

# POSITION DESCRIPTION

Department of Resident Life • University of Maryland

POSITION TITLE: Resident Assistant

SUPERVISOR'S TITLE: Resident Director

## DESCRIPTION

As the architect of the community, the primary responsibility of the Resident Assistant (RA) in the Department of Resident Life is to develop community within a unit by bringing about the realization of the role of each individual within that community. Called upon to respond to changing needs and situations, the RA position is one that requires flexibility, adaptability, enthusiasm, and commitment, as well as strong administrative and peer counseling skills. The areas of responsibilities listed below are representative of the major expectations of the RA. Additional guidelines are provided in the Resident Assistant Conditions of Employment, expectations set by sides of campus, communities, and individual supervisors, as well as our core documents (DRL Mission, Customer Service Standards, Multicultural Philosophy, Community Living Principles).

The RA position is a paraprofessional job (requiring approximately 20 hours of work per week) with a high level of responsibility. The RA lives on a unit of 45-75 residents and assumes primary responsibility for responding to the personal needs of unit residents, for shaping an environment that supports academic and personal development, and for managing critical administrative tasks, including duty and crisis management. The RA receives direct supervision and training from the Resident Director and is part of a staff team.

## STUDENT INTERACTION & DEVELOPMENT

- Develop positive interpersonal relationships with each unit resident.
- Receive and serve each individual student with care, candor, humanity, respect, and efficiency.
- Show interest in residents' personal activities. Find ways to relate to residents based on their interests, establishing effective communication through listening, responsiveness, openness, availability, and approachability.
- Introduce residents to each other, facilitate connections among unit members, and help unit members develop good interpersonal relationships among themselves.
- Maintain approachability and availability by spending time on the unit interacting regularly with residents.
- Be aware of resources and strategies related to personal and academic student success and serve as a referral agent to appropriate university and community services related to these needs.
- Respond to personal crises and emergencies of residents with promptness, dependability, and in a manner that shows care and consideration for individual needs and differences.
- Support and foster the rightful place of all community members by respecting the individual differences of all community members and holding others to this standard by confronting residents displaying behavior that is disrespectful towards others or the community.
- Demonstrate personal investment for community development through anticipating individual student needs and taking appropriate action to meet those needs.
- Conduct unit discussions and develop unit and roommate agreements concerning such issues as quiet hours, lounge use, and other issues necessary to the establishment of an environment characterized by investment and mutual respect and conducive to academic pursuits. Uphold these agreements in resolution of unit problems.
- Assist roommates and suite/apartment mates by mediating conflicts if they arise.

## COMMUNITY INTERACTION

- Implement the community development model on your unit and within your residential community.
- Create welcoming environment through participation in New Resident Orientation and other community development activities during the year.
- Assess personal and community interests and needs that are supportive of community development and individual development as citizens, scholars, and leaders.
- Intentionally involve residents in designing and implementing community activities consistent with assessed interests and needs.
- Be equitable and just in the performance of your duties to affirm the dignity and respect that is due each community member.
- Work collaboratively with other offices on campus to meet the interests and needs of your unit.
- Maintain an educationally-focused physical environment and create a welcoming atmosphere on your unit through creative bulletin boards,

postings, door hangers, etc.

- Assist in the development of unit governance by encouraging involvement in hall/area council. Actively support activities of Hall and Area Councils and serve in an advisory capacity to students involved.
- Seek to understand the complexities that a multicultural community poses to daily practice.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT & CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

- Role model positive behavior consistent with community expectations and University and Departmental policies, including, but not limited to those found in the Code of Student Conduct, the Community Living Handbook, and the Code of Academic Integrity.
- Be fair, consistent, and equitable in responding to residents' behavior concerns and in enforcing behavioral expectations.
- Monitor unit's physical state and emotional climate as a means of identifying and responding to personal and behavioral concerns.
- Recognize and respond promptly to individual crises and discipline matters through appropriate referral channels and adjudication processes. This includes following duty and crisis protocol in a timely and efficient manner, as established by departmental and supervisory expectations, including appropriate documentation and follow-up.
- Consult and rely on the guidance of the Resident Director for resolving unit behavior problems, especially those of an ongoing or complex nature.
- Inform residents of University and Department policies and the associated rationale, especially related to safety and security processes.
- Serve as an investigator into potential violations of policy or crises occurring in your unit.
- Serve on a duty rotation for your staff and/or community. RA duty coverage is provided each weekday evening (Sunday through Friday) between 7:00pm and 8:30am, and 24 hours on Saturdays and Sundays and when university offices are closed. Additional duty assignments may be required at other times (i.e., Fire Watch, Homecoming, emergencies, sporting events, break periods, and other special occasions). Specific duty responsibilities are determined by community.
- Maintain confidentiality with regards to policy violations and student behavioral concerns.
- Keep your supervisor informed of any issues of concern related to crisis or behavior on your unit.
- Record unit behavior through use of the incident reporting system, RA log, and other forms of record keeping.

### **STAFF COLLABORATION & ADMINISTRATION**

- Work in conjunction with, support, and respect all departmental staff members, including professional staff, service desk staff, administrative staff, and fellow RAs.
- Participate in activities involving all RAs, including RA Selection, Room Selection, and all training and development activities, including RA in-service trainings.
- Provide reliable, responsible, and responsive assistance to your supervisor and team members and towards team tasks.
- Recognize and value multiple perspectives in the work setting.
- Contribute input into community planning and training and other team efforts. Be open to and act upon suggestions for improvement from your supervisor and team members.
- Positively represent and support the members and decisions of your staff team, your supervisor, the department, and the university.
- Maintain regular contact with your Resident Director (through one-on-one meetings, reports, etc.), keeping them apprised of unit situations, activities, and problems.
- Share unit successes and challenges with other RAs to develop problem solving strategies and gain support.
- Take initiative, ownership, and investment as a staff member in displaying positive work ethics and behaviors and encourage this attitude in others.
- Support the efforts of hall and area councils and encourage student participation in residence hall student governance at the unit, hall, area, and system levels.
- Complete all work and assigned tasks in a timely, efficient, accurate, and organized manner.
- Be knowledgeable about departmental and university policies, procedures, and resources, including our Core Documents (DRL Mission, Customer Service Standards, Multicultural Philosophy, Community Living Principles).
- Show flexibility and adaptability in the performance of your duties in order to respond to changing needs, situations, and personalities.
- Maintain proper use of on-line databases, including the programming database and the Incident Reporting System.

Perform other duties as assigned.

