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Description automatically generatedRA

Selection Process

Fall 2021

# Resident Assistant Application Process

Thank you for your interest in the Resident Assistant Program. We have assembled the following information to help you better understand the selection standards and process. Please read through it carefully.

TO APPLY

### **Requirements**

### To be considered for the program

To be considered for the Resident Assistant Program the candidate must have:

* A minimum 2.40 GPA
* 12 Credit hours earned BEFORE spring semester from Penn State  
  (Current semester, advanced placement and transfer credits do NOT count)
* Full-time Penn State student status
* Attended an RA Information Session

### Once through the initial screening and interview

To be considered for the program once you have made it through the initial screening and interview process the candidate must have:

* successfully complete and receive a “B” grade in the three-credit Higher Education (HIED) 302 class
* be given a positive recommendation by your instructor
* maintain a 2.40 GPA throughout your entire time as a resident assistant
* enrolled and maintain status as a full time Penn State student (12 credits undergraduate)
* abide by the University’s Code of Conduct

Your status within the University, the criminal justice system, The Student Conduct history of candidates will be checked prior to selection and placement and may preclude a candidate from being hired.

Additionally, as an RA, you cannot hold the office of President in a governing student organization such as ARHS, UPUA, CCSG, or any residence hall area government.

**Selection Process Timeline**

This selection process will consist of an evaluation of your application, and two separate interviews with Coordinators and current RAs. Fill out the application carefully. The schedule is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| September 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10,13, 14 | Information Sessions <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/reslife/ra> |
| September 2 - 17 | On-line application available |
| September 17 at 11:55 p.m. | Deadline to submit online applications |
| September 27 | Eligibility Status for interviews notification letter sent out (Email) |
| September 27 - 30 | Candidates sign up for 2 interviews |
| October 5, 6 & 12 | Coordinators and RAs interview with each candidate |
| November 10 | Final email notification to applicants (Eligibility for and invitation to enroll in HIED 302: The Resident Assistant: Theory and Practice) |
| November 19, Noon | Deadline to submit/ accept HIED 302 class invitation |

Please keep in mind that due to the actual RA placement process, we cannot guarantee each RA candidate will receive an RA position.

## Remuneration

REMUNERATION for participating in the Resident Assistant Program varies from year to year. This year, 2021/22, the remuneration package includes room, meal plan #3, and $500 towards tuition each semester. The tuition credit amount depends on yearly budget approval. There is a possibility that Resident Assistants will be assigned a roommate and/or suitemate; a single room is not guaranteed.

## **Training**

All RAs are expected and required to attend training in its entirety for Fall RA training (approximately 10 days prior to Fall arrival) and Spring RA training (several days prior to Spring arrival).

Again, we thank you for your interest and wish you luck in the process!

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the   
Resident Assistant Program, please feel free to contact   
John Hurst, Assistant Director   
p: 814-865-2890   
e: jeh9@psu.edu

# Residence Assistant Term Limits

Recently, there have been questions concerning Resident Assistant term limits. To clarify the policy, please read the following. Resident Assistants may not serve for more than two years.

RAs who are appointed in a Spring semester will be allowed to complete a fifth semester in Residence Life. Non-University Park RAs will also have a term limit that includes their experience at their respective Penn State campus/college location. Summer Session does not count towards the term limit policy.

This is how we determine the RA term limits:

* If the RA begins in Fall, they have Fall-Spring, Fall-Spring
* If the RA begins in Spring, they have Spring, Fall-Spring, Fall-Spring
* If the RA begins in Fall and takes leave in Spring, they have the following Fall-Spring if a vacancy exists, and then ends (see assignment priority)
* If the RA begins in Fall, works Spring, and takes leave the following Fall, they can come back for Spring if a vacancy exists, and then ends (see assignment priority)
* If the RA begins in Fall, works Spring and Fall, then takes leave in Spring, they end

