

**EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & RESIDENCE LIFE
RESIDENT ADVISOR**

ROLE OVERVIEW

The Resident Advisor (RA) position is an excellent opportunity for development of leadership, role modeling, and student engagement skills within the Department of Housing & Residence Life (DHRL). The fundamental role of an RA is to build and maintain a residential community that engages students and creates an atmosphere for academic success and personal development. A residential community is a floor or grouping of students that not only live and learn together, but build positive relationships among each other over the course of the year. The ideal residential community promotes harmony, allows residents to voice their opinions with respect, sets appropriate expectations for behavior on the floor or area, and holds each other accountable. A healthy community promotes adequate sleep and study time as well as a place to have fun and meet new and diverse people. The Department of Housing and Residence Life has created a Residential Curriculum that guides our work with residents in the areas of civility, critical thinking, personal responsibility, social adjustment, transition skills, belonging, and wellness. The residential community is where this work takes place.

QUALIFICATIONS

The following qualifications must be met in order to serve in the Resident Advisor role.

- **Commitment to community:** RAs must demonstrate strength of character, good judgment, flexibility, responsibility, involvement, and commitment to student life and the University.
 - RAs must exhibit the following personal characteristics needed to be a good role model and build a successful community:
 - Commitment to student growth
 - Interpersonal and communication skills
 - Ability to interact with a diverse student population and relate well with peers
 - Accepting of others and approachable
 - Motivated with a positive attitude and integrity
 - Self-confidence, self-discipline, self-awareness
 - Receptive to feedback with a desire to improve and grow
 - Ability to problem-solve, make sound decisions, and exercise authority wisely
- **Course Load:**
 - **Undergraduate RAs:** must carry a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester. Undergraduate RAs in their final semester before graduation may carry fewer than 12 credit hours if approved by the Associate Director for Residence Life or designee.
 - **Graduate RAs:** must carry a minimum of 9 credit hours per semester. Graduate RAs in the final semester before graduation may carry fewer than 9 credits with approval from the Associate Director for Residence Life or designee.
- **Class Standing:** Applicants must have completed at least 12 credit hours of full-time academic coursework at ETSU, or be a transfer student with 12+ credit hours earned as a full-time student at another institution, by employment start date. Credits earned as dual-enrollment, Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) do not count towards this requirement.
- **Grade Point Average:** RAs must hold a cumulative 2.50 GPA on the date of the job offer, and at the conclusion of the academic semester. If an RA's cumulative GPA falls below the 2.5 requirement, they will be placed on Academic Probation and will have one semester to reach the minimum requirement or will be separated from the RA role.
- **Selection Process:** RAs must successfully complete the application and selection process.
- **University Standing:** RAs must be in good standing at East Tennessee State University and the

Department of Housing and Residence Life prior to and throughout the role. Once a student has been offered an RA position, the expectation is that they do not violate ETSU policies.

- **Background Check & Fingerprinting:** 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 Public Safety before starting work.

COMPETENCIES + LEARNING GOALS

Individuals who seek to serve in the RA role must demonstrate the core competencies noted below:

- Flexibility
- Ability to work within a team
- Ability to organize tasks
- Ability to prioritize duties
- Ability to effectively complete the various components of the RA position, including the following physical requirements:
 - Visually assess the community, surroundings, and situations that occur spontaneously and respond appropriately
 - 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).

ROLE PERIOD

The standard role period for Resident Advisors is one academic year, from August (prior to the opening of the campus residence halls) through May (after commencement). RAs are expected to report for training sessions prior to residence hall check-ins for both fall and spring semesters. The role period is contingent upon the successful completion of tasks, assignments, responsibilities, and positive performance appraisals. Upon successful completion of the standard role period, the RA may be considered to serve for additional periods of time if eligible. There is no expectation to serve for an additional period, but is dependent on outstanding service, maintaining full-time enrollment, meeting the minimum overall GPA, and good standing with the University and the Department of Housing and Residence Life.

The Department hires summer positions, which require a separate application and selection process.

TIME COMMITMENT

RAs should expect about 20 hours per week in their residential community, consisting of both virtual and in-person responsibilities. These hours are used interacting with residents, answering the phone/responding to situations while on-call, one-on-one meetings, staff team meetings, preparing for an enacting our residential curriculum, and communicating via your ETSU email. These hours are based on the needs of the residential community, and include weekday, weekend, and holiday hours. Please note that the residential environment does encounter peak times, including opening, closing, and transition periods. That said, some weeks, more than 20 hours may be needed, whereas others may be fewer than 20 hours. Flexibility is what is important. RAs have an earlier arrival and later departure than residents each semester.

Availability: All RAs are expected to be sufficiently available in the residential community to respond to student situations that may arise and to maintain regular contact with residents. RAs are assigned to a designated space within their hall or apartment complex. They are expected to reside in this space. RAs are allowed to be away from their hall/apartment complex for five weekends (defined as 4:30 p.m. Friday to 4:30 pm. Sunday) per semester. Additional weekends for University-related functions may be approved with prior notice, as may earlier departure and later return times.

- **Holidays, Emergency Closures, Break and Vacation Periods:** RAs may be required to serve in an on-call capacity for a portion or all of holidays, emergency closures, breaks, and vacation periods when University offices are closed; these include, but are not limited to, Fall Break, Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, and Spring Break.
- **Meetings:** RAs must attend team (staff) meetings on predetermined weeks and times as scheduled by a supervisor. Regularly scheduled one-on-one supervisor meetings will also be scheduled. These meetings are a part of the 20-hour commitment.
- **Training, Opening, and the First Weeks of Term:** Training and opening each semester are typically a busier time in our residence halls and apartments. This time includes move-in, welcome activities, an enhanced emphasis on getting to know and interacting with residents, as well as conducting curriculum events and programs. It is important that individuals applying for the RA position recognize that the time commitment during this period will require your full engagement. Individuals serving in the RA position should not schedule external commitments during this time period; any accommodation must be requested in-advance and may not be approved by the Associate Director for Residence Life or designee.

