



◆ Division of Student Affairs ◆ Residential Life ◆

RESIDENT ASSISTANT
Position Description: 9 Month and Apartments
2009-2010

POSITION SUMMARY

The Resident Assistant (RA) is an integral part of the University of Connecticut and Residential Life. The primary purpose of the Resident Assistant is to support the educational and personal goals of students within the community. A Resident Assistant is a student leader who must be conscientious, honest, courteous, and professional at all times. The RA must show respect for persons of all backgrounds, including but not limited to ethnicity, sexual orientation, interests, and abilities. A Resident Assistant must present themselves as a positive role model and must be knowledgeable about, enforce, and personally abide by all university policies and procedures, as well as federal and state laws.

The Resident Assistant plays a key role in the development of community in on-campus housing. The RA plays an active role in the educational, social, and cultural development of the student outside of the classroom, leads the effort to promote a positive living environment in on-campus housing, addresses issues of student conduct, and provides programmatic opportunities. The Resident Assistant is responsible for an area of approximately 30-70 resident students. Specific scope of responsibilities varies depending on conditions and assignment. The RA serves on a staff team of 3-24 RAs and is supervised by an Assistant Residence Hall Director, Hall Director or Community Director.

POSITION QUALIFICATIONS

1. Candidates must be able to demonstrate:
 - An understanding of the needs of and interest in working with resident college students which includes a desire to help foster community.
 - An understanding of, sensitivity to, and willingness to live and work with a diverse student population.
 - A desire to serve as a resource to and provide assistance to students.
 - Experience working one-on-one and with groups.
 - An ability to communicate clearly and effectively.
 - A desire to work as part of a highly functioning team.
2. The Resident Assistant must be a successful student. It is important that students and current staff demonstrate their ability to maintain solid academic progress. To that end, students must have a 2.50 cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) in order to be eligible for an interview. The RA must maintain that cumulative GPA (2.50) throughout the term of employment as well. While a student's semester standing alone does not determine eligibility, a RA applicant must have earned sophomore status at the time of employment.
3. The role of the RA is deeply entrenched in ethical decision-making, and we expect our RAs to hold their residents accountable for ethical behavior and to uphold healthy community standards. Upholding the university's *Responsibilities of Community Life: The Student Code* and *The On Campus Housing Contract* are vital components of the RA position, and represent a bare minimum expectation for assuming a leadership role in the community. Students who are on University Probation at the time of application review are not eligible to interview. Students who were found responsible for any incidents in the current academic year may not be eligible to interview. Students with a judicial history will be subject to review.
4. To be eligible for consideration, students must be available for the entire employment period.
5. Students must meet the following Special Restrictions Regarding Work Eligibility:

International Students - Per U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services regulation, failure to comply with the following policy is a violation of the student's F-1 visa status that could ultimately result in removal from the United States.

 - During the fall and spring semesters, international students may not work more than twenty (20) hours per pay week, Friday through Thursday, in all jobs combined (including graduate assistantships).

- During intersession, spring break and summer, if the international student is eligible and intends to register for courses for the next semester, the student (maintaining F-1 visa status) may work full time, up to, but not more than, forty (40) hours per pay week, in all jobs combined.

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

I. Community Leadership and Development: Facilitating the creation of a shared living environment where floor residents come together to learn and grow as individuals and as part of the larger community.

A. Group Outreach

1. Organize and promote community development with a focus on maintaining an educational environment.
2. Assess student needs and provide activities and programs that encourage and support the academic, wellness, life skills, and cultural exploration learning, as well as promote the development of a positive community.
3. Confront and document inappropriate behavior to hold community members responsible for their actions. Ensure that residents are aware of the policies and procedures of the university's *Responsibilities of Community Life: The Student Code* and *The On Campus Housing Contract*.
4. Develop a community supportive and respectful of individual differences and rights of others.
5. Be available and approachable to residents.
6. Promote and maintain health and safety standards within the community.
7. Educate students in an effort to instill self-assistance in order to take responsibility for their community. These efforts include, but are not limited to: teaching students to submit work orders on-line, uphold community standards through assertive communication, and appropriately voicing their concerns or issues about their community.
8. Support community government/councils through active recruitment of residents, attending their meetings, events, and activities.
9. Participate in the student staff selection processes that may include helping to identify and recruit candidates, interview, and provide feedback on candidates.
10. Participate in interviewing candidates for other positions as requested and time allows.
11. RA assignments to learning communities, gender neutral, and transfer housing requires the RA to conduct their responsibilities in a specialized manner. Specific responsibilities and focus areas are noted in the section titled "Resident Assistant Responsibilities for Learning Communities, Gender Neutral, and Transfer Housing".
12. Perform other duties assigned.

