

# Resident Assistant Job Description 2016-2017

## West Texas A&M University

<b>POSITION:</b>	Resident Assistant (RA)
<b>RESPONSIBLE TO:</b>	Area Coordinator/Assistant Area Coordinator
<b>TENURE:</b>	This is a one academic year position (fall/spring); candidates who have potential conflicts (i.e. graduation, student teaching, study abroad) and cannot commit to the full year will not be considered; reappointment is dependent on job performance.
<b>BENEFITS:</b>	Leadership development, diversity education, networking, time management skills, customer service skills, growth opportunities through unique projects, lasting friendships/relationships.
<b>COMPENSATION:</b>	Each RA receives a private room (unless temporary spaces are needed) at no cost; a \$50.00 stipend paid four times each semester; and the 175 meal plan ( <i>Buff Hall staff members will receive compensation for the 75 meal plan</i> ).

### **POSITION SUMMARY**

Under direct supervision of the Area and Assistant Area Coordinators, the Resident Assistant (RA) is responsible for creating and maintaining a residential living environment in which the greatest educational, social, and cultural opportunities will be realized. 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 residents' needs by serving as a counselor, advisor, community developer, educator, mentor, and friend for 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 potential for self-development through 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 residential students, as well as using their own best judgment, maturity, and concern for those individuals with whom they live and work.

The Resident Assistant will be responsible for the development and enhancement of the community and each individual resident under their care and supervision. A chief concern of every staff member is to help each student achieve maximum adjustment to University life and to develop with each resident a sense of responsibility for both individual and group action. 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 Assistant/Area Coordinator, Assistant 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 be a student in good standing at WTAMU.
- Must have one full semester of college experience (post high-school) in order to apply.
- 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 grade point average (GPA) the long semester (fall or spring) 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 Area Coordinator, Associate Director, and/or 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, he/she will be terminated.
- Preferably be a resident at least one semester prior to being employed.

- Attend mandatory RA Orientation each semester (typically 2 weeks prior to the start of each semester); missing any portion of orientation is not permitted, unless it conflicts with WTAMU academic courses.
- Due to the sensitive nature of the position, you must successfully clear a criminal background check.

## **PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES**

- Ability to gain confidence and respect of residents and associates
- Administrative skills and ability to organize and balance responsibilities
- Initiative and creativity in programming
- Good health and emotional maturity
- Academically focused
- Respect for and belief in the fundamental worth and dignity of all individuals
- Positive attitudes about Residential Living and West Texas A&M University

## **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Residence Hall 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:
  - To foster an academic environment favorable to a successful scholastic career.
  - To aid the resident in their transition from family to the broader social and educational community.
  - To assist in the development of social values, courtesy, cultural appreciation, and interpersonal relationships.
  - To promote proper habits for good mental and physical health.
  - 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 he/she holds this position says to every student that the staff member possesses certain characteristics the University respects and considers important. Be a role model on campus, off campus, and anywhere a resident could see your behavior (this includes being a role model in your online presence).
- The RA must be instrumental in promoting the purposes and policies of the University and he/she serves as a vital link between the administration and students.
- Each RA must consider him/herself to be a part of the overall University public relations program and should make every effort to favorably interpret the University to the public as they come in contact with current and prospective students and parents.
- This position requires a large commitment to 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 will handle individual situations.
- Participate in on-call responsibilities, which includes weekdays, weekends, holidays, and University break periods:
  - 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.
  - 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 forwarded to their room 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 and Assistant Area Coordinators and the RA must be one of cooperation and helpfulness – tempered with loyalty, honesty, respect and courtesy. The staff is directly responsible to the Coordinator of their residence hall for the proper administration of his/her wing, unit, or floor.

- Establish and maintain good working relationships with maintenance and housekeeping personnel.
- The consumption of alcohol or being under the influence of alcohol while serving in the capacity of a Resident Assistant (i.e. when you are or going 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 Curriculum for structured "intentional interactions" with residents.
- Gain respect of students by caring. The RA's first responsibility to his/her residents is one of helpfulness. In order to create an atmosphere of "helpfulness" the staff should not come across as a "disciplinarian." Such an attitude destroys staff's ability to help when needed.
- Treat all confidential matters involving assigned residents in that manner; 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; the best way to do this is leading by example.
- Consult with, or refer to, your Coordinator any problems that concern the staff 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 Coordinator 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 regulations 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).
- Each RA may be required to assist with judicial hearings related to incidents in the Residence Halls, as needed.
- Maintain reasonable noise levels in your assigned community by consistently enforcing quiet and courtesy hours.

## **4. PROGRAMMING AND SELF-GOVERNMENT**

- Stimulate resident interest in programming and self-government through the Residential Curriculum model. The staff is the key to "selling" programs, activities, and self-government.
- Provide opportunities for group unity 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 (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 Coordinator.
- Perform administrative responsibilities as designated by the Area and/or Assistant Area Coordinators.
- Handle all incoming office calls while on office duty in an appropriate, business-like fashion.
- Each RA is responsible for use and upkeep of the living area bulletin board (if one exists); 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 area repairs to the Area and/or Assistant Area Coordinator so work orders may be submitted to the Physical Plant in a timely manner.

- Assist in the opening and closing of your assigned areas throughout the year (including holidays) by physically checking rooms for completed checklist items. You are expected to remain in their halls at the end of each semester until the halls are clear and the Coordinator has released you from duty.
- Each RA will be assigned a collateral/committee responsibility, as needed; this collateral is an assigned task that is the responsibility of that RA to complete for a specified time period.
- Assist with the organization and implementation of hall safety programs and drills as determined by the Area Coordinator.
- Assist with evacuation procedures in any emergency as required by the Area and/or Assistant Area Coordinator, 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, and/or termination of employment.
- Complete any reasonable task or procedure deemed necessary by the Area and/or Assistant Area Coordinator, Associate Director, or the Director of Residential Living.

## **6. ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

- Participate in and/or assist with all RA Orientation sessions as designated by the Area Coordinator and the Associate Director of Residential Living; RA Orientation typically occurs two weeks prior to the start of each semester.
- Attend all weekly staff meetings and special meetings as called by the Area and/or Assistant Area Coordinator, 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, all other hall staff (from all residence halls), and the entire student services staff.
- Maintain professional and personal confidences, 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, rumor, or use of profanity by residents or staff.
- 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.

## **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 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 unit, wing, or floor programming activities, all-hall activities, cooperative programming among halls, and hall council.
- Participation in and attitude toward RA Orientation sessions, training workshops, and staff meetings.
- Ability to encourage and motivate residents to develop responsibility within the group living situation.
- Participation in planning, implementation, and attending 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 (*see AC for details and additional requirements*).
- If you are receiving a campus housing scholarship and you are offered this position, the scholarship may be voided.
- The compensation package for an RA could affect any financial aid that you may be receiving.