



## Assistance Animal Procedure

The Office of Residence Life at Mississippi College is dedicated to providing reasonable modifications to its rules, policies, and practices as required by law, ensuring equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities.

### Pets

A “pet” is any animal kept for companionship and ordinary use. Pets are prohibited indoors in The Office of Residence Life at Mississippi College residence halls, with the sole exception of harmless aquatic fish in aquariums of 10 gallons or less. Assistance animals (Service and Emotional Support Animals), as defined below, are not considered pets.

### Assistance Animals

This policy applies to assistance animals used by individuals with disabilities. The term “assistance animal” encompasses both Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals, as defined below. An assistance animal either (1) works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for a person with a disability or (2) offers emotional or other support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person’s disability.

The Office of Residence Life at Mississippi College is committed to providing equal access and reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you require disability-related accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Accessibility Services. For more information, visit our website:  
<https://www.mc.edu/offices/accessibility-services/>

Each time you apply for a new housing contract, you must indicate on the housing application that you require accommodation for an emotional support animal.

### Service Animals

A “Service Animal” is any animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disabilities. The work or tasks performed by a Service Animal must be directly related to the person’s disability. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Guiding people who are blind
- Alerting people who are deaf
- Alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure
- Reminding a person with a mental illness to take prescribed medications
- Calming a person with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack

Providing emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship does not constitute work or tasks under this definition. Service Animals considered under this definition include dogs or, in some cases, miniature horses.

Service Animals are permitted to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of Mississippi College. The campus and facilities, including housing, allow students, members of the public, and other participants to go into services, programs, or activities. The Mississippi College Office of Residence Life does not require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a Service Animal. Additionally, the Office of Residence Life cannot ask about the nature or extent of a person's disability to determine whether their animal qualifies as a Service Animal. The student must register with Accessibility Services to have a Service Animal on campus.

However, when it is not readily apparent that a dog is a Service Animal, the Mississippi College Office of Residence Life staff may make two inquiries to determine whether the dog qualifies as a Service Animal, which is:

- (1) Is the dog/animal required because of a disability?
- (2) What work or task has the dog/animal been trained to perform?

A Service Animal residing in a Mississippi College residence hall must be housebroken (i.e., trained to control its waste elimination, except in cases of illness or accident). In public, the Service Animal must be controlled by a harness, leash, or other tether unless the person cannot use these or such use would interfere with the service animal's work performance or tasks. In such instances, the Service Animal must be controlled by voice, signals, or other effective means.

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## **Emotional Support Animal**

An "Emotional Support Animal" (ESA) is 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 Emotional Support Animals are not required to be trained to perform work or tasks and can include species other than dogs. Only one emotional support animal is allowed per student. Before an Emotional Support Animal can move into a residence hall at Mississippi College with a person with a disability, students seeking an Emotional Support Animal must register with the Office of Student Accessibility Services and provide appropriate documentation of their disability and animal needs. For details on what constitutes suitable documentation, please consult the Office of Student Accessibility Services. Once the appropriate documentation is received, provisional approval for the animal will be communicated to both the Office of Residence Life and the student. Please note: students must also complete the online housing accommodation request form before approval.

For full consideration, the following steps must be completed and the documentation uploaded:

- A recent picture of Emotional Support Animal.
- You will also be required to acknowledge that you have read and agreed to the terms of the Mississippi College Service and Emotional Support Animal Roommate, Suitemate, and Apartment Occupants Acknowledgement.

If your request is approved, you and your roommates must sign this acknowledgment. The Office of Residence Life recommends that you inform your assigned roommates as early as possible of your intention to request an Emotional Support Animal

**If all roommates do not accept an approved Emotional Support Animal, the Office of Residence Life will make every effort to accommodate all affected parties on a case-by-case basis.**

The Clinton County animal ordinance mandates that:

- a) By August 1 each year, every owner or keeper of a dog or cat three months or older within the city must ensure the animal is vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian in the state or another authorized person permitted by the state board of health to administer vaccines.
- b) Proof of vaccination must include a metal tag and certificate issued and signed by the administering person, containing identifying details such as the owner's name, address, and telephone number. The dog or cat must wear the metal tag at all times.

