FALL/WINTER RESIDENT ASSISTANTS (RAS) JOB DESCRIPTION

Title: FALL/ WINTER Resident Assistant
Department: UWCRC and the Office of Housing and Student Life
Reports to: Manager of Campus Living (Housing)
Term: August 15, 2012 – April 30, 2013
Compensation: rent plus top up for EI deductions

General Description

Resident Assistants (RAs) are undergraduate or graduate university student staff who live in the University residences. Their role is to help build strong and healthy residential learning communities which complement and extend classroom learning. RAs are expected to create residential environments that enhance student academic progress and success; promote the intellectual life of the residents; create opportunities for students to explore and clarify their interests, values and attitudes; build inclusive and reflective environments in which differences of background and belief are explored; provide personal and academic counseling and referral; plan and participate in house, floor, or Residence-wide activities; know and explain University policies; be available to students; and encourage student responsibility and accountability.

Being an RA means being a member of a staff team. RAs work with a variety of administrators both from The University of Winnipeg Office of Housing and Student Life and The University of Winnipeg Community Renewal Corporation; The University of Winnipeg Security Services, faculty, managers, office administrative staff, food service workers, maintenance staff, cleaning staff, and others. Together the entire staff works as a team to create reflective and responsible living/learning environments.

There are three categories of Resident Assistants:

1) RAs in Dorm houses and Dorm floors; and
2) RAs in Dorm floors with Meal Plans; and
3) RAs in Apartments

The three categories of RAs differ both in their expected workload and in compensation levels. The RA job also varies by accommodation type—dorm house, dorm floor, dorm floor with meal plan, and apartment.

The following describes the job responsibilities, conditions of employment, and compensation for all RA positions. Work expectations will be adapted to each living situation in such a way as to reflect the different levels of RA compensation and accommodation type. Specific job objectives will be described in the RA Contracts, and will be further explained through the interview process. Additionally, programmatic changes within Residential Education may alter some of the job responsibilities.

Job Responsibilities

1. Demonstrate Leadership

RAs hold leadership positions of responsibility and may be called upon to exercise authority when handling certain situations. As leaders in their residence, RAs are expected to do the following:

- Serve as role models demonstrating responsible behavior, personal integrity, and good judgment.
- Know and educate residents about University policies, procedures, regulations, and community standards (e.g., FIPPA, the Residence Contract, Resident Handbook, Respectful Workplace Policy, the Smoke Free Environment Policy, and other important policies pertaining to the residences and University life).
- Demonstrate consistency when enforcing Residence policies.
• Develop effective communication skill that are marked by the ability to facilitate difficult conversations that lead to conflict resolution.
• Continually develop their leadership skills by participating in leadership training (including spring training, fall training, in-service training during the year, reading the written training materials for residence staff).
• Know and educate residents about the University emergency response protocols and procedures.
• Work closely with, support and advise other leaders in the residences--such as first year Resident Assistants--by attending house/floor meetings, cluster discipline meetings, and house/floor social events, and acting in a mentoring role.
• Assume a leadership role in crises (e.g., resident crises, fire, and other emergencies).
• Assume a positive and energetic attitude towards Residence Living, Co-Workers, and Administrative Staff.

2. Support of the Academic Mission

In support of the University's mission and the academic progress of their residents, RAs are expected to do the following:

• Be knowledgeable about the general and departmental advising programs and support the interaction of students and their advisors.
• Know and be able to direct residents to the academic resources and support services on campus (e.g., tutors, labs, library resources, academic advising).
• Help create residential environments that promote academic inquiry and discourse and are conducive to studying.

3. Build Community

RAs are responsible for creating a residence environment in which all views, popular and unpopular, can be voiced, heard respectfully, and fully explored. With this understanding, RAs are expected to do the following:

• Help establish community norms, ground rules, and chores/duty schedules derived from open and honest student communication exploring the definition of "responsible conduct".
• Be sensitive to the needs of all groups in the residence, and help residents to be aware of each others concerns.
• Mediate conflict and help residents to take responsibility for their residence community.
• When in the residence, RAs need to establish an “open door” policy that invites and facilitates an environment where students can feel welcome and free to visit.

4. Promote Intellectual Pursuits

As educators and facilitators, RAs are expected to do the following:

• Plan and promote educational opportunities and programs in the residence.
• Invite faculty, management, and support staff into the residences and create opportunities for comfortable, informal interaction with students.
• Promote the intellectual life of the residence through formal and informal discussions about campus, national and international issues (including culture, values, and beliefs, social, political, and ethical issues).
• Share their intellectual and academic interests with residents and encourage residents to discuss their academic interests, experiences, goals, and future plans.

5. Listen & Provide Counsel

Residents seek advice from their RAs, and specific counseling responsibilities require the following skills:
• Active and effective listening.
• Ability to help individuals attain a sense of self and personal well-being.
• Communicate support without assuming responsibility for the problem or for the decision-making.
• Identify crises that require immediate attention and work with Counseling Services through the Office of Housing and Student Life.
• Know appropriate campus offices and resources to which to refer students.
• Maintain confidentiality of both private conversations and staff discussions.

