

## Resident Advisor Position Description and Agreement

The Resident Advisor (RA) is a member of the Residential Life staff within the Student Housing & Residential Life (SHRL) department within the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services. RAs are student staff who under the supervision of a Residence Life Coordinator (RLC), serve as liaisons between SHRL and residents and work within a diverse community of students to foster student success in living-learning environments by building relationships, promoting engagement and leading with an ethic of care.

RA staff is located in all of the residence halls: Cougar Village I, Cougar Village II, Cougar Place, Moody Towers, and Quadrangle. There are also RAs serving in Bayou Oaks and University Lofts apartments. While RAs in the residence halls and the apartments serve in the same capacity, there may be slightly different timelines associated with the apartment RAs due to differences in the Residence Hall Service Agreement dates for the apartments. Apartment RAs should refer to their RLC for specific dates that apply to apartment staff.

### SECTION 1: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### 1. Administrative

- a. Exercise time management skills to successfully balance the RA position with academic and personal responsibilities.
- b. Facilitate the check in and check out processes, including intersession when needed.
- c. Manage keys and card access and keywatcher privileges appropriately.
- d. Attend and participate in weekly staff meetings and ongoing in-service training.
- e. Attend regularly scheduled one on one meetings with your supervisor to discuss community issues, staff development areas, problem solving, and performance feedback.
- f. Conduct community floor meetings at least once per semester.
- g. Attend all fall and spring training sessions. Complete all online training sessions by the appointed deadline.
- h. Submit maintenance work orders and provide follow-up as needed.
- i. Respond to all job related email and/or telephone communications within 24 hours, unless on approved time away from the hall.
- j. Check your mailbox in the hall office daily.
- k. Read and be responsible for all the information contained in training materials.
- l. Submit information, reports, logs and other paperwork as instructed.
- m. Distribute campus handouts/flyers and department materials in a timely manner.
- n. Create and maintain bulletin boards.
- o. Assist with implementation of department assessment efforts (for example, EBI surveys).
- p. Perform office hours in the hall office when needed.
- q. Perform other tasks as necessary or assigned.
- r. Tracking hours worked including, but not limited to, office hours, on-duty responsibilities, and meetings.

#### 2. Community Building

- a. Execute the Community Development Plan for your community.
- b. Be familiar with all assigned residents. Know residents' names and room numbers and have a working knowledge of any issues (positive or negative) that are affecting your residents.
- c. Utilize the coaching conversations to facilitate intentional interactions and document these interactions.
- d. Nurture student success and satisfaction through facilitated discussions, activities, and events that promote academic progress and achievement, connection to the University and resident personal and social development.
- e. Demonstrate approachability, availability and visibility. It is expected RAs walk their communities on a daily basis to connect with residents and report facilities concerns.
- f. Provide good customer service. Maintaining a positive, helpful attitude when interacting with others.

- g. Establish a professional working relationship with supervisors, other staff members, and members in organizations such as RHA, NRHH, Hall Council, FIRs and other student groups.
- h. Actively participate and encourages community participation in SHRL and University programs and activities. Supports the programming efforts sponsored by student organizations (including, but not limited to Faculty in Residence, Student Government Association, RHA, Hall Council, etc.) and campus partners.
- i. Create an inclusive environment that is welcoming to all students.
- j. Be familiar with and able to utilize University referral sources in order to assist residents.

### 3. Leadership

- a. Serve as a role model for other students, especially in reference to University of Houston policies as listed in the Code of Conduct.
- b. Strive to make a positive difference in the lives of residents.
- c. RAs may not be in the presence of any students who are violating policies unless they are intervening in the behavior. Even if an RA is not “participating” in the prohibited behavior, this bystander behavior is considered “Complicity” as listed in the Student Code of Conduct.
- d. Display a positive attitude about the RA position and support SHRL in philosophy and policy as stated in the Resource Guide and department expectations.
- e. Give and receive feedback in a professional manner. Proactively address concerns and issues.

