

# **Resident Assistant Position Description**

## **DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW**

The core values of the Residential Living Office at Drexel University are social justice, community, citizenship and learning. Through effective management strategies we seek to engage students and staff in the complexity of citizenship, incorporate student learning into daily practice, be active facilitators of community and proponents of social justice.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

Full-time Drexel student  
Sophomore or above

## **POSITION TERM**

Typically 3 terms

## **COMPENSATION**

Full room and board remission, plus a small stipend

## **REPORTS TO**

Resident Director

## **POSITION OVERVIEW**

Resident Assistants (RAs) are staff members of the Residential Living Office (RLO) at Drexel University. Living in a residence hall is an essential part of student learning and engagement. The RA is critical to developing a community that fosters this experience. The RA works under the direction of the Resident Director (RD) of his or her building. Success of the residential population is dependent upon the performance and commitment of each RA in fulfilling his or her role and responsibilities.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Intrapersonal Responsibilities**

Self Awareness:

- Present a caring, genuine and approachable demeanor to facilitate communication and establish positive relationships with all residents, fellow staff members (including all levels of RLO), and other members of the University community.
- Use self analysis and review to continually improve performance as a RA.
- Maintain a positive and mature attitude.

Responsibility:

- Align priorities such that academics, co-op, and RA responsibilities are taken into consideration before other commitments.
- Attend all scheduled training and staff meetings. This includes: fall training, in-service training (on-going), building and staff development, all regularly scheduled department-wide, staff and one-on-one meetings (with supervisor and/or designee).
- Participate in the opening and closing of residence halls at break periods (Thanksgiving, winter break, spring break and the end of the year). Complete all opening and closing responsibilities as assigned (including working prior to openings and following closings).
- Know and understand all RA employment policies including the "Action Steps for Improving Staff Job Performance" and "Termination Policy."

Teachability:

- Actively participate in giving and receiving feedback with your supervisor and peer staff.
- Seek personal challenge and growth.

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### **Responsibilities relating to Cognitive Complexity**

#### Ethics:

- Know and observe all University policies and regulations (this includes RLO policies and regulations).
- Be a role model in the residential community.

#### Advocacy:

- Support RLO and University missions, policies, practice, decisions, and personnel in a positive manner.
- Be aware of, support and advocate for residents' needs and concerns.
- Use the chain of command in RLO to advocate for residents and staff.

#### Decision Making:

- Use RLO resources (RD, RAs, Staff Manual, etc.) to make informed decisions.

### **Interpersonal Responsibilities**

#### Communication Skills:

- Be aware of the progress of residents through regular contact.
- Be available to residents as much as possible. The RD of the building will help set appropriate limits and expectations.
- Assist in resolving resident conflicts. Mediate roommate conflicts and assist in the room change process as instructed by the RD.
- Use basic communication skills (active listening, reflective questioning, etc.) to develop relationships with residents.
- Use electronic communication appropriately and responsibly.

#### Mentoring:

- Advise and support residents through academic, personal, and social matters (within the limits of training and ability). Refer residents to appropriate University resources as needed.
- Utilize "teachable moments" with residential population.

#### Social Justice:

- Create an environment in which residents broaden their perspectives on social justice issues.
- Demonstrate an active commitment to diversity and multiculturalism.
- Develop a community that is welcoming and safe for all residents through interactions, language and events.
- Facilitate opportunities where residents actively engage in learning about one another and themselves.
- Support residents' exploration of commonalities and differences in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- The Residential Living Office does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion or other characteristics. Refrain from any behavior that contributes to such discrimination.

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## Community Development Responsibilities

### Building Community:

- Form an engaged community with and among your residents through individual relationships as well as facilitating connections between others.
- Plan events to develop the community of your area. Follow the guidelines and expectations set by the community development model and your RD.
- Participate and assist in the planning of hall government functions (elections, meetings, fundraising, large events).
- Submit online work requests as needed and keep the RD informed of physical emergencies.
- Encourage awareness among the residents of proper standards of care for the physical facility.
- Create and maintain educational and/or attractive bulletin board displays for the public areas of the building as directed by the community development model.
- Conduct regular meetings with residents to share information and build the community.
- Participate in New Student Days according to guidelines set by the Director.
- Specific requirements will be reviewed during fall training.

### Community Standards:

- Know and explain the rationale behind violations of community standards and other university policies and regulations.
- Encourage self-regulation in student conduct through the development of a floor community contract.
- Appropriately document and confront all problems, concerns, and violations of residence hall and/or university policies.
- Participate in scheduled on-duty responsibilities and be in the hall for additional hours as assigned by the RD. During duty you are required to be in the building, complete building rounds and to be available to respond to a range of situations (including, but not limited to: building emergencies, behavioral issues, facilities problems, covering the front desk, etc.).
- Assist with the maintenance of hall records (room condition reports, rosters, term audits, safety and sanitation inspections, etc.) and complete all assigned paperwork in a timely manner.
- Assist and be available at the front desk for two evening hours (as set by your supervisor and by the building specific needs) while on duty. During this time you should be available to students, monitor policy compliance, educate students on policies, and support all desk operations as needed.
- Assist with fire drills, fire alarms, and other emergency situations.
- Be responsible for the use and maintenance of all keys (including master, sub master, and room keys).

