2019-2020 Resident Advisor Position Description and Agreement

The Resident Advisor (RA) is a student staff member of the Student Housing and Residential Life (SHRL) team within the Division of Student Affairs. Under the supervision of the Residential Life Coordinator (RLC), RAs serve as liaisons between SHRL and residents. They work within a diverse community of students to foster student success in living-learning environments by building relationships, promoting engagement in and outside of the residence hall, and leading with an ethic of care. Emphasis is placed on creating a positive experience where residential students are able to Live, Learn, and Engage in a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment.

RA staff live on campus in a residence hall community. Given their critical duties and responsibilities to residential students, RAs are considered an essential part of the SHRL team.

SECTION 1: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Administrative
   a. Exercise time management skills to successfully balance the RA position with academic and personal responsibilities.
   b. Attend and actively participate in weekly staff meetings, ongoing in-service trainings, and professional development opportunities as needed.
   c. Attend all fall and spring training sessions. Complete all online training sessions by the appointed deadlines.
   d. Read and be responsible for all the information contained in training materials.
   e. Attend regularly scheduled one-on-one meetings with your supervisor to discuss community issues, staff development areas, problem-solving, and performance feedback.
   f. Conduct community floor meetings at least two times per semester and as requested.
   g. Assist with implementation of departmental assessment efforts (e.g. EBI surveys, focus groups, polls/surveys, etc.).
   h. Distribute campus handouts/flyers and department materials in a timely manner.
   i. Create and maintain bulletin boards as requested.
   j. Facilitate the check in and check out processes for residents on a daily basis.
   k. Manage key processing (admin, room, and floor masters) appropriately.
   l. Submit facility work orders in a timely manner and provide follow-up as needed.
   m. Complete and submit information, reports, logs and other paperwork as instructed.
   n. Track hours worked including, but not limited to, on-duty responsibilities (time spent completing rounds and responding to incidents/crises), meetings, working at the front desk, etc.
   o. Complete 6 hours of work (weekly) at the hall’s front desk as part of your room and stipend compensation.
      i. Work includes but is not limited to filing, sorting, copying/scanning documents, mail distribution, answering telephones and taking messages, greeting visitors, referring students and guests, utilizing RMS Mercury housing software, room and admin key management, high level administrative tasks, and other related office/clerical duties as assigned.
   p. Execute all assigned Opening and Closing residence hall responsibilities. RAs are required to complete this work before and during the start of fall classes as well as during and after the residence hall officially closes for winter break and summer break.
   q. Complete semester RA collateral assignments as requested.
   r. Respond to all job related email and/or telephone communications within 24 hours, unless on approved time away from the hall.
   s. Check your mailbox in the hall office daily.
   t. Perform other tasks as necessary or assigned.
2. Community Building
   a. Be familiar with all assigned residents. Know residents’ names and room numbers and have a working knowledge of any issues (positive or negative) that are affecting your residents.
   b. Facilitate intentional daily and weekly interactions with all assigned residents.
   c. Nurture student success and satisfaction through facilitated discussions and high-impact programs/initiatives that promote academic progress and achievement, connection to the University and resident personal and social development.
   d. Execute the HAWKS Model/community development model, small and large-scale hall efforts, and high-impact programs/initiatives for both your community and residence hall as requested.
      i. Utilize Engage software, which includes but it not limited to program management from start to finish, assessment, and campus programming support.
   e. Serve as a positive representation of our Live, Learn, and Engage philosophy.
   f. Demonstrate approachability, availability and visibility. It is expected that RAs walk their communities on a daily basis to connect with residents and report facilities concerns.
   g. Provide excellent customer service. Maintaining a positive, helpful attitude when interacting with others.
   h. Establish a professional working relationship with supervisors, other staff members, members of student organizations, and campus offices.
   i. Actively participate in and encourage community participation in SHRL and University programs and activities.
   j. Support the programming efforts sponsored by student organizations and campus partners.
   k. Be familiar with and able to utilize University referral sources in order to assist residents.

3. Leadership
   a. Serve as a positive role model for other students, especially in reference to University of Houston – Clear Lake policies as listed in the Student Handbook and Living Guide.
   b. Strive to make a positive difference in the lives of residents.
   c. RAs may not be in the presence of any students who are violating SHRL or other campus policies unless they are intervening in the behavior, in their duty as an RA.
   d. Display a positive attitude about the RA position and support SHRL in philosophy and policy.
   e. Provide and receive feedback in a professional manner. Proactively address concerns and issues.

