

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™

Department of Housing and Residence Life

2009-2010 Resident Adviser Position Description

Division of Student Affairs

- Our Vision** To create premier learning experiences that instill in our students a spirit of inquiry, critical thinking, and diversity to become innovative and ethical leaders committed to serving the multicultural, globally community.
- Our Mission** To support the mission of Mississippi State University by providing student learning opportunities that promote personal development through engagement in critical thinking, self-awareness and healthy lifestyles choices in a dynamic and diverse environment that prepares our students to be ethical, responsible, service-oriented citizens.
- Our Values** We in the Division of Student Affairs value:
- A Student Centered Approach
 - A Commitment to Excellence
 - Integrity
 - Diversity and Inclusiveness
 - Health and Wellness
 - Leadership and Service

Housing and Residence Life Vision

To create a "home away from home" where students are individually and collectively challenged and supported in the journey to become mature, contributing citizens in a global community.

Housing and Residence Life Mission

To provide a well-maintained, on-campus residential experience which supports the overall mission of Mississippi State University and the Division of Student Affairs, promotes a spirit of community, and extends student learning beyond the classroom.

Qualification

A Resident Adviser candidate must have completed a minimum of one academic semester, have at least a 2.50/4.00 semester and MSU cumulative GPA the semester of application, be in good judicial standing, have previously lived in a residence hall or had an equivalent experience, and have passed a criminal background check.

Throughout this document, the acronym RD is used to refer to the Residence Director assigned to the respective building a RA is assigned to.

Leadership and Organizational Skills

1. RAs are responsible for completing the assigned “Bulldog in 6” plan within the Community Building Model during the first 6 weeks after halls open for the fall semester. RAs are expected to learn details about his/her residents.
2. RAs are responsible for meeting with their residents periodically throughout the semester to assess the resident’s growth and success as a student here at MSU.
3. RAs are responsible for completing all programming requirements as outlined by the Community Building Model (please see referenced model for details of expectations).
4. RAs mentor and coach residents. RAs encourage participation and campus leadership through dissemination of information and encouragement of residents’ attendance at meetings and events.
5. RAs mentor Hall Council floor reps in planning, implementing, and publicizing events and activities in her/his residence hall, based on the Community Building Model.
6. RAs refer any counseling problems (personal, academic, or crisis-oriented) beyond her/his limitations to appropriate resources. This involves being aware of the resources available on campus in addition to the Housing and Residence Life Staff.
7. RAs will demonstrate effective decision making, problem solving, and follow through skills.

Group Facilitation Skills

1. RAs must facilitate regular community gatherings.
2. RAs will mediate floor and roommate conflicts through established Community Standards and roommate agreements.
3. RAs will be required to assist in duty coverage with other RAs in the building/area. During on-duty time, the RA is required to stay in her/his building except when doing rounds or when s/he is addressing an incident. Duty Shifts typically last 24 hours and exceptions are made to leave for class during times the Housing Office is open. Night classes are not an exception for leaving the building while on duty. RAs should avoid duty shifts on nights when they have classes.
4. RAs will be required to assist in duty coverage for the following breaks and holidays: Labor Day, Fall Break, Thanksgiving Break, and Spring Holiday. Each building will be assigned a “buddy” hall and this break coverage must be determined between the two halls at the beginning of the fall semester.
5. RAs will address misconduct and provide appropriate educational counseling for inappropriate actions. The RA should immediately report any unusual incidents or disturbances, including violations of University rules and regulations, to the RD even if the problem has been resolved.

Administrative Skills

1. RAs must perform certain administrative duties as deemed necessary by the RD. RAs are also responsible for the distribution of memos and check-in/check-out procedures, roommate agreements, weekly reports, health and safety inspections, survey administrations and other paperwork as assigned by a supervisor.
2. Writing Situation Reports is a duty of the RA. Situation Reports assist in keeping the RD informed of any problems or irregularities occurring on the RA’s floor or in the building. Situation Reports need to be submitted to the RD immediately following the incident or receiving information regarding an incident or issue with a student.
3. The RA keeps residents informed of University activities and policies through posted notices, hall meetings, and individual contact.
4. RAs must respond to maintenance issues and encourage residents to report individual problems online via the “Fix It” link at www.my.housing.msstate.edu. RAs must report possible vandalism or unresolved maintenance concerns to her/his RD immediately.
5. RAs serve as an ambassador for the University. All communication (electronic, voicemail, personal contact, guided tours, etc.) should be reflective of this role, presenting a positive and professional image of the University.

