GVSU HOUSING OFFICE
ASSISTANCE ANIMAL POLICY

Collaborating to provide opportunities for student learning and success through inclusive residential communities and experiences.

POLICY STATEMENT
Grand Valley State University (GVSU) is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities and fulfilling obligations under State and Federal laws. This Policy governs the use of Assistance animals in campus housing by persons with disabilities.

The health and safety of GVSU students, faculty and staff and the Assistance animal are important concerns; therefore each request for such an accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis. Requests for an accommodation regarding Assistance animals should be supported by sufficient information or documentation for proper consideration of the request.

GVSU shall not allow an animal that poses a threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation; would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation; poses an undue financial and administrative burden; or would fundamentally alter the nature of housing operations.

In all cases, the owner of the animal is responsible for the animal’s behavior. The removal of any animal, and any necessary cleaning, repairs and/or pest control will be done at the expense of the resident responsible. Students living with an Assistance animal will be expected to adhere to the same housing policies as all other residents.

Assistance animals should not be brought into university housing until a meeting with DSR has taken place and approval has been granted.

DEFINITIONS
Assistance Animal
An Assistance animal is an animal that is necessary to afford a person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling when there is an identifiable relationship or nexus between the person’s disability and the assistance the animal provides. Except to the extent that a service animal also qualifies as an Assistance animal, Assistance animals are only allowed within a person’s residence in university housing.
ASSISTANCE ANIMAL PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL

A. 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 and provide documentation of a disability. Guidelines for documentation can be found at www.gvsu.edu/dsr. GVSU reserves the right to request additional clarification or documentation. Please note that students must petition for accommodation each academic year with DSR. 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.

B. Each request will be reviewed on an individualized basis. The student will be notified by a DSR representative of the decision. Where accommodation has been approved, DSR will work with the resident and campus officials to facilitate a supportive network.

C. It is the responsibility of the individual to provide appropriate documentation. Should approval be granted, the student will be asked to read and adhere to the Responsibilities and Guidelines for having a Service and Assistance Animal in Housing.

APPEAL PROCESS

Any individual wishing to challenge the decision reached in the accommodation process such as disability determination, appropriateness of an accommodation, service/assistance quality, or an animal restriction should first contact DSR. If the matter is not resolved, a request for dispute resolution should be submitted to DSR. Individuals may also file a written complaint in the Office for Inclusion and Equity at 616-331-2894.

OTHER PROVISIONS

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

1. Vaccinations: In accordance with applicable local, state and federal law the animal must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. Dogs must have current vaccination against rabies and wear a rabies vaccination tag. Although not mandated, cats should have the normal shots required for a healthy animal. Local licensing requirements are to be followed.
2. Health: Animals, other than cats and dogs, to be housed in university housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a Michigan licensed veterinarian. Documentation can be a vaccination certificate for the animal or a veterinarian's statement regarding the animal's health. The university has authority to direct that the animal receive veterinary attention. (Local licensing law is followed.)

3. Licensing: The university reserves the right to request documentation showing that the animal has been licensed and to have the animal inspected by a licensed Michigan veterinarian of its choosing (e.g., Michigan law requires that every dog be licensed and provides that service dogs are exempt from the license fee).

4. Other Conditions: Disability Support Resources may place other reasonable conditions or restrictions on the animals depending on the nature and characteristics of the animal.