

The role of the paraprofessional staff is a vital one. For many students the RA is the highest-ranking University official with whom contact is made. Impressions about the college experience, and about the quality of life at Ohio University, are based to a large extent upon the residence hall experience and staff. That's precisely why there is a very manageable student/staff ratio within the residence halls.

Resident Assistants are graduate or undergraduate members of the Residence Life staff who are under contract to the Director of Residence Life. They report to and are directly supervised by a Resident Director. Resident Assistants have the most frequent and direct communication with resident students; therefore, they have an outstanding opportunity to contribute to the development and education of individuals. They also have a great responsibility in implementing programs and enforcing policies through which the goals of Residence Life can be accomplished. It is our expectation that the Resident Assistant is sincerely interested in and supportive of the welfare of the students at Ohio University.

**I. Qualifications for Selection:**

An Ohio University student enrolled full-time in an undergraduate or graduate degree program.

Leadership potential as evidenced by previous leadership experiences, recommendations, and staff evaluations.

High level of maturity exhibited in sound judgment, emotional stability, flexibility, and willingness to accept responsibility.

Strong interpersonal skills through proven ability to interact effectively with others and as perceived through the interview process and the paraprofessional class.

Good conduct standing with the University (not currently on disciplinary probation).

A 2.25 accumulative grade point average as well as a 2.0 grade point average the quarter preceding employment is required. Candidacy may be terminated if second quarter grades do not raise the accumulative GPA above a 2.25. A minimum of 40 quarter hours of credit must be earned by the quarter of employment.

Satisfactory completion of a three (3) credit paraprofessional training course is required for employment.

Preference is given to applicants who will be enrolled on campus all three quarters.

**II. Responsibilities:**

To support the Department of Residence Life in attaining its goals for the residential students. Our primary goal is the development of an environment conducive to the academic and personal growth of students living in the residence halls. The following is a summary of the significant expectations for which Resident Assistants are responsible.

Student Relationships:

Resident Assistants strive to help each student develop to their full potential as a person, a student, and a member of their floor, hall, and University communities. In their multiple roles as peer, facilitator, administrator, and disciplinarian, Resident Assistants model appropriate

respect for the health, safety, welfare and rights of all members living in the residence halls. Each Resident Assistant is expected to:

Meet and become acquainted with each of their residents.

Assist students with personal, vocational, social, academic and general concerns or refer students to other resources when appropriate.

Spend sufficient time on the floor section to assess student needs, and ensure that the information is accurately transmitted to the immediate supervisor in a timely manner.

Continually model appropriate behavior through academic and personal goals.

Maintain confidentiality of information when ethical and appropriate to do so.

### Student Conduct:

Resident Assistants are responsible for responding to student behavior so that an atmosphere conducive to study is maintained and the physical facilities are protected for student use in the future. Resident Assistants are responsible for maintaining consistent policies throughout the residence hall and for impressing upon residents that they are responsible for their own actions. Under no condition should Resident Assistants tolerate immature behavior or improper conduct. Specifically, a Resident Assistant is expected to:

1. Know the University Student Code of Conduct as outlined in the Student Handbook and the residence hall regulations presented in the Housing Contract and the Paraprofessional Staff Manual.
2. Know the procedure for handling violations of University and residence hall regulations.
3. Respond to problems calmly and reasonably.
4. Discuss with the Resident Director or the Assistant Resident Director the best way to handle specific problems.
5. Recognize the importance of making decisions that are consistent with the expectations and procedures of the Department of Residence Life.
6. Abide by all policies as well as enforce them. This means that under no circumstances should a resident Assistant ignore the violation of a regulation or policy by a resident, nor violate regulations or policies that residents are expected to follow.

### C. Programming:

Since a balance of activities in the residence hall contributes to a feeling of "community", Resident Assistants are responsible for actively assisting individuals, floor sections, the hall/complex council, other staff members and the Resident Director/Assistant Resident Director with the continual assessment of programming needs and the successful implementation of programs and activities.

Specifically, each Resident Assistant is expected to:

Attend hall council meetings to demonstrate support, and when appropriate, offer assistance.

Identify potential hall leaders and direct their involvement at the floor and hall levels.

Encourage the active involvement of residents in planning and implementing hall activities.

Assist the Resident Director/Assistant Resident Director in the assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of a balance of the programs and activities.

Promote activities which contribute to a beneficial living/learning atmosphere on the floor section.

