

**RESIDENT ASSISTANT
STAFF TRAINING**

**JOB DESCRIPTION
AND
GENERAL EXPECTATIONS**



VALLEY CITY
STATE UNIVERSITY

Fall 2017

VALLEY CITY STATE UNIVERSITY

Resident Assistant Job Description

QUALIFICATIONS

The following are minimum requirements for the position of Resident Assistant:

1. Must be of at least sophomore academic status.
2. Cannot be on academic or conduct probation.
3. Must be on a food service/board contract.
4. He/she must have lived in a residence hall for at least one semester prior to application/employment.
5. Off-campus employment/commitments must be approved by the Director for Residence Life. (Staff members planning on student teaching during any portion of the academic year should discuss this possibility with the Director for Residence Life. All situations will be considered on an individual basis).
6. He/she must have the ability to relate well with others.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The main responsibilities of residence hall staff are twofold. The staff is first responsible for the welfare of the residents and secondly, the staff is responsible for the care and maintenance of the physical facilities of the hall.

The Resident Assistant in the residence hall is administratively responsible to the Hall Director and performs the following functions: (These should not be considered as all-inclusive.)

****RA's not meeting the minimum requirements for employment will be asked to meet with their Hall Director, who is the direct supervisor to the RA. Meetings will be documented and performance improvement plans made. If job performance does not improve, and RA may be asked to vacate a position before the end of the semester or may not be rehired for the next academic year.****

1. Helps the Hall Director open and close the halls (this includes arriving prior to the academic year when designated by Director for Residence Life and remaining until 2-3 days after graduation).
2. Abides by and reports violations of the university/residence hall rules and regulations.
3. Responsible for maintaining records of residents in their halls. Records must be kept regarding students moving in or out of the residence halls or changing rooms.

4. Students must be checked in and out of their rooms in the residence halls. Room condition reports, noting all damages that have occurred while the student has been living in the room, will be forwarded to the Hall Director.
5. It is expected that the Resident Assistant will assist in securing the hall for vacation periods. The Resident Assistant must check with the Hall Director before leaving for vacation.
6. The Resident Assistant is required to spend most evenings and weekends on the campus. He/she must inform the Hall Director before being absent for an extended period of time.

Assists in establishing an adequate interpersonal environment in the residence halls:

1. Provides leadership in approaches to academic and social life.
2. Assist the Hall Director in evaluating and determining students' educational and developmental needs by conducting regular floor meetings.
3. Helps plan and implement educational programs each semester in consultation with the Hall Director and Director for Residence Life.
4. Resident Assistants may be asked to assist with campus wide events and partner with other organizations on occasion.
5. The Resident Assistant must become personally acquainted with all students living on his/her floor. Room visits are invaluable tools to get to know their residents.
6. Residence hall staff will be responsible for confronting and handling some of the disciplinary cases that may arise within the residence halls. Disciplinary cases should be forwarded to the Hall Director and/or Director for Residence Life.
7. It is the responsibility of the residence hall staff to be of as much assistance as possible to each individual student. Many student problems can be handled if the student has someone in whom he/she can confide.
8. Residence hall staff must be prepared to refer more difficult problems to the proper person/agency.

Performs other duties as assigned:

1. Serves as host to VCSU's guests, in particular, prospective students.
2. Assists in collecting data for information and research purposes.
3. Seeks to improve self and maintain academic standards.
4. Attends workshops, in-service training sessions, and meetings, as supervisors deem

necessary.

5. Is aware of and understands the information contained in the University Room and Board Contract, the Student Handbook, and the VCSU Residence Hall Handbook.
6. Attends regular meetings with the Hall Director in order to discuss developing problems and other information or instructions. All items in these meetings must **REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL.**