RA Eligibility Chart  
Remember, there are no guarantees of appointment or re-appointment.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| fall | spring | fall | spring | end of term | | |
| fall | leave | fall | spring | end of term | | |
| fall | spring | leave | spring | end of term | | |
| fall | spring | fall | leave | end of term | | |
|  | SPRING | FALL | SPRING | FALL | SPRING | End of term |
|  | SPRING | LEAVE | SPRING | FALL | SPRING | End of term |
|  | SPRING | FALL | LEAVE | FALL | SPRING | End of term |
|  | SPRING | FALL | SPRING | LEAVE | SPRING | End of term |
|  | SPRING | FALL | SPRING | FALL | LEAVE | End of term |

# Resident Assistant Program Description

The Resident Assistant (RA) works in a residence hall or apartment setting under the direct supervision of a professional live-in staff member (Coordinator/Assistant Coordinator). The role of the RA is to work with other residence hall staff to facilitate an environment within the residence hall community that promotes the educational experience of residential living. The RA articulates to residents the philosophy and policies of the Office of Residence Life, Student Affairs, the Penn State community and represents the needs of students to the administration.

The following are basic expectations of an RA. Specific responsibilities and expectations vary slightly among residential areas/campuses. It is your responsibility to become familiar with the *Student Code of Conduct*, the *Housing Terms and Conditions*, and the *Residence Life Resident Assistant Manual*. Duties, responsibilities, and qualifications include but are not limited to those listed below.

## Duties and Responsibilities

### Community Development

* Assist residents in developing a meaningful community that supports and promotes the ideals of personal and academic responsibility and engaged citizenship.
* Develop a Community Agreement/Pledge and facilitate regular community meetings to encourage ongoing development and engagement within the residential living environment.
* Commit to and become involved in the development of meaningful educational, social, recreational, and cultural events for residents.
* Assess residents’ needs and plan events that effectively meet the needs outlined in the Educational Priority and Residence Life Curriculum.
* Encourage residents to pursue their educational and personal interests and plan their own events and activities.
* Support department and University wide initiatives for community development and education.
* Engage in positive intentional interactions with individual members of the community.
* Encourage students to take responsibility for their actions and accept consequences for their behavior.

### Academic Connection

* Promote and encourage the academic experience in support of living-learning communities.
* Highlight the clear connection between in-class academics with out-of-class learning and growth through intentional and meaningful conversations.
* Promote opportunities for students to engage with each other, faculty and staff with a focus on the academic area of interest of the learning community (where appropriate).
* Promote building relationships with faculty members, academic advisors, and academic support services.
* Encourage residents to pursue their educational interests in a supportive environment.
* Engage students in formal and informal peer interactions in relation to area of academic interest.

### Role Modeling

* Serve as a highly visible campus leader and representative of the Office of Residence Life and the Penn State University.
* Remain in good social, financial, academic and conduct standing with the University.
* Uphold high standards and live in accordance with the policies outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, the Housing Terms and Conditions, and the Residence Life RA Manual.
* Understand that role modeling behavior is considered during your appointment at the University including on and off campus as well as in cyber profiles and social media outlets.

### Individual Helping and Referral

* Assist residents with academic, personal and social matters within the limits of his/her training and capabilities and serve as a resource and referral agent.
* Get to know residents in the assigned area of responsibility well enough to recognize changes in behavior patterns for which counseling or other assistance may be necessary.
* Become familiar with campus and community resources.
* Be aware of the scope of your responsibility and consult with a supervisor.
* Maintain appropriate confidentiality regarding students’ records and incidents.

### Meetings and Training Programs

* Successfully complete the RA Class or equivalent and RA Training.
* Attend all Residence Life and environment-specific staff meetings and training programs including semester arrival preparations in their entirety. No exceptions will be granted without appropriate consultation.

### Enforcement of Regulations & Policies

* Understand, abide by and enforce all University regulations and policies in a fair and consistent manner.
* Educate residents about their role to abide by University regulations and policies.
* Facilitate a climate that promotes individual responsibility and protects the rights of the individual and the community.
* As a designated Campus Security Authority (CSA), uphold the Clery Act and Title IX guidelines.

