Brandeis University Policy for Residential Students Regarding Support Animals

Overview

Animals, including pets, are not permitted in Brandeis University housing with the exception of fish, as noted in section 10.14 of Rights and Responsibilities. In compliance with the Fair Housing Act and Americans with Disabilities Act, we work with students to allow Support Animals for individuals with disabilities. For Service Animals, see separate Service Animal Policy.

Brandeis is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. Students who require a Support Animal as a reasonable accommodation for a disability may request to bring the animal into residence provided that they comply with the University’s policies regarding such animals.

A team representing Disabilities Services and Support, Community Living, the University Health Center and the Brandeis Counseling Center will determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether to approve the student’s request for a Support Animal. In making this determination, the team will consider the needs of the student, as well as the impact of the animal on the campus community. Students seeking to have a Support Animal in undergraduate housing must submit a Housing Accommodation Request form for review each academic year.

A request for a Support Animal should be submitted as part of the Housing Accommodation Request Process (dates and timeline varies by class year.) The animal must not be in residence prior to the student initiating the request or prior to the conclusion of the decision process. The approval of a request is animal-specific and is not transferable to another animal.

Please note that presence of a support animal is best used as a complement to traditional psychotherapy (or other mental health treatment) and utilization of campus resources, such as Academic Services. Utilizing these additionally supports will allow students to develop coping strategies and other skills that will lead to success both inside and outside of the classroom.

Section I. Definitions

Support Animal

A Support Animal is an animal that provides emotional or other support that ameliorates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Examples include alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure or calming a person suffering
from disabling anxiety or depression. Some, but not all, Support Animals receive formal training.

**Pet**
A “pet” is an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. A pet is not considered a Service or a Support Animal. Individuals are not permitted to keep or bring pets on University property or in housing.

**Section II. Process regarding bringing a Support Animal**

A student seeking to have a Support Animal in residence must make a formal request through the Housing Accommodation Request process. To do so, the student must submit a Housing Accommodation Request form and Medical Provider Form.

When the need for a Support Animal is not readily apparent, the University may request additional clarification from a physician, psychiatrist, social worker, or other mental health professional, including (i) verification of the student’s disability, (ii) statement on how the animal serves as an accommodation for the documented disability, and (iii) statement on how the need for the support animal relates to the ability of the student to use and gain benefit from University undergraduate housing. Any necessary documentation must be dated within the last 12 months.

The recommended due dates correspond with the timetable for the general student body to receive housing assignments. Requests submitted after these deadlines will be accepted and will proceed through the process; however, the later submission may result in a decision that is later than the timing for other students. General deadlines that correspond with the process for the general student body are:

- Upper-class students request by February 15 for housing for the following year.
- New, incoming students request by May 31 for fall housing.
- Midyear students (new students arriving in January) request by October 15.

If the need for the Support Animal arises after the student is already placed in housing, then the student should complete the required request form and documentation, as well as contact staff in the Department of Community Living. The review process may take 30 days or more; the student should make his/her plans accordingly.

Once the Housing Accommodation Team completes its review, the decision will be provided in writing to the student. If the request for a Support Animal is approved, the requesting student will be asked to sign a Support Animal Agreement that includes the provisions of this policy.
The requesting student may appeal a denial of a request within ten business days by sending a letter to Appeals Process, Department of Community Living, MS 220, Usdan Student Center 032. The result of a committee Appeals Process is final. If the request for a Support Animal is approved, Community Living staff will make a reasonable effort to notify the other occupants of the room or suite where the Support Animal will be located. This notice will be limited to information about the animal’s presence as an accommodation to a student with a disability; there will be no disclosure of the student’s disability. Other residents of the room or suite with medical condition(s) that are affected by animals (e.g., respiratory diseases, asthma, severe allergies) are asked to contact Community Living if they have a health or safety-related concern about exposure to a Support Animal.

Depending on the configuration of common spaces in a residence hall or building, Community Living staff may determine that there is a need to post a general notice to all residents of the hall or building; such notice would not identify the student or the disability. We are committed to meeting the needs of all students involved. Disabilities Services and Community Living staff will collaborate, as necessary, to resolve conflicts related to a Support Animal. Staff members will consider the needs and/or accommodations of all resident students involved.

All roommates or suitemates of the Owner of the Support Animal must sign an agreement acknowledging that the Support Animal will be in residence with them. In the event that one or more roommates or suitemates do not approve, either the Owner and the Support Animal or the non-approving roommates or suitemates, as determined by the Community Living staff, may be moved to a different location.