4. Safety and Community Standards
   a. Awareness and adherence to University and SHRL policies and procedures, as well as their importance to maintaining a safe, secure, and educationally focused living environment
   b. Uphold community standards and address issues and concerns in timely manner. Mediate conflict between community members. Identify potential problems and inform supervisors accordingly.
   c. Interpret and explain Community Standards to residents, including rationale and background, helping residents understand the impact negative behavior can have on a community.
   d. Carry out room inventory inspections, health and safety inspections, as well as occupancy check duties as requested.
   e. Following all fire safety policies and procedures including assisting during fire drills.
   f. Initially respond to any alleged violation of University policy, document situations, inform on-call duty staff or supervisor immediately, and provide follow up with residents involved.
   g. RAs will be prepared to deal with behavioral problems and emergencies with the support of professional staff as outlined in training.
   h. Submit all documentation of incidents and/or resident/guest behavior immediately following an incident via the Maxient software. Supervisors may require follow up emails with certain incidents.
   i. RAs are required to report life threatening situations, sexual misconduct policy violations, other alleged policy violations, and any potentially dangerous situations to their direct supervisor or on-call duty staff immediately.
   j. Participate in a rotating duty schedule that begins prior to the opening of campus and continues daily through the closing of campus including holidays and break periods. Duty schedules will vary according to the residential community and the time of year.
   k. RAs are expected to maintain daily visibility on their floor and in their community. Extended leave requests need to be approved by their supervisor.
SECTION 2: QUALIFICATIONS

1. Must be a full-time student at the University of Houston – Clear Lake.
2. Must be a student at UHCL working towards a degree, enrolled full time, and attending classes.
3. Good academic standing at UHCL must be demonstrated upon application and maintained throughout appointment. This means that Resident Advisors must have, and maintain, at the beginning and throughout the appointment a cumulative and semester grade point average of at least a 2.5. Semester GPAs will be verified after the completion of each semester.
   a. New RAs failing to meet all criteria (semester and cumulative GPA; passed units) by the start of employment may result in termination prior to the appointment start date.
   b. Failure to maintain these academic requirements may result in academic notice and/or early termination from the position.
   c. If an RA achieves a semester GPA of 2.0-2.4, it will result in academic notice for one semester. If the RA does not achieve a semester GPA of 2.5 or greater during the following semester, the RA’s position may be terminated.
      i. As part of the condition of academic notice, the RA is required to complete and follow an academic plan of action as discussed with their supervisor.
      ii. SHRL will only permit one semester of academic notice during the course of RA employment.
   d. If an RA achieves a semester GPA below a 2.0, a semester of academic notice may not be granted and the RA’s position may be terminated.
4. RAs are expected to maintain an academic load of no less than twelve and no more than eighteen semester credit hours. The supervisor and SHRL must approve any exception in advance.
5. Student teaching, clinical work, athletic commitments, co-ops, internships, and student club/organization commitments must be discussed and approved by SHRL before the RA signs the Resident Advisor Position Description and Agreement.

SECTION 3: POSITION REQUIREMENTS

1. RAs must be available for the academic year (fall and spring). Consideration will be given to RAs completing co-ops and internships during the academic year.
2. Re-appointment to the position is not guaranteed and is based upon performance throughout the appointment period. Incumbents interested in returning must participate in a re-appointment process and be recommended for re-appointment by their supervisor/SHRL.
3. The RA position is a security sensitive position. All RAs are required to complete a background check prior to the start of employment.
   a. Results of the background check will be reviewed, and may prompt a review of the candidate’s appropriateness for the position, or cause the revocation of the RA position offer.
   b. The criminal background check form requires general personal information as well as all previous U.S. addresses since the age of 17. The form is submitted to the UHCL Human Resources Department, then to UHCL Police Department for the background check, which usually takes 1-2 weeks to complete, depending on residency.
   c. Failure to pass the background process will result in immediate termination of the individual from any security sensitive position.
4. Resident Advisors must have a signed and completed Residence Hall Agreement, meet all requirements of living on campus as determined by SHRL, and maintain on-campus residency in an assigned room throughout the term of employment.
5. RAs are required to participate in fall training each August, regardless of enrollment in either summer session classes or online classes, work commitments, family commitments, etc. All exceptions must be approved in advance by their supervisor/SHRL. RAs are also required to participate in training each spring.
6. Failure to complete all or part of fall or spring training sessions will be cause for employment review and probable termination.
7. RAs are responsible for completing all required training. Failure to complete trainings by the deadline may result in position termination.
8. RAs are responsible for reading, understanding and adhering to all training materials, UH and UHCL policies, Student Housing and Residence Life policies and procedures, and any additional assigned literature, in addition to seeking clarification when necessary. RAs will follow the divisional and departmental dress codes.
9. Must be in “Good Standing” with SHRL and the University (Student Conduct status with the Dean of Students Office, as well as financially and academically). Alleged Violations of the Student Handbook are a separate process from the employment process and will be heard according to the process outlined in the Student Handbook. During this process, the RA may be under an interim suspension of duties, depending upon the nature of the alleged violation. Employment action may be taken concurrently with the student conduct process.
10. RAs need to check and respond to e-mail, phone voicemail, and staff mailbox daily. RA’s UHCL e-mail addresses will be published and made available to the residents enabling them to contact RAs when necessary. RAs private phone numbers will be made available to only Student Housing and Residential Life staff for emergency purposes.