Interpersonal Skills

1. RAs serve in the capacity of an adviser, mentor, and counselor to residents. To do this, the RA must develop a personal relationship with residents on his or her floor. The RA shows interest and concern for each resident on a regular basis, and should encourage involvement on the floor, in the residence hall, and within campus-wide activities.
2. RAs must maintain a positive working relationship with all staff members in Housing and Residence Life, including, but not limited to, building, administrative, custodial, and maintenance staffs. RAs will report concerns and follow-up promptly with his/her supervisor.
3. RAs must communicate clearly and regularly with colleagues, residents, and supervisors.
4. RAs must role model and encourage appreciation of all diversity.
5. RAs will demonstrate sensitivity with respect to the privacy of students and student information. All information that RAs obtain, see, observe, hear, or become aware of should be treated confidential and shared with supervisors only.

Personal Success Skills

1. RAs must report to the RD regularly, attend and actively participate in weekly staff meetings, on-going staff development activities, Resident Advisor Continuing Education sessions (RACE), training sessions, and programs. RAs will utilize one-on-one meeting time with their supervisors to report on hall/resident development and reflect on their experiences.
2. RAs will participate in all training sessions, RACE events, interview and recruitment processes, departmental/divisional events, and staff development activities provided by the Housing and Residence Life staff.
3. RAs participate in evaluations of their own performance, the performance of their peers, the performance of the RD, and Residence Life Program.
4. RAs will role model personal success by knowing, positively supporting, and abiding by all University and Housing policies and regulations.
5. RAs will demonstrate time management skills by turning paperwork in on time and contributing to staff meetings, one-on-one meeting and other scheduled meetings. Time management should also be reflected in RAs academic work.

Conditions of Employment

1. RAs serve as employees of Housing and Residence Life, the Division of Student Affairs and Mississippi State University. As such, RAs must support University and Housing rules and regulations in words and actions.
2. The period of employment begins with pre-semester training and concludes at noon three days following the spring residence hall closing date. Final paychecks may be delayed until all responsibilities are completed. RAs must arrive before the hall opening date of each semester to participate in all training workshops. The RA position is a one-academic year commitment.
3. RAs must maintain a semester and MSU cumulative GPA of 2.50, and notify her/his supervisor at any point at which their GPA falls below this minimum.
4. RAs are allotted 5 nights away per month during employment. "Nights away" are defined as nights spent outside of the residence hall and include weekends. Prior approval must be obtained from the supervisor before an RA uses a "night away."
5. RAs may take 16 credit hours/semester during employment. Prior approval must be obtained from the RD and Area Coordinator to register for more than 16 credit hours/semester.
6. During the first semester as an RA, s/he agrees to accept no additional employment on or off campus. Up to 10 hours/week of outside employment may be allowed after the first semester if approved by the RA's Area Coordinator and the Associate Director for Residence Life. After the first semester on staff, any employment or participation in activities, such as internships, joining a social organization or holding office in a club or organization, must be approved by the Area Coordinator and Associate Director for

Residence Life. RAs may not serve in an elected position with any Residence Hall Association or Council.

7. RAs will not be allowed to co-op or student teach while serving as an RA.
8. RAs will be assigned a furnished, single-occupancy room in her/his assigned building. RAs are required to commit to a 9-month residence hall contract and must adhere to the terms therein. The room charges stated in the contract will be waived for the duration of employment as an RA. Should such employment be terminated, the contract will revert to a contract for a general residence hall room and all charges will be the responsibility of the student. In some cases, a \$50 application fee may be required prior to assignment.
9. The RA will be required to cover desk duty, Community Aide, and/or office duty for a minimum of six hours per week and assist on a temporary basis at certain key times of the year (i.e. the time periods immediately after opening and before closing). This will involve remaining in the building until all residents vacate the area before s/he may leave for vacation periods and returning early to help open the building after vacation periods. Should an RA receive approval for additional employment after his/her first semester, RAs may work Community Aide shifts for extra pay. RAs will not be allowed to work additional desk shifts for extra pay.
10. RAs accept responsibility for any equipment issued by the University during her/his employment and will replace or pay damages for loss of any item, including keys. RAs accept full responsibility for any keys they use in relation to the position. As outlined in the policy, master keys may only be used for official purposes directly related to job responsibilities. Upon termination of employment, the final paycheck may be delayed until all keys and materials are returned.
11. Job assignments may be changed by the Associate Director at any time during employment. Such changes would be made in the best interest of a working situation and/or individual.
12. The RA will participate in RA and RD staff selection as requested.
13. In the first full semester of employment, RAs are required to take the RA class; COE 4513 Paraprofessionals in Student Development. A grade of 80% is required for employment. Failure to successfully complete the requirements of the course may result in immediate dismissal.
14. The RA reports to the RD and assumes duties under the direct supervision of the RD. S/he is to cooperate with the RD to fulfill all duties listed and all other duties, which the RD or another member of the professional residence life staff may assign.
15. The RA position is a one academic year commitment and renewal of this position is not automatic. Satisfactory performance evaluation by the supervisor, passing the RA class with at least 80% (if applicable), an application and interview process are required for an RA's reappointment.
16. Failure to perform duties as stated, failure to abide by policies, and misuse of authority of position may lead to immediate dismissal.