

UAB DSS Assistance Animal Guidelines

An **assistance animal**, also referred to as **emotional support animals**, are animals that have been prescribed by a medical or psychiatric health provider as playing a role in the treatment of a disability. Assistance animals are not pets, but rather a part of an ongoing therapeutic relationship that is integrated into treatment.

UAB works with students to make reasonable accommodations for assistance animals in accordance with federal guidance. These guidelines are intended to help you and your provider in preparation of documentation. Please keep in mind that thoroughly addressing guidelines helps Disability Support Services in determinations of disability and disability need for assistance animals.

The following should be included in the report:

1. Student information including name, date of most recent evaluation
2. Evaluator information:
 - Name, qualifications, licensure, office information
 - Length of time the provider and student have been in a therapeutic relationship
 - Nature of practice with student (monthly medication management, psychotherapy, case management, etc.)
3. History to support diagnosis:
 - Description of the duration and severity of the disorder
 - Relevant medical, familial, and social histories
 - Length of time animal has been prescribed in care
 - Evidence of reduced symptomology, improved functioning from assistance animal treatment role
4. Evidence of current impairment:
 - Description of how disability currently impacts the student in social, academic, or occupational settings
 - Description of how the disability will limit the student in a residential setting
 - Discussion of how the assistance animal is necessary for the resident to use and enjoy College housing as compared to a person without a disability
5. Assessment information:
 - Results and interpretation of specific evaluation data to support diagnosis
6. Treatment and medication:

- Description of any current medication, therapy, or other treatment being implemented
- Identification of the animal (name, species)
- Identification of the animal's role in the treatment plan
- Description of the medically necessary assistance the animal provides to the student

7. Diagnosis:

- Clear statement of diagnosis including the DSM-5 or ICD-10 diagnostic code

8. Recommended accommodations:

- Include specific recommendations for academic accommodations and the rationale for the accommodations

Documentation from the Internet

Some websites sell certificates, registrations, and licensing documents for assistance animals to anyone who answers certain questions or participates in a short interview and pays a fee. The Housing and Urban Development Department notes that such documentation, by itself, is not sufficient to establish disability or disability related need for an assistance animal. In accordance with the Fair Housing Act, UAB expects requests for assistance animal accommodations be accompanied with sufficient documentation of a disability and a disability related need for an assistance animal. Please use caution when seeking assistance animal documentation from websites that claim to guarantee to provide all the documentation you need.

For more information, please review U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's guidance on Service and Assistance Animals:

<https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PA/documents/HUDAsstAnimalNC1-28-2020.pdf>