### Staff Community:

- Participate in departmental staff selection and evaluation processes.
- Support, promote, and participate in division-wide programs, activities, and initiatives. Staff may be asked to serve on departmental committees.
- Be an active and contributing staff member.
- Attend and participate in all staff meetings and development functions.
- Volunteer to help other staff members when your support is needed.
- Other duties as assigned by RD.

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## **VALUES OF OUR RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM**

We believe that the residential experience is based in relationship and learning. The following competencies have been identified as the foundation of the development of our student staff and their experiences as a Resident Assistant. These directly link to the principal values that drive the Residential Living Office and its educational curriculum in the halls.

It is expected that during your time on staff, you will grow and develop in your role as an RA. This growth is guided by and expected in the following competency areas.

### **INTRAPERSONAL COMPETENCY**

- Self Awareness - an understanding of one's self
- Responsibility - the power of taking responsibility for one's actions and choices
- Teachability - the ability to learn from every person and circumstance

### **COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY/CRITICAL THINKING**

- Ethics - Negotiating departmental standards and one's personal ethics
- Advocacy - Advocating for oneself and one's constituencies
- Decision Making - Making thoughtful, informed decisions

### **INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCY**

- Communication Skills - Interacting in meaningful ways with those around you.
- Mentoring - Using the moments available in a residential experience to help develop your peers.
- Diversity - An understanding of oneself in the context of one's community.

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

- Community Relationships - an ability to develop relationships among those around you.
- Community Standards - facilitating the understanding of how individuals affect a community.
- Staff Community - a commitment to the staff group as a support structure and place to learn

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### **STATEMENT ON RESIDENT ASSISTANT STANDARDS**

The Resident Assistant position requires adherence to a basic level of standards. These reflect the level of role modeling and responsibility that is required from Residential Living staff members in order to allow the entire team to be effective in its goals. In addition to the standards covered in the position description, employment policies, and those set by supervisors; Resident Assistants should meet the following expectations:

#### **General:**

- Be sincere, concerned, and interested in any student(s) who bring concerns to you.
- Treat all students impartially and consistently. Be cautious of shared affiliations, activities, etc., as they may lead to perceived and/or real favoritism.
- Provide an approachable and safe environment for all residents.
- There are many times when you will need to work with your RD (or the RD on duty) to make a decision or to manage a situation. Whenever there is doubt on the best strategy and most appropriate response, discuss the issue with your supervisor or the RD on duty.
- Be honest and have integrity in all aspects of your RA job performance.

#### **Loyalty to Employer:**

- Never intensify student complaints. If complaints are unjustified, you should address the concern while explaining the reasons and rationale behind the situation. If complaints are justified, get the facts and report them to your RD.
- Respect the chain of command. All concerns should be directed to your RD. It is not acceptable to take action beyond your immediate supervisor without first consulting with him or her.
- Be respectful of the Office of Residential Living, its staff and its policies. Do not criticize or undermine the office, any staff member, policy or program in front of residents. Concerns and feedback should be discussed respectfully and privately.

#### **Maintenance of Community Standards:**

- Be consistent and fully comply with all University and residential policies and procedures. RAs should strive to avoid even the appearance of improper behavior.
- Understand that you have responsibilities to the entire residential community. Do not disregard or disassociate yourself from problems or situations that you may encounter in other residence halls.
- Recognize the importance of role modeling full compliance with and respect for the University's alcohol policy.
- You should always be in full compliance of all University rules and regulations when on campus or at a college-related event. Please remember that your behavior off campus will also impact your effectiveness as a RA, especially when you are in the presence of Drexel residential students.

#### **Limits and Boundaries:**

- Know that your primary role is that of student; therefore, all RAs must maintain a full-time credit load or co-op position. After your student responsibilities, the RA position should be your first priority and any extracurricular commitments or additional employment must be approved by your RD.
- Remember, you are not a professional counselor and you should refer any situation that requires help beyond basic listening. If you are ever unsure of whether a referral is needed, you should consult with your supervisor.

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- Respect the authority your role carries and refrain from engaging in any exploitative relationship with a resident within your area of responsibility. If you have questions about appropriate relationship boundaries, consult with your RD.
- Residential Living staff members will be exposed to a great deal of private and potentially sensitive information through their position. It is essential that they maintain appropriate confidentiality of this information at all times. In addition, there will be times when information cannot be shared with you. Respect the standards of confidentiality the professional staff must maintain.