



**Office of Learning Services
Student Handbook
2026-2027**

**109 Hubbard Hall
(315) 792-3032**

This handbook highlights Utica University procedures and practices. It is provided for your personal education and information. Therefore, it cannot be construed as a legal document or contract, nor does it supersede applicable Federal, State, or local laws, or Utica University policies. Nothing in the Office of Learning Services Student Handbook should be construed as legal advice or a legal opinion.

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Utica University Office of Learning Services Student Handbook 2026-2027

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Office of Learning Services Mission Statement

The mission of the Office of Learning Services is to ensure that students with disabilities have an equal access to educational opportunities and helps students develop self-awareness and self-advocacy skills, as well as serve as a resource for all members of the Utica University community.

Part One Introduction

WELCOME TO THE OFFICE OF LEARNING SERVICES

The Office of Learning Services provides advisement, advocacy, and academic support to students who identify themselves as having a disability and to students who are experiencing academic difficulties. The office has three professional staff members: Judy Borner, Director, Edward Simpson, Assistant Director, and Audrey Caputo, Captionist.

CONTACT PERSONNEL

To contact the Office of Learning Services :

Telephone: 315-792-3032
Fax: 315-223-2504
E-mail: Judy Borner: jcborner@utica.edu
Edward Simpson: epsimpso@utica.edu
Audrey Caputo: aucaputo@utica.edu

Regular Mail: Utica University
Office of Learning Services
109 Hubbard Hall
1600 Burrstone Road
Utica, N.Y. 13502

The Office of Learning Services is located in Hubbard Hall Room 109. Office hours are from 8:00 – 5:00 during the academic calendar year.

To contact the 504 ADA Compliance Officer for Utica College:

Kristin Phelps
Associate Vice President for Human Resources

Telephone: 315-792-3024
E-mail: kphelps@utica.edu
Regular Mail: Utica University
Office of Human Resources
1600 Burrstone Road
Utica, NY 13502

Part Two

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

Making The Transition From High School To College

The following chart summarizes the differences in student rights and responsibilities from high school (K – 12) to college (Post – Secondary).

	K – 12	Post - Secondary
Regulations	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Section 504 (subsection D) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) Section 504 (subsection E) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Intent	To provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment	To ensure access to the educational program for persons otherwise qualified to meet the standards of the college
Identification	Schools are responsible for identifying, evaluating, and classifying students.	Students are responsible for self-identifying and providing appropriate documentation.
Educational Plan	Schools are responsible for creating an individualized education program (IEP).	IEP / 504 Plan from high school does not continue into college, however, it is used in the accommodations process.
Service Provision	Schools provide special education program and services as part of student's schedule	No special education. Students are responsible for their education. Accommodations are available for students who choose to use them.
Advocacy	Parents and school personnel advocate for the student.	Students are self-advocates.
Parents	Parents are active participants in the educational process. They attend meetings and share in decision-making.	Students are responsible for their own educational process. Parents are not actively involved.

Disclosure Information

Students are not required to disclose a disability during the admissions process. Utica University does not have an alternate admissions process for students with disabilities. They are admitted under the same highly selective criteria as other students -- admissions requirements are not waived or altered based upon a disabling condition.

If you have questions about the admissions process, please contact our Admissions Offices:
By phone: 315-792-3006
By email: admiss@utica.edu

Once admitted, students with disabilities are **strongly advised** to contact the Office of Learning Services as soon as they decide to attend Utica University so that they can submit supporting documentation in a timely fashion if they plan to request accommodations.

Part Three Documentation

HOW TO INITIATE RECOGNITION AND CONSIDERATION AS A STUDENT WITH DISABILITY

Utica University recognizes its responsibility to provide equal access to opportunity for students with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (as amended). The University will provide reasonable adjustments and/or accommodations for our students to meet the equal access / non-discrimination nature of the federal mandates.

Students who are applying to Utica University and are planning to request accommodations should contact the Office of Learning Services as soon as they have made the decision to attend. Students who are already attending Utica University may contact the Office of Learning Services whenever they determine a need for assistance.

The Process

To initiate recognition and consideration as a student with a disability, **students** should: **Refer** themselves, ***by personal contact***, to the Office of Learning Services

Self-disclose their disability

Submit documentation (when available) to verify eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990' Protection of these civil rights statutes is determined on a case-by-case basis and is based upon documentation of a disability that currently substantially limits some major life activity.

Engage in the interactive process – students must meet with one of the staff in Learning Services to review and discuss their needs related to their disability and accommodations request.

Follow Utica University procedures as described in this Handbook.

Students should provide documentation of a disability for two reasons.

- First, to establish that the student is a person with a disability.
- Second, to establish that the student has a need for accommodation.

Documentation allows the College to determine if the student is a person with a disability, and what, if any, accommodations are needed for equal access. A prior history of accommodations without demonstration of a current need does not in itself warrant the provision of like accommodations.

Documentation should be current. “Current” refers to the content of the documentation, rather than to the date on which it was created. Current documentation will provide Utica University with a clear understanding of how the student is performing / functioning **right now**. A school plan, such as an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Plan, assists in the evaluation process.

