Assistance Animal Policy Statement

Grand Valley State University (GVSU) provides reasonable accommodations to housing residents with a documented disability. This policy governs the use of assistance animals in University housing. The definitions of service/assistance animals are defined by the University’s Service Animal Policy and users shall follow that policy. [http://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/C7BF326A-0990-A17D-F66456C52989A6FA/assistance_animals_policy.pdf](http://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/C7BF326A-0990-A17D-F66456C52989A6FA/assistance_animals_policy.pdf)

Guidelines for an Assistance Animal

1. A resident desiring the use of an assistance animal in University Housing must identify and register with Disability Support Resources (DSR) in advance, (preferably at least 30 days) before housing for the animal is needed. **Please note that students must petition for accommodation each academic year with DSR.**

2. Students must notify DSR of the need for an assistance animal at a minimum of 30 days after receiving their housing assignment to ensure that roommate agreements and conflicting disabilities will not delay approval. Each request will be reviewed on an individualized basis.

3. It is the responsibility of the individual to provide appropriate documentation.

Approval Process

1. Documentation of a disability.
2. A signed letter, on professional letterhead, from the individual’s health care provider stating:
   - The nature of the disabling condition or impairment; and
   - The provider’s professional opinion regarding the relationship between the disability and the assistance that will be performed by the animal.

   **The University reserves the right to request additional clarification or documentation.**

3. DSR will validate the need for approved accommodations and work with the individual and campus officials to facilitate a supportive network.

4. Once approved by DSR, the use of an assistance animal will be validated by a [memo](#) for documentation of request.

Requests to have an assistance animal in campus housing are considered requests for accommodation and will be reviewed on an individualized basis. Individuals making requests must establish that they experience a documented disability and must also establish that the animal is indeed providing essential therapeutic benefit related to the documented disability.

**GVSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to housing residents with a documented disability.**