Resident Assistant Job Description 2019-2020
West Texas A&M University

POSITION: Resident Assistant (RA)
RESPONSIBLE TO: Area Coordinator/Residence Hall Director
TENURE: This is a one academic year position (fall/spring); candidates who have potential conflicts (i.e. graduation, student teaching or "block", study abroad) and cannot commit to the full year will not be considered; reappointment is dependent on job performance.

BENEFITS: Leadership development, diversity education, networking, time management skills, customer service skills, growth opportunities through unique projects, lasting friendships/relationships.

COMPENSATION: Each RA receives a private room (when available) at no cost; a $50.00 stipend paid four times each semester; and the 175 meal plan.

POSITION SUMMARY

Under direct supervision of Area Coordinators or Residence Hall Directors, the Resident Assistant (RA) is responsible for creating and maintaining a positive community within their residence halls with robust educational, social, and cultural opportunities. Additionally, the RA is responsible for utilizing an intrusive and intentional approach to develop one-on-one relationships with residents assigned to their area.

In order to accomplish this, RAs are expected to play a variety of constantly changing roles. Each RA must be flexible and creative in meeting the diverse needs of their residents by serving as a pseudo/para-counselor, advisor, community developer, educator, and mentor to students living in our residential community.

RAs are students selected on the basis of leadership, experience, scholarship, and the desire to help residents realize their full potential through self-development and community living. They are representatives of the Department of Residential Living and West Texas A&M University and are expected to act accordingly. They are responsible for acting as role models for residents. RAs use their own best judgment, maturity, and concern in daily interactions.

The Resident Assistant will be responsible for the development and enhancement of the community, as well as each individual resident under their purview. A chief concern of every staff member is to help each student achieve maximum adjustment to University life and to develop each resident's personal, social, and academic growth in both individual and group settings. The position will require that the RA supplement and complement the process of formal education by enhancing the quality of life in the community. The position will require that the RA be a known, visible, and an active resident within their given community area of responsibility and the entire facility as well. The basic expectations will include the maintenance of communications between the residents and department staff; the implementation of the policies, procedures, and regulations of Residential Living as well as those of the University; and participation in any phase of the operation of the facility as assigned by the Area Coordinator, Residence Hall Director, Associate Director, Senior Director or any of their representatives. The RA is expected to provide leadership to all residents and assist in the planning of educational, cultural, and social activities that will make the group living experience a success. The RA is to maintain confidentiality at all times and should never discuss any issues with anyone other than personnel having a professional need for the information.

QUALIFICATIONS

• Must have one full semester of college experience (post high-school) in order to apply.
• Preferably be a resident at least one semester prior to being employed.
• Must be a student in good standing at WTAMU (no conduct issues or holds).
• Must be able to commit to the position for a full academic year (August through May).
• Must be enrolled full time while employed – at least 12 credit hours per semester for undergraduates, and 9 credit hours for graduate students.
• Possess a 2.5 cumulative grade point average (GPA) prior to applying, as well as the semester prior to being employed; a 3.0 GPA is required for graduate students.
• Must receive a minimum of 2.5 GPA each semester while employed (3.0 GPA for graduate students). If minimum GPA is not achieved, the Associate Director of Residential Living will determine if
employment will continue the following semester. Should the staff member be allowed to retain employment but receive less than a 2.5 GPA a second time, they will be terminated.

• Due to time commitment and academic year length of commitment, RAs are not permitted to do clinicals, student teach, study abroad, or have other high-commitment academic or non-academic experiences during their RA experience. If you have any questions please ask prior to applying.

• Attend mandatory RA Training each semester (typically 2 weeks prior to the start of each semester); missing any portion of training is not permitted, unless it conflicts with WTAMU academic courses (at which point, you are required to work with your supervisor to create an alternate training schedule).

• Due to the sensitive nature of the position, you must successfully clear a criminal background check.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

• Respect for and belief in the fundamental worth and dignity of all individuals regardless of how their choices, values, ethics, etc. differ from your own

• Ability to gain confidence and respect of residents

• Administrative skills and ability to organize and balance responsibilities

• Initiative and creativity in programming and community development

• Possess a positive attitude about Residential Living and West Texas A&M University

• Growth mind-set: willingness to learn (in and outside the classroom), development of self and others by pushing your comfort zone and willingness to engage in thoughtful discussion, ability to learn from your mistakes, and receive and implement feedback received to better your performance

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

• On campus living is considered a part of the student's total educational experience at West Texas A&M University. To achieve desired educational experiences, the RA should work toward the following goals:
  o To foster an academic environment favorable to a successful scholastic career.
  o To aid residents in their transition from family to a broader social and educational community.
  o To assist in the development of social values, moral development, courtesy, cultural appreciation, and interpersonal relationships.
  o To promote proper habits for good mental and physical health.
  o To promote participation in democratic group government and the appropriate methods of initiating change.

