An Emotional Support Animal (ESA) means any animal that provides emotional support, comfort, or therapy that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects associated with its owner’s disability. An ESA is prescribed to an individual with a disability by a mental health professional and is an integral part of a person’s treatment process.

**Procedures for Obtaining Approval for the Use of an ESA Within University Housing:**

A. Disability Support Services (DSS) and Residence Life & Housing (RL&H) manage student requests related to ESA’s within the student’s University housing assignment.

B. The student must submit an application and appropriate supporting documentation to DSS using the form(s) found at Disability Support Services and follow documentation guidelines, depending on the nature of the disability, posted on the DSS website.

C. DSS and RL&H will accept and consider requests for reasonable accommodations in University housing at any time. The individual making the request for accommodation should apply and present documentation to the DSS as soon as practicably possible before moving into University housing. However, if the request for accommodation is made fewer than 30 days before the individual intends to move into University housing, DSS & RL&H cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the individual’s accommodation needs during the first semester or term of occupancy. Existing residents must submit an application and documentation of a disability as soon as practicably possible. DSS & RL&H cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the accommodation needs during the semester or term in which the request is received. Students may be required to submit updated, current documentation to DSS annually. The request must be approved before the ESA is permitted in University housing.
D. In addition to documentation verifying the disability, additional paperwork from the mental health professional must include how the animal is necessary to provide the person with a disability access to MSU’s housing program, and the relationship between the disability and the assistance the animal provides.

E. All health records and vaccinations must be current and submitted to DSS. All dogs and cats must be spayed or neutered.

F. If an ESA is approved for a student by the DSS office, DSS will send a recommendation to Residence Life & Housing. Once approved, RL&H will then assign the student to the most appropriate housing location with his/her ESA and meet with the student to review the applicable forms.