11. RA rooms/suites are assigned specifically to meet the needs of the community. In the event that the RA is terminated from the position, voluntarily or otherwise, the RA will be required to:
   a. move into another room/suite outside of their area/floor community OR
   b. move out of on-campus housing, thereby being released from their Residence Hall Agreement.

12. On-call Duty Rotation:
   a. Must be available to serve on duty during the week, weekends, as well as holiday and break periods when the University is closed (for example: Thanksgiving Break, Spring Break, Winter Break, etc.) as required.
   b. Duty rounds include but are not limited to walking the entirety of the residence hall, noting facilities concerns, confronting incidents, writing incident reports, posting and removing signage, performing fire safety checks, etc.
   c. When serving on duty, RAs are required to be in the residence hall by 8:00 P.M. and must remain in the residence hall and on-call until 8:00 A.M. the next day.

13. Nights Away:
   a. RAs are permitted twelve nights away per semester.
   b. Nights away are limited to no more than three sequential nights away, at the supervisor’s discretion.
   c. Conferences, student leadership opportunities, and academic-related commitments will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the supervisor.
   d. Overnight absences from the hall will be considered a “night away”.
   e. RAs must be in their residence hall by 1:00 A.M. Sunday through Wednesday night, and by 3:00 A.M. Thursday through Saturday night to avoid an overnight absence.

14. Assist in the selection of the RA Staff by participating in the RA Interview process as requested.

15. Hall and Campus Program/Initiative requirements:
   a. Attend and actively participate in Fall and Spring RA training programs/sessions.
      i. Fall training is typically held during the first/second week of August; Spring Training is typically the week prior to spring classes beginning.
   b. RAs are required to work/attend/support (at the discretion of the supervisor) the following hall and campus events/initiatives: Move-In/Opening, Welcome Back Bash, I Heart UHCL/Spirit Week, the Chili Cook-Off, and various Weeks of Welcome Events.
   c. RAs are strongly encouraged to show their Hawk spirit with Blue and Green Wednesday each week.

16. In addition to the required special event/initiative participation, weekly responsibilities include (Estimated):
   a. Weekly staff meetings (approximately 1 hour)
   b. One-on-one supervisor meetings (approximately 0.5 hour)
   c. RA programs and campus program support (approximately 1 – 1.5 hours)
   d. Interacting with residents on floor, one-on one and in groups (approximately 4 hours)
   e. Working at the front desk (at least 6 hours)
   f. On-duty responsibilities (approximately 4 - 6 hours)
      i. On-duty hours are defined as the time it takes to complete required rounds and respond to incidents.
   g. Other administrative duties (0 - 3 hours) when needed (for example: check in/check out, health and safety checks)

17. Physical Activities and Requirements essential to the position include:
   a. Ascending or descending multiple flights of stairs at a time. Elevators are available.
   b. Expressing or exchanging ideas by means of the spoken word; those activities where detailed or important spoken instructions must be conveyed to other people accurately, loudly, or quickly.
   c. Perceiving the nature of sounds at normal speaking levels with or without correction, and having the ability to receive detailed information through oral communication.
   d. The RA is required to have close visual acuity to perform an activity, e.g. preparing and analyzing data and figures, viewing a computer terminal, extensive reading, and visual inspection involving small defects and small parts.
SECTION 4: COMMITMENT TO CONFIDENTIALITY

1. The Resident Advisor Commitment to Confidentiality
   a. Maintain confidentiality of residents’ records and other sensitive information.
   b. Refrain from gossip or negative comments about others.
   c. No personal information (including, but not limited to: identity, assignment, address, contact information, conduct history, financial records, housing information, etc.) shall be revealed, unless that individual provides written documentation authorizing the disclosure of that information and a supervisor has approved the disclosure.
   d. When an individual waives confidentiality, staff or student members must exercise utmost caution not to exceed the parameters of the waiver. Any doubt regarding disclosure must always be resolved in favor of confidentiality.
   e. Any breach of confidentiality is a serious matter and may be cause for removal of the staff member from the position.