Documentation should include each of the following *essential components*.¹

1. The credentials of the evaluator(s).
2. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability
3. A description of the diagnostic methodology used.
4. A description of the current functional limitations
5. A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability
6. A description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications
7. Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services.

While submitted documentation meeting these guidelines may be acceptable to Utica University, it is important to be mindful that they may/may not meet the documentation guidelines required in the future by other academic or testing organizations (e.g., special certification, board examinations, standardized tests for admission to graduate schools, etc.).

The Director of Learning Services will make the determination of whether or not submitted documentation is appropriate, and whether or not reasonable accommodations are warranted and can be provided to the individual.

¹¹¹ Association on Higher Education and Disability website (www.ahead.org) article: *AHEAD Best Practices: Disability Documentation in Higher Education*. The specific section in the article is: *Seven Essential Elements of Quality Disability Documentation*.

THE PROCESS FOR DETERMINING APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATIONS

Utica University has charged the Office of Learning Services with the authority for making decisions regarding the accommodations necessary to provide equal access for students.

Accommodations for Utica University students are determined on an individualized basis in a collaborative process between each student and either the Director or Assistant Director of Learning Services.

This is the usual sequence for the process:

- The student contacts the Office of Learning Services to self-declare as a student with a disability and to request accommodations.
- The Director or Assistant Director advises the student what information he/she will need to provide to verify the disability.
- The student and either the Director or the Assistant Director meet (in person or virtually) to discuss:
 - the student's understanding of his/her disability
 - the disability documentation records that were submitted
 - if the student's documentation supports a need for accommodations
 - how the disability affects the student in the learning environment
 - what accommodations and strategies the student has used in the past
 - what accommodations the student believes would be beneficial in the Utica University environment
- Based on this discussion with the student and a review of all submitted information, the Director nor Assistant Director determines what accommodations would be appropriate for that student's needs.
- Accommodation letter is created and forwarded to the student electronically.
- It is the student's responsibility:
 - to determine to whom he/she wishes to disclose the disability
 - to inform his/her faculty and advisor of the disability by providing a copy of the accommodation letter to the faculty and advisor
 - to meet with the faculty and advisor to discuss the accommodation letter
- Except for circumstances of educational need to know or an emergency situation, none of the Office of Learning Services staff will initiate a discussion about the student's disability or accommodations with any faculty or staff person. The student is responsible for doing so.
- The staff of the Office of Learning Services will continue to assist the student as advocates and advisors for as long as the student is enrolled at Utica University.

Part Four

Working with the Office of Learning Services

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rights and Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities at Utica University have the right to:	Students with disabilities at Utica University have the responsibility to:
Equal access to courses, programs, services, and activities offered by the University.	Meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for courses, programs, and activities.
An equal opportunity to learn, and to receive reasonable accommodations in an effort to diminish the effect of the disability on academic functioning.	Self-identify as an individual with a disability when requesting accommodations, and to seek information, counsel, and assistance as necessary in a timely fashion.
Self-determine who will receive student released disability-related materials and information within and outside the University	Provide documentation from an appropriate professional on how the disability limits participation in courses, programs, services, and activities.
All other rights and privileges available to other students at Utica University.	Follow University procedures for obtaining reasonable academic accommodations and/or auxiliary aids and services.

Rights and Responsibilities of Utica College:

Utica University has the right to:	Utica University has the responsibility to:
Identify and establish essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge, requirements, and standards for courses, programs, services, and activities, and to evaluate students on this basis.	Ensure that courses, programs, services, and activities, when viewed in their entirety, are available in the most integrated and appropriate settings.
Request and receive, through Learning Services, current documentation that supports requests for academic accommodations and/or auxiliary aids and services.	Evaluate students on their abilities and not their disabilities.
Deny a request for academic accommodations and/or auxiliary aids and services if the documentation demonstrates that the request is not warranted, or if the individual fails to provide appropriate documentation.	Provide or arrange for reasonable academic accommodations and/or auxiliary aids and services for students with disabilities in courses, programs, services, and activities.
Select among equally effective academic accommodations and/or auxiliary aids and services.	Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication except where permitted or required by law or when the student requests that such information be shared
Refuse an unreasonable academic accommodation and/or auxiliary aid or service that imposes a fundamental alteration of a program or activity of the University.	

CONFIDENTIALITY

Student Records

The Office of Learning Services is the Utica University office charged with the responsibility for collecting and holding student disability documentation. Student documentation information is private and sensitive, and the Office of Learning Services holds this information in the context of assuring that the students have access to necessary accommodation and support.

The student records held by the Office of Learning Services are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). As such, the records are considered to be educational records, not medical records. They are kept in secure files, with access limited to the personnel in the Office of Learning Services and the Dean for Student Success to whom we report.

There may be occasions when the Director or Assistant Director of Learning Services will share information regarding a student's disability with other Utica University personnel if circumstances necessitate such sharing due to an appropriate legitimate educational need to know. Circumstances that may warrant such release may include, but are not limited to:

- Faculty / Staff requests to the Director for guidance in working with the student
- Concerns for the student's well-being
- Special circumstances in housing
- Complaint procedures
- Special financial aid considerations

Confidentiality is not maintained in the case of abuse, suicidal, or homicidal intent.