EXPECTATIONS AND CONDITIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT

1. Any involvement in activities outside normal work **should be considered secondary**. The job of an RA is an important one and should be viewed as a top priority after an individual's academics.
2. The Residence Life Office views the RA position, along with a full-time academic load, as a full-time commitment. Subsequently, RA's are not allowed to hold extra employment off-campus without the permission of the Director for Residence Life.
3. If, in the judgment of the Hall Director, in consultation with the Director for Residence Life, participation in outside activities or membership in organizations affects the performance of a Resident Assistant, the RA will need to make a choice between the activity/organization and RA position.
4. Because of the role of a staff member, it is important that the behavior of each RA is above reproach. Open violation of regulations by RA's or encouragement of residents to violate these policies will not be tolerated. This is particularly true of the alcohol, drug, and visitation policies. Also, RA's are expected to make mature judgments about their behavior off-campus or outside the residence hall. **The RA must be a role model for student conduct**. Remember what is done by a Resident Assistant reflects not only on the individual staff member, but on the RA program, and therefore the entire staff. Although it is not our intention to require changes in lifestyles to become a Resident Assistant, careful consideration must be given to all aspects of a RA's behavior whether position related or not. (Specific information on staff conduct is included on a later page).
5. All RA's will be assigned certain nights and weekends during which they will be required to be in and around the residence hall. On nights that RA's are on duty, it is expected that they will be in the residence hall from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. and that the RA will be available at the front desk from 10:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. Duty nights are a good time to get acquainted with residents. Plan to use some of the time that you are on duty to visit floors other than your own. Resident Assistants should also plan to use duty time as a means of helping keep the building clean by performing regularly scheduled cleaning tasks. Please refer to the "Resident Assistant Duty Expectations" page for specific duty expectations and requirements. RA's should inform the Hall Director before when having plans to be absent on a weekend.
6. RA applicants must have a grade point average of 2.5 at the time of application. Employed RA's are expected to maintain the 2.5 semester and cumulative average. All staff grades will be reviewed at the end of each semester. There will be a review of the status of any RA whose grades fall below 2.5 for a semester. If the cumulative average falls below 2.5, the RA may not continue in the staff position.
7. During the semester, an RA will be expected to participate in training sessions at both the hall and campus level. These meetings are an important part of the Resident Assistant position and **all RA's are required to attend**. If it is absolutely impossible for an RA to attend a particular meeting, notice must be given to the Hall Director and the Director for Residence Life.

8. Regular communication between the entire residence hall staff is a must. On a weekly basis, all RA's will meet with their Hall Director to receive important information, discuss problems/solutions, and learn about upcoming events. The entire staff will meet on a monthly basis.
9. A Resident Assistant is required to return to campus prior to the opening of the halls fall semester for in depth training.
10. RA's may be expected to assist in the recruitment and selection of new RA's.
11. RA's are hired for 1 year and must re-apply in order to continue employment as an RA. RA's failing to perform RA duties at the minimum level may not be given the opportunity to re-apply.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

Know and Care About Your Residents

Caring is the key to your success as an RA. You should become acquainted with all residents in your building, not just those on your floor. The best way to understand people and their behavior is to know them well enough to be aware of the causes of that behavior. In your contacts with residents, exemplify the very best in consideration, good judgment, thoughtfulness, honesty, and those qualities that we expect residents to demonstrate in their dealings with each other. Be alert to feelings, interests, and problems that residents may have, and take time to help in any way you can. Spend time every day interacting with residents in their rooms, in the dining hall, throughout the campus, and elsewhere. Do not always expect them to seek you out.

Support University and Residence Hall Policies

Since you are responsible for enforcing residence hall policies, you should be familiar with them and the rationale for each. These are reasons for the policies at VCSU and your attitude will be a most important factor in the students' acceptance of them. Be consistent and fair. The way that you approach policies, the explanation you give, and the quality of treatment students receive, will largely determine the response that you will receive. Some students may not agree with you or with the policies, but most will respect you when you carry out your duties in a responsible manner.

Know the Facilities

You will be a prime source of information for students with questions. Freshmen will ask a million questions as they attempt to become oriented to campus, university life, etc. Upperclassmen will have questions about facilities in the hall if they haven't lived there before. So take a thorough tour of your building before students arrive and know what is available and where everything is. If there are questions that you cannot answer, tell the student that you don't know but will help him/her find out. Always be sure of your information. You can cause major problems by substituting assumptions or hearsay for fact. Get and use a schedule of classes and a current catalog. Make it a point to know the various clubs and organizations on campus. If you are well-informed, you can often help a lonely or seemingly apathetic student find a meaningful place for himself/herself.

Support Our Custodial Staff

These people keep the public areas in our halls clean and shining. They make some room repairs, furnish light bulbs, and provide other services for our convenience. Get acquainted with them the first day that you are in the hall. They enjoy their work and do a better job when you and the residents are friendly, cooperative, and appreciative. Complaints should go to the Hall Director. Custodians should not be asked to clean up messes that residents have made or do special favors (like vacuum resident's rooms, etc.). Encourage each student to assume his/her responsibility as a member of the group calling your hall "home". Vacuums and trash rooms are located on each floor.