### 4. Safety and Community Standards

- a. Awareness and adherence to University and SHRL policies and procedures, as well as their importance to maintaining a safe, secure, and educationally focused living environment
- b. Uphold community standards and address issues and concerns in timely manner. Mediate conflict between community members. Identify potential problems, informing their direct supervisor or RLC on Duty, and document situations.
- c. Interpret and explain Community Standards to residents, including rationale and background, helping residents understand the impact negative behavior can have on a community.
- d. Perform regular health and safety inspections of resident rooms as instructed by your supervisor.
- e. Assist with Fire Drills and Fire Life Safety Inspections.
- f. Submit all documentation of incidents and/or resident/guest behavior immediately after the incident.
- g. RAs are required to report life threatening situations, sexual misconduct policy violations, other alleged policy violations, and any potentially dangerous situations to their direct supervisor or RLC on Duty immediately.
- h. Participate in a rotating duty schedule that begins prior to the opening of campus and continues daily through the closing of campus including holidays and break periods. Duty schedules will vary according to the residential community.
- i. RAs are expected to maintain daily visibility on their floor and in their community. Extended leave requests need to be approved by their supervisor.
- j. Initially respond to any alleged violation of University policy, document situations, inform RLC on Duty or supervisor immediately, and provide follow up with residents involved.
- k. RAs will be prepared to deal with behavioral problems and emergencies with the support of professional staff as outlined in training.

## SECTION 2: QUALIFICATIONS

- 1. Must be students at the University of Houston.
- 2. Undergraduates must be enrolled and attending classes with a minimum of 12 units and a maximum of 18 units per semester. Graduate students must be enrolled in a minimum of 6 units per semester and a maximum of 12 units for the period of appointment
- 3. Good academic standing at UH must be demonstrated upon application and maintained throughout appointment. This means that Resident Advisors must have, and maintain, at the beginning and throughout the appointment, the following:
  - a. A cumulative and semester grade point average of 2.75
  - b. Prior semester grade point average of 2.75 (not including summer semester)
  - c. Have passed at least 12 units (or 6 graduate units) the semester prior to, and each semester throughout the appointment (academic work during summer sessions do not count towards Fall or Spring GPA or credits earned, but may impact Cumulative GPA).
  - d. Failure to maintain these academic requirements will result in RA grade probation and/or early termination from the position.

- e. New RAs failing to meet all criteria (semester and cumulative GPA; passed units) by the start of employment could result in termination prior to the appointment start date.
  - f. If an RA currently on staff or returning to staff is missing one of these 'good standing' criteria, it will result in probation for one semester. After which, if all three criteria are not met, the RAs position will be terminated.
  - g. If an RA currently on staff or returning to staff is missing two or more of these criteria at the end of an academic semester, it will result in the position being terminated, and that individual will not be eligible to apply for the position until all three criteria are met.
4. Have at least one (1) completed semester of on-campus living experience (or other approved "similar experience") prior to the employment start date.

