

Emotional Support Animal Request Process

ESA Overview

Pets are not permitted in residential housing at Wake Forest University. However, animals that a student requires to provide emotional support may be permitted to live in the residence halls by following our ESA request procedure. Requesting an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) at WFU consists of three main parts.

1. Establish Need for ESA
2. Animal Registration
3. Review Meeting

Establish Need for ESA

Your first step is to ask your mental healthcare provider to complete the Emotional Support Animal Request form. This form asks the provider to justify the need for a support animal and consider several factors related to your ability to be successful on campus with or without the ESA.

Animal Registration

Once a specific support animal has been identified, the animal's information will need to be documented. You are asked to provide evidence that the animal does not pose a threat to others in the community (including receiving proper vaccinations, and documenting any history of aggression). In addition, we ask you to provide information for the animal's safety (including other approved handlers and emergency contacts), and have conversations with those who share your living space about how they should interact with your ESA.

Review Meeting

Finally, when all of your information is prepared, you will meet with a Residence Life & Housing staff member (typically the Assistant Director of Assignments) to go over your materials. Based on this review, you will be informed whether the animal is approved, or if further information/documentation is required.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long does the approval process take?

The length of the process depends largely on the ability of the student to provide all required information in a timely manner. However, most requests will receive a decision at a review meeting within 2-4 weeks of the initial request.

Can my ESA go to class with me?

No. Once approved, Emotional Support Animals are only permitted within your assigned individual living space in the residence halls.

Once approved, can my ESA be removed from campus?

Yes. If the animal is threatening to others or otherwise disruptive to the University, the animal's approval may be reviewed and revoked, if warranted.

Who should complete my request form?

The person who completes your request form should be a licensed professional who can identify your

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need for an Emotional Support Animal. For instance, a mental health counselor, social worker, or psychiatrist. If you have an established relationship with the provider, they will be able to speak to your needs more effectively.

What if I do not currently have an animal to serve as my ESA?

In some cases, you may be seeking to adopt or purchase an animal to serve as your ESA. In these cases, you should meet with the Assistant Director of Assignments to discuss timing of completing your animal registration and review meeting.