

Emotional Support Animal Policy

Caltech is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who seek to bring an Emotional Support Animal (“ESA”) to campus must first contact the Student Disability Coordinator, [Barbara Green](#), at (626) 395-6351. An ESA is an animal that is necessary to afford a student with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy Caltech housing.

Consistent with Federal and State law, Caltech permits students with disabilities to have an ESA reside with them in Caltech housing if the presence of the animal is necessary for the individual’s full benefit, enjoyment, and use of the housing facilities. An ESA may be necessary to provide physical assistance, emotional support, calming, stability and other kinds of assistance.

Unlike a Service Animal, an ESA does not assist a person with a disability with activities of daily living, nor does it accompany a person with a disability at all times. ESAs may be considered for access to Caltech housing, however, they are not permitted in other areas of the campus (e.g. libraries, academic buildings, classrooms, labs, student center, etc.). This policy addresses only the presence of ESAs in Caltech housing.

Process for Requesting an Emotional Support Animal

A student who wishes to have an ESA in Caltech Housing must make a written request to the Student Disability Coordinator and submit documentation from an outside psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker, physician or other health care professional who has an established treatment relationship with the student which should include (i) verification that the student has a disability, (ii) verification that there is a disability-related need for the ESA to reside with the student to afford the student an equal opportunity to use and enjoy the residence hall, and (iii) verification that the animal provides support that alleviates one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of the disability. This documentation should be a reflection of the student’s current level of functioning and must be dated within the last 12 months. Students should submit their requests to the Student Disability Coordinator at least 30 days prior to the date the student would like to bring the animal to housing.

The Student Disability Coordinator will determine, on a case-by-case basis, and in collaboration with other appropriate offices on campus, whether to approve the student’s request for an ESA. In making this determination, the Student Disability Coordinator will consider the needs of the student, as well as the impact of the animal on other members of the housing facility and Caltech community. The request will be denied if accommodating the request will impose an undue hardship on Caltech or if the animal poses a direct threat to the safety of others, or would cause substantial physical harm to Caltech property or the property of others. The student may be required to move to alternate Caltech housing, depending upon housing location, in order to best accommodate them and/or the animal.

The decision of the Student Disability Coordinator will be provided to the student in writing. If the request for an ESA is approved, the student will be required to sign an Emotional Support Animal Agreement. The Residential Life staff will make a reasonable effort to notify the other residents in the housing unit where the ESA will be located. This notice will be limited to information about the animal’s

presence as an accommodation to a student with a disability: there will be no disclosure of the student's disability. Other resident students with medical condition(s) who are directly and negatively impacted by animals (e.g., respiratory diseases, asthma, severe allergies) are asked to contact the Student Disability Coordinator if they have a health or safety related concern about exposure to an ESA. Such affected students may be eligible for a disability accommodation when living in proximity to an ESA.

The Student Disability Coordinator and Residential Life and Caltech Housing staff will collaborate, as necessary, to resolve conflicts related to an ESA. Staff members will consider the needs and/or accommodations of all resident students involved. The student may be required to move to alternate Caltech housing in order to best accommodate them and/or the animal. If the student's ESA causes damage to the student's unit or the common areas of the housing facility, the student will be charged for the cost of repairing the damages and may be asked by Caltech Housing to remove the animal if the animal's behavior continues.

Students seeking to have an ESA in undergraduate or graduate housing must submit a request for review each academic year. A request for an ESA should be submitted at the same time housing selection begins for Caltech Housing each April. The animal must not be in residence prior to approval by the Student Disability Coordinator. The approval of a request is animal-specific and is not transferable to another animal.

Appeal Process

The requesting student may appeal a denial of a request for an ESA within five business days to the Vice President of Student Affairs. The decision of the Vice President of Student Affairs is final.