



Documentation Guidelines for Emotional Support Animals

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the University of your disability. Accommodations are provided in accordance with the ADA. When you register for services, **please submit documentation from your healthcare provider or other appropriate professional that includes information that covers all of the bullet points below.**

In general, only domesticated animals of a type commonly kept in households are eligible to serve as assistive animals. Reptiles (other than turtles), barnyard animals, monkeys, kangaroos, and other non-domesticated animals are not considered common household animals. Although it is possible that an "exotic species" could qualify as an assistive animal, the individual seeking accommodation has a substantial burden to demonstrate a disability-related need for the specific exotic animal or the specific type of exotic animal.

Please give your provider the following documentation guidelines.

Reason for Letter

A patient of yours is enrolled at Georgia College & State University and living on campus. They are reporting to the Student Disability Resource Center that they meet the definition of disability under criteria of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). They have reported that you are their provider currently treating them for this disability. Please read the important terms and definitions and then write a letter based on the terms and definitions and your clinical judgment. Please address all bulleted items below.

Important Terms and Definitions

Emotional Support Animals (ESA) are animals that provide comfort and aids in decreasing the impairments of a disability on everyday functioning. Under the Fair Housing Act, an individual with a qualifying disability may be entitled to keep an assistive animal as a reasonable accommodation in housing facilities that otherwise restrict or prohibit animals. Assistive animals are allowed only in housing/residences.

Please write your supporting letter on letterhead, date the letter and address all of the following:

- Please see Appendices D-H of the USGBOR Academic and Student Affairs Handbook: <https://usg.policystat.com/policy/19293833/latest/#autoid-jk4d4> before writing a supporting letter
- General Information
 - The student's name and birth date
 - The nature of the professional's relationship with the patient/client which should be related to the provision of health care or disability-related services
 - The type of animal for which the reasonable accommodation is sought
- Disability-related information (whether or not the patient has a disability must be addressed)
 - Primary and secondary diagnosis (if applicable) consistent with the most recent DSM/ICD
 - Whether the patient's impairment(s) substantially limit at least one major life activity or major bodily function
 - Information showing that individual needs the animal because it performs a job or task, provides assistance, or performs at least one task that benefits the patient because of his or her disability, or because it provides therapeutic emotional support to alleviate a symptom or effect of the disability of the patient/client, and not merely as a pet
- Healthcare Professional Credentials
 - Healthcare professional signature and date, on letterhead, on any documentation provided
 - Contact information, name, title and license number