The student is responsible for obtaining and maintaining a current vaccination certificate by Clinton County guidelines. [https://library.municode.com/ms/clinton/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=COOR\\_CH14AN](https://library.municode.com/ms/clinton/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH14AN)

If you have a disability that the presence of animals may impact, please reach out to the Office of Student Accessibility Services. The Office of Residence Life at Mississippi College is dedicated to meeting the needs of all individuals with disabilities and will promptly address any conflicts or issues that may arise. An Emotional Support Animal residing in the Mississippi College Office of Residence Life residence hall must be housebroken (i.e., trained to control its waste elimination, absent illness or accidents), and a harness, leash, or other tether must control it. Additionally, the animal must not pose a danger to others.

## **Service Animal Trainees**

A service dog in training cannot reside in the Residence Halls at Mississippi College.

## **Responsibilities of People with Disabilities Using Assistance Animals**

The Office of Residence Life at Mississippi College is not responsible for caring for or supervising assistance animals. Individuals with disabilities are accountable for the cost, care, and supervision of their assistance animals, including:

1. Compliance with animal licensing, vaccination, and owner identification laws.
2. Ensuring the animal is under control and taking appropriate action if it becomes uncontrollable.
3. Providing food, walking the animal, and properly disposing of its waste. The student must ensure that the approved assistance animal eliminates waste in designated areas as specified by the Office of Residence Life. It is the student's responsibility to clean up after the animal promptly.

Waste disposal through plumbing is not permitted in residence halls or apartments. Animal waste must be bagged and placed in the outdoor trash receptacle. All waste, including indoor animal litter and bedding, must be securely tied in a sturdy plastic bag before disposal in outside trash dumpsters. Litter boxes and cages should be placed on mats to prevent waste from being tracked onto carpeted surfaces. Failure to clean up after the assistance animal may result in fines. Mississippi College Office of Residence Life does not impose

surcharges or fees for assistance animals. However, the student may be held responsible for any damages caused by the assistance animal.

## **Exceptions and Exclusions**

An animal may be excluded from an area where it was previously authorized if:

- The animal is out of control, and no effective action has been taken to control it.
- The animal is not housebroken; in the case of a support animal using a designated cage or litter box, the owner fails to clean it daily, resulting in an unclean environment.
- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be mitigated by reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures or the provision of auxiliary aids or services.

When assessing whether an assistance animal directly threatens others; health or safety, the Director of Housing will make final decisions. The decisions consider:

1. The nature, duration, and severity of the risk posed.
2. The likelihood that the potential injury will occur.
3. Whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, procedures or the provision of auxiliary aids or services could reduce the risk.



# Service and Emotional Support Animal Student's Responsibilities and Guidelines Agreement

The "Student" is defined as the Mississippi College, Office of Residence Life, resident who has requested the accommodation and has received authorization by the Director of Accessibility Services to have an "Approved Animal" in the residence halls.

## **Section I. Application Process**

### **A. Requests for Service and Emotional Support Animals should be made by:**

1. Submit appropriate documentation to the Mississippi College Office of Accessibility Services as a one-time requirement.
2. For each new contractual application period, the Student must complete the "Online ESA Accommodation Request Form" as part of the online housing application.

A Student approved for an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) may have only one animal. To be considered for approval, there must be a documented link between the animal and the student's disability. Emotional distress caused by having to give up an animal due to a "no pet" policy does not qualify for accommodation under federal law. All animals must be approved, and required documentation must be submitted to the Office of Accessibility Services before the animal can reside in the residence halls.

A request for an ESA requires documentation from a licensed physician, psychiatrist, or other mental health professional, to be submitted to the Office of Accessibility Services during the online application process prior to the semester in which the Student is requesting the ESA. The Director of Accessibility Services reviews online applications for Assistance Animals for Fall in July, for Spring in November, and for Summer in April. Online applications received after these review periods will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as availability permits.

Unapproved ESAs or pets, other than harmless aquatic fish in aquariums of 10 gallons or less, found on campus or in-residence halls, are considered a violation. Violations may result in fines, sanctions, probation, termination, suspension from Mississippi College Office of Residence Life, automatic denial of the ESA application, or any combination of these consequences.