Be Protective and Respect Confidential Information

As a staff member, you will have access to confidential information regarding your fellow students, residential/university situations, etc. Students will tell you very personal things about themselves that they may later regret. If they ever hear you repeating confidences or talking about students to students or other staff members, they are going to assume that you cannot be trusted. Any confidential or personal information should be handled with extreme care. This does not mean that you cannot ask assistance if you encounter a situation that you cannot handle. Advise any person before he/she confides in you that you can be a good listener, but that you cannot be sworn to secrecy if this is a problem that the two of you can't handle alone. You will become aware of various information/situations that you will need to discuss with your Hall Director. You should make an effort to develop and maintain open lines of communication with your Hall Director. He/she can be helpful in providing insights into situations which may arise.

SPECIFIC STAFF CONDUCT INFORMATION

The following is a list of behaviors for which a staff member might be disciplined. Because of the nature of the Resident Assistant position, it would not be possible to describe each and every action that would be viewed as a violation of standards. It is possible to provide some guidelines to serve as an indication of those **acts, which if committed by a Resident Assistant, are considered serious enough to warrant dismissal from the position:**

1. Behavior resulting in a felony conviction.
2. Behavior resulting in misdemeanor conviction that casts reasonable doubt on the likelihood of satisfactory job performance.
3. Violation of university or residence hall policies or regulations – failure to meet requirements of RA Job Description and General Expectations, VCSU Residence Hall Handbook and/or VCSU Student Handbook.
4. Acts of negligence or incompetence that cast a reasonable doubt on the likelihood of satisfactory job performance.
5. Misuse of official keys.
6. Conduct by a staff member which include ethnic, religious, sexist, or racial slurs, as well as unwanted physical advances or intimidations.
7. Refusal to comply with reasonable, legitimate, and specific direction from the Hall Director or a member of the University Student Affairs staff.

ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR THE RESIDENT ASSISTANT

The residence hall situation is one of the best opportunities available to educate young adults to be effective members of society. As a staff member, you will greatly affect the feelings of the student toward the responsibility, self-discipline, and self-determination, which will be expected of him/her. As you become more acquainted with the position, you will realize the significance of this responsibility. What makes the resident assistant's position special is that you are very much on your own. There are many people available for consultation, but as you react and relate to the students on your floor, you will not be under direct observation. As such, it is important that you possess an internal sense of responsibility, judgment, and ethics. The following ethical standards will help you.

The RA is obligated to carry out the responsibilities assumed as part of his/her residence hall position. If the RA falls short because of outside activities or academic problems, the RA should make an adjustment by dropping some activities or by asking to resign.

The RA acts with integrity, dignity, and competency while striving toward improved services, educational programs, and administrative procedures.

The RA has a dual responsibility to both the student and the institution.

The RA has an obligation to understand the educational goals of the institution and to aid in the support and realization of the goals through residence hall programming, leadership, IRHC, and sound management.

The RA develops and maintains staff relationships in a climate of mutual respect, support, trust, and interdependence recognizing the strengths and limitations of each fellow staff member. Disharmony among staff members, should it exist, must be kept within the staff. Suggestions and constructive criticisms within the staff are the most positive outlets.

The RA develops lines of communication within the campus community so that programs, policies, and procedures are mutually reinforcing, consistent, and operating in support of quality education for students.

The RA believes in the educational value of formal training, in-service training, and attending appropriate conferences to develop new knowledge as the basis for improved programs, policies, procedures, and services and shares this knowledge with associates.

The RA admits and profits from his/her errors, and seeks assistance when necessary.

The RA is sincere, responsible, self-disciplined, and has respect for the policies under which he/she works and the people with whom he/she works.

The RA is a model for student conduct. Use good judgment in social relationships with students and other staff members. Watch your actions so that they cannot be questioned when you may have to question other's actions.

The RA should expect ethical behavior from his/her colleagues. Whenever he/she possesses information about the ethically questionable behavior of a colleague, he/she is obligated to make efforts toward rectification of the condition.