• With this position comes a great deal of responsibility. These are not "8:00 to 5:00" jobs and we do not have the luxury of knowing when we may be needed.

• The RA serves as a role model; the very fact that they hold this position says to every student that the staff member possesses certain characteristics the University respects and considers important. Being a role model on campus, off campus, and anywhere a resident could see your behavior (this includes your online presence) is crucial.

• The RA must be instrumental in promoting the purpose and policies of the University and they serve as a vital link between the administration and students.

• Each RA must consider themselves to be a part of the overall University public relations program and should make every effort to favorably interpret the University (and therefore our department) to the public as they come in contact with current and prospective students and parents.

• This position requires a large commitment: weekly office hours (four hours per week) in their assigned community, hall programming, on-call responsibilities, and time spent in the living area with residents. Outside part-time jobs are undesirable and discouraged, but are permissible under certain provisions; the Area Coordinator/Residence Hall Director will handle individual situations.

• Participate in on-call responsibilities, which includes weekdays, weekends, holidays, and University break periods:
  o RAs rotate on-call coverage each weeknight with other hall staff; the on-call RA will also work an additional office hour in the evening.
  o Every other weekend, the RA will be expected to cover weekend office hours (four hours per day) and on-call responsibilities (typically Friday through Sunday). The on-call RA is required
to stay in the building throughout the weekend and have the duty phone with them when they are not at the hall desk; two one-hour breaks are permitted for lunch and dinner.

- On-call coverage during holiday and University break periods may be required.
- RAs are required to sign-up for and utilize a meal plan in order to provide higher visibility on campus, increase resident interaction, and to assist in monitoring University food service operations.
- The relationship existing between the Area Coordinators/Residence Hall Directors and the RA must be one of cooperation and helpfulness – tempered with loyalty, honesty, respect, and courtesy. The staff is directly responsible to the Area Coordinator/Residence Hall Director of their residence hall for the proper administration of their wing, unit, or floor.
- Establish and maintain good working relationships with maintenance and housekeeping personnel.
- The consumption of alcohol and/or impairing substances (legal or illegal) or being under the influence of such substances while serving in the capacity of a Resident Assistant (i.e. when you are on duty, working desk, writing an incident report) is unacceptable and may be cause for termination.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

2. KNOW YOUR RESIDENTS
- Become acquainted with all assigned residents, immediately establishing relationships with each one; RAs will utilize the Residential Education model for structured “intentional interactions” with residents.
- Gain respect of students by engaging them, their individual needs, and showing an invested interest in their success. The RA's first responsibility to their residents is one of helpfulness. In order to create an atmosphere of "helpfulness," the staff should not come across as a "disciplinarian" or "security/cop." Such an attitude destroys staff's ability to help when needed.
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters involving residents; information should always be shared with your supervisor and no one else (including other RAs), unless directed to do so.
- Assist all residents in knowing what is expected of them in relation to the group living situation and the reasons for these expectations.
- Initiate contact and on-going communication with each resident in assigned areas in order to personalize the University and to be generally aware of "how things are" for each resident. Counsel with students concerning personal, academic, social and financial problems, being constantly aware of personal limitations.
- Make referrals to appropriate departments or agencies (i.e. Counseling Services, Academic Advisor, Tutoring, Career Services, etc.) for those residents in need of specialized help.
- Assist in facilitating mediation and resolution of resident conflicts.
- Conduct wing, unit, or floor meetings as needed to keep residents informed.
- Encourage clean, neat, attractive rooms, hallways, and lounges to create welcoming environment for all residents.
- Consult with, or refer to, your supervisor any problems in regard to the residents.

3. KNOW AND ENFORCE UNIVERSITY RULES AND POLICIES
- Each staff member must be knowledgeable about community and University rules and regulations in order to appropriately explain and enforce them when confronting residents and visitors. Always refer discipline matters to your supervisor and other appropriate persons through the established procedure.
- Abide by and enforce all policies; this means that under no circumstances should you ignore the violation of a regulation or policy by a resident, nor violate rules or policies that residents are expected to follow.
- There will be situations where it is necessary for the RA to confront and document violations of University policy. Always be certain to explain "why" the policy exists (educating vs. policing).