### **B. Required documentation for Approved Animals to be submitted to Mississippi College Office of Residence Life prior to move-in**

1. Annual proof of Hinds County Animal Licensing is required for dogs, cats, and ferrets. All other Approved Animals must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian.
2. Certificate of Vaccination and Health for Animal Accommodations.
3. A recent picture of the Assistance Animal.

## **Section II. Responsibilities and Guidelines**

### **A. Responsibilities**

1. The Student is responsible for ensuring that the Approved Animal does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence hall community or cause difficulties for other residents.
2. The Student is financially responsible for the actions of the Approved Animal, including bodily injury or property damage. This responsibility includes, but is not limited to, replacement of furniture, carpet, window coverings, and wall coverings. The Student is expected to cover these costs at the time of repair and/or move-out.
3. The Student is responsible for any expenses incurred for cleaning beyond standard cleaning or for repairs to Mississippi College Office of Residence Life premises assessed after the Student and Approved Animal vacate the residence. The Mississippi College Office of Residence Life reserves the right to bill the Student's account for unmet obligations.
4. The Student must notify the Office of Residence Life in writing if the Approved Animal is no longer needed or no longer in residence. If a replacement Service or Emotional Support Animal is needed, the Student must submit the required documentation regarding the new animal to the Office of Accessibility Services to update records.
5. The Student is required to maintain control of the Approved Animal at all times. Care and supervision of the Approved Animal are the Student's responsibility.
6. The Student must allow the Approved Animal to relieve itself in areas designated by the Office of Residence Life. The Student is responsible for ensuring the cleanup of the Approved Animal's waste. Waste disposal via plumbing is prohibited in all residence halls and apartments. All waste matter, including indoor animal litter and bedding, must be double-bagged in sturdy plastic bags and securely tied before being disposed of in outside trash dumpsters. Litter boxes and cages should be placed on mats to prevent waste from being tracked onto carpeted surfaces.

### **B. Guidelines**

1. The Student's residence may be inspected for fleas, ticks, or other pests as needed. If pests are detected, the residence will be treated using approved fumigation methods by the Office of Residence Life's approved pest control service. The Student will be billed for any pest treatment expenses above and beyond standard pest management in the residence halls.
2. All roommates or suitemates of the Student must sign an agreement allowing the Approved Animal to reside with them. If one or more roommates or suitemates do not approve, either the Student and Approved Animal or the non-approving roommates or suitemates, as determined by the Office of Residence Life, may be moved to a different location.
3. When leaving, all Approved Animals must be in appropriate pet carriers or on a leash/harness. When exiting the building with the Emotional Support Animal, the Student must use the shortest and most direct route.

4. Vaccination: In accordance with Hinds County Animal Licensing and regulations, the Approved Animal must be immunized against diseases common to its species. Dogs, cats, and ferrets must have current rabies vaccinations and wear a current rabies vaccination tag.
5. Health: Approved Animals, other than dogs, cats, and ferrets, housed in Mississippi College housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. Documentation can be a vaccination certificate or a veterinarian's statement regarding the animal's health. The Office of Residence Life has the authority to require that the Approved Animal receive veterinary attention.
6. Licensing: The Office of Residence Life reserves the right to request documentation showing that the Approved Animal has been licensed.
7. Approved Animals may not be left overnight in-residence halls to be cared for by another student. Approved Animals must be taken with the Student if they leave campus overnight or for a prolonged period. In the event of an emergency or prolonged absence, the Approved Animal must be removed by the designated emergency off-site animal caregiver. If the emergency caregiver cannot be contacted, the Office of Residence Life will have the Approved Animal kenneled at the Student's expense. Mississippi College's Office of Residence Life assumes no liability for any charges or injury to the Approved Animal. Students living in residence halls cannot be the emergency caregiver for the Approved Animal.
8. The Office of Residence Life has the authority to relocate the Student and Approved Animal as necessary according to current contractual agreements.
9. The Student agrees to continue to abide by all other residential policies. Reasonable accommodations that may constitute an exception to community living standards do not constitute an exception to any other community living standards.
10. Any Approved Animal that constitutes a nuisance (e.g., barking, unleashed, etc.) or health hazard to other residents or the community, in the opinion of the Director of Residence Life, will be removed within a reasonable amount of time as determined by the Director of Residence Life. Approved Animals deemed a threat to others' safety must be removed immediately.