If a student wishes to have information about his/her disability shared with others outside the University, the student must provide written authorization to the Director of Learning Services to release the information.

Maintenance of Records

The Office of Learning Services maintains a file on each student that includes documentation of the disability. These student files will be shredded seven years after either the last contact with the student or the student's graduation date. Therefore, students should make certain that they maintain their own copies of their disability documentation and their accommodation letters.

Information About Accommodations

Procedure Students Follow To Take Accommodated Tests

For On-Campus Students:

Students may use the testing room in Hubbard 109 for tests if they have one or both of the following accommodations listed on their accommodation letter:

- Extended time for exams and quizzes
- Separate location that is quiet with minimized distractions

Accommodated tests are not provided for every student with a disability, only for students for whom this is an appropriate accommodation.

While the primary responsibility of providing accommodations for testing rests with the instructor, the Office of Learning Services tries to accommodate as many students as possible within the testing room which has seating for 7 students. Students must follow these procedures:

- Make certain that they have given a copy of their accommodation letter to their instructor, preferably during the first two (2) weeks of the semester.
- Notify their instructor that they would like to use testing room for an exam accommodation and obtain the instructor's consent to do so. The instructor will make arrangements for extended time and/or a quiet room if he or she does not want the student to take the test in the testing room in Hubbard 109.
- Schedule an appointment for testing seat. This can be done in person, by phone, or online. The appointment must be made at least two (2) days in advance of the date the student intends to take the exam. ***No student will be allowed to "walk in" and take an exam.***
- Students must begin the test at the scheduled time. ***No student will be allowed to start an exam more than 10 minutes after the scheduled start time.*** Students who are late for their appointments or who do not show for their appointments will need consent from their instructor to reschedule the exam.

Note: The student is responsible for telling the instructor when an exam has been completed. We hold the completed until the instructors retrieve them.

For On-Line Students:

Students who are enrolled in a class which is taught entirely on-line through Moodle (or other learning platforms) may have extended time for exams if they have the following accommodation listed on their accommodation letter:

- Extended time for exams and quizzes

Faculty need to manually reprogram the exam time limits within the LMS to provide for this accommodation. Therefore, students should make these arrangements with their faculty in advance of any on-line exams for which they want to use the accommodation of extended time.

For Students in on-campus evening classes:

Students who are enrolled in on-campus evening classes may use the testing room in Hubbard 109 if they have one or both of the following accommodations listed on their accommodation letter:

- Extended time for exams and quizzes
- Separate location that is quiet with minimized distractions

A student with a disability who chooses to use his / her accommodation of extra time or a distraction-minimized environment for a test should talk with his / her instructor. There are two primary options that the student and the instructor may consider to make these arrangements.

First:

If the instructor does not mind the student taking the test during the day, the student can schedule a time with the Office of Learning Services per the usual process. .

Second:

If the instructor prefers that the student take the test in the evening, the instructor would need to provide the accommodation for the student directly. (ie. Using an adjacent empty classroom).

Academic Integrity for Testing

The testing room in Hubbard 109 has a closed circuit camera that staff will monitor during all testing activities. Students are required to leave all backpacks, electronic devices, cell phones, course materials, etc. in the outer office area storage bins during exams. Faculty will provide information to the Office of Learning Services regarding any special instructions for exams.

If a student is observed to exhibit behaviors of cheating, such as using materials not allowed, having an electronic device or cell phone, talking to another student, or other actions, the student will immediately be stopped by the OLS staff in continuing the exam and the behaviors observed will be explained to them. This action will immediately be communicated by phone or email to the instructor/faculty member. Any evidence (ie. Materials, phone access, etc.) will be gathered and provided to the instructor/faculty member. The instructor/faculty member will then determine next steps for violating the academic integrity policy for their course.

Procedure Students Follow To Request a Note Taker

For On-Campus Students:

Students may request a note taker for particular classes if they have the following accommodation listed on their accommodation letter:

Note taker in the classroom.

Peer notetakers or the use of the notetaking application software program Genio Notes may be utilized to meet this accommodation need.

Students who intend to request a note taker for a particular class should do the following:

- Attend each class at least once to determine in which class/classes they would need a note taker.
- Meet with an OLS staff member to discuss the options of a peer note taker or using the notetaking app Genio Notes. If interested in Genio Notes, a training session will be scheduled with Audrey Caputo, Captionist.
- Make certain that they have given a copy of their accommodation letter to their instructor, preferably during the first two (2) weeks of the semester.

If a student does request a peer notetaker, they will complete the request form for each class that they need, and it will be processed through the Administrative Assistant. Peer notetakers are hired through the federal work study program to meet this need. In situations when a peer notetaker cannot be hired through federal work study, institutional funds may be requested (when available) to meet this accommodation need.

Any peer notetaker notes are provided to the student electronically.