By accepting employment with the university, the RA has accepted the responsibility to understand and follow its policies. If an RA cannot support a policy, he/she should seek out his/her supervisors in an effort to re-examine or revise the policy. If despite his/her efforts, the RA is unable to resolve his/her conflict, he/she should end his/her association with the university as a residence hall staff member.

If an RA believes he/she is not qualified to help a student, he/she is obligated to refer the student to the appropriate person. If the RA feels he/she is qualified to help but is having some difficulties establishing or maintaining a relationship with the student, he/she should seek assistance from someone with the appropriate background.

The RA recognizes the difference between consultation and gossip. The RA may discuss a student's problem or hall situation with fellow staff members as necessary, but not where it may be overheard by others. Exercise caution in discussing student problems with staff members from

other halls except for problems where mutual consultation and information is vital.

If an RA learns of something within the counseling relationship which is likely to bring clear and imminent harm to the student or others, the RA is expected to report the condition to the appropriate person. The RA should present the situation in a way, which safeguards the identity of the person involved whenever possible.

The RA accepts students as individuals, each with rights and responsibilities, each with goals and needs, and with this in mind, seeks to create and maintain a group living environment in which learning and personal development can take place.

RA REQUIREMENTS

Semester Returns and Departures:

- August: Expect to be on campus for all of Welcome Week Activities
 - December: Expect to depart from campus 2-3 days after the last day of Finals
 - January: Expect to be on campus 2 days prior to the Students return
 - May: Expect to depart from campus 2-3 days after the last day of Finals
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FAILURE TO ATTEND SCHEDULED METINGS:

- 2 unexcused no-shows = 1 strike + meeting

CHECK-IN: Performed during RA training and prior to student move-in

- Compile Maintenance requests for items (drawers off track, wall paint chips, vacuum, keys, lights etc.)
- Submit in time for maintenance to address issues and repair timely

DOOR DECORATIONS

- Have door decorations on doors with resident's name & room number (not suite number)
 - o Have back up decorations prepared in case vandalizing occur
- Have second semester decorations created and ready come January

BULLETIN BOARDS

- Have bulletin boards decorated corresponding with door decoration themes
 - o have second semester bulletin board created and ready to put up come January
 - o have 2 boards prepared per semester

SIGNS

- Have proper signage in necessary locations (Quiet Hours, Laundry, cleaning, etc.)
 - o have back-up signs available when go missing
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CHECK-OUT: The following duties must be completed before you are able to leave campus for the breaks:

- Check- out all Residents from your floor, (Unless previously noted to be staying for extended circumstances)
- Collect keys from residents who have checked-out
- Note all room issues on separate sheet listing fines for:
 - o Lost keys
 - o Repairs
 - o Broken items
 - o Cleanliness
 - o Miscellaneous
 - o If rooms are fine and do not have issues/ repairs leave these off of the Fines list.

- Take down door decorations off of doors of empty suites/ rooms
- Trash all bulletin board decorations and place signs on bulletin board
- Check refrigerators for perished goods
- Clean your room to the standard that you uphold residents to.

ON DUTY REQUIREMENTS:

****Remember – when you are ON DUTY, you are AT WORK. When on duty, plan to sit at the RA desk and dress in a VCSU top and jeans. Use your time on duty to complete RA tasks – complete the checklist below, make door decorations, plan programs, do program advertising, meet and get to know your residents.**

On duty:

- One night/week, one weekend/month, one major holiday (T, C, SB, E)
- Be in the building from 7:00 pm until 7:00 am the night you are on duty.
- Sit at the desk from 10:00 pm until 1:00 am in all halls.
- While on duty you need to make three rounds throughout the residence hall. Do thorough rounds so that you know what is going on. After each round, record what was happening on each floor, which residents you saw, any suspicious activity you noticed, any other notes to fellow RA's. You will keep a log of your duty night on Blackboard.
- If you have a conflict on your duty night, make arrangements with another RA so that someone is in the residence hall:
 - Ex. If you have to work from 6:00 pm until 9:00 pm at the library, make sure there is another RA in the residence hall that students can reach during that time.
 - Ex. There is a campus event beginning at 8:00pm and going until 10:00pm that you would like to attend, make arrangements with another RA that will be in the residence hall during that time that students can get a hold of.

*Make sure to write this person's name and number on the white board.

*Tell your Hall Director about the switch.

*If there is no other RA to be available, talk to your Hall Director and see if they will be around and available for students to call.

