

PROSPECTIVE RESIDENT DIRECTOR GUIDEBOOK

A guide for Resident Director (RD) applicants



**HOUSING AND
RESIDENCE LIFE**

STRIVE FOR PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION.

RESIDENT DIRECTOR GUIDEBOOK

DHRL: Department of Housing and Residence Life

VISION

The Department of Housing and Residence Life strives to make on-campus living the student's best choice for education and personal growth.

MISSION

The Department of Housing and Residence Life provides housing programs, and services, that:

- Establish a setting that enables learning to take place;
- Are affordable, enjoyable, safe, and well-maintained;
- Motivate students to participate in on-campus activities;
- Connect academic work and resident living experiences to maximize student learning and development;
- Establish and foster a diverse, interactive learning community

EDUCATIONAL PRIORITY

As a result of living in our campus residence halls and apartments, students engage in communities that support their academic, social, and personal development.

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Dear Prospective Resident Director (RD) Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in a graduate assistantship with the Department of Housing and Residence Life (DHRL) at East Tennessee State University (ETSU). The RD position at ETSU is a tremendous learning opportunity for graduate students who are seeking positions that impact student learning and growth in college.

As a Department, we have a commitment to our students, and give a great deal of time and energy to ensuring that RDs are trained and well-supported. As a unit within the Division of Student Life and Enrollment (SLE), we are also committed to hiring individuals who are invested in establishing and maintaining an on-campus atmosphere that supports the personal development of students.

This guide will provide you with details regarding the RD position, as well as information regarding the structure of our Department. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We look forward to receiving your application.

Sincerely,

ETSU Housing and Residence Life

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Position Overview

The fundamental role of the RD is to facilitate and ensure that the residential experience engages students and fosters an atmosphere conducive to the personal development and growth of residents and staff.

RDs work together and with the Department of Housing and Residence Life (DHRL) in establishing and supporting Departmental academic initiatives, living-learning communities, the residential curriculum, and enacting our residential model. Additionally, RDs provide support for University and Student Life and Enrollment initiatives. This is a live-in position with a contract of one academic year (fall & spring semesters). This graduate assistantship is not available during summer terms, although are opportunities to apply for internships with the Department during the summer.

Qualifications

Previous experience in residence life is preferred, but not required. Knowledge of student development and residential living-learning philosophies, interpersonal communication, and organizational skills are necessary to lead and direct hall staff and students. RDs must have an ability to interact with a diverse student population. Other qualifications include the ability to be flexible, work as a team, organize tasks, prioritize duties, and effectively complete the various components of the RD position, including the following physical requirements:

- Visually assess the community, surroundings, and situations that occur spontaneously, and respond accordingly;
- Verbally communicate with staff, residents, and supervisors in casual and crisis interactions;
- Use and operate keys/access cards, elevators, duty phones, and computer systems;
- Access and respond to situations where they occur (i.e. inside student rooms, bathrooms, hallways, stairwells, elevators, and building lobbies)

In accordance with Tennessee state law, all residence hall and apartment staff must successfully pass a national and local criminal background check and have fingerprints on file with ETSU Police before starting work. Please note: applicants for the RD position must possess a social security number at the time of application (required to complete the background check) and be eligible to work in the United States. A social security number can only be issued in-person at a social security office within the United States.

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Duties and Responsibilities

The following pages represent a guideline for the responsibilities of an RD. Due to the ever-evolving needs of our students, other duties may be assigned. Training takes place in late-July/August, prior to the opening of on-campus housing, and throughout the year. This allows for further refining of basic skills and professional development of the RD staff team.

As stated in the introduction to the position, the fundamental role of the RD is to facilitate and ensure that the residential experience engages students and fosters an atmosphere conducive to the personal development and growth of residents and staff. This is fulfilled in all of the following duties and responsibilities, as well as many other ways related to and separate from the position.



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Student Engagement

Student engagement refers to building an inclusive community that supports students in developing a sense of belonging, critical thinking skills, and personal responsibility. Student engagement requires the following:

- Maintaining a high level of visibility and availability to both residents and staff
- Being attuned to student and staff morale, needs, and interests
- Acting as a source of friendly counsel, and a referral to available campus resources for academic, career, or personal concerns
- Coaching students and staff in the use of affective statements to actively confront situations of inappropriate behavior, intolerance, and bias
- Recognizing and capitalizing on teachable moments
- Creating learning opportunities within the facility
- Ensuring that reciprocal relationships between students and staff are developed
- Developing strategies for educational, recreational, and social student involvement that meets the needs of the community
- Utilizing online resources appropriately to connect to the residential community
- Informing and educating residents regarding community standards
- Supporting individuals and communities during and after crisis

Developing and Advising the Community Council, and Working with Student Leaders

Community Councils are active, registered campus organizations. Advising includes the following:

- Identifying and actively recruiting students within the hall to form an active Community Council, and participating in any associated trainings
- Conducting Community Council elections
- Assisting Community Councils in goal-setting, self-governance, performing officer duties, recognizing programming needs, providing programs for individual floors/halls/campus, developing leadership skills, and overall maintenance of a positive community atmosphere
- Promoting resident involvement and participation in Residence Hall Association (RHA) and National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH) meetings, events, and conferences.

