Service/Emotional Support Animal Procedure for Students

Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) is committed to supporting students with disabilities and to compliance with state and federal laws regarding individuals with disabilities. CCSU students who seek academic or housing accommodations for a qualified disability should contact Student Disability Services located in Willard Hall, Suite 101-03 (email: disabilityservices@ccsu.edu; telephone: 860.832.1952; fax 860.832.1865).

With respect to a request for a service or emotional support animal, CCSU will determine, on a case by case basis and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, whether such animal is a reasonable accommodation. In doing so, CCSU must balance the needs of the individual with the impact of the animal on other campus patrons. For students seeking reasonable accommodations, an accommodation review process will be undertaken, and may involve additional conversations between the Student Disability Services staff and the student making the request.

Definition of Service and Emotional Support Animals.

**Service Animal:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a service animal as a Dog, which has been individually trained to perform tasks for the benefit of an individual diagnosed with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or task that the animal performs must be directly related to the individual’s disability, and can include a wide variety of services, such as assisting those with low vision, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, pulling a wheelchair, and retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone. Service animals may also perform tasks such as recognizing and assisting during seizures. For individuals with psychiatric or neurological disabilities, the animal’s tasks may include preventing or interrupting impulsive destructive behavior. For example, for students with autism, service animals can be trained to interrupt inappropriate repetitive behavior with a persistent nudging task. Service animals must be allowed to accompany their owners at all times and in all places on campus, unless specifically prohibited. Under limited circumstances, a miniature horse may qualify as a service animal. Service animals are TRAINED animals.

**Emotional Support Animal:** An emotional support animal or an animal providing comfort or companionship is defined as any animal that has been determined necessary to mitigate the effects of a physical or mental disability by a physician, psychologist, physician’s assistant, nurse practitioner, or licensed social worker. These animals may include different types of animals other than dogs, and may not be trained. While the ADA limits service animals to a dog or miniature horse, the Fair Housing Act does not limit the type of animal. Further, the Fair Housing Act applies to campus housing; thereby permitting untrained emotional support animals in campus housing. Central Connecticut State University will NOT allow exotic animals on campus. Untrained animals are prohibited on campus in areas not covered by the Fair Housing Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
Procedure.

**Campus housing.** If a student desires that a service or emotional support animal live in campus housing, the student must notify Student Disability Services at least thirty (30) days prior to the desired move-in date so that CCSU can best accommodate the student and the animal. Priority registration dates include May 1st for the Fall semester, and November 1st for the Spring semester. If all other criteria are met, as set forth by the Student Disability Services, a meeting will be arranged between the student and the Office of Residential Life to discuss how to best accommodate the student, the service or emotional support animal, and the campus community.

Where it is not readily apparent that an animal is a service animal as defined by the ADA, or an emotional support animal under the Fair Housing Act, CCSU may require sufficient information and documentation to determine whether the animal qualifies as a service or emotional support animal under the applicable law. CCSU may require that the documentation be provided on the letterhead of a treating physician or mental health provider or by using the Documentation for Accommodation Needs Form, and permit CCSU to determine:

1) That the student has a disability for which the animal is needed.
2) How the animal assists the student, including a description of the work and tasks the animal has been trained to perform.
3) The link between the student’s disability and the assistance that the animal provides.

The SDS Documentation Guidelines (guidance) can be found [here](#). The SDS Documentation for Accommodation Needs Form can be found [here](#).

**Responsibilities of the Owners of Service or Emotional Support Animals.**

1) All service animals or emotional support animals must be under control – harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal’s work or the individual’s disability. In those cases, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
2) It is the student’s personal responsibility to immediately cleanup or to solicit the proper assistance for cleaning up if their service or emotional support animal defecates, or becomes ill and either vomits and/or becomes incontinent. Students living in a University residence hall or apartment should contact the appropriate operations center in order to identify an appropriate location for elimination of waste.
3) All animals must be licensed and tagged in accordance with local regulations. Animals must have all appropriate vaccinations and must be in good health. Animals to be housed at the university must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian.
4) Owners of disruptive or aggressive animals will be asked to remove them from University property. If improper behavior happens repeatedly, the animals will not be allowed to return to campus until their owners correct the behaviors. Such corrections as recommended by the University may include muzzles for barking dogs and refresher training for the owners and animals.
5) Emotional support animals will only be permitted in campus housing and no other areas of the campus, such as the library and classrooms.
6) A service animal must be allowed to be present in public areas that serve food, but are banned from the areas that prepare the food.
7) If the service or emotional support animal causes damage to CCSU property, the owner will be charged for any damage caused.

Responsibilities of Student Disability Services.

All questions regarding service or emotional support animals should be referred to Student Disability Services (SDS). SDS may only ask two types of questions about service animals.

1) Is the service animal required because of a disability?
2) What work or tasks has the animal been trained to perform?

Reasons a service or emotional support animal may be prohibited from certain areas.

1) Consistent with federal and state law, a service or emotional support animal may be prohibited from a CCSU facility or program if the animal’s behavior or presence poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
2) The animal may be excluded from areas where its presence fundamentally alters the nature of a program or activity.
3) CCSU may exclude the animal if the animal is disruptive, if its presence would result in substantial physical damage to the property of others, or if it substantially interferes with the reasonable enjoyment of the housing or public accommodation by others.

Complaints about the animal from other students or staff.

At times, students or staff affiliated with Central Connecticut State University may complain about being in close proximity to a service/emotional support animal. Allergies and fear of animals are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using these animals. When a person who is allergic to an animal must spend time in the same room or facility, they should both be accommodated by assigning them, if possible, to different locations within the room or different rooms in the facility.

A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless:

1) The animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it.
2) The animal is not housebroken.

When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, staff must offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain goods or services without the animal’s presence. CCSU is not required to provide care or food for a service or emotional support animal.
**Appeal/grievance process.**
A student who disagrees with a decision made by Student Disability Services is invited to submit a detailed, written letter explaining the reason for the appeal or grievance within 10 days of the date that the decision was made. It shall be addressed to the Vice-President of Student Affairs and Vice-President of Student Affairs has 30 days to respond. Notification of appeal/grievance decisions will be made by mail.

**For confidential information on ADA compliance, please contact the ADA’s Informational Line to speak with an ADA specialist at:** 800-514-0301 (Voice) and 800-514-0383 (TTY)
**Hours:** M-W, F 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., and Th 12:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (Eastern Time); 24 hours a day to order publications by mail

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**Student Acknowledgement**

I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the guidelines contained in the **Service/Emotional Support Animal Procedure for Students** and that I will comply with my responsibilities as the owner of a Service/Emotional Support Animal as described above. I further acknowledge that I received a copy of this document for future reference.

Student Name: _________________________________________________

Student Signature:_______________________________________________

Date:__________________________

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