### SECTION 3: POSITION REQUIREMENTS

1. Residence Hall RAs must be available for the academic year (fall and spring).
2. Re-appointment to the position is not guaranteed and is based upon performance throughout the appointment period. Incumbents interested in returning must participate in a re-appointment process and be recommended for re-appointment by their supervisor.
3. The RA position is a security sensitive position. All RAs are required to complete a background check prior to the start of employment.
  - a. Results of the background check will be reviewed, and may prompt a review of the candidate's appropriateness for the position, or cause the revocation of the RA position offer.
  - b. The criminal background check form requires general personal information as well as all previous U.S. addresses since the age of 17. The form is submitted to the UH Human Resources Department, then to UHPD for the background check, which usually takes 1-2 weeks to complete.
4. UH Session IV summer school classes and/or other external courses that last through mid-August typically conflict with the training schedule and as training is required.
5. Failure to complete all or part of fall or spring training sessions will be cause for employment review and probable termination.
6. Resident Advisors must have a signed Residence Halls Service Agreement, meet all requirements of living on campus as determined by SHRL and maintain on campus residency in an assigned room throughout the term of employment.
7. RAs need to check and respond to e-mail, phone voicemail, and staff mailbox daily. RA's UH e-mail addresses will be published and made available to the residents enabling them to contact RAs when necessary. RAs private phone numbers will be made available to only Student Housing and Residential Life staff for emergency purposes.
8. RAs are responsible for reading, understanding and adhering to all training materials, University of Houston policies, Student Housing and Residence Life policies and procedures, and any additional assigned literature, in addition to seeking clarification when necessary.
9. RAs are responsible for completing all required training. Failure to complete this training by the deadline may result in position termination.
10. Must be in "Good Standing" with SHRL and the University (Conduct Status with the Dean of Students Office, as well as financially and academically).
11. RA rooms are assigned specifically to meet the needs of the community. In the event the RA is terminated from the position, voluntarily or otherwise, the RA will be required to move into another room/suite/apartment outside of their area/complex.
12. Must be available to be on duty during holiday and break periods when the University is closed (for example: Thanksgiving and Spring Breaks, Winter Break, etc.)
13. Required events fully participate in
  - a. Fall and Spring RA training programs/sessions
    - i. Fall training is typically two weeks before classes start; Spring Training is typically the week prior to classes beginning
  - b. Assists in the selection of the RA Staff by participating in RA Interviews and Group Process
  - c. RA's are also required to work/attend the following events: Frontier Fiesta, Family Weekend, Cougar Preview, Weeks of Welcome Events
14. In addition to the required special event participation, weekly responsibilities include (Estimated)
  - a. Weekly staff meetings (approximately 1.5 hours)
  - b. One-on-one supervisor meetings (approximately 0.5 hours)
  - c. RA programs, RHA and Hall Council events, other programming (approximately 3 hours)
  - d. Interacting with residents on floor, one-on one and in groups (approximately 5 hours)
  - e. On-duty responsibilities (approximately 4-7 hours)

- i. On-duty hours are defined as the time it takes to complete required rounds and respond to incidents.
  - f. Office hours or other administrative duties (0-4 hours) when needed (for example: check in/check out, health and safety checks)
- 15. Physical Activities and Requirements essential to the position include:
  - a. Climbing: Ascending or descending stairs, using feet and legs and/or hands and arms.
  - b. Talking: Expressing or exchanging ideas by means of the spoken word; those activities where detailed or important spoken instructions must be conveyed to other workers accurately, loudly, or quickly.
  - c. Hearing: Perceiving the nature of sounds at normal speaking levels with or without correction, and having the ability to receive detailed information through oral communication.
  - d. Visual Acuity: The worker is required to have close visual acuity to perform an activity such as: preparing and analyzing data and figures; viewing a computer terminal; extensive reading; visual inspection involving small defects and small parts
- 16. The Resident Advisor Commitment to Confidentiality
  - a. Maintain confidentiality of residents' records and other sensitive information.
  - b. Refrain from gossip or negative comments about others.
  - c. No personal information (including, but not limited to: identity, assignment, address, contact information, conduct history, financial records, etc.) shall be revealed, unless that individual provides written documentation authorizing the disclosure of that information and a supervisor has approved the disclosure.
  - d. When an individual waives confidentiality, staff or student members must exercise utmost caution not to exceed the parameters of the waiver. Any doubt regarding disclosure must always be resolved in favor of confidentiality.
  - e. Any breach of confidentiality is a serious matter and may be cause for removal as a staff member from the position.

