RESIDENT ASSISTANT POSITION DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Resident Assistant (RA) – Office of Housing and Residence Life (HRL)
Reports To: Area Director (AD)
Supervises: N/A
Contract Date Range: Tuesday, August 1, 2018 to Friday, May 17, 2019

INTRODUCTION
Rutgers University - Newark residence facilities exist to provide an opportunity for students to extend their learning experiences beyond the classroom, library and laboratory. The Office of Housing & Residence Life attempts to create a group living environment in which each student is offered an opportunity to develop as an individual in an atmosphere which encourages emotional, intellectual and cultural growth as well as self-government. Additionally, the Office of Housing & Residence Life is committed to creating an environment which values and promotes an appreciation for diversity of identities, cultures and people.

Since an RA has the opportunity to work closely with students over an extended period of time, they are in the unique position of being able to positively influence student growth and development. RAs work to create a positive environment by fostering a sense of community within the residence halls, by providing help and assistance to students, and by working with students and staff to ensure the best possible operation of the residence halls.

QUALIFICATIONS
A. Personal qualities of maturity, self-reliance, motivation, initiative, responsibility, self-esteem, integrity, and open-mindedness.
B. Strong interpersonal skills.
C. Leadership potential.
D. Good conduct standing with the University and the Office of Housing & Residence Life (no current disciplinary probation or outstanding judicial standings).
E. GPA Requirements:
   o Undergraduate Level: 2.5 semester and 2.5 cumulative.
   o Graduate Level: 3.2 semester and 3.2 cumulative.
F. Be a full-time, matriculated, confirmed Rutgers University – Newark student. RAs are specifically required to make appropriate academic progress while they are employed by the Office of Housing and Residence Life.
G. Be at least of sophomore standing at the time the agreement becomes effective.
H. It is suggested that students have a personal cell phone for contact in case of emergency.
I. Prior housing/on-campus living experience is preferred, but not required.

PLEASE NOTE: Candidates for the RA position must meet qualifications detailed in “E” & “F” during the recruitment and selection period. For example, a candidate for Spring appointment must meet the GPA requirements at the end of the preceding Fall semester and a candidate for Fall appointment must meet the GPA requirements at the end of the preceding Spring semester.
TERMS OF AGREEMENT

A. Period of Agreement
1. The period of employment is for the entire academic year and includes dates for training and closing which occur prior to the start of the semester and after the end of semester.
2. An RA has the option to reapply to the position. Reappointment is contingent upon the staff member’s continued ability to meet all qualifications, successful completion of tasks, positive written evaluations and exhibition of growth in the position.
   • Returning staff members must be able to commit for the entire academic year.
   • Any staff member who is terminated prematurely from their contract may be held responsible for housing charges and fees while occupying their unit as declared by the Assistant Dean & Director of Residence Life.
3. RAs must report prior to the beginning of each semester to participate in all scheduled trainings and to assist with the check-in of residents. Similarly, RAs must remain in the halls after the end of each semester and until all assigned duties have been completed. Specific dates for arriving and departing are established on a year to year basis.
4. Many residence halls remain open for student use during non-academic periods; therefore, it is necessary to have staff present and on duty to handle emergency situations. Staff members agree to work on a rotating basis in order to provide emergency coverage while their assigned residence hall is open. Staff will be compensated with a meal allowance for each day they are on duty and Stonsby dining hall is closed.

B. Time Away
1. RAs are permitted to be away from campus ten nights during an academic semester on a non-cumulative basis. This time must be prearranged and approved by a supervisor.
   • A night away consists of an RA not being present in their assigned residence hall between 12:00 AM and 7:00 AM Sunday through Wednesday or between 1:00 AM and 7:00AM Thursday through Saturday.
   • Additional restrictions may be necessary for special weekends during the year.

C. Living Arrangements
1. For the period of employment, RAs must reside in University Housing.
2. The Office of Housing & Residence Life will make final building and floor assignments according to experience, abilities and departmental needs and objectives.
   • The Office of Housing & Residence Life has the right to re-assign an RA to another room/section/building at any time if the situation warrants. Prior consultation, if possible, will be attempted.
   • An RA is required to be present and maintain residence in their assigned residence hall seven days a week, unless using “time away” (see section B).