### Emergency Response

* Assume on-call/duty responsibility as scheduled (8:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.); at night, on weekends, during break periods when the University remains open (i.e. Labor Day, etc.) and during hall openings/closings to ensure proper coverage.
* Serve as needed in times of emergency response, i.e. severe inclement weather, crisis response, etc.
* Live in residence each night throughout the year during contract periods, including examination periods, unless an overnight absence is approved by the supervisor.

### Safety and Security

* Conduct rounds of the assigned housing area in accordance with protocol.
* Document and submit reports within appropriate timeline.
* Educate residents on fire and personal safety as well as evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency.
* Ensure the community is safe and livable for residents.

### Administration

* Read and become familiar with administrative procedures contained in the Student Code of Conduct, the Housing Terms and Conditions, and the Residence Life RA Manual.
* Be present for and assist with opening and closing the halls/buildings.
* Assist with housing administration functions as assigned.
* Collect and disseminate information in order to generate reports as required.
* Serve on committees or assigned functional areas that are initiated throughout the year.
* Be fiscally responsible when using department funds.
* Assume other related duties as assigned.

### Outside Commitments

* Limit outside activities to avoid conflict with residence hall responsibilities which are a priority.
* Review and receive approval for any significant additional commitments with supervisor prior to start of term and throughout the semester. Employment and other commitments must not interfere with the RA duties.
* Amount of hours at an outside job should be no more than 15 hours per week; all outside employment be approved.
* Restrict being a president of a governing student organization (ARHS, CCSG, UPUA and any area government).
* Restrict positions on executive boards unless there is prior approval from the supervisor (see addendum).

### Evaluation & Reappointment

* Resident Assistants are not necessarily reappointed for the following academic year.  Reappointments are contingent upon the Resident Assistant’s performance during the previous year.  Some of the factors taken into account are successful completion of tasks, positive evaluation by the supervisor, demonstration of continued engagement for the RA role, and needs of the student population.
* Residence Life maintains the right to reassign the Resident Assistant upon the needs of our office and the student population.
* Each campus reserves the right to have expressed term limits.

### Qualifications

* Enroll and maintain status as a full time Penn State student in the academic year (12 credit hours undergraduate) in good financial standing throughout the appointment period.
* Possess and maintain the minimum required GPA as noted on your campus addendum throughout your recruitment and appointment period.
* Maintain good student conduct standing with the Penn State University throughout appointment. Past violations of policy or the law may result in a candidate or Resident Assistant being removed.

### Compensation

* Compensation is dependent upon placement.
* Please refer to offer letter for specifics regarding compensation

# The Reality of Being an RA

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What am I required to attend while being an RA? | * Fall RA training (approximately 10 days prior to fall arrival) and Spring RA Training (several days prior to spring arrival); you are expected and required to attend training in its entirety. * Your supervisory group (“Supergroup”) staff meeting every Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. * A scheduled 1-on-1 with your Coordinator at least every two weeks. |
| **What ARE SOME COMMON RESPONSIBILITIES?** | * Committing to your RA role as a top priority and managing time accordingly. * Checking your Residence Life mailbox at the area Residence Life office daily. * Completing paperwork as assigned by your Coordinator or other supervisor. * Maintaining a high level of visibility and presence on your floor(s). * Attaining a familiarity with the policies and procedures outlined in the RA manual. * Participating in at least one fire drill and/or Safety and Security program every semester depending on area needs. * Assisting in the RA selection process for new RA staff between semesters. * Planning and implementing community building opportunities for your community; specific requirements vary between Coordinators, residence hall areas, and special living environments. * Assisting in interviews of professional staff members. * Confronting issues where PSU policy has been violated and handling conflict mediation and crisis intervention with the support of Residence Life professional staff. * Working with a diverse population and meeting specific needs posed by the community. |
| **WHAT IF I HAVE OTHER COMMITMENTS?** | * RA’s are permitted to work up to 15 hours outside of their RA role with the prior approval of their Coordinator supervisor; however, this is to be considered secondary to the RA role which must take priority; RA’s in their first semester are discouraged from outside employment in order to be successful in their RA experience. * RA’s are always encouraged to be involved on campus in groups, organizations, etc.; however, attendance and participation in these groups is secondary to the RA role; these time commitments will be worked out individually with your Coordinator. |
| **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN RA “ON DUTY”?** | * Only RA’s who are on duty are required to be in their building between 8:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.; all other RA’s are strongly encouraged to be spending adequate time on their floor in order to be successfully developing relationships and floor community. * The amount of days spent “on duty” depends on the size of your Supergroup and the needs of your building; this can range from once every two weeks and 3 weekends a semester to once a week and 6 weekends a semester. |
| **AM I REQUIRED TO BE IN THE RESIDENCE HALLS OVER THE WEEKENDS?** | * RA’s are allowed up to five weekends per semester away from campus; these weekends must be cleared with your Coordinator prior to leaving and may not include any days “on duty”. |

