Sam Houston State University
Department of Residence Life
Assistance Animal Guidelines

Sam Houston State University provides reasonable accommodations to students living on campus with a documented disability. Residence Life policy allows Assistance animals to live with students in their on-campus accommodation upon approval by the Services for Students with Disabilities Office. The term Assistance Animal refers to “Service Animal” and “Support Animal” as defined below.

The term “Service Animal” is defined per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as a dog or, under certain circumstances, a miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. The work or task that a service animal has been trained to perform must be directly related to the person’s disability. The provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship does not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition. Species other than dogs and, in some cases, miniature horses are not considered service animals under the ADA.

The term “Support Animal” is defined as an animal that provides emotional or other support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person’s disability. Unlike Service Animals, Support Animals are not required to be trained to perform work or tasks and may include species other than dogs and miniature horses. Assistance animals, as defined above, are not pets.

The process to seek approval begins with the resident registering with the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (SSD).

SSD will engage with the student in an interactive process to evaluate his/her request for possession and use of an Assistance Animal in a university residential facility. If the student’s disability, his/her disability-related need for the Assistance Animal, and/or the assistance provided by the animal is not readily apparent, SSD will make appropriate inquiries with the student to ascertain whether the animal is an assistance animal and, in the case of a support animal (as defined in this policy), may require reliable documentation of the student’s disability and/or disability-related need for the animal.

Possessing an Assistance Animal, and keeping it in a residence hall room or apartment is only made possible through a formal evaluation of the resident’s need. If approved, as an animal owner, the student has an obligation to maintain the animal in a healthy and sanitary condition at all times.