

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and all applicable federal, state and local disability laws, Bard Graduate Center (BGC) will accommodate students with disabilities who require an assistance animal.

Assistance animals are animals that work, perform tasks, assist, and/or provide therapeutic emotional support for individuals with disabilities. This policy addresses two types of assistance animals:

- (1) Service Animals; and
- (2) Emotional Support Animals.

Service Animals

Per the ADA and 28 CFR 35.136(i), Service Animals are any dog or miniature horse “that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of” an individual with a disability. Moreover, “the work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability.” Emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals **are not** considered Service Animals.

Unlike Support Animals, Service Animals are generally permitted in all campus spaces with their handler. A Service Animal does not need approval to access the BGC campus as long as it is readily apparent that it is a Service Animal, meaning that the dog or miniature horse is trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. If it is readily apparent that the animal is a Service Animal, BGC may not make inquiries about the Service Animal. However, if it is not obvious that the animal is a Service Animal, BGC may ask the following questions:

1. Is the dog or miniature horse required due to a disability?
2. What work or task(s) has the dog or miniature horse been trained to perform?

BGC cannot require documentation that the Service Animal has been trained, certified, or licensed as a service animal.

Students who plan to bring their Service Animal to campus are encouraged to contact BGC’s Director of Admissions and Academic Affairs (DAAA) prior to doing so. This way, the DAAA can assist the student in providing notice to faculty or other BGC employees of the presence of the animal and help coordinate any other accommodations or auxiliary services needed.

Emotional Support Animals

An Emotional Support Animal (“ESA”) is an animal that provides therapeutic emotional support for an individual with a disability and is not trained to work or perform specific

tasks. ESAs must stay in the student's assigned room in the residence hall and are not permitted to attend class, enter kitchens or dining areas, or the rooms of other residents. If the ESA is to be transported outside of the student's room, it should be properly restrained by a leash or in an animal carrier.

The DAAA, in conjunction with Residence Life, will only approve an ESA if:

1. The animal is necessary for the student with a disability to have equal access to housing;
2. There is an identified relationship between the symptoms of the disability and the assistance the animal provides; and
3. The accommodation is reasonable.

An accommodation is unreasonable if it presents an undue financial or administrative burden to BGC, poses a substantial and direct threat to personal or public safety, or constitutes a fundamental alteration of the nature of the housing provider's operations.

Factors which may determine whether the presence of an ESA is reasonable include whether:

- The size of the ESA is appropriate for available housing;
- The ESA's presence forces another individual from housing;
- The ESA violates an individual's right to peace and quiet enjoyment;
- The ESA is housebroken and able to reasonably live with and among others;
- The ESA's vaccinations are up-to-date during the animal's entire stay on campus;
- The ESA poses, or has posed, a direct threat to others (e.g. aggressive behavior or injury); or
- The ESA causes, or has caused, excessive damage beyond reasonable wear and tear.

Dangerous, poisonous, and/or illegal animals are not permitted under any circumstances. Residence Life will make reasonable efforts to notify the members of the residential community of the presence of an ESA. Conflicting conditions, including allergies, will be considered by DAAA and Residence Life.

To request an ESA as an accommodation, all students must:

1. Complete the [Disability Accommodation Registration Form](#).
2. Attach disability documentation to the form.
3. If necessary, meet with the Director of Admissions and Academic Affairs (DAAA) to discuss potential accommodations and work to create an ESA accommodation plan.

4. If a student's request for an ESA is approved, the student must then:
 - Provide appropriate veterinary records, if applicable
 - Complete Animal Registration Form on My Annandale portal

*Please request accommodations in advance; some accommodations may take time to implement.