

# RESIDENT ASSISTANT (“Student RA”)

## Memorandum of Understanding and Expectations (“MOU”)

2019-2020

**This MOU will be in effect beginning at noon on August 14, 2019 through 7pm on May 6, 2020.**

**\*Some Student RAs may be released early based on the needs of the department. In addition, some Student RAs may be placed in consolidation housing in order to turn over building to facilities for updates/repairs if needed.**

The primary expectation of students serving in the role of Student RA is the development of an environment conducive to the academic and personal growth of residential students. The Student RA reports to the Area Coordinator (AC) or the Residence Director (RD). The Student RA is a student who lives on a floor in an undergraduate or graduate residence hall and serves as a role model, peer counselor, resource and referral person, advocate, educator, upholder of community standards, and leader for residents. The Student RA also assists with duty, proctoring, and the planning and implementation of community engagement initiatives. The specific role of the Student RA will depend on the needs of the particular hall and area assigned. Student RAs may assume other responsibilities consistent with the spirit of this MOU.

### QUALIFICATIONS

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Student RAs must meet the following qualifications:

- **Commitment to Community:** Student RAs must role model and demonstrate strength of character, good judgment, flexibility, responsibility, involvement, and commitment to Residential Life and the University.
- **Course Load:** Undergraduate Student RAs must carry a minimum of 12, but no more than 16, credit hours per academic term. Exceptions for course loads over 16 credit hours must have prior approval of the Assistant Director of Residential Life for Student RA Training, Student RA Selection and Leadership or their respective supervisor. Any undergraduate Student RA in the final academic term before graduation may carry fewer than 12 credits, but no fewer than 6 credits. Graduate Student RAs must carry a minimum of 9 credit hours per academic term. Graduate Student RAs in the final academic term before graduation may carry fewer than 9 credits.
- **Grade Point Average:** Student RAs must hold a cumulative 2.75 Quality Point Average and be a full-time student throughout the time of application and appointment.
- **Selection Process:** Student RAs must successfully complete the application and selection process.
- **University Standing:** Student RAs must be in good standing at Northeastern University prior to and throughout the period of the MOU. Good standing for the purpose of this MOU is defined as: at least a 2.75 cumulative quality point average (QPA), no continuing record of student conduct sanctioning, no outstanding debt owed to Northeastern University, and having full-time student status and eligibility for housing.
- **Criminal Background Check:** All Student RAs will be required to complete and clear a background check.

### EXPECTATIONS AND TERMS OF STUDENT RA APPOINTMENT

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The following terms must be accepted in order to serve in this role. Specific dates are subject to change.

- **Availability:** All Student RAs are expected to be sufficiently available in the hall to respond to emergency situations that may arise and to maintain regular contact with residents. A Student RA who is not on assignment and who plans to leave the hall for more than a 24-hour period (i.e., weekend) must notify and/or obtain prior permission from their AC or the RD. Student RAs should refrain from making plans during training, move-in, and blackout dates without receiving prior approval from their Assistant Director of Residential Life for Student RA Training, Student RA Selection and Leadership or their respective AC or the RD. Communities should be half-staffed at all times unless explicitly communicated by the professional staff member overseeing the community.