D. Remuneration
1. RAs receive housing, an allocation of Raider Dollars, and a book stipend each semester.

E. Time Commitment
1. Work Load
   • As a general guideline, RAs should anticipate a minimum of 25 hours per week of regularly scheduled responsibilities (e.g. time on floor, staff meetings, staff duty and other advisory responsibilities). The concentration of these hours will be during the evening. In addition to these responsibilities, RAs will also be required to complete other duties as assigned by any supervising officer (e.g. Dean, Director, Area Director, Grad Assistant, AAD, etc.)
Prior to mid-term and final exams each semester, RAs should expect to devote an increased amount of time to the position as student pressures become more apparent.

2. Course Load
   - RAs must be matriculated full-time Rutgers University – Newark students. Undergraduate students must carry no less than 12 and no more than 18 credit hours per semester, and graduate students no less than 6 and no more than 12 credit hours per semester.
   - Tuesday and Thursday evening classes (6:00 PM to 9:00 PM) must be approved by your supervisor.
   - Any requests for exception regarding evening courses and/or course load must be submitted in writing prior to the start of the semester to the supervisor and Assistant Dean & Director of Residence Life.

3. Additional Work and Extracurricular Activities
   - RAs must hold the RA position as a significant and primary responsibility. Holding outside positions is strongly discouraged; however, if an RA does wish to hold an outside position or commitment, that request must be submitted in writing to the appropriate supervisor. Permission to hold an outside commitment must be granted from the supervisor and confirmed by the supervisor and Assistant Dean & Director of Residence Life PRIOR to any outside commitment being made.
   - RAs must limit the outside commitments to 20 hours per week, and must be pre-approved by supervisors each semester.
   - "Outside Commitments" include but are not limited to part-time jobs, non-academic internships, involvement in student organizations and any other involvements not directly related to your course work.
   - RAs may not hold major campus office during the period of their agreement with the Office of Housing & Residence Life. This includes, any executive positions of a clubs or student organizations.

F. Academic Performance
   1. GPA Requirements
      - Undergraduate Level: 2.5 semester and 2.5 cumulative.
      - Graduate Level: 3.2 semester and 3.2 cumulative.
   2. Academic Progress
      - RAs are also required to make appropriate academic progress by completing and passing at least 12 credit hours (undergraduate level) per semester or 9 credit hours (graduate level) per semester.
   3. Academic Probation
      - Should an RA fail to maintain the above standards they may be placed on RA probation for a specific period of time if the credit hours or GPA are close to the requirement and supervisors are in agreement. During this time, a specific contract may be drawn up between the RA and the supervisor. After the probation period, if conditions of the contract have yet to be met, the RA may be removed from the position.
      - RAs may only be placed on academic probation once during their tenure with the Office of Housing and Residence Life; failure to meet academic standards a second time will result in termination.

G. Evaluation
   Several evaluations of RAs will take place throughout the year. These evaluations will be both formal and informal, and are designed to facilitate improvement in the RA's performance.
   1. Informal evaluation and feedback should be ongoing between the supervisor and the RA.
   2. Periodic, formal, written evaluation of the RA by their residents and their supervisor will take place during the Fall Semester.
• Failure to meet expectations of students and/or staff members may necessitate probation or termination from the RA position.

