Position Description and Contract

The Resident Advisor (RA) is a para-professional staff member of the Office of College Houses and Academic Services (CHAS) who is expected to assume responsibility for an assigned area of a College House. The RA serves as mentor, advisor, and friend to residents. Under the direction and supervision of a House Dean, the RA is expected to assist in the development of community, encourage student initiated programming, and report inappropriate behavior. The RA provides support in emergencies and times of personal stress.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

1) The RA will make this position their highest non-academic priority. The RA will not accept additional employment or make other commitments that may limit their ability to meet the requirements of the position without the advance approval of the House Dean. A House Dean may restrict activities that fall outside of these responsibilities if the activities are likely to or have in the past negatively affected the staff member’s performance. The RA must abide by employment restrictions established by the Immigration and Naturalization service and other U.S. laws.

2) The RA must attend all sessions of staff orientation in August (August 8 through August 25, 2015) and in-service training meetings, as designated by the House Dean and CHAS. The RA may move-in to their room no earlier than Friday, August 7, 2015.

3) The RA is required to live alone in the residential space assigned by the House Dean.

4) The RA is required to contract and maintain cellular telephone service and set-up and regularly monitor a personal e-mail account no later than August 17, 2015. In addition, RAs must provide a cell phone number to the House Dean no later than this date.

5) The RA is required to remain in residence throughout the period of appointment, including fall term break, Thanksgiving recess, spring recess, the undergraduate exam periods and Senior Week. In planning for Winter Break, the RA should not expect to leave campus before Winter Break officially begins for staff on Saturday, December 19, 2015 at 2:00 pm. and must return to campus the day duty resumes for the spring semester, January 8, 2016. In the Houses that close for Winter Break undergraduate students are not permitted to remain in residence, including the RA. Conversely, in the Houses remaining open for break, the RA may be required to remain in residence during Winter Break, and take a duty shift. The House Dean will establish duty schedules early in the fall semester.

6) The RA will not be absent from the College House for more than two consecutive days without prior approval from the House Dean, except in extreme emergencies.

7) The RA is required to read and be familiar with the current Emergency Staff Manual and any other material distributed by College Houses and Academic Services, House Deans, or other department administrators.

8) The RA is expected to know and observe University regulations and to serve as a role model for House residents. The RA should demonstrate behavior befitting a responsible community leader. The RA should encourage students to respect each other’s rights and fulfill their obligations regarding the House, CHAS, and University rules and regulations.

9) The RA is expected to refrain from engaging in any exploitative relationship with a resident within their area of direct supervision. This includes, but is not limited to, romantic relationships, a relationship that provides undue privileges to any resident, or a relationship that strips away the rights or privileges of a resident.
EXPECTATIONS FOR RESIDENT SUPPORT, COMMUNITY BUILDING AND PROGRAMMING

In order for the College House Program and an individual RA to be effective each RA is expected to know their residents well. This requires an RA to be visible and actively engaged with each resident. Specific RA responsibilities for programming will be assigned by the House Dean and Faculty Master of each College House. Programs will be designed to make all residents informed, active participants in the academic and co-curricular life of the University. Availability both during the evening and weekends is important to community development.

1) The RA is required to maintain a schedule that assures regular interaction and availability to residents on their floor or wing.

2) The RA is required to develop and implement various methodologies that keep residents informed of programmatic activities as well as CHAS or University information. This may be accomplished in many ways that include but are not limited to: regular floor or wing meetings and study breaks, list-serves, bulletin boards, flyers or posters, and many forms of electronic communication such as Facebook or direct email. On-going personal interaction with residents is a key component of RA success, as well as, the creation of respectful and engaged communities of residents on a floor or wing. Successful RA’s have learned that individual interaction with residents at least once each week has been a crucial part of developing strong floor communities.

3) The RA is required to assist and encourage residents to become actively involved in the planning and implementation of programs in the House that reflect the needs of diverse residents and help to build both cohesive House and floor or wing communities.

4) The RA is expected to utilize the dining contract by eating regularly in the dining facilities with residents and participating in House dining and dining-related activities, as part of community-building responsibilities.

5) The RA is expected to demonstrate support for other staff and residents by attending House events and by assisting with student groups such as residential councils, manager boards, judicial boards, interest groups, and activities committees.

6) The RA is required to attend and participate in all House staff meetings and to meet individually with the House Dean as necessary.

7) The RA is required to submit program activity reports, surveys and evaluations as requested by the House Dean and CHAS.

8) The RA is expected to provide initial counseling to students, while making appropriate referrals to other University support services, when necessary. The RA should mediate roommate/floor conflicts whenever possible, referring unresolved roommate problems to the House Dean. In all such matters, the RA is required to consult with the House Dean regarding all student matters.

9) The RA is expected to serve as a communication link between and among residents, the House Dean, the Faculty Master and CHAS.

10) The RA is expected to actively participate in recruitment of candidates, staff selection and staff development. This includes participation in open houses, information sessions, interview training sessions and interviews.

11) The RA is expected to assist with New Student Orientation and other University sponsored activities.

12) The RA is expected to complete any additional responsibilities that may be required by the House Dean. Additional responsibilities may be covered in individual "College House Addenda" which must be signed and returned with this contract.

