



To be allowed to have either a service animal or ESA reside in campus housing, the student must first contact the Office of Disability Services and complete the appropriate documentation requirements. The following guidelines apply to all approved animals and their owners who live in University campus housing. [disabilityservices@vanguard.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@vanguard.edu) | 714-619-6550

Vanguard University generally does not permit animals/pets to reside on campus, however Residence Life does allow fish in a five-gallon or smaller tank. The animals permitted to reside on campus are: (a) Service Animals, and (b) Emotional Support Animals.

Vanguard University is committed to providing students with access to its programs and services. Service Animals are an example of this commitment, and those animals are treated in a separate policy. This policy deals with Emotional Support Animals (hereafter, "ESA"). An ESA is a reasonable accommodation provided to qualified students with a disability who live in a Vanguard University residence. An ESA will be permitted to live in a student's personal residence space provided that there is compliance with this policy.

## **Definitions**

**Emotional Support Animal.** ESAs are animals that provide emotional support which alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of an individual's disability. An ESA must be recommended by a qualified professional for a student to be permitted to have the ESA stay in the student's University residence. An ESA is not a Service Animal. Dangerous, poisonous, illegal, and any other animals that pose a direct threat to the health or safety of individuals in the campus community will not be permitted as an ESA.

**Pet.** A pet is an animal kept for pleasure and companionship; pets often provide emotional support for their owners. A pet is distinguished from an ESA because a pet's emotional support is not necessary to alleviate one or more identified symptoms or effects of an individual's disability. A pet is neither an ESA nor a Service Animal. Pets cannot reside on Vanguard University property and are not permitted inside Vanguard University buildings without authorization.

**Owner.** The Owner is the resident student who has an approved ESA in Vanguard University housing under this policy.

**University Housing.** Any building or facility owned or operated by Vanguard University for the purposes of housing residential students, whether leased or owned.

## **Emotional Support Animal Application and Approval Process**

A student seeking an ESA must make a formal request through the office of Disability Services. To make a formal request, the student must complete three steps:

- (1) Meet with the Assistant Director of Disability Services regarding the possibility of bringing an ESA to campus;

- (2) Submit to Disability Services a completed ESA Request for Information form, recently filled out by a qualified professional (e.g., treating physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other mental health professional); and
- (3) Submit to Disability Services a personal statement explaining the reason(s) for requesting the ESA and make a commitment to provide appropriate care for the ESA.

Vanguard University will make every effort to respond to a formal ESA request within sixty (60) calendar days from the date a completed formal request is submitted. Because it takes time to evaluate ESA requests, students should plan to submit ESA requests more than 60 days before the student intends to move into the University residence or have the ESA live with the student. If the formal request for an ESA is not completed well in advance of the desire to have an ESA, Vanguard University cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the student's accommodation needs immediately, if approved; Vanguard University will attempt to meet needs as quickly as it can.

If ESA requests are submitted June 15<sup>th</sup> or after, or November 15<sup>th</sup> or after, ESAs may not be approved to come to campus at the start of the semester. They may be approved to come sometime during the semester once all requirements have been met and approvals obtained. It is strongly encouraged that approved ESAs be spayed or neutered.

***Until a student is notified that the student's ESA request has been approved, a student must not bring an animal into their residence or other Vanguard University housing.***

Bringing an unapproved animal into a University residence – even an animal that likely would have been approved – will have two consequences. First, the student will be in violation of the Code of Student Conduct and a referral will be made to Residence Life. Second, the student's ESA request may not be approved. One of the conditions that an Owner has to meet is that the Owner will be a responsible owner and will abide by University policies. Bringing an unapproved animal into a University residence is a signal that the student cannot meet that condition.