OUTSIDE/ADDITIONAL WORK

Participation in leadership roles and work experiences are an important part of the educational experience. When choosing if you will engage in outside/additional work opportunities, it is important to ensure that your academic program is prioritized first and that your RA role expectations can be successfully met. RA staff will discuss any outside/additional work with a supervisor so that they can assist in offering support on time management and balance.

- Domestic undergraduate students at ETSU are limited to not more than 29 hours of work per week in on-campus employment. This means that RAs are permitted to work not more than 9 hours/week in additional campus employment.
- International undergraduate students at ETSU are not permitted to hold additional campus employment beyond the RA position.

Please note that some campus leadership roles are not compatible with the RA position. One conflict that we are aware of involves POLO Leaders working Preview; you cannot serve in both the RA role and POLO Leader role for Preview, due to overlapping time commitments. It is important that you speak with your other campus involvements and with ETSU Housing and Residence Life prior to applying for the RA position to discuss any possible conflicts.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

The following represents a guideline for the RA duties as stated in the Residence Life Staff Handbook. Due to the ever-evolving needs of our students, other duties may be assigned. Training takes place in August, prior to the opening of on-campus housing, and throughout the year to further refine basic skills and professional development. RAs are expected to know and abide by all University and DHRL rules, demonstrate positive attitudes and professional conduct, and perform all duties in an accurate and timely manner.

Community and Personal Development

- Build personal relationships with residents by
 - Knowing residents by name

- Communicating with residents on a routine basis
- Establishing and maintaining a high level of visibility and availability
- Foster connections among residents by
 - Allowing residents to set personal, room, and community standards
 - Providing regular floor/area meetings
 - Developing social activities
 - Facilitating the Residential Curriculum lesson plans
 - Supporting the Residence Hall Association and Hall/Community Council
 - Utilizing restorative practices
- Assist residents with
 - Conflict mediation
 - Academic concerns
 - Personal and social matters
 - Connection to the campus community and resources

Safety & Security Functions

- Handle crises and emergencies calmly and appropriately; maintain order
- Report to facility and/or Public Safety for campus emergencies
- Appropriately advise, refer, and support students in crisis
- Fairly and consistently enforce University/DHRL policies and state laws
- Assist students with personal problems/concerns
- Assist with fire drills
- Conduct health and safety inspections

Administrative Functions

- Assist with the opening and closing of your building each semester
- Assist with Open House and other University/Housing recruitment events
- Attend staff meetings, weekly one-on-one meetings, training workshops, and seminars
- Assume weeknight/weekend duty coverage at appointed time and place, be available during entire duty shift, and perform tasks such as community walks, any needed follow-up, distributing flyers, assisting residents, covering routine desk/Buc Ridge Clubhouse duties, documenting activities, and submitting Duty Logs
- Checking access and security of doors in residence halls/apartments
- Effectively communicate DHRL policies, procedures, and information to staff and students
- Maintain open lines of communication with other DHRL staff
- Keep RD/ARD and professional staff informed of residents' concerns
- Document student misconduct, problems, or issues
- Attend hearings as a witness for incidents you have reported
- Maintain confidentiality of residents' records and information
- Submit work orders
- Maintain updated bulletin boards
- Notify supervising AC/AM when needing to be away from campus for a night or weekend

TRAINING + DEVELOPMENT

Training and development are important to the effectiveness, success, and strength of the ETSU Housing and Residence Life community. The professional staff in Residence Life oversees training and development that is aimed to provide RAs with important skills and competencies aligned with core learning goals and our residential curriculum. Virtual and in-person trainings occur throughout the academic year.

- **RA Training in Fall Semester**
 - RAs are trained on specific role-related responsibilities and skills including (but not limited to) community development, crisis response & protocol, conflict management, cultural competency, and peer helping skills, in addition to training on health and safety on campus. The format for this training may be offered in both face-to-face and virtual formats.

- **Spring In-Service (Jumpstart) Development**

- Spring in-service development is focused on personal and professional skills, rather than fall training's emphasis on role-specific responsibilities and skills. Time during in-service development will occur in both all-staff formats, as well as by area/community.

DATES OF EMPLOYMENT

Resident Advisors are provided dates of employment during the hiring period, upon an offer of employment. RAs return to campus earlier than the start of classes in fall and spring semesters, and depart after the semester concludes each term.

FEEDBACK + APPRAISALS

ETSU Housing and Residence Life staff members are committed to the learning, growth, and development of all RAs. Professional and graduate staff provide training, development, supervision, mentorship, feedback, and support. To achieve personal growth and individual success, RAs engage in formal, informal, and experiential activities throughout their time in the role, which includes:

- Facilitated team and individual meetings
- Mid-semester, Mid-Year, and End-of-Year evaluations
- Peer feedback opportunities
- Community development planning
- Curriculum planning, implementation, and assessment
- Reapplication interviews (where applicable)

COMPENSATION

In addition to an invaluable experience in peer leadership and mentorship, RAs receive a scholarship applied to their University account. Scholarships are applied to student accounts through Financial Aid and the Bursar's Office at the start of each semester. Receipt of this scholarship may impact your other Financial Aid awards, and we urge you to contact your Financial Aid Counselor directly to discuss what these impacts may be prior to applying for or accepting an RA position.