

# Service & Emotional Support Animal Policy



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## Service Animals

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), JPCatholic allows the use of service animals in its facilities. A service animal as defined by the ADA is a dog or miniature horse individually trained to:

- Direct people who are blind,
- Alert people who are deaf,
- Protect and alert people who struggle with seizures, or
- Perform other special tasks directly related to the person's disability

Other assistance animals, such as those that provide emotional support, are excluded from the ADA definition, and are treated separately as "reasonable accommodation requests" (see Emotional Support Animal below). A request for a service animal should be made to the Dean of Students (if a student) or Human Resources (if an employee) and should include:

- Affirmation that the service animal is required due to disability (if not readily apparent),
- A description of the specific tasks or work the animal has been trained to perform (if not readily apparent), and
- Documentation that the service animal is in compliance with all required California State, San Diego County, and Escondido City requirements associated with licensing, vaccinations, and other health regulations.<sup>1</sup>

The student or employee is responsible for the health of the animal (with verification from a licensed veterinarian if necessary), as well as always maintaining cleanliness, including the sanitary disposal of animal wastes. The service animal is to be kept on a leash or harness all the time, unless this would substantially limit the service the animal provides, or the student or employee cannot use a leash or harness due to the disability.

A service animal must be removed immediately if it becomes aggressive, overly disruptive, or poses a serious health risk to others on campus. This can include excessive barking, growling, running around unleashed, and/or biting. JPCatholic may prohibit the use of service animals in certain locations because of health and safety restrictions.

The student or employee is responsible for making sure that any mess or damages caused by the service animal is taken care of. *Students or employees will be held responsible for any damages to university property caused by the service animal.*

## Emotional Support Animals (ESAs)

Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) are defined as animals utilized by individuals with disabilities for emotional support, well-being, or comfort. Because they are not individually trained to perform work or tasks, ESAs are not service animals. Unlike a service animal, ESAs do not assist with daily living tasks. Therefore, ESAs stay only in residence: they do not always accompany the individual with a disability (i.e., ESAs do not attend class, enter the library, or visit other residential apartments).<sup>2</sup>

Except as modified below, requests for an ESA are addressed as reasonable accommodation requests under the standard University policies and processes relating to the request and documentation of disability accommodations.

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<sup>1</sup> Service animals living in the residential apartments may be required to show yearly proof of good health from a licensed veterinarian.

<sup>2</sup> For this reason, the policy on ESAs is directed primarily at residential students; on the rare occasion that an employee requests an ESA, the same policy will apply. Requests from employees must be addressed through Human Resources.

### **Requests for an ESA**

The individual requesting to keep an ESA in University housing must submit documentation from a treating physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other licensed mental health professional that supports the need for the ESA. The documentation must:

1. Be current, presented on professional letterhead, and signed by the licensed provider,
2. Indicate whether the person making the request has a disability and how long the person has been in treatment,
3. Describe how an ESA is needed to provide support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of the requesting person's disability,
4. Show evidence of the animal's role in reducing these specific symptoms; there must be an identifiable and clearly established relationship between the individual's disability and the support the ESA provides, and,
5. Specifically prescribe an ESA and note the type of animal that is recommended.

The University's on-campus counselor does not write letters to support ESAs.

Requests for an ESA must also show that the animal is in compliance with all required California State, San Diego County, and Escondido City requirements associated with licensing, vaccinations, and other health regulations, and provide a yearly proof of good health from a licensed veterinarian.

Requests for an ESA must be made at least 60 days prior to the start of the Fall Quarter, or if the student is enrolling mid-year, as soon as possible after the student enrolls. *Requests for an ESA at any other point during the year will generally not be considered until the following Fall Quarter.* If a student is approved for the accommodation of an ESA, Student Life will communicate with each person in the specific residential unit to obtain written, voluntary agreement to live in a unit with an animal. The identity of the student requesting the ESA will be disclosed.

If a suite/apartment-mate is allergic or fearful of animals, the animal will be welcomed on campus *when the University identifies appropriate housing* for everyone involved. If this is not possible during the current quarter, the Student Life Team will look to the following quarter or next academic year as all housing accommodations are based on availability.

Approval for an ESA will be revisited on a yearly basis and the University reserves the right to require an updated verification from a medical professional, as described above.

### **Care and Removal of ESAs**

Approved animals may never be left overnight in University Housing without the owner present. ESAs must never be left over Quarter breaks in the care of another student. ESAs must be contained within the privately assigned residential area (room, suite, apartment) at all times, except when transported outside the private residential area in an animal carrier or controlled by leash or harness. Because of this, the ESA must be of a size to fit comfortably and humanely within the assigned space.

The student must provide contact information for an alternative caregiver/emergency contact who will take responsibility for the ESA and remove it from campus should the owner be unable to care for it (e.g., due to hospitalization or accident). The emergency contact must reside off campus and must be available to remove the ESA in a timely manner appropriate for the animal species and needed (within 6 hours for dogs and no more than 12 hours for other animals).

The student is responsible for the health of the animal as well as maintaining cleanliness at all times, including the sanitary disposal of animal wastes. Animal food must be stored in a sealed container. Evidence of insect infestation, including fleas or ants, *is cause for immediate removal of the ESA from housing*. The student is responsible for making sure that any mess or damages caused by the animal be taken care of. *Students will be held responsible for any damage to university property caused by the animal.*

An ESA must be removed immediately if it becomes aggressive, overly disruptive, or poses a health concern to others that cannot be mitigated. This can include excessive barking, growling, running around unleashed and/or biting. In the residential context, the University will make a good faith effort to facilitate mitigation of certain health concerns from other students (e.g., allergies to pet dander) by matching the disabled student with fellow residential students who do not have animal-related health concerns. If such mitigation cannot be achieved, the animal must be removed.

### **Restricted Breeds and Prohibited Dogs for Service and Emotional Support:**

The following breeds are not permitted at Latitude: Akita, Alaskan Malamutes, Pit Bull, Bulldog, Presa Canarios, Chow, Doberman, Pinscher, English Mastiff, German Shepherd, Rottweiler, Siberian Husky, Terrier/Staffordshire Terrier, Wolf-Hybrid, or any mix thereof. Regardless of your representation as to the breed or classification of any animal, you agree that we shall make the final determination as to the breed or classification of your pet or animal in our sole and absolute discretion. Restricted Breeds shall have the broadest possible meaning, and includes, but is not limited to, any animal displaying physical traits or characteristics of any restricted breed animal, whether by observation or by standards established by the American Kennel Club, or other applicable association, or defined by any law, statute, or ordinance. If applicable, a canine DNA test may be requested at your expense. In addition, any dog with a history of biting, injuring any person or animal or damaging property will be prohibited from living at Latitude or any JPCatholic leased or owned property.