B. Individual Outreach

1. Support and uphold university and Residential Life policies by personal example, or role modeling.
2. Ensure that information provided to residents is timely and accurate.
3. Provide the resources for and assist community members to resolve conflict. Work with the supervisor(s) to make appropriate referrals.
4. Understand the nature of and maintain confidentiality when handling community issues. This responsibility also includes appropriately notifying supervisors as outlined in "Expectations of Resident Assistants".
5. Perform other duties assigned.

II. The Student Development and Community Leader: Providing support to residents through shared resources and participation in department and university initiatives.

- A. Assist supervisor(s) with administrative duties including incident reports, maintenance requests, check-in and closing procedures, health and safety inspections, etc.
 - B. Attend and participate in pre-semester and in-service training sessions.
 - C. Be available to residents generally from 7:00 p.m.-7:00 a.m. throughout the week.
 - D. Participate in rotating weekend/weekday duty. All staff must remain on campus during designated required weekends. RAs may have up to five weekends off per semester with prior approval from the supervisor.
 - E. Attend all staff meetings as specified by supervisor(s).
 - F. Work cooperatively with complex dining, housekeeping, and maintenance staffs to facilitate and maintain community standards in conjunction with residents.
 - G. Complete specified reports and paperwork in a timely manner.
 - H. Be available during the official openings and remain through the official closings for all vacation and recess periods in order to assist appropriate staff in preparing the facilities. Specific duties will be delineated by the supervisor(s).
 - I. Provide office support as directed and monitor common space and facilities.
 - J. Perform other duties assigned.
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RESIDENT ASSISTANT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LEARNING COMMUNITIES, GENDER NEUTRAL, AND TRANSFER COMMUNITIES (where applicable)

Residential Life offers several special living arrangements based on academic or social interests that are designed to provide residents additional opportunities to learn and be involved through a specific interest or academic major. In addition to the responsibilities outlined previously, a Resident Assistant assigned to a learning community directs special attention to the programming and learning needs of the residents of the community. Since a balance of activities and self-governance in the residence hall contributes to a sense of community, RAs are responsible for actively assisting with continual assessment of programming needs and the successful execution of activities designed to further the community.

Each special housing area has unique characteristics, and the role of the RA may differ somewhat from area to area. Communication between the RA, the supervisor, residents, and the instructor or faculty sponsor (if applicable) is essential in determining goals and expectations and ultimately the success of each community.

I. Programming

- A. Work with the supervisor to provide relevant, informative, and educational programs.
- B. Under the supervision of the Hall Director, Community Director, or Assistant Hall Director, provide added learning experiences through the planning and facilitation of programs and functions that encourage student involvement around the community's focus. Special attention must be directed toward academic programs and events that promote the goals and philosophy of the community.
- C. Meet (at least) monthly with the supervisor and instructor or faculty sponsor, if applicable, to assess progress and develop programming ideas.
- D. Support other RA's programs by attending and encouraging student participation.

II. Collaboration With Other Faculty/Staff (if applicable)

- A. Work closely with the supervisor and instructor or faculty sponsor in developing programs, special events, and dining opportunities.
- B. Invite the instructor or faculty sponsor to hall and community programs.
- C. Communicate academic or interest updates to resident participants.
- D. Keep the instructor or faculty sponsor informed of community happenings on a regular basis.
- E. Reserve space in the dining hall for lunches and dinners with the instructor or faculty sponsor when appropriate.