6. Administrative Responsibilities

As members of the Office of Student Housing and Life staff, RAs are expected to perform the following administrative tasks in a timely and efficient manner:

• Check ins/outs of the residences.
• Complete all paperwork accurately.
• Submit check in/out forms within 48 hours of completion.
• Return labeled keys within 48 hours of check out.
• Check in regularly—usually three times weekly at a minimum—at the Housing Office.
• Check email daily, and respond within 24 hours to requests for information.
• Ensure that residence members receive information about University and Residence policies.
• Distribute materials from the Housing Office and other official University material as required.
• Assume responsibility for house security, including use of the master keys, and evening lockup, report any unsafe conditions to the Office of Housing and Student Life.
• Identify and report to University of Winnipeg Security any unauthorized visitors to the building/floor/suite.
• Assist University of Winnipeg Security, Fire Dept., Police, and other authorities as directed in an emergency situations.
• Submit weekly reports of House morale, incidents, and activities both formal and informal to the Office of Housing and Student Life and the Manager of Campus Life (Housing).
• Complete on-duty rounds as required.
• Report damages or maintenance problems, complete forms as required.
• Monitor and promote cleanliness, maintain neat and welcoming personal accommodations, respond to staff requests to assist in keeping common areas clean, discourage storage of personal belongings in common areas, ensure prompt cleanup after social activities.
• Perform all on-duty responsibilities including answering the phone, responding to resident needs, and doing rounds of the properties.
• When on duty, to be inside the residence or cluster or building.
• Perform tours for potential residents, parent, administration, and other University Faculty or Staff when called upon.
• Other duties as assigned.

7. Personal Conduct

RAs are paid staff and are expected to be professional at all times. RAs serve as role models for the residents and are basically always “on duty”. RAs are expected to do the following:

• Know and abide by University policies including but not limited to FIPPA, the Residence Contract, Resident Handbook, Respectful Workplace Policy, the Smoke Free Environment Policy, and other important policies pertaining to the residences and University life.
• Be responsible and professional community leaders.
• Exercise common sense and mature, good judgment in their interactions or relationships with residents.
• Maintain appropriate confidentiality when dealing with students and staff.
• Do not consume alcohol while on duty or supervising resident events.
8. Team Skills

To work effectively with their residential team, RAs are expected to do the following:

- Attend and contribute to regularly-scheduled staff meetings with the Office of Housing and Student Life, with their cluster or building RAs, and with the Manager of Campus Life (Housing).
- Work cooperatively with staff on projects and shared tasks.
- Offer and accept constructive feedback.
- Act as a liaison between the support staff and the residents.

Employment Conditions

- University of Winnipeg students, undergraduate and graduate students, are welcome to apply for residence staff positions. No person will be appointed to a residence staff position without having been at University of Winnipeg for at least a term before assuming the position.
- RAs must be registered at University of Winnipeg as full time students (minimum 18 credit hours).
- RAs are expected to remain in good academic standing (2.0). Candidates who are on probation or provisional registration are not eligible for an RA position. Incompletes must be completed before the start of the job in September. If a student is placed on probation or is suspended during their service as a Resident Assistant, this will be grounds for termination.
- RAs must have a social security number. Non-Canadian citizens must also have a current and appropriate visa. In addition, proof of employment eligibility is required.
- RAs are required to live in the residence to which they are assigned and to sign and abide by the University of Winnipeg Residence Contract and any other special house agreements that are required by members of the residence.
- RAs, in order to be accessible and provide a consistent level of response to The Office of Housing and Student Life, must have in their name a local phone number. Additionally, phone numbers of RAs should have a dedicated answering service (e.g. voicemail, answering machine).
- RAs are required to pay house or floor fines if fines are charged to residents of the house or floor to which they are assigned.
- RAs are expected to remain in their residences until the end of the term, and the last resident student has left.
- RAs are required to attend and participate in all of RA training and staff retreats (and participate in other training sessions during the spring/summer session). Specific dates for training are provided during the selection process.
- RAs are expected to abide by all University policies and may not break the law. Violating University policy or breaking the law is grounds for termination.
- RAs may only hold additional employment with permission from the Manager of Campus Life (Housing). If permission is granted, employment will be for a maximum of 12 hours per week.
- RAs may only hold limited membership in Campus student groups and organizations with permission from the Manager of Campus Life (Housing).
- RAs are required to request time away from residence, in writing, through the Office of Housing and Student Life. Permission may be granted by the Manager of Campus Life (Housing).
- RAs are required to stay in residence during the following closures: Labor Day Weekend, Thanksgiving Weekend, Louis Riel Day, Reading Week, and Easter Weekend.
- RAs are required to complete basic First Aid training annually.

Compensation

RAs will be compensated an amount equivalent to the dorm fees for their specific residence for the term plus vacation and benefits as required by Human Resources. Resident Assistants required to participate in the Meal Plan will have the cost associated with the basic meal plan covered as well.