#### **SECTION 4: COMMITMENTS BEYOND THE RA POSITION**

1. The RA position is a maximum average of 20 hour per week commitment with the expectation that the majority of this time will be spent directly interacting with residents.
2. UH SAM. No. 02.A.34 applies to this position. Specifically, section 2.6 limits student employment to 20 hours per week during the academic year. This means that RAs are not permitted to have additional student employment on campus.
3. There is an expectation the RA position is to be the principal non-academic activity for the student employee.
4. A full academic course load and the RA position is a significant time commitment. To be a successful student and then a successful RA, additional time commitments should be carefully considered.
  - a. If choosing to work a job outside the University, that position should be limited to 10 hours per week.
    - i. The RA position commitments will not be scheduled around outside employment.

#### **SECTION 5: COMPENSATION**

This position is contracted through Student Housing and Residential Life with the following compensation:

1. RAs are provided one room space for the duration of appointment (space to be assigned based upon community needs and availability). It is expected RAs live in their assigned space throughout the duration of the position.
2. RAs shall receive a compensation package that includes a room (single room where available), a monthly salary of approximately \$100 per month and a meal plan.
  - a. Compensation in the form of housing and meal plan is excluded from income subject to taxes as long as your position requires you live on the premises. Housing is furnished for the convenience of the University and for a substantial non-compensatory business reason, and it is a condition of employment necessitated by the proper performance of duties (SAM 03.D.06).
  - b. Please note that SHRL is required to submit your RA housing rent and meal plan compensation information to Financial Aid. Please consult with the Financial Aid Office regarding the impact that this position may have on your financial aid award.
  - c. The monthly salary is taxable income.
3. Meal Plans are available only when cafeteria facilities are open. When on-campus dining options are closed, the department will not be responsible for providing meals for the staff. Cougar Cash supplied with the staff meal plan may be used to purchase food items from the campus convenience stores prior to their closing or at other venues which accept Cougar Cash. The meal plan compensation is provided to staff members for the purpose of building relationships with residents in the dining halls during the academic year.

#### **SECTION 6: TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

1. Upon termination of the position, all necessary paperwork must be completed.

2. If an RA chooses to resign, he/she will write a letter of resignation and give it to his/her supervisor.
3. Failure to meet the requirements and expectations as outlined in this document, training, and directives from supervisors may result in employment action, up to and including termination.
4. Should an RA's position be terminated (by the department or RA) prior to the end of the period of employment, that individual will be relocated at their expense to another location outside of the staff area for which they were on duty.
5. Upon termination date, rent, monthly stipend and meal plan will be prorated.
  - a. RAs who resign or are terminated from the position are subject to penalties associated with the departmental purchase of a meal plan. Meal plans are non-transferable, as such; resignation or termination of the position may result in the former employee being charged the remaining prorated amount of their meal plan.
  - b. In the case a former employee resigns or is terminated from the position and chooses to live off campus, the former employee may be subject to housing penalties associated with breaking the Residence Halls Service Agreement.
6. Any Resident Advisor can be terminated for violation of University of Houston or Student Housing and Residence Life policy or public law at any time deemed necessary.
7. Upon termination:
  - a. It is the RAs responsibility to meet with their direct supervisor to determine an appropriate housing re-assignment and to schedule an appointment to return RA supplies/materials and check out of their current assignment.
  - b. RAs also are financially responsible for any unreturned items and, if applicable, an improper check out fee – charges will be posted to the students account.
8. If an RA is removed from his/her position, he/she has the opportunity to appeal the decision to the Associate Director of Residential Life in writing within two business days of the termination.

**My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the responsibilities of my assignment as a Resident Advisor:**

- I accept the duties of the position and will perform them as outlined.
- From time to time, position descriptions may change. If this occurs, RAs will be provided notice in writing of these changes.
- I agree to accept additional duties as directed in training or meetings or by my direct supervisor, not explicitly listed in this document.
- If I have any individual needs or accommodations that would restrict me from performing any part of the RA duties, I have already requested these needs in writing with my direct supervisor for the upcoming year.
- I understand that as an RA, I may be moved or reassigned to another residence hall at the discretion of the Residence Life Coordinator.

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Resident Advisor Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Resident Advisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Residence Life Coordinator Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Residence Life Coordinator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date