EXPECTATIONS FOR OPERATIONAL SERVICES

1) The RA is required to assist with residential move-in periods that occur in mid-August and January and move-out processes in December and in May as directed by the House Dean and CHAS.
2) The RA is required to participate in the duty system of the house, and submit incident reports as necessary. Duty usually requires carrying a cell phone and being within a few minutes (no more than five minutes) travel time of the residence during the entire on-duty period. RAs are expected to refrain from activities (both prior to and during duty) that would impair their ability to respond appropriately to a situation while on duty. This includes the use of alcohol and other controlled substances.

3) The RA is expected to report damage and malfunction of the College House's facilities through appropriate channels and cooperate with all departments and entities providing residential services.

4) The RA is expected to observe and report problems in the performance of safety/security personnel, equipment and in the operation of security systems.

5) The RA is expected to respond to emergencies appropriately, according to the University and College Houses and Academic Services Emergency Response Procedures.

6) The RA is expected to participate in emergency drills and the dissemination of information related to fire safety, emergency procedures and security information.

ROOM AND BOARD

The RA is provided a furnished room designated for single occupancy and a dining contract for meals. Meals are provided for the staff-training period prior to the start of the fall semester and to dine with residents during the course of the academic year to facilitate activities and meetings with members of the house community. As a result, the meal contract provided is not intended to meet any student’s daily nutritional needs.

Rooms are provided for staff during the term of appointment only. Size, shape, and furnishings of staff rooms vary. All residence staff members must sign a Residential Services Occupancy Agreement at the time their individual assignments are made. As stated in the Residential Services Occupancy Agreement, residents are not permitted to: paint, add or remove wall partitions or modify the room in anyway.

The RA may be relocated at the discretion of College Houses and Academic Services. There are a variety of room types used by the College House system; RAs should not assume that relocation means to a similar room type.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is limited to full-time, registered Penn undergraduate students in good standing with a minimum GPA of 2.50, and must maintain this minimum GPA for the duration of appointment. Only students who will have attained junior or senior year status by the fall term of their appointment are eligible for appointment as an RA. CHAS reserves the right to confirm good standing throughout the academic year.

TERM OF APPOINTMENT

The amount of time needed to accomplish the assigned responsibilities varies, but an average of 15-20 hours per week during the school year should be anticipated. This includes time spent at meals, in weekly staff meetings, in the House dining room and on duty. The RA appointment commences on August 8, 2015 and terminates on May 18, 2016.

SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION

Satisfactory performance is evaluated in terms of the successful completion of the assigned responsibilities. RA evaluations will be performed once per semester. Results will be shared with the RA and discussions between the RA and the House Dean and/or Faculty Master will be held with the goal of improving RA performance.

TERMINATION

The appointment may be terminated prior to its normal expiration date if the RA fails to perform the above-specified duties or for conduct at variance with that expected of a RA, or if status as an undergraduate student in good standing (full time
with a GPA of 2.5 or above) lapses. If termination occurs prior to the end of the appointment period, the RA has five days to comply with move-out procedures.

REAPPOINTMENT

The RA is eligible to apply for re-appointment for a second term provided they continue to be in good standing at the University of Pennsylvania, and dependent upon their first-term performance. The RA interested in returning to the position must go through a formal re-appointment process. This process may include a performance review meeting with their supervisor and completion of an online application.

IF YOU ARE ACCEPTING THE POSITION OFFERED IN ___________________ COLLEGE HOUSE, AND HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE LETTER OF APPOINTMENT, PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS ENTIRE LETTER TO YOUR HOUSE DEAN. THIS APPOINTMENT BECOMES VALID WHEN SIGNED BY ALL THE PARTIES NAMED BELOW AND CHAS CONFIRMS THAT YOU HAVE MET ALL REQUIREMENTS FOR APPOINTMENT, INCLUDING THE MAINTENANCE OF A MINIMUM 2.50 GPA. A COPY OF THE COMPLETED LETTER WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU AT THE ADDRESS YOU INDICATE BELOW.

ALL POSITIONS WILL BE REPORTED BY COLLEGE HOUSES AND ACADEMIC SERVICES TO STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES. THE VALUE OF THE RA APPOINTMENT IS CONSIDERED AS A RESOURCE IN EVALUATING FINANCIAL NEED. BE ADVISED THAT APPOINTMENTS CAN HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON AN INDIVIDUAL’S FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE (I.E., GRANT AND WORK STUDY ALLOCATION). AS A RESULT APPLICANTS ARE HIGHLY ENCOURAGED TO CONSULT WITH STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES BEFORE ACCEPTING THE RA POSITION. STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES CAN BE CONTACTED THROUGH THEIR WEBSITE AT WWW.SFS.UPENN.EDU, VIA EMAIL AT SFSMAIL@EXCHANGE.UPENN.EDU, OR BY CALLING THEIR OFFICE AT (215) 898-1988.

Printed Name of Resident Advisor ___________________________________________ PennCard # ______________

Signature of Resident Advisor ______________________________________________ Date __________________________

Signature of House Dean ________________________________________________ Date __________________________

Summer Mailing Address of Resident Advisor:
Number and Street __________________________________________________________
City, State and Zip Code ______________________________________________________
Cell Phone ______________________________ Email __________________________________________

Permanent Mailing Address of Resident Advisor:
Number and Street __________________________________________________________
City, State and Zip Code ______________________________________________________
Cell Phone ______________________________ Email __________________________________________