Once a completed formal request for an ESA has been received, the request will be reviewed for approval or denial (or alteration) by the Housing Accommodations Committee, chaired by the Assistant Director of Disability Services. The Housing Accommodations Committee will consider all relevant information available in making a determination about whether an ESA or a specific species of animal would be a reasonable accommodation for the requesting student. Among the factors the Housing Accommodations Committee will assess are:

- 1) The nature of the qualified professional's recommendation.
- 2) The Owner's personal statement.
- 3) The Owner's commitment and ability to be a responsible owner of the animal.
- 4) Whether the ESA's presence would force another individual from their Vanguard University residence (e.g., allergies, emotional health).
- 5) Whether the ESA's presence would disturb other individuals' right to peace and quiet enjoyment.
- 6) Whether the ESA is housebroken and able to live with others in a healthy, reasonably odor-free manner.

- 7) The Owner's plan for the ESA when the Owner is not present in the room (e.g., Will a cat or dog be crated?)
- 8) Whether the ESA's vaccinations are up to date.
- 9) The size of the animal relative to the size of the residential space. Large animals should not be confined to small spaces; it is not fair to the animal. Animals less than 25 lbs. tend to be appropriate in most university housing spaces. Animals larger than 25 lbs. will have an additional assessment to determine whether the residential space is appropriate/adequate.
- 10) Whether the ESA causes excessive damage to property beyond reasonable wear and tear.
- 11) The presence of other ESAs. Typically, only one ESA to a residential space is appropriate.
- 12) Whether the ESA poses, or has posed in the past, a direct threat to the health and safety of persons or other animals. Animals who exhibit aggressiveness are not appropriate for Vanguard University residences, regardless of whether they have "actually" injured someone. In other words, Vanguard University does not have to wait until someone is harmed; aggressive behavior is disqualifying.
- 13) Whether there is the potential for zoonotic or other health-related diseases (reptiles, rodents, chickens, goats, etc.) in the requested animal. This consideration may apply to both students and other ESAs.
- 14) The diet of the ESA and permissible foods in the residence hall (e.g., mice and insects are not permissible).
- 15) Legal requirements.

Students will be notified of the Housing Accommodation Committee's decision in writing (via email). If an ESA is approved, the student must meet with the Assistant Director of Disability Services to review and sign this policy. Failure or refusal to sign this policy will be presumed to be an indication that the student does not intend to abide by the policy and will result in revocation of the approval. It is the student's obligation to ensure that all appropriate documentation of the animal's vaccinations and health is submitted to Disability Services. Copies of the animal's documents will be kept on file in Disability Services. Disability Services will notify Residence Life when an ESA is approved to be in campus housing.

Any approval under this policy is valid for one academic year. A student wishing to have an ESA for a subsequent year must notify Disability Services of the student's desire to continue utilizing the ESA accommodation when the housing and placement process begins for the upcoming academic year. Vanguard University requires an Owner to annually sign the ESA policy.

## **Notifications and Student's Appeal Rights**

### **Roommate Notification**

If approval for an ESA is granted, the Owner will be assigned to a low occupancy housing status (1 roommate). Residence Life will contact the intended roommate in case he/she has a health or safety-related concern about exposure to an approved ESA. If the roommate is willing to live with an ESA, Residence Life will obtain written approval.

If the roommate does not approve or has a health or safety-related concern regarding exposure to the approved ESA, general Vanguard University policies regarding roommate disagreements will be followed to enable either the Owner and the approved ESA or the non-approving roommate to be moved to a different location. Written acknowledgement from a parent is required for roommates under the age of 18.

### Residence Life

Resident students with a medical condition(s) who may be affected by an approved ESA (e.g. respiratory diseases, asthma, severe allergies) are asked to inform Residence Life as soon as they are aware of an ESA in his/her residence hall, if they have a health or safety-related concern about exposure to an approved ESA.

Residence Life will collaborate, as necessary, to resolve roommate or floor conflicts related to an approved ESA. Staff members will consider the needs and/or accommodations of all resident students involved.

Residence Life will notify Vanguard University's Facilities Services so they will be aware of the presence of an animal in case there is a need to enter a student's residence (e.g., work orders).

If an ESA request is denied by the Housing Accommodations Committee, the requesting student may appeal that denial by submitting a written appeal to the Vice President of Student Affairs within seven (7) calendar days from the date the decision is sent to the student. The decision of the Vice President of Student Affairs (or designee) is final.

