



SACRAMENTO STATE

Office of Housing & Residential Life

RESIDENT ADVISOR GENERAL JOB DESCRIPTION 2009-2010 ACADEMIC YEAR

If you are selected to be a Resident Advisor, please note that you will be responsible for the following expectations and conditions. Your decision to accept the job will be taken as your indication that the following are consistent with your goals and objectives and are conditions for which you are willing to accept responsibility. If you have any questions, please ask a member of the Residential Life staff.

You should be aware that responsibility will be placed upon you for enhancing the educational environment of students in your residence hall. You will be expected to promote the goals and expectations of California State University, Sacramento and to uphold University standards of conduct. You will be expected to contribute to the positive growth of the residents in the hall. You should also be willing to give and accept constructive feedback.

The Resident Advisor is responsible for assisting the Res. Life Coordinator in developing, maintaining, and coordinating an atmosphere, which will provide a positive intellectual and social living environment for students. Resident Advisors are directly responsible to their Res. Life Coordinator and function as a member of the California State University, Sacramento Residential Life staff.

A Resident Advisor should possess personal qualities which aid in effectively relating to students. These qualities should include maturity, integrity, and sensitivity to name a few.

Role Model

Perhaps the most influential aspect of the Resident Advisor position is that of role model. Role model expectations are best stated in *The Resident Assistant* by Blimling (2003) as follows:

By virtue of your position as a residence hall staff person, students know that you have certain characteristics that the university values.

As an RA, you model behavior that others will come to assume is appropriate for students in college. If you have good study skills, new students in your living unit are more likely to develop good study skills as well. Likewise, if you spend most of your time throwing a Frisbee up and down the hallway, drinking beer with people in your living unit, or continually find that your time is occupied by your boyfriend or girlfriend, you are setting an entirely different example of behavior.

As an RA, you are expected to live by the rules and policies that your institution has set. Unless you can abide by them, do not expect your residents to do so. If you cannot abide by these policies, do not consider becoming an RA. When you accept responsibility as an RA, you also make a commitment to the position as it is defined. If you disagree with the administration's policies or regulations, try to change them through the appropriate supervisory channels. If you cannot change them and still cannot live with them, resign. Do not do yourself, the institution, and your residents a disservice by not enforcing the rules or by pretending that the policies and regulations do not exist.

Understand from the outset that your RA position extends outside your residence hall and onto the campus. This does not mean that you go about campus enforcing random rules and regulations, advising students on this and that, and asserting your staff position in places where it is not welcomed. It does mean that your role-modeling responsibility carries beyond your living unit. If you believe that you shed the cloak of RA when you leave your living unit, you are mistaken. While on campus – and at some universities off campus as well – you are expected to conduct yourself as a member of the staff. Amazingly, many RA's believe that as soon as they leave the residence hall they can become as wild and reckless as they please. Not only is this practice illogical, it is irresponsible.

As a Sac State Resident Advisor, you will be expected to conduct yourself as a leader and role model both on and off campus.

Advisor/Leader/Teacher

As a Resident Advisor, residents will assume you possess qualities of experience and maturity which qualify you as a leader. They will look to you for guidance, direction, and advice. As a leader, you will be in a position to encourage and develop leadership in others. As a Resident Advisor you will have the opportunity to teach and learn through facilitating floor meetings, planning activities, and addressing community problems/issues. There will be opportunity to explore and challenge values -- yours as well as the residents. You will have opportunity to create formalized learning situations by way of organizing programs and using campus resource personnel.

As a Resident Advisor, you are in a unique and important position. As a member of the Residential Life staff, you will be expected to pass onto residents, information concerning the Residential Life policies, procedures, and relevant campus information. You will be expected to communicate, interpret, and uphold policies and procedures in conjunction with the other staff members. A part of your responsibility is to be aware of your residents' different needs and direct them to the different services and alternatives available. You are also responsible to know to which agencies referrals can be made such as Psychological Services, Student Health Center, Financial Aid, and Academic Advising.

An important component in the Resident Advisor's job is to establish a positive, interactive relationship and be available to residents in your community. This may be accomplished by learning the students names and familiarizing yourself with their attitudes and behavior patterns. By the RA using good listening skills, learning student names and developing effective relationships with residents, the RA will be better able to understand the individual from their own framework.

Discipline/Crisis

A part of your function in working with residents in the hall is to help them assume responsibility for their behavior. How effective you are depends to a large extent on the type of atmosphere you have helped to create. If students develop a sense of group responsibility and cohesiveness, they will be able to carry out a program of self-discipline and you will have helped in the development of a responsible community in which everyone contributes.

How well you function in confrontations is dependent upon how well you function in the other aspects of your position -- particularly role-modeling. If you have established a relationship of trust and fairness with your residents, you will find the job of confrontation much easier. In those instances when you must confront undesirable behavior, be firm, be consistent, and follow up appropriately later. Never be unnecessarily confrontative or verbally/physically aggressive. Confrontations may involve dealing with either discipline or crisis. Your role in both cases will be to assess the situation, take the necessary steps to resolve issues, and be able to help residents find additional resources.

Administrative

As a Resident Advisor there are certain administrative duties which you must perform. This aspect of your job is the easiest to define, because it includes the mechanical and procedural duties which you must perform in order that the hall can operate efficiently. These duties include, but are not limited to, working desk duty, keeping records, checking students in and out of the hall, writing incident reports, and serving on committees. It is expected that you will be punctual, accurate, and responsible in handling these tasks.

Staff/University Support

You will be expected to communicate effectively with all members of the Residential Life community. Additionally, you should support all other staff member's efforts and Residential Life programs (this includes committees, projects, and meetings as assigned). You may be asked to assist with University and Residential Life public relations by explaining programs and duties to visitors, guests, parents, faculty, etc. In addition, you should also maintain open communication with your staff team and keep your Res. Life Coordinator informed of student activities and/or problems. You also are responsible for maintaining good relationships with other University personnel.

Periods of Employment

Resident Advisor duties generally commence during mid-August for training prior to the arrival of residents. There is no duty during the winter and spring breaks. During winter and spring breaks there may be options for staying in Sierra Hall. Sierra Hall Resident Advisors will receive priority since Sierra hall is the hall open during breaks. American River Courtyard may

be opened during designated breaks and American River Courtyard RAs get priority to staff the building during that time period. Winter duty commences the day prior to winter intersession classes. Spring duty generally commences the weekend prior to the return of the residents. Remuneration is paid room and board. Employment is contingent upon the occupancy of the complex.

Continued Employment

Resident Advisors may apply to return as an RA when performance evaluations from residents and supervisor have been positive.

Compensation

Compensation is paid room and board plus flex cash. Employment is contingent upon the occupancy of the complex. Benefits include priority registration and the opportunity to attend a RA conference.

For more detailed information, see the Agreement for Resident Advisor.