Any violation of the above rules may result in immediate removal of the Approved Animal the Office of Residence Life residence halls and may be reviewed through the Student Conduct Process, and the Student will be afforded all rights of due process and appeal as outlined in that process. All liability for the actions of the Approved Animal is the responsibility of the Student; the Office of Residence life is not responsible. Any excessive damage will be billed to the Student's account. Should the Approved Animal be removed from the premises for any reason, the Student is expected to fulfill his/her housing contractual obligations for the remainder of the housing contract for the period in which they are contracted.



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## Certificate of Vaccination & Health For Animal Accommodation

### Veterinary Clinic Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Animal Owner Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
MC ID \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Animal Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Male/Female \_\_\_\_\_  
Species \_\_\_\_\_ Color \_\_\_\_\_  
Breed \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Spay/Neuter \_\_\_\_\_

### Canine (Dog)

| Vaccination          | Date Administered | Due Date |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Rabies               | _____             | _____    |
| DHPP                 | _____             | _____    |
| Bordetella           | _____             | _____    |
| Flea/Tick            | _____             | _____    |
| Intestinal Parasites | _____             | _____    |

### Feline (Cat)

| Vaccination          | Date Administered | Due Date |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Rabies               | _____             | _____    |
| FIV/FelV             | _____             | _____    |
| FVRCP                | _____             | _____    |
| Intestinal Parasites | _____             | _____    |

I certify the animal above has been examined and found to be free of disease, is currently on vaccinations and is on a flea and tick preventative medication.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Veterinarian (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Veterinarian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Completed form must be uploaded by students under the housing application.** Failure to submit this form will result in your application for animal accommodations being incomplete and your application for housing will be processed without consideration of your animal. Should you have questions please call the Office of Residence Life at 601.925.3359.





Accessibility  
Services

# Service Animal Procedure

## Acknowledgment and Information Form

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Animal Type (*select one*):**                      Dog                      Miniature Horse

**Animal's Breed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Animal's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rabies Vaccination Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Spay/Neuter Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Record must be attached)                      (Record must be attached)

As a handler of a service animal, I assume full responsibility for providing adequate care and supervision for the service animal at all times while on Mississippi College property or attending University sponsored events. I have reviewed and understand Mississippi College's Policy for Service Animals on campus and shall comply with all requirements detailed in that policy.

**Additionally, I agree to the following:**

1. I assume personal responsibility for any damage to any property and/or harm to others caused by my service animal while on University property or attending University sponsored events.
2. I will register my service animal annually with the Office of Student Disability Services
3. The University will not be financially responsible for any actions of, or related to, my service animal.
4. I shall indemnify and hold Mississippi College and its faculty and staff harmless against any and all claims, liabilities and costs for any personal injury or property damages or other damages that the University may sustain arising out of or in connection with my use of a service animal while on University property or attending a University sponsored event.

**I accept and agree to be bound by the terms of this Agreement.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Handler                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name                      MC ID#

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Director of Disability Services                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Housing                      Date



Accessibility  
Services

## Service & Emotional Support Animal Roommate Occupants Acknowledgement

By my signature below, I understand that I will share areas of my assigned residential space with the Approved Animal. Should I have any concerns regarding the care and control of the Approved Animal, I will discuss my concerns with the Student in charge of the Approved Animal and then with my designated Residence Life Student Staff Member. If the Student in charge of the Approved Animal and I cannot come to an agreement, I will notify the Office of Residence Life at 601.925.3359.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
Resident's Name (print)      MC ID#      Hall & Room #

\_\_\_\_\_  
Resident's Signature

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Resident's Name (print)      MC ID#      Hall & Room #

\_\_\_\_\_  
Resident's Signature

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Resident's Name (print)      MC ID#      Hall & Room #

\_\_\_\_\_  
Resident's Signature

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
Resident's Name (print)      MC ID#      Hall & Room #

\_\_\_\_\_  
Resident's Signature