### **Owner's Responsibilities for Approved ESAs in University Housing**

The Owner must comply with the following provisions regarding behavior and care of approved ESAs:

**Licensing and Vaccination.** In accordance with local ordinances and regulations, the approved ESA must receive all required and recommended immunizations against diseases. Local licensing requirements must be followed. Vanguard University may request an updated verification regarding an approved ESA's vaccinations at any time during the ESA's residency, but verification of current vaccinations will at a minimum be required prior to the start of each year the animal is in residence.

**Flea Medication.** ESA dogs and cats must be on a flea medication regimen and documentation must be provided (e.g., receipts).

**Health.** Approved ESAs must be in good health as documented annually by a licensed veterinarian. Vanguard University has authority to direct that the approved ESA receive veterinary attention (with the costs to be paid for by the Owner) in appropriate circumstances.

**Control.** The Owner must be always in full control of the approved ESA. The ESA must always remain in the Owner's residence room and be on a leash, harness, or other tether, or

in an appropriate crate or carrier (if applicable) when being transported to and from the student's residence room. Dogs should be walked out of the hall to excrete waste and for exercise, but ESAs are not to be outside the residence room for extended periods of time. ESAs cannot be in residence hall lobbies and cannot go to other areas of campus, including but not limited to, the cafeteria, library, or classrooms.

**Cleanliness.** It is the Owner's responsibility to remove and properly dispose of the approved ESA's waste (e.g. urine, excrement, fur, cage shavings, etc.), which must be placed in a sturdy plastic bag before disposal, and must be disposed of in an outside trash receptacle. An approved ESA must be clean and well groomed, and measures should be always taken for flea, tick, or other infestations and odor control. The residence room must be kept at a reasonable standard of cleanliness, as upheld in the Student Handbook, necessary for the health and safety of the approved ESA and housing occupants. The Owner will be held responsible for any room damages, including excess cleaning and/or replacement of any carpeting or furnishings.

### **Other Conditions**

- The Owner is responsible for assuring the approved ESA does not unduly interfere or adversely affect the routine activities of Vanguard University housing or other residents. In addition, the approved ESA must not pose a threat to the health, safety, or property of anyone in the Vanguard community.
- The care and supervision of the approved ESA is solely the responsibility of the Owner. The Owner is responsible for ensuring the safety of an approved ESA and the Vanguard University community. If it is suspected an approved ESA is being neglected, mistreated, or has been abandoned, Vanguard University may contact Costa Mesa Animal Control. The ESA may be removed without warning if removal is warranted due to safety concerns.
- The Owner is financially responsible for the approved ESA, including for any bodily injury or property damage caused by the approved ESA. The Owner's financial responsibility may include replacement of furniture, carpet, window, wall covering and costs of damage to other University-owned property. The Owner is expected to cover these costs at the time of repair or when moving out.
- The Owner must notify Residence Life or the appropriate housing personnel via email if the approved ESA is no longer needed or is no longer in residence. To replace an approved ESA, the Owner must submit a new written request to Disability Services for review.
- The Owner agrees to abide by all other Vanguard University policies, including all housing policies. Any violation of this policy may result in immediate removal of the approved ESA from Vanguard University. Reported violations will be reviewed by the Residence Life.
- Approved ESAs may not be left overnight in student housing without the Owner being present. Approved ESAs must be taken with the Owner if the Owner leaves campus overnight. The Owner must make proper arrangements for the removal and care of an approved ESA while the residence halls are closed for breaks. The need to care for an approved ESA is not on its own a valid reason for permission to stay on campus over a break or any other period when University housing is closed.
- Approved ESAs must remain in a crate, cage, container, or residence room when the Owner is absent and/or when University personnel are present in the room to complete work orders.