Important information about the “Note taker in the classroom” accommodation when a student is requesting a peer notetaker:

There is a delay between when a student requests a note taker and when one is recruited and hired. Therefore, it is imperative that students submit requests for a note taker as early in the semester as possible.

Students who use the note taker accommodation are expected to maintain regular attendance and to fully participate in each class for which they have requested a note taker. They are expected to take their own notes as part of their learning process. The Note Taker's notes are intended to supplement, not replace, the student's own notes. The Director of Learning Services will suspend the “note taker in the classroom” accommodation for any student who does not attend and participate in the classes for which they have requested a note taker.

Procedure to request Texts in Alternate Format

For On-Campus and On-Line Students:

As most textbooks are now provided in a digital format through the Book Bundle Program, students are encouraged to utilize screen reader tools to maximize access to content. If a student has a disability that impacts their ability to access materials digitally, they may request to have a physical copy of their textbook per the following accommodation:

- Textbooks in alternate format

Students who intend to request particular textbooks in alternate format should do the following:

- Attend each class at least once to determine in which class/classes they would need to have an alternate format for their textbooks.
- As required by law, proof of purchase must be provided before a textbook can be acquired in another format.
- Complete a "Request for Alternate Format" form for each textbook, and return it to the Office of Learning Services. Attach the proof of textbook purchase to the form.
- Textbooks are acquired on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with our Bookstore.

Special Requests For Utica University Housing

Utica University Housing is any facility owned or operated by the University for the purpose of housing residential students, whether leased or owned by the University and regardless of location. A major part of the university residential experience is for students to learn to interact and participate with other members of the residential community. Utica University provides residential housing to enhance student intellectual, social, and cultural development through the experience of living with other individuals who bring a variety of social and cultural backgrounds to the community.

Utica University Housing is unique in several aspects including the mandatory assignment of roommates for many of our students, in particular first year students, and the mandate that students must share a room or suite depending on the total number of students and the size of student groupings being housed.

Occasionally, a student may feel that he or she needs special consideration in residence hall assignments. When such a situation occurs, the student should contact the Office of Student Living to discuss the request for special consideration. The Director of Student Living will make determinations or requests that do not involve a disability.

If the student is making the request due to a disability, the Director of Student Living or their designee will advise the student to contact the Office of Learning Services (OLS), in 109 Hubbard Hall, to initiate the process for making the request and providing information that the OLS needs in order for consideration to be given. A student with a disability may also contact the Office of Learning Services directly to make a special request for Utica University Housing that is based on a disability. The Office of Learning Services (OLS) is the office that provides disability services for students with disabilities. The OLS staff collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and other University personnel to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to all Utica University programs and activities. The OLS is the recipient for all requests from students regarding special requests for housing due to a disability.

Consideration of Special Requests for Utica University Housing Assignments

Please note that any requests for rooms with fewer or no roommates based on a student's desire to have a quiet or undisturbed place to study will be considered only in unusual circumstances. By virtue of the shared facilities, resources, and number of people living under one roof in the residence halls, a room with fewer or no roommates does not provide for such quiet, distraction-free space to any appreciable degree beyond living in a standard shared room.

Special requests for Utica University Housing assignments should be made as soon as the student has decided to attend or continue at Utica University. ***Special requests need to be submitted each year, they do not carry forward.*** All requests are reviewed and prioritized according to severity of need. Every effort will be made to meet the student's needs. However, a large number of high priority needs and limited Utica University Housing space may mean that not all requests will be met immediately. If the request cannot be honored for the upcoming semester, the student will be put on a waiting list for consideration as openings occur.

For a request not due to a disability: an appropriate professional should provide the following information to the Director of Student Living in writing:

- Information regarding the need that is the basis of the request.
- An explanation of the current impact of the need on the student's ability to function in a university residential environment.
- A clear description of the desired housing configuration.
- An explanation of how the request relates to the impact of the need.
- An indication of the level of need for the recommended configuration, and the consequences of not receiving the request.
- Possible alternatives if the recommended configuration is not possible.

For a request due to a disability: the student must contact the Director or Assistant Director in the Office of Learning Services (109 Hubbard Hall) so that an Information Guidelines document appropriate to the student's disability may be provided to the student. The Director or Assistant Director will also discuss the decision making process with the student.

Documentation supporting a request will be reviewed by the Director of Student Living (or designee) and/or the Director of Learning Services. Once all relevant information is submitted, requests are reviewed by the Housing Accommodation Review Team. This team includes the Director of Student Living, the Director of Learning Services, the Director of the Counseling Center and a designated medical professional. All information will be held as confidential as possible during the review process. Listed below are some of the factors that are considered when evaluating special requests for Utica University Housing.

Severity of the condition:

- Is impact of the conditioning life threatening if the request is not met?
- Is there a negative health impact that may be permanent if the request is not met?
- Is the request an integral component of a treatment plan for the condition in question?
- What is the likely impact on academic performance if the request is not met?
- What is the likely impact on social development if the request is not met?
- What is the likely impact on the student's level of comfort if the request is not met?