***Be sure to okay any duty changes with your Hall Director, we need to be kept in the loop!!

Dance Nights:

- On dance nights, the person on duty is expected to stay on duty until 1:45 in all residence halls (one hour after the dance has ended).
- On these nights, please make five rounds, two of these rounds should occur between 7:00 pm and 10:00 pm.
- Plan to rotate dances so that the same person doesn't have to take duty for every dance since they are generally on Wednesday nights.

*We need a duty roster from each residence hall by Friday. This should include who is on duty on which nights, who will be on duty on weekends for the first month of school, who will take holiday

duties for the whole year (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring Break, Easter) and who will take each dance.

Duty night checklist:

Every Night:

- Check kitchen/lounge area for trash
- Wipe down surfaces in common areas
- Shovel/throw down ice melt when necessary

Monday Night:

- Wipe down fitness equipment

Tuesday Night:

- Sanitize door handles 1 & 2nd floor

Wednesday Night:

- Sanitize door handles 3rd & 4th floor

Thursday Night:

- Sanitize Entry door handles and Stair Rails

Friday- Sunday:

- See “Every night” check list

PROGRAMMING MODEL:

GOAL STATEMENT:

- “Resident life sponsored events should encourage growth socially and academically by promoting interaction among peers.”
- “Programs should be a safe place for residents to come and participate with peers while also making acquaintances with others they would not likely to interact with.”

SEMESTER PROGRAMMING REQUIREMENTS: “Quality vs Quantity of Programs”

- 1 Building event per Advisor
- Support at 1 building Theme event
- Supporting other RA’s programs and publicizing events in & outside of resident halls

BUDGET:

- Resident Advisors are allotted \$___ per year to utilize for semester events
- It is their job to not only plan events but also to budget correctly and not exceed the limit of their allowance

WHAT A PROGRAM LOOKS LIKE:

- Element of teaching
- Element of interaction among residents
- A take-away that students can benefit from after the program has ended
- Incentives (snacks, services, benefits)
- Uncomfortable exposure

FUNCTION OF A PROGRAM:

- Teaches while offering incentives for attendance (snacks, raffle, etc.)
- Encourages interaction among students and groups that normally do not interact
- Provide activities that promote community and retention of students at VCSU
- Encourages attendance of student and residents living on campus
- Provides a bridge between residents of different buildings
- Opens the Resident Halls up to invited community guests who to share something of value to students.

HOW TO PLAN A PROGRAM:

- *Who* are you trying to target to attend your event?
 - o Freshmen, senior, male, female
- *What* are you hoping to benefit others from this event?
- *Why* would residents want to come to this event?
- *When* and *where* will this event take place for best visibility?
- *How* will residents hear about the event (Flyer, Email, Word of mouth, Invitation, professor??)
- Choose a topic that has value to multiple populations of students interested.

- **Target by Major** (Examples): Music and exercise, Nutrition and exercise program, History and Wildlife, Safety with Police officers
 - **Awareness:** (Examples): alcohol, emergency, CPR, Equality, Suffrage, World Wide Events, Local News
 - **Life Improvement:** college hacks, surviving college, how to make ____, how to save money, how to make a relationship in college work,
 - **Self Improvement:** Career development, resume building, Grad School applications, how to find a job after graduation, maintaining a budget,
 - **Multicultural focus:** International holiday, National ____ day + facts & activities, International Holidays with background and student interactions, BINGO, inequality, gender stereotypes etc...
 - **Knowledgeable Community Guest:** Police officer, Educator, Ranger, EMS, Chef, professor etc...
- How to promote Interaction:
 - Plan activities that will split people into random groups
 - Ask for group feedback
 - Encourage group facilitation
 - Anonymous ballots
 - Accept controversies
 - Play the “advocate” role to a two sided argument

CHAIN OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO A PROGRAM

- Set a date for the event
- **2-3 Weeks prior:**
 - Obtain approval prior to your event by submitting your Program Request Form to your director and Stephanie
 - Ask for help or ideas from Director or RA’s on improving your program
- **1-Week prior:**
 - Have all supplies ordered/ bought for event
 - Have all posters/ publicity items printed, sent out
 - Re-confirm with guest speakers times & dates
 - Re-confirm support with assisting RA’s
 - Spread the word until the day of the event
- **Post Event:**
 - Complete Post Program Evaluation Form 1-2 days after and submit to your Director & Stephanie.