- Approved ESAs are not permitted to display behaviors or create noises that are deemed disruptive to others (e.g. excessive barking, growling, biting, hissing, scratching), unless said noises/behaviors are part of the needed disability service to the Owner.
- Vanguard University may require an Owner to permanently remove an approved ESA when it is out of control and the Owner does not take action to control it, when it is not housebroken, when it poses a threat to health and safety, or when the terms of this policy are otherwise violated.
- From time to time, Vanguard University may use pesticides, pest control devices, cleaning supplies, and other materials for the maintenance and operation of University housing. Vanguard University is not responsible/liable for harm to an approved ESA permitted to reside with an Owner in University housing. Vanguard University will make an effort to notify students in advance so that if the student feels the need to remove or otherwise protect their ESA, they may do so.
- The Owner will provide contact information for both an on campus and off campus contact should the Owner be unable to care for the ESA due to an emergency or unavoidable situation. University personnel (unless the University personnel are the parents/guardians of the student) are not appropriate choices for an off-campus emergency contact.
- The Owner will take the approved ESA outside during fire drills and/or emergency preparedness procedures. The approved ESA must remain in the crate/cage, or on a leash, during this time.

## **Revocation of Approval**

Vanguard will take appropriate measures, up to and including revocation of approval for an ESA if, among other reasons:

- The Owner knowingly violates any term of this policy;
- The approved ESA is no longer needed to assist with a disability;
- Vanguard University determines that the approved ESA is not able to meet the conditions of the ESA policy (e.g., through barking/noise or other disruptive behavior);
- Vanguard University determines that the approved ESA is a direct threat to the health, safety, or property of anyone in the University community; or
- Vanguard University discovers that false or misleading information was provided in the Owner's application for approval of an ESA.

Vanguard University reserves the right to make an interim accommodation while determining appropriate measures.

The requesting student may appeal revocation of approval of a previously approved ESA within seven (7) calendar days of the notice of revocation to the Vice President of Student Affairs (or designee). The student must do so in writing. The decision of the Vice President of Student Affairs (or designee) is final.

## **Guest Policy**

Vanguard University's provision for ESAs applies only to currently enrolled students residing in University housing and it only applies to the Owner's room. An Owner who has an approved ESA for the Owner's residence may not take their ESA to other University rooms/residences, including other ESA approved rooms. All other personnel or individuals (e.g. guests) are not allowed to bring animals, including ESAs, into University residences. This includes day visitations, overnight stays, or weekend visits, even if such visits are welcome by the Owner's roommate. Any student who takes an ESA to a different student's University residence or otherwise permits unapproved animal visits in Vanguard University residences will be referred to Residence Life for a Code of Conduct violation, and may have their ESA approval revoked.

## **Acknowledgement**

*By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read the Emotional Support Animal policy, understand it, and agree to abide by its terms.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Owner's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner's Signature (required, even if a minor)

### **If Owner is under 18 years old:**

*By signing below, you represent that you are the parent or legal guardian of the Owner, who is a minor. You acknowledge that you have read and understood the policy and that you agree to abide by its terms.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature

## **Emergency Contact Information**

In the event of an emergency in which I, the Owner, am unable to care for my approved ESA, the contact person stated below will be responsible for the care of my ESA (***All information is required to be completed – Please print.***):

### On Campus Contact

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Owner: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Off Campus Contact

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Owner: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Vanguard University Policy on Emotional Support Animals in University Housing ESA Documentation**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Animal's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Animal \_\_\_\_\_

Breed \_\_\_\_\_ Colorings/Markings \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Spay/Neuter \_\_\_\_\_ (yes) \_\_\_\_\_  
(no)

License # (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ (Vanguard requires renewal each year.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Vaccination verified. Date of Vaccination \_\_\_\_\_

(Rabies shot: 1<sup>st</sup> shot lasts one year; subsequent shots last 3 years.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Veterinarian check-up verified. Date of check-up: \_\_\_\_\_

**Roommate Agreement**

By my signature below, I agree to share the common areas of my assigned residential space with the ESA approved by this agreement. Should I have any concerns regarding the care and control of the approved ESA, I will discuss my concerns with the ESA’s owner and then with my Resident Assistant and Resident Director, if the ESA Owner and I cannot come to an agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Resident’s Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Resident’s Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Resident’s Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date