Feasibility and Availability:

- Is space available that meets the student's needs?
- Can space be adapted to provide the requested configuration without creating a safety hazard (electrical load, emergency egress, etc.)?
- Are there other effective methods or housing configurations that would achieve similar benefits as the requested configuration?
- How does meeting this request impact housing commitments to other students?

The Director of Student Living, or his/her designee, will notify students of the decision that has been made regarding a special request for housing not based on a disability. The Director or Assistant Director of the Office of Learning Services will notify students of the decision that has been made regarding a special request for housing based on a disability.

Special Request for an animal in Utica University Housing

1) Pets:

Per the Utica University Residence Hall Agreement document, students are not permitted to have non-fish pets in the residence halls. A student may make a request to the Director of Student Living to keep small fish in a small fish tank in his/her residence hall room with the approval of all roommates.

2) Service Animals

A dog that is a service animal is not a pet.

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (as revised 2010), a “service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.” The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. The provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.

A service animal may reside with its student-owner in the residence hall when that student-owner is a person with a disability who needs the use of a service animal.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure the health and well-being of the service animal, which includes keeping the dog clean and properly disposing of the dog's waste. In addition to meeting local licensing and leash requirements, the service animal must have a health statement, including vaccinations, from a licensed veterinarian dated within the past year. The service animal should wear some type of commonly recognized identification symbol at all times, and be under the student-owner's control at all times. The student-owner is responsible for the service animal's behavior and actions. A service animal may be excluded from campus when that dog's behavior poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, or when that dog's actions are unruly, disruptive, or destructive.

Students with disabilities who will use a service animal on campus must contact the Director of Learning Services for further information.

3) Emotional Support Animals

An animal that is an emotional support animal is neither a pet nor a service animal.

According to the Fair Housing Act, emotional support animals “provide emotional support to persons with disabilities who have a disability-related need for such support.” Under the FHA, individuals with a disability may be entitled to keep an emotional support animal as “a reasonable accommodation in housing facilities.”² In order to qualify for such an accommodation, the emotional support animal “must be necessary to afford the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling or to participate in the housing service or

² U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2/17/2011 letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Enforcement and Programs addressed to FHEO Region Director and Regional Counsel

program. Further, there must be a relationship, or nexus, between the individual's disability and the assistance the animal provides."³

The Office of Learning Services (OLS) is the recipient for all requests from students with disabilities regarding Emotional Support Animals in Utica University housing. Utica University Housing is any facility owned or operated by the University for the purpose of housing residential students, whether leased or owned by the University and regardless of location. Students with disabilities who reside or intend to reside in Utica University Housing and who believe they need such an accommodation must contact the OLS.

Emotional Support Animal in Utica University Housing Policy

Every student with a disability making a request to have an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) in University Housing as an accommodation for his/her disability is expected to have read the Office of Learning Services Student Handbook which includes this *Emotional Support Animal in Utica University Housing Policy*.

The student with a disability making the request for the ESA as an accommodation in Utica University Housing must be the owner of the animal. The student-owner making the request for an ESA in Utica University Housing must cooperate with OLS in a timely manner in providing all information needed by OLS to determine whether the requested accommodation is necessary.

The OLS is responsible for evaluating whether to grant or deny requests for an ESA in Utica University Housing as an accommodation due to a disability. In evaluating the request, OLS may consult with the Housing Accommodation Review Team (including, but not limited to, Office of Student Living and Campus Engagement, Student Health & Wellness Center, Counseling Center) to determine whether the requested accommodation is necessary and reasonable.

Section One:

Process for requesting to have an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) in Utica University Housing as an accommodation for a disability

An animal that is an emotional support animal is neither a pet nor a service animal.

No animal requested as an ESA may be brought in to Utica University Housing without prior written approval from the OLS. The OLS will accept and consider requests for an ESA as an accommodation for a disability at any time. However,

- for a student with a disability who does not currently live in Utica Housing, if the request for an ESA accommodation is made fewer than 90 business days before the student has authorization to move into Utica Housing, the OLS cannot guarantee that Utica University will be able to meet the student's accommodation needs during the first semester or term of occupancy.
- If the request for the accommodation arises when a student with a disability already resides in Utica Housing, he/she should contact the OLS as soon as possible to begin

³ Ibid.

the request process. The OLS cannot guarantee that Utica University will be able to meet the student's accommodation needs during the semester or term in which the request is made.

Once the student with a disability has contacted the OLS and provided all of the information and documents requested by the OLS, the OLS will begin the process of determining whether to grant or deny the approval for the student to have an ESA as an accommodation in Utica University Housing.

Utica University housing is unique in several aspects including the mandatory assignment of roommates for many of our students, in particular first year students, and the mandate that students must share a room or suite depending on the total number of students and the size of student groupings being housed. In order for an ESA to be determined an appropriate accommodation for a student with a disability in Utica University Housing:

- the ESA must be necessary to afford the student an equal opportunity to use and enjoy Utica University Housing
- there must be a clearly delineated connection, corroborated by a reliable third party, between the student's disability and the manner in which the animal provides emotional support for the disability. A reliable third party is someone who is familiar with the individual's disability and the necessity for the requested accommodation (e.g. doctor, therapist, other medical professional).
- the specific animal's presence in Utica University Housing as an accommodation must be reasonable

When evaluating each request for an ESA as an accommodation for a student with a disability, the OLS may consult with the Housing Accommodation Review Team (including, but not limited to, Office of Student Living, Student Health and Wellness Center, Counseling Center) to determine whether the requested accommodation is necessary and reasonable. During the consulting process of evaluating each request for an ESA, the OLS will maintain the confidentiality of the information or documentation disclosed by the student in connection with the request to the greatest extent possible.