H. Termination of Agreement
1. If a supervisor is concerned about an RA not fulfilling their responsibilities and/or meeting the guidelines of the position description, they shall consult the Assistant Dean & Director of Residence Life regarding possible termination of the staff member.
2. The supervisor will call a one-on-one meeting to discuss the RA’s performance.
3. At this time, the RA will be given an opportunity to discuss the concern(s).
4. The supervisor will then follow-up providing a written summary of this one-on-one meeting to both the RA and Assistant Dean & Director of Residence Life.
5. If appropriate, action may be taken, which may include but is not limited to:
   • A written warning in the staff member’s file;
   • RA being placed on RA Probation. If, after this probationary period, the staff member has not demonstrated improved performance, actual termination may take place.
   • The RA will be notified in writing of their pending termination at least two weeks before actual dismissal. At the end of the two-week period, the RA’s responsibilities will be relinquished immediately and they will vacate their assigned living space.
     - If approved to remain in University Housing, the RA will be relocated to a space other than their present assignment.
     - The RA has the right to discuss this dismissal with the appropriate full-time staff.
6. Exceptions to these procedures would occur if there has been gross misconduct or negligence on the part of the RA. This would warrant immediate termination. In these cases, RAs will be given 24 hours to move or vacate, no two weeks of notice will be given.
7. Actions, which will most likely bring about termination of an RA:
   • Drinking while underage or with underage residents or guests while in the residence halls.
     Woodward is a dry building, meaning no alcohol is permitted in any residents or RA’s rooms.
   • Drinking while on duty or coming on duty in an intoxicated state.
   • Drinking or possessing alcohol in facilities designated as “alcohol free” even if the RA is of the legal drinking age. Any type of abuse of residents, guests, or other staff members.
   • Loss of master, sub-master or negligence (as determined by supervisor) with keys.
   • Possession and/or use of any drug; other than prescribed or over the counter medications.
   • Possession and/or use of a weapon or ammunition in the residence facilities.
8. Other possible serious performance problems:
   • Being aware that an illegal activity is taking place in the residence facility and not taking appropriate actions.
   • Insubordination or refusal of supervisor’s request.
   • Breaches of confidentiality/ Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
   • Withholding information from the appropriate individual on a staff or student issue.
   • Misuse of a master or sub-master key.
   • Violation of University or Residence Life Terms of Occupancy or other performance problems.
9. Should an RA at any time decide to resign, they will discuss this with the direct supervisor and will notify, in writing, the Office of Housing & Residence Life at least two weeks prior to their resignation.
PLEASE NOTE: The list of performance problems is not all-inclusive. An effort has been made to be as specific as possible about performance problems viewed as serious, however, it is possible that a staff member’s appointment could also be in jeopardy for a reason not stated above.

For RAs alleged to have violated Residence Life Judicial Policies and/or the Student Code of Conduct, the Office of Housing & Residence Life reserves the right to temporarily remove or relocate an RA from the residence and/or dining facility as well as suspend an RA from their duties pending an investigation and/or hearing when, in its sole discretion, the University deems it appropriate to do so.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Each RA working for the Office of Housing & Residence Life is expected to conduct their self maturely and to be attuned to the goals and objectives of the Residence Life program. The primary goal is the development of an environment conducive to the academic, personal, and cultural growth of students living in the residence halls. The following is a summary of the significant expectations for which RAs are responsible.

A. Community Development

Fostering a sense of community involves promoting a group experience, which encourages a sense of belonging in the Residence halls. In order to accomplish this, staffs are expected to organize a wide range of educational, cultural, recreational and social activities and contribute actively to them. Increasing a sense of community also includes encouraging residents to assume responsibilities for their actions. RAs are responsible for interpreting, explaining and enforcing Residence Life policies and procedures. In general, RAs responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Possess and express interest in each student assigned to your floor:
   - Regularly visit each resident and each room to initiate interaction. Weekly at minimum.
   - Know the name of each resident on the floor and some general information about them.
   - Serve as a liaison between your residents and administration.

2. Take an active role in programming:
   - Promote informal small group interactions on the floor.
   - Identify needs of the residents and coordinate developmental program(s) each semester based on these needs and upon the requirements set up by the department and supervisors.
   - Identify and utilize the skills of students on your floor (leadership, organization, promotional and interpersonal) for program development and implementation.

3. Enforce Residence Life policies and procedures:
   - Become familiar, and be able to explain all policies and procedures.
   - Respond to behavioral problems and emergencies effectively and efficiently in a calm and consistent manner.
   - Consult with your supervisor regarding appropriate methods to deal with concerns.
   - Record and communicate incidents in an accurate and timely manner.
   - Follow all University and Residence Life policies and procedures. RAs are students too.

