



# COLLEGE HOUSES & ACADEMIC SERVICES

## 2020-2021 Resident Advisor Position Description and Contract

The Resident Advisor (RA) is a para-professional staff member of the Office of College Houses and Academic Services (CHAS) at the University of Pennsylvania 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.

### Equal Opportunity/Equal Access/Affirmative Action/ Disabilities Accommodations

The University of Pennsylvania is an Equal Opportunity/Equal Access/Affirmative Action institution. The university seeks excellence through diversity among its administrators, faculty, staff and students. The university prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, veteran status, or marital status. Consistent with its obligations under the law, the University will provide reasonable accommodation to individuals with a disability who requires accommodation to perform the essential functions of the job. Please contact Office of Student Disability Services to register at 215-573-9235 or by email at [vpul-sds@mail@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:vpul-sds@mail@pobox.upenn.edu).

### 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. An RA may not hold full time employment and serve in the Resident Advisor position. 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 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and other U.S. laws.
- 2) The RA must attend all sessions of Fall staff training and orientation in August (August 14 through August 31, 2020), Winter staff training (January 11, 2021) and all additional in-service training meetings and retreats, as designated by the House Dean and CHAS. The RA may move-in to their room no earlier than Friday, August 14, 2020.
- 3) The RA is required to live alone in the residential space assigned by the House Dean/CHAS.
- 4) The RA is required to contract and maintain cellular telephone service and set-up and regularly monitor their Penn e-mail account no later than August 1, 2020. 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 Wednesday, December 23, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. and must return to campus the day duty resumes for the spring semester, January 8, 2021. 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 know and observe the University of Pennsylvania's Sexual Misconduct Policy (<https://titleixoffice.upenn.edu>), as well as, the College House Policy on Consensual Sexual or Exploitive Relationships (<https://www.collegehouses.upenn.edu/policies/relationship-policy>), which follows:

The mission of the College Houses is to provide supportive residential communities for the education of undergraduate students. Within this environment, myriad connections take place among students, faculty, and staff that often have a lifelong impact. On the foundation of these connections, the College Houses become home to powerful communities.

College House communities depend on the integrity of the relationships between faculty, staff, and students within each individual house. For this reason, any sexual or exploitive relationship between a College House's Dean, Faculty Director, Faculty Fellow, Coordinator or other CHAS residential staff and any undergraduate or graduate student resident, Resident Advisor or Graduate Associate within that house is prohibited, regardless of whether there is any direct supervisory relationship. This prohibition extends to relationships between RA/GA staff and the residents of their specific halls or floors.

This includes but is not limited to romantic or sexual relationships, a relationship that provides undue privileges or a relationship that strips away rights or privileges. Even if both parties have consented to the relationship, such relationships can adversely affect the wider house community, raising serious concerns about the validity of the consent, conflicts of interest, and the unfair treatment of others.

The following offices are responsible for receiving and investigating complaints regarding violations of the College House Policy:

- The CHAS Executive Director
- The CHAS Faculty Director
- The Vice Provost for Education
- The Office of Affirmative Action and equal opportunity programs

## **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 Director 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 RAs 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 community building dining allocation to eat regularly in the dining facilities with residents and participate in House dining and dining-related activities in order to build strong relationships with their residents and strong communities with their floors, suites or sections 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 Director 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 information 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.

## **CONTRACT AGREEMENT**

### **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. Students who will have attained sophomore, 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 14, 2020 and terminates at noon on May 19, 2021.**

### **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, with a completed written performance evaluation to be submitted at end of each semester. Written RA evaluations must be submitted as part of a returning GA application. Evaluations will be shared with the RA and a formal facilitated meeting must take place with the house dean and RA.

### **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 normally 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 on 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.

### **ROOM AND COMMUNITY BUILDING DINING ALLOCATION**

The RA receives a rent-free single occupancy accommodation in their assigned College House.

In order to assist the RA in meeting the position expectations of building strong relationships with their residents and strong communities with their floors, suites or sections each RA is provided a community building dining allocation. The community building allocation is provided so that an RA is able to dine with their residents during the academic year approximately three times per week. This allocation also includes the opportunity to dine with their staff during the pre-service training period in August. The dining allocation is not intended to meet any RA's daily nutritional needs.

Please note that this dining allocation is provided for the RA's use only. Meals cannot be exchanged for additional dining dollars nor be reallocated to any other individual or program, such as "Swipe Out Hunger". The dining allocation does include the ability for the RA to invite up to five (5) guests per semester to dine with them.

Rooms are provided for staff during the term of appointment only. Size, shape, and furnishings of staff rooms vary. All residence staff members are responsible to review and honor the Terms and Conditions for University Housing as listed at this link: <http://cms.business-services.upenn.edu/residential-services/room-rates-and-policies/policies-forms.html>

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.

**STUDENT REGISTRAR & FINANCIAL SERVICES**

CHAS is required to report all student positions to Student Registrar & Financial Services (SRFS). The value of the GA appointment may be considered as a resource in evaluating financial arrangements for your graduate program. Be advised that GA appointment may have a significant impact on individual's financial aid packages (i.e. grants, work study). As a result, all applicants, whether new or returning, are highly encouraged to consult with SRFS regarding any potential impact before accepting the RA position. SRFS can be contacted through their website, [www.srfs.upenn.edu](http://www.srfs.upenn.edu), email [sfsmail@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:sfsmail@pobox.upenn.edu), or by call their office at 215-898-1988.

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By signing below, you are accepting the offer for a RA position in College Houses & Academic Services (CHAS), placement \_\_\_\_\_ College House. You have read and understand the position description and contract as well as the terms and conditions for housing. This appointment becomes valid when signed by all the parties named below and confirmation of all requirements for appointment is met, including active standing at the university and maintenance of a minimum 2.50 GPA. A copy of the signed contract will be returned to you either electronic or in paper format.

Printed Name of Resident Advisor \_\_\_\_\_ PennCard # \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Resident Advisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of House Dean/CHAS Representative \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information:**

Number and Street \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_