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Staff Supervision and Training

Supervision of residential student staff involves coaching, mentoring, and modeling with a student-centered focus, reflecting development processes and the educational initiatives of the DHRL. This is accomplished through the following:

- Developing effective working relationships through effective leadership, communication, and teamwork
- Conducting 1:1 meetings with hall staff
- Providing constructive feedback that clearly and frequently defines hall staff duties, expectations, and responsibilities
- Scheduling, supervising, and evaluating the daily work of hall staff within assigned facility/facilities
- Preparing and conducting weekly scheduled staff meetings for the purpose of disseminating information, planning, and coordinating the work of staff
- Assisting with recruiting, interviewing, and selecting hall staff

Administrative and Management Functions

RDs manage hall staff, programming budgets, safety and security, crisis intervention, and facilities. These functions include the following:

- Scheduling, training, supervising, and evaluating the daily work of hall staff as assigned
- Maintaining open communication lines with the DHRL, both residence life and operations, through checking hall mailbox and University email on a daily basis, providing updates on problems and concerns, and submitting appropriate reports in a timely manner
- Conducting the opening and closing of assigned facility/facilities at the beginning and end of each semester and breaks
- Attending weekly meetings with DHRL and respective supervising Area Coordinator or Apartments Manager
- Ensuring the timely distribution and posting of correspondence and other information
- Reviewing duty logs and other reports on a daily basis; providing appropriate follow-up and referral
- Maintaining hall office and files, including on-call schedule, checklists, visitation forms, key and card inventories, and other forms/information necessary for the smooth operation of the assigned facility/facilities
- Promoting a proactive, education, disciplinary philosophy that includes the enforcement of Housing and University policies and conducting individual disciplinary intervention meetings.

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- Knowing and implementing appropriate crisis and incident response protocols while on or off-duty, which may require visually assessing the community, surroundings, and situations; verbally communicating with staff, residents, and supervisors; using/operating keys and access cards, elevators, duty phones, and computer systems; accessing situations where they occur (i.e. inside student rooms, bathrooms, hallways, stairwells, elevators, and building lobbies); and accurate and timely documentation
- Working with custodial and maintenance staff on a daily basis to coordinate maintenance requests and follow-up procedures
- Maintaining a proactive approach to building damage/vandalism, related discipline, and recording of appropriate charges
- Coordinating and conducting regular facility inspections and procedures to ensure the health, safety, security, and maintenance condition of the residents and facility
- Maintaining key/card access and furnishings inventory
- RDs may be asked to step into participation in the hall duty rotation, or oversee a specific floor/community if an unexpected departmental need arises.

Campus On-Call Support

RDs provide on-call coverage assistance to campus housing through the following:

- Rotating nightly on-call coverage from 4:30pm-12:00am Sunday-Thursday, 4:30pm-8:00am Friday & Saturday.
- Rotating on-call coverage during University breaks and holidays, including Thanksgiving, Winter and Spring Breaks, etc. This rotation may include 8:00am-8:00am shifts.



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Compensation and Conditions of Employment

RDs are typically graduate students. Graduate students receive an assistantship, which provides a stipend (as stipulated in hiring paperwork) and a tuition waiver. Graduate Assistants (GAs) must be enrolled full-time (nine graduate hours) and maintain a 3.0 GPA, as well as be in good standing with the University. Any other employment is not permitted during the academic year, although students required to complete unpaid internships or clinical rotations as part of a program of study will be accommodated. The period of employment for Resident Directors is mid-July through May 15 of the academic year.

RDs are provided an on-campus housing accommodation. They must adhere to University policies and procedures as stated in the Residence Hall Student Handbook and the Residence Life Staff Handbook. Living facilities can accommodate the staff member, a spouse, and one child under the age of 7. Marriages must be recognized as legal in the State of Tennessee. Any exceptions would have to be approved by the Director of Housing and Residence Life.