SECTION 5: COMMITMENTS BEYOND THE RA POSITION

1. The RA position is a maximum average of 20 hour per week commitment with the expectation that the majority of this time will be spent directly interacting with and supporting residents.
2. UH SAM. No. 02.A.34 applies to this position. Specifically, section 2.6 limits student employment to 20 hours per week during the academic year. This means that RAs are not permitted to have additional student employment on campus.
3. There is an expectation that the RA position is to be the principal non-academic activity for the student employee.
4. A full academic course load and the RA position is a significant time commitment. To be a successful student and then a successful RA, additional time commitments should be carefully considered.
   a. If choosing to work a job outside the University, that position should be limited to 10 hours per week.
      i. The RA position commitments will not be scheduled around outside employment.

SECTION 6: COMPENSATION

This position is contracted through Student Housing and Residential Life with the following compensation:

1. RAs are provided one room space for the duration of appointment (space to be assigned based upon community needs and availability). It is expected RAs live in their assigned space throughout the duration of the position.
2. Resident Advisors shall receive a compensation package that includes a room, a monthly stipend in the amount of $100, and a $700 declining balance meal plan (per fall and spring semester).
   a. Compensation in the form of housing and meal plans may be excluded from taxable income, insofar as federal law allows. Housing is furnished for the convenience of the University and for a substantial non-compensatory business reason, and it is a condition of employment necessitated by the proper performance of duties (SAM 03.D.06).
   b. Please note that SHRL is required to submit your RA housing rent and meal plan compensation information to Financial Aid. Please consult with the Financial Aid Office regarding the impact that this position may have on your financial aid award.
   c. The monthly stipend may be eligible for income tax exclusion.
3. Meal Plan Information:
   a. Available only when dining/cafeteria facilities are open.
   b. When on-campus dining options are closed, the department will not be responsible for providing meals for the staff. The exception is during scheduled Fall and Spring RA Training as well as Closing procedures, when and if on-campus dining options are not available. During these times, SHRL will provide meals for Resident Advisors. Should the RA decide to eat off-campus, meal expenses will not be reimbursed by SHRL.
   c. The meal plan compensation is provided to staff members for the purpose of building relationships with residents in the dining halls during the academic year.

SECTION 7: TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

1. Upon termination of the position, all necessary paperwork must be completed.
2. If an RA chooses to resign, they will write a letter of resignation and give it to their supervisor, either in-person or electronically via email.
3. Failure to meet the requirements and expectations as outlined in this document, training, and directives from supervisors may result in employment action, up to and including termination.
4. Should an RA’s position be terminated (by the department or RA) prior to the end of the period of employment, that individual may be relocated at their expense to another location outside of the staff area for which they were assigned.
5. Upon termination date, rent, monthly stipend and declining balance meal plan will be prorated.
a. Resident Advisors who resign or are terminated from the position are subject to penalties associated with the departmental purchase of a declining balance meal plan. Meal plans are non-transferable, as such; resignation or termination of the position may result in the former employee being charged the remaining prorated amount of their meal plan.

b. In the case that a former employee resigns or is terminated from the position and chooses to live off campus, the former employee may be subject to housing penalties associated with breaking the Residence Hall Service Agreement.

6. Any Resident Advisor can be terminated for violation of University of Houston system, UHCL, or Student Housing and Residence Life policy or public law, at any time deemed necessary.

7. Upon termination:
   a. It is the RA’s responsibility to meet with their direct supervisor to determine an appropriate housing re-assignment and to schedule an appointment to return RA supplies/materials and check out of their current assignment.
   b. RAs are financially responsible for any unreturned items and, if applicable, an improper check out fee – charges will be posted to the student’s account.

8. If an RA is removed from their position, they have the opportunity to appeal the decision to the Director of Student Housing and Residential Life, in writing, within two business days of the termination.

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the responsibilities of my assignment as a Resident Advisor:

- I understand that this document holds me to these duties and expectations for the 2019-2020 academic year (fall and spring).
- I accept the duties of the position and will perform them as outlined.
- From time to time, position descriptions may change. If this occurs, RAs will be provided notice in writing of these changes.
- I agree to accept additional duties as directed in training or meetings or by my direct supervisor, not explicitly listed in this document.
- If I have any individual needs or accommodations that would restrict me from performing any part of the RA duties, I have already requested these needs in writing with my direct supervisor for the upcoming year.
- I understand that as an RA, I may be moved or reassigned to another floor/residence hall at the discretion of SHRL.

_________________________________  ____________________________________  ________________
Resident Advisor Printed Name  Resident Advisor Signature  Date

_________________________________  ____________________________________  ________________
Director of SHRL Printed Name  Director of SHRL Signature  Date