Utica University may consider the following factors, among others listed in the OLS Student Handbook, as evidence in determining whether the presence of an animal as an ESA is reasonable or in the making of a housing assignment for a student with an ESA approved as an accommodation:

- Is the request for an ESA an integral component of a treatment plan for the disability in question;
- The size of the animal – is it too large for available assigned housing space;
- The animal's presence - would it force another student from housing (e.g. serious allergies);
- The animal's presence – would it otherwise violate other students' right to peace and quiet enjoyment;
- Is the animal housebroken or litter box trained;
- Is the animal able to remain healthy while living in close confinement for extended periods of time;
- Is the animal able to live in the residential community in a reasonable manner;
- Are the animal's vaccinations, medical records, and licensing up-to-date;

- Does the animal currently pose or has it posed in the past a direct threat to the student or others such as aggressive behavior towards or injuring the student or others;
- Does the animal cause or has it caused excessive damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear.

A request for an ESA may be denied as unreasonable if the presence of the animal: (1) imposes an undue financial and/or administrative burden; (2) fundamentally alters Utica University housing policies; (3) poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or would cause substantial property damage to the property of others, including University property; and/or (4) is otherwise unreasonable to the operation of Utica University.

Section Two

Approval or Denial of the accommodation request for an ESA in Utica University Housing

When the accommodation request is approved:

- If the OLS determines that a requested accommodation for an ESA in Utica University Housing is necessary and is not unreasonable, it will notify the student-owner by email to the student-owner's Utica University email address, within seven (7) business days of its determination. The email will advise the student-owner of the approval decision and instruct the student-owner to call the OLS to schedule an appointment with the OLS Director or Assistant Director. At that appointment, the Director or Assistant Director will define the implementation of the accommodation and set an authorization date for the approved ESA to be brought in to Utica University Housing.
- The approval for an ESA applies only to the specific animal that was authorized by the OLS. The approval is not transferable to any other animal.
- The presence of an ESA will be authorized only within the Utica Housing facilities to which the student-owner is assigned. An ESA is not permitted in other areas of the University (e.g. dining facilities, libraries, academic buildings, athletic buildings and facilities, classrooms labs, etc.).

When the accommodation request is denied:

- If the OLS determines that a requested accommodation for an ESA in Utica University Housing is either not necessary or is unreasonable, it will notify the student-owner by email to the student-owner's Utica University email address. The email will advise the student-owner of the denial decision and the reasons for the denial. The email will also instruct the student-owner to call the OLS to schedule an appointment with the OLS Director or Assistant Director. At that appointment, the Director or Assistant Director will answer any questions about the process of deciding the denial decision and discuss any suggestions the student may have for alternative accommodation options to meet his or her disability-related needs. The Director or Assistant Director will also advise the student of the right to appeal the decision, and the procedures for that appeals process.

All appeals are reviewed by the Vice President for Enrollment and the Student Experience, in consultation, as warranted, with the University's ADA/Section 504 Compliance Officer.

- If the appeal is approved, the Vice President's Office will notify the student-owner by email to the student-owner's Utica University email address, within seven (7) business days of its determination. The email will advise the student-owner of the approval decision, and instruct the student-owner to contact the OLS to confirm an authorization date for the approved ESA to be brought in to Utica University Housing.
- If the appeal is denied, the Vice President's Office will notify the student-owner by email to the student-owner's Utica University email address, within seven (7) business days of its determination. The email will advise the student-owner of the denial decision and the reasons for the denial.

Section Three

Student-Owner's Responsibilities for the approved Emotional Support Animal

When an accommodation for a student-owner to have a specific Emotional Support Animal as an accommodation is approved, the student-owner will be solely responsible for the custody and care of the ESA and must abide by the following requirements:

1. An approval for an ESA is limited to a specific animal. Approval is not transferable from one animal to another. To replace an approved ESA, the new animal must be necessary because of the student-owner's disability and the student-owner must follow the procedures detailed in the OLS Student Handbook when requesting a different animal.
2. The student-owner must submit a health statement, including dates of any necessary vaccinations, from a licensed veterinarian dated within three months prior to submitting the health statement. The OLS will provide the student with an Information Guidelines document to submit to the veterinarian to assist him or her in writing the health statement. The student-owner must provide the health statement to the OLS not later than 5 business days prior to the date on which the student-owner has been authorized to bring the ESA in to Utica University Housing. An ESA will be refused entry into Utica University Housing if the OLS has not received the health statement from the student-owner by that date.
3. The student-owner must abide by current city, county, and state ordinances, laws, and/or regulations pertaining to licensing, vaccination, and other requirements for animals. It is the owner's responsibility to know and understand these ordinances, laws, and regulations. The University has the right to require documentation of compliance with such ordinances, laws, and/or regulations. The University reserves the right to request documentation showing that the ESA has been licensed as required.
4. The student-owner is solely responsible for ensuring that the ESA is contained in an appropriate enclosure when the student-owner is not present in the residence room during the day due to attending classes or other activities.
5. The student-owner will be solely responsible for the custody and care of the ESA. If the student-owner will be absent from Utica University Housing overnight or longer, the student-owner is responsible for removing the ESA from Utica University Housing for the duration of the absence.
6. The ESA must be under the dominion and control of the student-owner at all times. The student-owner shall not permit the ESA to go loose or run at large. If an ESA is found running at large, the animal is subject to capture, confinement, and

