Comfort/Assistance Animals at UC Irvine

The University of California, Irvine is committed to compliance with state and federal laws regarding individuals with disabilities. Members of the UC Irvine community who seek reasonable accommodation for disabilities should contact the Disability Services Center (DSC).

Comfort/Assistance animals are also known as therapy or emotional support animals and are not service animals. Please see Service Animal Policy for more information.

Any comfort/assistance animal approved to live in UC Irvine facilities must be housebroken and under the control of its handler. When leaving the apartment or dwelling, the comfort/assistance animal shall have a harness, leash, or other tether and be under the handler’s control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means). The owner is liable and responsible for the animal's behavior (including damages) and activities while in any UC Irvine setting. Housing Communities may designate specific areas where animals may relieve themselves. University staff is not responsible for any aspects of caring for a comfort/assistance animal.

Consistent with federal and state law, an animal may be prohibited from a UC Irvine facility or program if the animal’s behavior or presence poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. Others may exclude it from areas where its presence fundamentally alters the nature of a program or activity, if the animal is disruptive, if its presence would result in substantial physical damage to the property of others, or if it substantially interferes with the reasonable enjoyment of the housing or public accommodation. Appeal/grievance process and procedures may be found at http://www.dsc.uci.edu/Resources/complaints.php.

In order to maintain a safe and healthy academic and living environment for all individuals who live and work within the UC Irvine community, those interested in bringing a comfort/assistance animal to the campus are required to register with the Disability Services Center. Please keep in mind that comfort/assistance animals are generally restricted to the housing unit and must comply with housing policies and procedures.

If a student desires that a comfort/assistance animal live in campus housing, the student must notify the Disability Services Center at least thirty (30) days prior to the desired move-in date so that UC Irvine Staff can best accommodate the student and the animal. If all other criteria are met, as set forth by the DSC, a Letter of Accommodation will be sent to the UC Irvine Student Housing notifying and approving your animal accommodation in the community.

Procedure for requesting to bring a comfort/assistance animal to University Housing:

- Apply for Services at www.dsc.uci.edu at least 30 days prior to your desired move-in date. DSC Staff will contact you within five business days to schedule an appointment to meet with a Disability Specialist.
- Submit your disability documentation. Documentation forms may be downloaded at www.dsc.uci.edu/Forms_Publications/index.php. Documentation may be mailed, faxed or hand delivered to DSC.
- Meet with a Disability Specialist where eligibility for disability related accommodations is determined through an inter-active conversation and documentation of functional limitations.
- If requested, provide a letter of advocacy from a treating Mental Health Professional outlining the need for a comfort/assistance animal.
- DSC will retain a photo of your animal to verify permission to live in University Housing.
- Updated documentation may be requested in the future to support continued need for accommodations.

Please contact the Disability Services Center with any questions.

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