

Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Procedure for Requesting an Exception to the Residential No Pet Policy for a Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal

Offices of Residential Education and Disability Services, CTL

For the purpose of this policy, the term “service animal” refers to service animals, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Therapy pets or emotional support animals are not covered by the ADA, however, HWS considers exceptions to the Residential Pet Policy in cases where these animals can be shown to be integral to a comprehensive, ongoing treatment plan that is recommended and managed by a licensed health care provider, usually a psychologist or psychiatrist, as opposed to a prescriptive recommendation for such an accommodation that is not part of a comprehensive, ongoing treatment regimen. Documentation guidelines for a psychological disability are applicable to most of these cases..

Residential Education and the Office of Disability Services, CTL will solicit recommendations from the experts in the fields of disability accommodations, housing, animal care and control, counseling and other campus and community experts as needed. With the assistance of these experts, Disability Services, CTL will make a thoughtful, well-informed decision about granting an exception to the pet policy.

HWS will consider animals recommended by qualified persons. However, when possible, it is preferred that the animals are standard household pet-type animals such as small dogs or cats. No dangerous, poisonous and/or illegal animals will be considered.

A Request for an Exception to the No Pet Policy (request) must be submitted by February 15 for the consideration for the fall term and November 1 for consideration for the spring term. In cases involving students anticipating their first semester in residence, the request must be received at least eight weeks prior to the first day of classes for the first semester that the animal is expected to be in residence. The animal may not be in residence unless the request is approved. The approval of a request for one animal is not transferable to another animal.

- 1) The resident student (owner) must prepare a request, which includes :
 - A. A cover letter with the owner's explanation concerning the need for the animal, the type of animal, a description of the animal, and the animal's name. Address the cover letter to:

The Coordinator of Disability Services
Center for Teaching and Learning

Warren Hunting Smith Library

Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Geneva, NY 14456

- B. A letter from the owner's relevant health care provider verifying the resident's disability or condition for which the animal is meant to provide accommodation.
- C. A signed letter from the owner providing the contact information for each health care provider who is submitting a letter of support and containing the owner's permission for a representative of the colleges to speak with that provider about the information in their letter of support.
- D. **If the request is for a therapy pet or an emotional support animal, the following additional information must also be included in the packet:**
 - a. A letter from a licensed mental health professional outlining:
 - i. Verification of the disability or condition for which keeping the animal is essential;
 - ii. The ways in which the animal serves as an accommodation for the verified disability or condition;
 - iii. The ways in which keeping the animal is integral to an ongoing, comprehensive treatment plan;
 - iv. The ways in which the need for the animal relates to the student's ability to use and enjoy the living arrangements provided by the Colleges.

The Coordinator of Disability Services will review the request for completeness and work with the owner to make clear any materials necessary to complete the request packet. The Coordinator will then notify the owner by email and campus mail and/or US Mail of decision to accept or decline the request for exception.

If the request is accepted, the Coordinator of Disability Services will work with the Assistant Director of Housing Operations who will coordinate with the owner, Residential Education staff, and other relevant campus offices to determine suitable location for the owner and animal to reside and review with the student the guidelines for maintaining health and community standards while the animal is in residence.

The decision of the Coordinator of Disability Services may be appealed, in writing, within five business days of the date on the decision letter.

Written appeals must be submitted to:

Vice President for Student Affairs

Smith Hall

Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Geneva, NY 14456

Appeals must state a specific reason for reconsideration. Appeals may only be based on:

- a. new information that was not available at the time of the initial review to support the animal as an accommodation;
- b. a procedural error that occurred which unfairly affected the decision in the request;
- c. a specific condition which exists that provides just cause to reconsider the request, such as a demonstrated bias against the owner or the animal identified in the request.

If the Request for an Exception to the Pet Policy is accepted, the owner must enter into the following agreements and complete the following additional information regarding the animal:

Additional documentation required:

- 1) Animal Registration Form (to be maintained with the housing contract).
- 2) Up-to-date veterinary record certifying the animal's good health and that the animal has all recommended vaccinations to maintain the animal's health and prevent contagious diseases (to be maintained in the office of Disability Services).
- 3) Signed Guidelines for Maintaining a Service Animal within the Residential Community document (to be maintained in the Office of Disability Services).

