

PROCEDURE ON USE OF COMFORT ANIMALS IN CLARION UNIVERSITY HOUSING

PROCEDURE:

Clarion University Housing recognizes that as a provider of university student housing it has certain obligations with respect to animals that provide comfort to students with disabilities who live in such campus housing where pets are otherwise prohibited.

Comfort animals are sometimes referred to as support, therapy or comfort animals. A comfort animal is not a pet. The term "comfort animal" is intended to mean an animal that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks or services for the benefit of a person with a disability, or provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability.

- Students with disabilities may request a reasonable accommodation to possess a comfort animal, including an emotional support animal. Requests for accommodations should be made to the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS).
- DSS, with the assistance of the University Housing Office shall have sixty (60) days to evaluate a request for a reasonable accommodation to possess a comfort animal in a student housing unit based on:

*Whether the student has a disability: and

*Whether the student has a disability-related need for a comfort animal. In other words, do the animal work, provide assistance, perform tasks or services for the benefit of the student or provide emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's existing disability?

*Whether the University can reasonably accommodate the animal.

The request may be denied if the specific comfort animal in question poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation, or the specific comfort animal in question would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation.

Students seeking an accommodation for an assistance animal that provides emotional support must provide reliable documentation of a disability from a physician, psychiatrist or other licensed mental health professional qualified to assess that the animal provides

emotional support that alleviates one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of an existing disability.

Once approved, students are required to comply with the following rules intended to directly relate to the ongoing health, safety and welfare of the campus community:

- Students must comply with state and local laws governing the vaccination, licensing, ownership and maintenance of the animal and agree to provide documentation of compliance to the University Housing Office.
- Appropriate veterinarian care must be provided for the animal.
- The animal must be healthy.
- The student must be capable of controlling the animal at all times.
- The animal cannot be left unattended for inappropriate periods of time.
- Animal waste must be disposed in outside dumpster so as not to create odor, damage or health risks.
- The animal must be housed in the student's housing unit, not in any common areas except in the course of transit to or from the student's unit.
- The animal cannot exhibit behaviors that create a nuisance or undue disruption.
- Policies regarding responsibility for property damage or repairs apply to damages caused by; or repairs necessitate by an animal such as, but not limited to, additional cleaning, extermination services or replacement of carpet/furniture necessitated by the animal.

Students who are assigned to roommates who do not want to share a room with a comfort animal may request a transfer, but the student being accommodated will not be required to move solely to accommodate another student's preference. However, where a student has medical issues that are precipitated by the assistance animal, the University Housing Office will attempt to reach a mutually beneficial solution that may involve relocation to another unit.

Students approved for assistance animals will be asked to sign a Statement of Understanding.

Although the University may be required to reasonably accommodate a comfort animal other than a dog in a residence hall or campus apartment, the institution is not required to allow the student to bring that animal to other areas or buildings on campus unless the animal also qualifies as a "service animal" under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Non-service animals (i.e. comfort animals) are not permitted in other student rooms, in classrooms, campus activities/events, offices or any non-residential university building.