- removal to an animal shelter. Any expenses billed by the animal shelter will be the responsibility of the student-owner.
7. The student-owner is required to clean up after and properly dispose of the ESA's waste in a safe and sanitary manner as determined by the Office of Student Living. When needed for the animal, the student-owner must use the animal relief areas designated by the Office of Student Living.
 8. The student-owner is required to ensure the animal is well cared for at all times. Any evidence of mistreatment, neglect, or abuse by the student-owner or any other person may result in immediate removal of the ESA to an animal shelter and/or student conduct discipline charges for the owner and any other culpable individuals. Any expenses billed by the animal shelter will be the responsibility of the student-owner.
 9. Utica University will not ask for or require a student-owner to pay a fee or surcharge for an approved ESA.
 10. A student-owner may be charged for any damage caused by his or her approved ESA beyond reasonable wear and tear (as determined by Student Living policies) to the same extent that it charges other students for damages beyond reasonable wear and tear.
 11. The student-owner's living space in Utica University Housing may also be inspected for fleas, ticks, or other pests if necessary as part of the University's standard or routine inspections. If fleas, ticks, or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a University-approved pest control service. The student-owner will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment above and beyond standard pest management in the residence halls. The University shall have the right to bill the student-owner's account for unmet obligations under this provision.
 12. The student-owner must fully cooperate with University personnel with regard to meeting the terms of this policy and developing procedures for care of the ESA (e.g. cleaning the animal, feeding/watering the animal, designating an outdoor relief area, disposing of feces, etc.).
 13. The student-owner agrees to abide by all equally applicable residential policies that are unrelated to the student's disability such as assuring that the ESA does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for students and staff who reside there.
 14. Requests for ESAs must be submitted each year, they do not carry forward. An ESA will be allowed in Utica University Housing only as long as it is necessary because of the student-owner's disability. The student-owner must notify the Office of Learning Services in writing if the ESA is no longer needed or is no longer in residence.
 15. Utica University personnel shall **not** be required to provide care or food for any ESA including, but not limited to, removing the animal during emergency evacuation for events such as a fire alarm. Emergency response personnel will determine whether to remove the animal and may not be held responsible for the care, damage to, or loss of the animal.
 16. The student-owner must sign an acknowledgment form to confirm his or her understanding that the Office of Learning Services will disclose information regarding the request for and presence of the Emotional Support Animal to those individuals who may be impacted by the presence of the animal including, but not limited to, Student Living personnel and potential and/or actual

roommate(s)/suite(s)/neighbor(s). Such information shall be limited to information related to the animal and shall not include information related to the student-owner's disability.

Section Four

Removal of the Emotional Support Animal from Utica University Housing

The University may require the student-owner to remove the ESA from Utica University Housing if:

- the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or causes substantial property damage to the property of others;
- the animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of a University program;
- the student-owner does not comply with the student-owner's responsibilities set forth in this document; or
- the animal or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference within the Utica University Housing or community.

The University will base such determinations upon the consideration of the behavior of the particular animal at issue, and not on speculation or fear about the harm or damages an animal may cause. Any removal of the animal will be done in consultation with the Office of Learning Services and may be appealed to the Vice President of Enrollment and the Student Experience.

Should the ESA be removed from the premises for any reason, the student-owner is expected to fulfill his or her housing obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

Student Grievance Procedures

If a disagreement arises concerning specific accommodation requests, the provision of academic accommodations, or administrative procedures, the student should first confer with the Director of Learning Services. If the student then desires a formal process of conflict resolution, he or she should follow the “Student Complaint Process” found on the Utica University website at:

<https://www.utica.edu/student-complaint-process>

Utica University Student Support Services and Resources

In addition to the Office of Learning Services, there are many support services and resources available for students at Utica College. Students have the opportunity to collaborate with an extensive network of professionals and offices throughout the campus, all of which are committed to their success. The personnel in the Office of Learning Services assist each student to build a network of these resources that is appropriate for his or her individual needs. In this way, we encourage students to be the architects of their own success.

Center for Student Success:

Location: 115 Hubbard Hall Telephone: (315) 223-2555

The mission of the Center for Student Success is to empower students with the skills and abilities to direct and govern their learning throughout their lives by teaching cognitive strategies and behaviors, facilitating maturity through the development of personal insight, fostering engagement between students and faculty, and ensuring that programs and services of the College are student centered and user friendly.