B. Helping Skills

A vital function for RAs is serving in a helping relationship with the students on their floor. Helping involves caring about and being open to the needs of all people in the residence halls, being aware of their concerns and being perceived by them as receptive. Helping also involves staying well informed about the University and conveying appropriate information to the residents. Encouraging academic achievement is a third and important component of the helping function. In general, RAs responsibilities include but are not limited to:
1. Assist students in meeting their academic responsibilities:
   - Plan and implement programs that focus on study skills.
   - Familiarize oneself with students who are experiencing academic concerns and act on that information. Make appropriate referrals.
   - Familiarize oneself with resources for academic concerns and communicate with your supervisor.
2. Act as an information source:
   - Utilize referral techniques when appropriate.
   - Be familiar with University policies and procedures and available campus resources.
   - Maintain bulletin boards once a semester.
3. Develop and maintain helping relationships with students on your floor:
   - Be available to talk with students on a one-on-one basis.
   - Be aware of physical and psychological needs of residents.
   - Become familiar with all University counseling and referral resources.
   - Be an understanding listener without being judgmental.
   - Act as a resource and be aware when you need to refer students elsewhere.
   - Act as a mediator in roommate problems and disputes.

C. Administrative and Operational Duties

Working with students and staff to ensure the best possible operation of physical facilities is the third function of an RA. RAs work closely with the Office of Housing & Residence Life in coordinating administrative responsibilities such as check-in, room changes, occupancy reports, etc. In general, staff responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Provide for ways to develop the health and safety of the living environment:
   - Be on duty as required. Duty is assigned on a rotating basis.
   - Be aware of and carry out procedures for emergency situations including fire drills.
   - Assume duties as assigned for the residence halls under the direction of the supervisor.
   - RAs are not allowed to leave the premises during a natural disaster, unless prior arrangements were made beforehand and approved by your supervisor.
2. Fulfill Residence Life and Housing Office responsibilities:
   - Complete housing reports accurately and on time.
   - Assist with check-in and check-out procedures.
   - Sponsor floor meetings at the beginning of the academic year and in January for new residents to provide information as outlined during training.
   - Report maintenance problems and follow-up as necessary.
   - Facilitate room changes for students entering or leaving your floor.
   - Educate floor residents on proper ways to request work orders.
   - Assist in the RA selection process.
3. Improve your performance as an RA:
   - Attend and participate in all staff meetings and trainings. Staff Meetings will be held on Tuesday at 9:00 PM, schedules should accommodate weekly staff meetings.
   - Meet periodically with your supervisor in order to evaluate your performance and personal growth.
   - Develop a working relationship with other Office of Housing & Residence Life staff members.
   - Familiarize yourself with all areas in the manual for Residence Life staff.
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Being an RA provides many opportunities for personal growth. While the RA must assume the major responsibilities for personal development, they are provided with training, supervision and numerous opportunities for learning. To this end, RAs are expected and have the opportunity to do the following:

- RAs will attend and participate in on-going staff development training opportunities. They may be held several times each semester as deemed necessary. The Office of Housing & Residence Life will provide the staff development and training dates in advance but reserves the right to increase the number of staff development workshops and/or change the day and time of these sessions at any point throughout the year if deemed necessary.
- During regular discussions with supervisors about question or concerns, RAs should take notes to assist with performance.
- RAs are expected to challenge themselves, their fellow staff members and residents to do the same.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Each RA will support the Office of Housing & Residence Life’s commitment to promoting cultural and social diversity. They will not engage in any type of behavior which is, or perceived to be, discriminatory or offensive.
- Any Residence Life Staff Identification card issued to Residence Life Staff members remains the property of Rutgers University – Newark Housing & Residence Life and must be returned at the end of that individual’s period of employment.
- Occasionally, RAs are appointed during the summer, and the Office of Housing & Residence Life will determine the necessity for summer staff. Summer positions are, therefore, not automatic.
- RAs interested in serving in this leadership position during the following academic year must reapply, meet all appropriate qualifications and receive the enthusiastic endorsement of their current supervisor prior to being reappointed to the position. RAs that are reappointed will not necessarily receive the same placement from year to year.

CONCLUSION

The RA will carry out, accurately and punctually, all duties as described in this position description. The position description is not an all-inclusive statement of the responsibilities of the RA. Special circumstances may necessitate the assignment of additional responsibilities for a period of time.