Rules that apply follow:

1. Approved Animals must be taken with the Owner if the Owner leaves campus overnight.

2. The behavior, noise, odor, and waste of a Support Animal must not exceed reasonable standards, and these factors must not create an unreasonable disruption for residents and Community Living Staff.

3. Dangerous or wild animals (e.g., snakes) are not permitted.

4. The Support Animal must be contained within the student room (or suite) and designated common space(s) in the residence hall at all times, except as required for transportation off-campus or to eliminate waste. While outside the Owner’s room or suite, the animal must be in an animal carrier or controlled by leash or harness. Support Animals are not permitted in University facilities other than the building in which the student resides, for example a dining hall.
5. Dogs and cats must be at least 12 months old.

The following pertains to the health and well-being of a Support Animal:

Vaccination – In accordance with local ordinances and regulations, the Support Animal must receive all required and recommended immunizations against diseases. Dogs must have a current vaccination against rabies and wear a rabies vaccination tag. Local licensing requirements must be followed. The University may request updated verification regarding a Support Animal’s vaccinations at any time during the animal’s residency.

Health – Support Animals must be in good health as documented annually by a licensed veterinarian. Appropriate documentation will be determined on a case-by-case basis, and the University may direct that the Support Animal receive veterinary attention in appropriate circumstances.

Control – The Owner must be in full control of the Support Animal at all times. Whenever the Support Animal leaves the student’s room or suite, the animal must be in a carrier or on a leash/harness. Exceptions based on disability may be made on a case-by-case basis.

Cleanliness -- It is the Owner’s responsibility to properly dispose of any waste. A Support Animal must be well-groomed, and measures should be taken for flea and odor control. The Owner will be held responsible for room damages including excessive cleaning or replacement of the carpet. This will be noted on the Room Condition Report form and during Health and Safety Inspections.

Other Conditions: Disabilities Services and Support or Community Living may place other reasonable conditions on the Support Animal depending on particular facts and circumstances, including the nature and characteristics of the Support Animal.

Section III. Owner’s Responsibilities for Approved Animals in Residence

1. The Owner is responsible for ensuring that the Approved Animal does not adversely interfere with the routine activities of the residence hall. The Approved Animal must not pose a threat to the health, safety, or property of anyone in the Brandeis University community. If either condition is not upheld, the University will take appropriate measures, including a determination that the Approved Animal may no longer be permitted in residence.

2. The care and supervision of the Approved Animal is solely the responsibility of the Owner. If this condition is not upheld, the University will take appropriate measures, including a determination that the Approved Animal may no longer be permitted in residence.
3. The Owner is responsible for ensuring the cleanup of the Approved Animal’s waste (e.g. urine, excrement, fur, cage shavings, etc.). Indoor animal waste must be enclosed in a sturdy plastic bag before disposal.

4. The Owner is financially responsible for the Approved Animal, including for any bodily injury or property damage caused by the Approved Animal. 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 and/or move-out. The owner is also financially responsible for maintaining the health of their animal, which may include food, medical care and other needs as they arise.

5. The Owner must notify Disability Services and Community Living in writing if the Approved Animal is no longer needed or is no longer in residence. To replace an Approved Animal, the Owner must file a new Need-based Housing Request as outlined above.

6. The Owner's residence may be inspected for pests as needed. Community Living staff will schedule any such inspection. If pests are detected upon inspection, the residence room or hall will be treated using University-approved pest control methods. The Owner will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment that is beyond routine pest control. Community Living staff at the discretion of the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs or designee, may enter a room where a support animal is present if the condition of the animal is believed to be an immediate health and safety threat to the animal or the community at large.

7. From time to time, the University may use pesticides, pest control devices, de-icing materials, cleaning supplies, and other materials for the maintenance and operation of university housing. The University is not responsible for any harm to Approved Animals caused by such materials.

8. Approved Animals may not be left overnight in the student’s undergraduate housing without the Owner.

9. Community Living staff may relocate the Owner and Approved Animal as necessary according to the Brandeis University Housing Contract. The Owner agrees to continue to abide by all University policies, including campus housing policies.

Any violation of this policy may result in immediate removal of the Approved Animal from the University. Reported violations will be reviewed by the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs or designee. Should the Approved Animal be removed from the premises for any reason, the Owner is expected to fulfill his/her housing contract.