4. PROGRAMMING AND SELF-GOVERNMENT
- Stimulate resident interest in programming and self-government through the Residential Education model. The staff is the key to engaging residents in programs, activities, and self-government.
- Provide opportunities for community development through programming; this will include Strengths-based programming. Specifically, staff is expected to provide unit, floor, or wing programming activities for their special groups; monies may be available for those activities.
- Assist with and inform residents of all residence hall projects and events (Hall Council, Residence Hall Association, and University activities).
5. OFFICE AND HALL OPERATIONS

- Assume responsibility for office duty on a rotational schedule established by your supervisor.
- Perform administrative responsibilities as designated by the Area Coordinator/Residence Hall Director.
- Handle all incoming office calls while on office duty in an appropriate, business-like fashion.
- Each RA is responsible for use and upkeep of community area bulletin boards; assist in keeping information on hall bulletin boards up-to-date at all times. Creativity should be used to make an area bulletin board a center of communication for all residents.
- Report needed repairs and maintenance requests to the Area Coordinator/Residence Hall Director so work orders may be submitted in a timely manner.
- Assist in the opening and closing of your assigned areas and the entire hall throughout the year (including holidays) by physically checking rooms for completed checklist items. You are expected to remain in the halls at the end of each semester until the halls are clear and the Area Coordinator/Hall Director has released you from duty.
- Assist with the organization and implementation of hall safety programs and drills as determined by the Area Coordinator/Residence Hall Director.
- Assist with evacuation procedures in any emergency as required by the Area Coordinator/Residence Hall Director, law enforcement agencies, or civil defense.
- Use master keys in a responsible manner, follow the prescribed procedures for these keys, and do not allow master keys to be used out of your possession. Misuse or loss of keys may result in replacement charges, disciplinary action by the Area Coordinator (or higher), and/or termination of employment.
- Complete any reasonable task or procedure deemed necessary by your supervisor, Associate Director, or the Senior Director of Residential Living.

6. TRAINING

- Participate in and/or assist with all RA Training sessions as designated by the Area Coordinator/Residence Hall Director, and the Associate Director of Residential Living; RA Training typically occurs two weeks prior to the start of each semester.
- Attend all weekly staff meetings and special meetings as called by the Area Coordinator/Residence Hall Director, or Associate Director of Residential Living.

PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS

Resident Assistants should always:

- Maintain a positive attitude about the University, department, job responsibilities, the Area Coordinators/Residence Hall Directors, all other hall staff (from all residence halls), and the entire student services staff.
  - If you have concerns, you should raise those in a private, professional manner to your immediate supervisor first; then any unresolved concerns should be brought to their supervisor.
- Maintain professional and personal confidences (unless required by department policy or law to report), whether these are between the residence hall staff and residents, or other members of your residence hall staff, all housing staff, etc.
- When possible, discourage and avoid engagement in gossip and rumors.
- Represent the University in a professional manner at all University functions, whether on or off campus.
- Wear appropriate attire at the hall desk, as designated by the Area Coordinator/Residence Hall Director. Refrain from wearing other school attire at desk.

EVALUATION AND RE-APPOINTMENT

Details of the evaluation/re-appointment process for residence hall staff are explained more fully in the Resident Assistant Work Agreement. However, the staff should be aware that evaluation and re-appointment will occur in regard to the following aspects:

- Attitude toward residents and relationships established.
- Attitude toward the Area Coordinator/Residence Hall Director and other housing staff, including all staff members.
- Professionalism (i.e. confidentiality, staff and student services relations, office relations, etc.)
• Ability to communicate effectively with residents, staff, and all with whom the staff comes in contact.
• Ability to motivate residents to become involved in the residence hall and larger campus community.
• Participation in and attitude toward RA Training sessions, training workshops, and staff meetings.
• Ability to encourage and motivate residents to grow academically, socially and personally.
• Participation in planning, implementation, and attendance at hall-sponsored programs.
• All other aspects found in the above job description.

BEFORE YOU APPLY - IMPORTANT INFORMATION

• While it is discouraged due to the high level of responsibilities for the position, Resident Assistants may have other outside employment. The job, however, must be on-campus and approved, with appropriate documentation, by their Area Coordinator /Residence Hall Director.
• The compensation package for an RA could affect the financial aid and scholarship amounts that you may receive. Prior to applying, check with those offices to understand how being hired may impact you.