D. Administration - Documentation:

The smooth operation of residence halls is dependent upon the cooperative efforts of all staff members. Resident Assistants are called upon to provide administrative support which is important to the operation of the hall. A Resident Assistant is expected to:

Attend all weekly staff meetings.

Complete all assigned administrative tasks thoroughly, accurately, and on time (such as: mail duty, furniture inventory, et cetera).

Assist the Resident Director/Assistant Resident Director with periodic room inspections and the proper check-in and check-out of residents.

Assist the Residential Custodial Services (RCS) staff in identifying facilities in need of repair or special attention.

E. Communications:

Resident Assistants play a crucial role in setting the tone of how the University and the Department of Residence Life is perceived by students. Resident Assistants should strive to represent the University and the Department of Residence Life positively to students, parents, and the general public. A Resident Assistant is expected to:

Meet regularly with individual residents and groups to explain and promote policies and programs, assess needs and community goals, and learn of ideas or concerns.

Check staff office mail box daily and post University and Residence Life information in designated areas.

Respond to all messages/notes in a timely manner.

Use the appropriate chain of communication: Immediate supervisor, Green Office, Central Office, Dean of Students' Office when transmitting ideas, needs or concerns about residence hall living.

Maintain regular contact with the immediate supervisor and discuss job-related as well as personal concerns relative to performance.

F. Self-Development:

Resident Assistants have the opportunity to grow in their position while on the job. While the Resident Assistant must assume the major responsibility for self-development, he/she is expected to:

Participate in Orientation: During Spring Quarter, fulfill the requirements of the Paraprofessional class.

Participate in in-services each quarter as required.

Be evaluated formally by the Resident Director with continued employment based upon positive evaluation.

Be evaluated by residents on his/her floor section through the use of the Community Life Assessment.

G. Recruitment and Selection of Staff:

The input of Resident Assistants is considered to be a valued source of information in the selection of staff. As a paraprofessional staff member you may be asked to participate in the Senior Staff and Central Staff interviews.

III. **Terms of Employment:**

A. Period of Employment:

The period of employment will be announced through the Office of the Director of Residence Life and is for the academic year. All Resident Assistants are required to assist in the opening and closing of the halls for each academic term and for vacation periods. This requires returning to campus approximately one week before the residents return for Fall Quarter and remaining until the residents leave for vacation. Continuation of employment depends upon successful completion of tasks, positive quarterly evaluation by the Resident Director, and exhibition of growth in and continual enthusiasm for the position.

B. Time Off:

Resident Assistants are permitted 10 days off per quarter (this can be week days as well as weekends). Restrictions will be made on special weekends as deemed appropriate by the Central Staff. A weekend is defined as extending from Friday noon to 6:00 p.m. Sunday. No more than half of the staff in any hall will be permitted to leave on a given weekend.

C. Curfew:

All Resident Assistants are expected to be in the Residence Hall in which they live by 2:30 a.m., seven days a week, unless they have been approved for time off.

D. Living Arrangements:

Resident Assistants will be assigned to a staff room. Those assigned to first year halls are not subject to the visitation policy of those halls; however, guests must be escorted within the building.

E. Remuneration:

There are regular pay periods Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters. The final paycheck of each quarter will be held by the Resident Director until all responsibilities of the position are completed to his/her satisfaction.

## F. Time Commitments:

### 1. Work Load:

It is recognized that a Resident Assistant position require a great deal of time commitment and due to the special nature of the position, no minimum or maximum number of hours can be designated. He/she will be expected to devote the time necessary to fulfill his/her obligation to the position. This includes specific staff duty assignments, weekly staff meetings, in-service training and significant time on his/her floor section.

### 2. Course Load:

Any undergraduate Resident Assistant must carry a minimum of twelve (12) and a maximum of twenty (20) hours per quarter. Any exceptions must have the recommendation of the Resident Director and the written approval of the Assistant Director of Residence Life. No exception will be made for first quarter Resident Assistants. Graduate students who are Resident Assistants must carry a minimum of nine (9) and a maximum of thirteen (13) hours per quarter. Requests to take more or less than the prescribed hours must be made in writing to the Assistant Director of Residence Life and approval will be granted on the basis of the rationale and previous performance of the Resident Assistant.

