the event that a student living within the same residence as an ESA has an allergic reaction or other legitimate objection to the ESA, the University may change the room assignment of the owner and ESA or others.
- **Responsibility for Damage:** The owner is financially responsible for any damage, loss or expense caused by an ESA to University or third party property as well as any injury the ESA causes to another person or animal.
- **Removal of ESA:** An ESA may be removed from University premises if, in the University's judgment, the ESA and/or handler fails to abide by any of the above requirements or otherwise:
 - Poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others
 - Causes significant damage to property
 - Acts in a manner that is disruptive to the student's housing environment causing other students to be restricted in their use and enjoyment of the dwelling
 - Is no longer necessary because the student's disabling condition no longer exists.

➤ **Procedure for Having an ESA in BU Rental Properties**

1. Students must contact BU Real Estate.
2. Students must submit **Tenant Accommodation(s)/Modification(s) Request Form** to BU Real Estate
3. Students must provide current relevant documentation of their disability to DAS
4. If ESA is approved for BU Rental Property unit, student must submit:
 - ✓ Tenant Acceptance of Responsibilities for Emotional Support Animal
 - ✓ Veterinary and vaccination records
 - ✓ City of Boston dog license
 - ✓ Signed Agreement Form

➤ **Standards and Procedure for ESAs in BU Housing**

- [Eligibility Standards](#)

1. Student with a significant psychiatric disability has been prescribed the accommodation of an ESA in housing by a licensed or otherwise qualified mental health provider (who is qualified to speak directly to and specifically regarding the relationship between the ESA and the student's disability).
 2. The documentation provided by the student's provider evidences the following:
 - ✓ The ESA accommodation is necessary to afford the student's equal access and use of BU Housing.
 - ✓ There is an identifiable nexus between the ESA and the student's disability.
 - ✓ The ESA is not an excluded animal (inherently dangerous or predatory)
 - ✓ No other means, treatments or intervention methods or combination of means, treatments or intervention methods (including counseling, medication, other housing accommodations or other treatment approaches) are available or effective in adequately mitigating or ameliorating the symptoms of the disability within the context of living in a college residence hall.
- ESA Accommodation Request Procedure
 1. Student must register with BU Housing
 2. Student must register with DAS
 3. Student must meet in person with DAS staff member regarding the ESA accommodation request.
 4. Student must provide the following two forms to DAS:
 - ✓ **Accommodated Housing (ESA) – Provider Psychiatric Disability Verification Form**
 - ✓ **Accommodated Housing (ESA) – Student Acceptance of Responsibilities for ESA In Housing Form**
 - Additional ESA Accommodation Request Procedure Notes
 1. Approval of an ESA does not guarantee a housing slot.
 2. The review and approval process requires at least **60 calendar days**. Students should submit documentation and begin the process at least sixty days prior to the beginning of housing assignments. If the need for an ESA arises after the student has already been assigned housing, a student may need to wait until the beginning of the next semester to bring their ESA into housing. Absent exceptional circumstances, new ESA accommodation requests may not be granted mid-semester due to the availability of housing. If an ESA is approved after the deadline (within 60 days prior to move in), the ESA will be allowed on campus the following semester.
 3. Students must provide updated documentation supporting an ESA accommodation request on an annual basis for the following academic year because approval of an ESA accommodation requests is based on the student's current need.