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the typical time commitment for an RA?

All RAs are required to complete a certain amount of duty nights. This depends on how large your supervisory group (supergroup) is. You may be required to do 5-10 weekend shifts and one weekday shift every other week or every three weeks, again, depending on the number of resident assistants in your staff. In addition, there is a weekly mandatory staff meeting usually on Wednesdays between 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. (If this time does not work with you, your coordinator and supergroup will work together to find a better time to do the meeting.) Additionally, typically coordinators will require you to host at least one community builder event each week and attend a 1:1 meeting with your coordinator usually once every other week.

Additionally, RAs are required to come early for fall and spring semesters for mandatory training. And, RAs are either required to stay until the halls close for spring/fall break and can come back to campus late OR RAs can leave early during spring/fall break and are required to come back before halls open again. In addition to this commitment, you are expected to be on the floor and to be an active member. Your residents should be able to reach you as needed. You are required to sleep in your dorm room every night with the exception of 10 requests for nights off.

## Will the HIED302 course count toward general education credit?

Since requirements vary by major, it may or may not. Your academic advisor should be able to answer this question.

## What happens if I’m not selected for the HIED302 course?

You may reapply as many times as you want. The online application opens shortly after the beginning of each fall and spring semester following the information sessions.

## Is the HIED302 course offered in the summer?

No, the class is only offered during the fall and spring semesters.

## Do I get to pick where I will be an RA?

No, placement is ultimately up to the coordinators. But, you can choose to apply and hopefully be chosen to interview for a Special Population RA vacancy in an area/hall you wish to live in.

## What happens if I want to study abroad?

If you are selected for the HIED 302 class and are going abroad, you may defer and take the class the following semester.

If you take the HIED 302 class and are picked up as an RA the same semester that you are going to be abroad, you can defer and wait to be an RA until the following semester.

## Are RAs ever able to go home?

RAs can stay off campus ten nights per semester if this is cleared with the coordinators and at least half the staff is remaining on campus on any given night.

## Is it possible for an RA to have another job?

### First semester RAs:

Are not allowed to have jobs outside of the RA position. In certain cases, permission needs to be secured from the Assistant Director of the area in which they are assigned.

### Second semester RAs:

Can work a maximum of 15 hours per week at another job if they are fulfilling and prioritizing their RA responsibilities and have the permission of their coordinator.

## Am I able to be an RA if I’m a student athlete, in blue band, etc.?

Being an RA should come second only to being a student. Being an RA must have priority over all other positions. If you can attend all the required RA events and fulfill all your RA duties, you may be a part of another organization. This is something you should discuss with the advisor of the organization to see if the time commitment to the organization would prevent you from being able to be an RA.

## How often do RAs have to be on duty?

This can vary depending on a couple different things. Since RAs divide duties evenly, size of the supergroup (supervisory group) will affect how often each RA will need to go on duty. Different areas may have different requirements pertaining to number of RAs needing to be on duty on any given night. Certain days of the week or specific weekends there may be a need for more RAs on duty.

The RA role is essential to our educational efforts in Residence Halls.  
We need people like you who are committed to helping others succeed in their living and learning experience here at Penn State.