### 3. Additional Work and Extracurricular Activities:

It is important that Resident Assistants remember that their position is demanding and thus their other activities will have to be limited. Resident Assistants are not permitted to hold other compensatory positions while employed by Ohio University. However, Resident Assistants demonstrating financial need may petition the Assistant Director of Residence Life for permission for additional employment. (Ten (10) work study hours should be used as a guideline.) Approval will be based on need, previous performance, and time involved in the work request. Other extracurricular involvement which does not interfere with the performance of the job is permissible.

### 4. Academic Commitments:

Every effort will be made by the department to accommodate academic requirements while in the position (e.g. student teaching, O.U. Marching Band). This can be especially problematic during Fall Staff Orientation. Prior to accepting a position, a discussion regarding academic time commitments should take place with a member of the central staff for approval.

## Academic Performance:

To retain the position, Resident Assistants must maintain a 2.0 accumulative grade point average and receive at least a 2.0 grade point average each quarter. If either grade point average falls below these standards, the Resident Assistant may be placed on one quarter of probation. No Resident Assistant will be retained in employment if:

For two (2) consecutive quarters his/her quarter GPA falls below a 2.0 and/or if

For two (2) consecutive quarters his/her accumulative GPA falls below 2.0.

H. Evaluation:

Formal written evaluation of Resident Assistants by their Resident Director will occur at the end of the fall and winter quarters and by their residents once during the year through the use of the Community Life Assessment. Informal evaluation or feedback should be ongoing between the Resident Director and the Resident Assistant.

I. GA/TA Positions:

Current Resident Assistants and Administrative Resident Assistants requesting a Teaching Assistantship or Graduate Assistantship in their respective academic departments should do the following:

Contact your immediate supervisor to more fully discuss your ability to successfully carry these additional responsibilities in addition to your Residence Life position. A deadline date will be announced.

Your immediate supervisor will include this information in their recommendation for rehire to the Assistant Director of Residence Life on your respective Green during the Spring Quarter.

The Assistant Director of Residence Life will make a decision and notify you as to your status.

It is recognized that Residence Life positions are extremely demanding. While the department fully supports the pursuit of academics and personal development through extracurricular activities, TA/GA appointments will be weighed carefully when considering the ability of individual staff members to successfully meet their job responsibilities with additional responsibilities.

J. Termination of Employment:

A Resident Assistant who is removed from his/her position will be reassigned to a room which is not on their floor section. A student who has been removed from his/her Resident Assistant position may not reside in a Resident Assistant room. Housing arrangements will be made at the discretion of the Assistant Director of Residence Life. A Resident Assistant who signs a contract and then decides not to be a Resident Assistant forfeits his/her housing assignments and will receive another assignment when and if a space becomes available.

K. Ohio University Department of Residence Life Statement on Alcohol:

The Department of Residence Life supports Ohio University in its commitment to maintaining a campus free of illegal drugs and the unlawful or irresponsible use of alcohol. To achieve this goal, Residence Life staff are expected to perform many duties and fulfill the vital roles of student, helper, administrator, floor member, and programmer.

**Student Role:**

All staff members are encouraged to educate themselves about issues on and off campus and current events that regard alcohol use.

Staff members of legal age are expected to be responsible in their use of alcohol as with any other student.

As a student of Ohio University, RAs and SAs are expected to abide by the terms of the Student Code of Conduct and state laws.

**Floor Member Role:**

Paraprofessional staff are asked to use care and thought when choosing attire and room decorations, recognizing inconsistent messages that might be sent.

In addition, staff are asked to foster understanding about the direct and indirect effects of alcohol use on the community.

**Helper Role:**

Paraprofessional staff are expected to identify and address illegal and/or irresponsible alcohol use by students or staff.

**Administrative Role:**

Paraprofessional staff are expected to (a) inform and interpret University alcohol policies to students and their guests, and (b) enforce University alcohol policies and procedures by confronting and documenting violations.

**Programmer Role:**

Paraprofessional staff are expected to provide activities that do not include alcohol. Alternative activities include, but are not limited to, providing educational opportunities about alcohol related issues.

**Staff Member Role:**

As mentioned above, staff members are expected to adhere to University policy and state law.

Staff members are asked to be proactive in their approach to alcohol use (including of-age misuse) by (a) confronting other staff members directly about potential problems, (b) bringing issues to the supervisor, and (c) being a role model to peers.

Also, staff should be sensitive to the nonverbal messages that could be sent by dress, room decorations, or other forms of expression.

The employee/student is advised that depending on the nature of the contract for employment with Ohio University, your personnel file may be subject to an open records request and may be disclosed pursuant to law.