III. Training

- A. Attend pre-semester and semester training as directed.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

- A. It is expected that the RA will make necessary arrangements to leave Wednesdays from 7:00-9:00 p.m. available for weekly staff meetings.
- B. The Resident Assistant must be available for the stipulated contract period as outlined in the appointment letter. The contract period is typically one full academic year. These contract dates include August and January pre-service training periods, opening and closing of the residential areas, designated 'required weekends', and applicable on-duty periods. Additional contract periods are based on job performance and will be reevaluated near the conclusion of each contract period. RAs will be notified of their status. Graduating Resident Assistants must be available for the closing of the residential areas.
- C. The Resident Assistant must be available for opening and closing periods and applicable on-duty periods during the stipulated contract period. These dates include the Thanksgiving and Spring Break periods and may also include, depending on assignment, Winter break, Summer Periods, August and January pre-service training periods.
- D. The department reserves the right to change the location of the RA's assignment if needed. Based on the need for student housing, RAs may be temporarily assigned a roommate. Depending on assignment, Resident Assistants will have an apartment mate and may be able to choose their apartment mate. Due to the special nature of this relationship, it is expected that RAs engage in discussions with their apartment mate about, but not limited to, the nature of their positions and other issues as outlined in *The Roommate Contract*. Residential Life encourages potential RAs to engage in this discussion at the time the RA selects their apartment mate. It is also expected that the RA will set up a meeting with the supervisor and the RA's apartment mate within the first semester of employment.
- E. During their first semester of employment, RAs cannot hold any academic commitment five (5) days/week (practicum, internships, co-op, student teaching, etc.).
- F. Students already employed within Residential Life must bear in mind a principle of no dual employment for two main reasons: giving students an opportunity to diversify their work experiences and distributing meager resources to eligible student workers equitably. This means that the RA will not usually be eligible for other employment within the department while employed as a RA.

- G. All requests for part-time work and co-curricular activities outside the position must be approved by the supervisor. Hours will be limited.
- H. A newly-hired RA is required to enroll in EPSY 3235, a 3-credit course during the first semester of employment. EPSY 3235 will enhance the RA's understanding of their role and provide a basis for understanding student development. Both undergraduate and graduate student RAs should carefully review their academic progress to ensure that the addition of this class will work in concert with the RA's required course of study. Graduate student RAs do not enroll in the course, but attend lecture and a discussion group, and complete a community development plan and journal entries.
- I. RAs must maintain a 2.50 cumulative Grade Point Average throughout the term of employment. Grades will be checked at the conclusion of each semester. Staff members on scholastic probation or subject to dismissal (as indicated by the Term GPA) may also be ineligible to continue in the position. Winter session and summer session(s) coursework will not be figured into the previous semester's grades for the purposes of maintaining the required grade point averages.
- J. The RA must be a full-time student enrolled at the Storrs Campus during the time of employment. It is recommended that an undergraduate RA carry no more than a normal course load as defined by the academic program (typically 15-17 credits). A graduate RA may carry no more than 12 credits per semester. Both undergraduate and graduate student RAs should carefully review their academic progress and required course load to ensure successful completion of the RA's program.
- K. The RA's performance will be periodically evaluated in keeping with the duties and responsibilities of the job description, the university's *Responsibilities of Community Life: The Student Code, The On Campus Housing Contract* and the RA's behavior in accordance with ethical guidelines and departmental expectations. Involvement in situations which demonstrate a lack of understanding of *The Student Code* may affect the staff member's ability to remain in the position. This holds true for any position for which the RA works while employed at the university, including summer and other recess periods.
- L. Residential Life provides the staff member with local telephone service so that the staff member is readily accessible to students and other members of the university community. The staff member's university provided telephone number will be published in the Residence Hall Staff Directory and will be available through the university switchboard. The staff member cannot request to have their phone number "blocked".

At the University of Connecticut, our commitment to excellence is complemented by our commitment to building a culturally diverse community. We actively encourage women, people with disabilities, and members of minority groups to apply.

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