RDs are expected to reside and be visible in their assigned facility while employed, and maintain presence in the assigned community overnight during the week and weekends, except during approved time off. RDs are allowed to request to be away from their community five weekends (Saturday-Sunday) per semester. A weekend off may be substituted for days during the week. Notification to the RDs immediate supervisor is to be made in writing prior to leaving, making use of the department's request form. Any additional leave requires a written request to and approval from senior leadership in Residence Life.

In the event of resignation or termination of contract, the RD will be required to vacate the assigned living facility immediately.



Resident Director Recruitment

October 11, 2026

Priority Deadline for
RD Applications

A complete application packet for the RD position consists of an **In-House Application**, an **ETSU RD online application**, a **Cover Letter**, and a **Resume**. All original documents, with signatures, must be uploaded to the online job application.

Cover Letter

A cover letter should address the applicant interests in the RD position and candidate qualifications, as well as the following items:

- Your motivations for applying for the RD position.
 - A description of Residence Life/Student Life activities that you have participated in and/or work experiences and skills that you feel qualify you for the RD position.
 - Your definition of what community development means to you, and how you would establish a sense of community within a residential environment.
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Resume

Your resume should list your experiences and educational background, including **all employment you have held** (full and part-time), starting with your most-recent position. Your resume should also address your educational background and GPA.

ETSU Application for Employment

Candidates for the RD position must complete a temporary application, available on the ETSU employment website. Complete the application with all requested information, including (a) all employment held, starting with your current or most-recent job, dates of employment, employer's full address and phone number, supervisor, duties, and date left; and (b) three references from a variety of sources **OTHER THAN** immediate supervisors, friends, or relatives. You must include complete email and mail addresses, as well as work, home, and cell phone numbers. This application is where you will also upload the In-House RD Application, as well as your cover letter and resume.

In-House RD Application

A complete and signed DHRL In-House RD application must also be included with your application. Please use the typewriter function to complete this application, or print clearly.

ETSU Department of Housing and Residence Life

In-House Resident Director Application

Full Name (last, first, middle initial) _____

ETSU Student ID (E#) _____ **Email Address** _____

Permanent/Home Phone: _____ **Cell Phone:** _____

Have you been officially accepted into ETSU's Graduate School? _____YES or _____NO

What is your intended area of study? _____

What is your intended date of enrollment (month/year)? _____

(For current students): How many semesters have you been in your program of study? _____

Because TCA 40-31-211 prohibits sex offenders required to register under TCA Title 40, Chapter 39, Part 2 from knowingly accepting employment within one thousand feet (1,000') of the property line of any public school, private or parochial school, licensed day care center, other child care facility, public park, playground, recreation center, or public athletic field available for use by the general public, registered sex offenders are not eligible for employment at our institution.

Are you required to register as a sex offender under TCA Title 40, Chapter 39, Part 2? _____YES or _____NO

Are you currently or have you previously been, a student at ETSU? _____YES or _____NO

If yes, do you have holds on your account or records for any reason? _____YES or _____NO

Have you ever been subject to any discipline from the Department of Housing and Residence Life or the Division of Student Life and Enrollment? _____YES or _____NO

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, please explain on the back of this form.

Conditions of Employment

The following statements cover general guidelines of employment for Resident Directors. Please read and initial each statement to indicate your understanding.

____ Employment begins prior to the opening of the residence halls in the fall and ends after the halls close in the spring. Staff members are expected to be the last to leave and the first to return at all breaks and holidays throughout the year.

____ Staff members are required to attend all training sessions and workshops, staff meetings, and other meetings as announced by their supervisor.

____ Staff members are expected to remain full-time students at ETSU and in good academic standing.

____ Staff members are required to successfully pass a national background check and be fingerprinted by ETSU Police. I currently possess a social security number (required for the background check) and am authorized to work in the United States.

By submitting this application, I affirm that the information included is true, accurate, and complete. I understand that falsification, misrepresentation, or omission of fact on this application (or any accompanying documents) will be cause for denial of employment or immediate termination of employment.

Applicant Signature

Date



Resident Director Timeline

October 11, 2026

Priority application deadline

October 23, 2026

Candidates selected for further consideration will be invited to participate in the RD interview process. Candidate interviews will be conducted in person.

November 9, 2026

Offers for RD positions made by this date. Paperwork for the RD position must be completed as communicated.

Candidates selected as alternates for the RD position will be notified November/December 2026 of their status.

January 2027

RDs begin training in January 4, 2027. Individuals will move into on-campus housing accommodations prior to the start of training, with details communicated during the hiring process.



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