Success Coaches:

Success coaches are professional staff members who provide academic coaching, registration, and support services to all students. They manage the University's academic alert system, which regulates academic intervention and determines what students need assistance; and collaborates with faculty on issues involving retention and success for students.

Health & Wellness Center

Wellnow Urgent Care – located in Strebel 204. Provides immediate health care support to all students and campus employees.

Counseling Services Office:

Counseling Services provides individual counseling and support services for students. Referrals and other resources can be found on their webpage at: hwc@utica.edu

Tutorial Services:

These services are provided to all Utica University students. Primary tutoring center is housed in the Library Learning Commons. Tutorial services are coordinated by the Director, Kat Savino, who facilitates both the person-to-person peer tutoring program and the **ThinkingStorm** online tutoring program.

Opportunity Programs Office: Hubbard Hall 110

HEOP (Higher Education Opportunity Program):

HEOP is open to New York State residents regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or physical challenge. To be eligible for HEOP, prospective students must be academically underprepared, financially disadvantaged, and demonstrate potential for academic success. First-time HEOP freshmen are required to attend the five-week pre-freshman Summer Institute, designed to serve as a bridge between high school and college. Courses are offered in writing, mathematics, science, reading, and study skills. A staff of counselors and tutors is available to help students adjust to college life.

CSTEP (Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program):

CSTEP's goal is to increase the number of historically underrepresented minority and economically disadvantaged students enrolled in scientific, technological, health-related, and licensed professions.

Office of Student Financial Services:

Location: Cynkus Family Welcome Center: (315) 792-3179

Student Financial Services works closely with each student to ensure maximum access to a broad range of scholarships, grants, student loans, and other forms of aid; as well as answering questions regarding their student accounts, and helping to fulfill their financial obligations to the college.

Office of the Registrar:

Location: 122 White Hall Telephone: (315) 792-3393

The Registrar's office provides information on course offerings, final exam schedules, academic deadlines, how to request a copy of a student's transcript, and the academic calendar. The office staff provides student centered services on an individualized basis.

Office of Career Services:

Location: 120 White Hall Telephone: (315) 792-3087

The primary effort of Career Services is to teach students decision-making skills so that they can learn to set personal and career goals. This office serves as a resource for students and alumni by assisting with the career search process, resume writing and job interview preparation. Career skill building workshops, networking events and career fairs are held annually.

Academic Honesty at Utica University

The following information was drawn from documents developed by the Academic Standards Committee – Academic Integrity Page. It is included here because the issue of academic honesty is pertinent to *all* students (undergraduate to doctoral) for the entire time that they are enrolled at Utica University.

Utica University takes academic honesty very seriously. You should be aware of the following issues:

To quote from the college catalog, “cheating refers to both the giving and the receiving of unauthorized assistance in the taking of examinations or in the creation of assigned and/or graded class work.”

Plagiarism, a more complex concept, is the use of someone else’s words or ideas as your own. It doesn’t matter if the words or ideas came from a book, a journal article, a web site, or a personal letter; if they are not yours, you must cite them and give credit to the person to whom they belong. Plagiarism is a form of theft. Thus, lifting words, or ideas, from a source and passing them off as your own represents a serious offense to what the academic endeavor represents.

Poor paraphrasing of a source can also easily lead to plagiarism. If you copy a passage from a source, swapping out words here and there, you are guilty of plagiarism. “Paraphrasing” is summarizing and condensing in your own words and still requires an indication of your source. When writing papers or completing projects that involve research, you must also be cautious not to use material lifted from a web site verbatim without indicating that it is a quotation even if you cite the source in your works cited page. If the material is not in quotation marks, or set off in a block quote, it is plagiarism even if you cite the source somewhere in your work.

One can even plagiarize from oneself: You may not resubmit a paper you have already written for another course without consulting carefully with the instructors in question and determining whether they regard any overlap as appropriate.

The penalties for academic dishonesty will vary from situation to situation, but you must understand that our faculty are committed to preserving the integrity of the academic endeavor, that they are vigilant, and that they will impose serious penalties for any transgressions, including assigning the grade of “F for cheating.” Faculty are also committed to reporting all acts of academic dishonesty to the Office of Academic Affairs which keeps a record. More than one offense will result in the student being referred to the Academic Standards Committee which may impose sanctions over and above those imposed by faculty members, including the student’s dismissal from the college.

Some types of plagiarism may result from confusion about standards for academic honesty. Students are encouraged, throughout their careers at Utica University, to ask their professors if at any time they have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism (or academic dishonesty more broadly) or how to attribute sources correctly. Students: if you need help, do not cheat. Ask for help and your faculty will clarify their expectations where necessary and help you to meet College standards and conduct yourself with integrity.

Acknowledgements

The information in this Handbook was developed from Utica University documents and a variety of disability services resources.

I would like to thank the following colleagues for allowing me to adapt and adopt portions of their student manuals and disability related procedures. I appreciate the generous and gracious assistance they gave me as I was developing the various editions of handbook.

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Director of Learning Services
July 2026

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