- **Room and Board:** In addition to experience in peer leadership and teamwork, and the enhancement of their educational experience at the university, Student RAs are provided with room and board (\$120.00 in Dining Dollars per academic term on the Student RA's Husky Card, 19 meals per week, and 10 guest passes per academic term). Note that the meal plan can only be used when dining halls are open and the University is in session. Please note this Room and Board may be considered in reviewing your total Financial Aid award eligibility. For further information, please contact Financial Aid.
- **Appointment Term:** The term for a Student RA position is one academic year, from August to May. Student RAs are expected to attend training sessions prior to residence hall move-ins for both fall and spring academic terms, as well as complete any online summer training in preparation for fall training. Fall Student RA Training will be held on **Wednesday, August 14, 2019 – Sunday, August 25, 2019** and is required for all Student RAs. Winter Student RA Training will be held on **Thursday, January 2, 2020 – Sunday, January 5, 2020**. A Student RA may not miss any of Student RA Training without advance written permission from the Assistant Director of Residential Life for Student RA Training, Student RA Selection and Leadership. Additionally, all Student RAs must participate in any ongoing development sessions implemented by the department over the course of the year. Specific requirements regarding attendance at developments will be determined and communicated by the Department of Residential Life. The term of appointment is contingent upon the successful completion of tasks, assignments, and positive assessments by the RA's AC or the RD. Upon successful completion of the appointment term, the Student RA may be considered to serve for an additional appointment term. Limited summer opportunities may be available. The University may terminate the appointment term at any time and for any reason it deems sufficient in its sole discretion, including but not limited to a Student RA's breach of their expectations hereunder.
- **Holidays and Breaks:** Student RAs may be required to serve for a portion or all holiday breaks when University offices are closed; these include, but are not limited to Thanksgiving Break (**Wednesday, November 27, 2019 - Sunday, December 1, 2019**), Winter Break (**Monday, December 15, 2019 – Wednesday, December 17, 2019 and Thursday, January 2, 2020 – Sunday, January 5, 2020**) and Spring Break (**Saturday, February 29, 2020 – Sunday, March 8, 2020**). Student RAs should refrain from making plans during holiday breaks (Thanksgiving, Winter, and Spring) without consulting with their respective AC or Assistant Director of Residential Life for Student RA Training, Student RA Selection and Leadership.
- **Meetings:** Student RAs are expected to attend hall staff meetings every Tuesday evening and regularly scheduled one-on-one meetings with their AC, which will be scheduled by the ACs.
- **Outside/Additional Activities and/or Work:** Participation in leadership positions and work experiences are an important part of one's educational experience. However, since this role must be the primary role of those selected, it is paramount that participation in aforementioned activities not be excessive in time required outside the hall and must not come in conflict with the requirements and expectations of the role. For example, the appointment of Senior Resident Assistant or Resident Assistant is not permitted at the same time as holding the office of President of the Student Government Association or President of the Resident Student Association. A Student RA seeking employment and/or leadership opportunities must receive permission from their residence AC prior to accepting such positions. Those who have been awarded work study aid through the Office of Financial Aid will not be barred from taking work study positions at the University. However, the Student RA should contact their AC before committing to any work study position.
- **Additional Expectations:** Student RAs must be available and visible in their residence hall, including but not limited to for the purposes of resident engagement, staff meetings, one-on-one meetings, interactions with residents, proctoring, etc. Please note that residence halls do experience peak times including opening, closing and transition periods. Student RAs are expected to assist with housing selection, Student RA selection, hamper duty hours, open houses, Welcome Days, Health and Safety Inspections, and when "all hands are on deck" for sporting events or campus emergencies.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

In addition to the list below, other expectations of Student RAs will be defined as needed by the Department. Student RAs are required to review the Residential Life RA Manual for specific protocols and responsibilities that apply to them.

### **Community Development:**

- Partner with the professional staff to implement holistic community development plans that help support the department's residential curriculum;
- Partner with residents to create a living and learning environment that promotes academic growth, personal responsibility, and community accountability;
- Provide opportunities for meaningful interaction for residents;

- Student RAs will initiate and implement Husky Chats, individualized conversations with residents, according to the guidelines provided during training.
- Student RAs will initiate, plan, and implement community engagement activities during the academic year according to the guidelines provided during training. Individual and community-wide engagements, include but are not limited to: meetings with residents, program and event planning, passive engagements, and virtual communication. Engagements must be approved by the AC or the RD. In addition, Student RAs will program as needed to address community concerns;
- Assist residential students in academic, social, and personal matters through resource referral;
- Respect and foster the diversity of the residential community;
- Serve as an advocate for and a representative of residents by communicating concerns to the AC or the RD;
- Assist with the completion of roommate mediations;
- Provide guidance and support, and role model appropriate behaviors as a responsible community member; this includes behavior on campus, off campus, and online (email, social media outlets, etc.);
- Support and promote the mission of hall council;
- Be available to residents as a resource, providing residents with information regarding University events;
- Support the assessment of program effectiveness and learning outcomes by submitting program evaluations in a timely manner;

#### **Administrative:**

- Participate in weekly meetings on Tuesday nights;
- Participate in regular one-on-one meetings and provide regular e-mail updates regarding situations in the hall with the AC or RD;
- Understand the needs, goals, and objectives of, and act as a liaison between the Office of Housing and Residential Life and residential students;
- Participate in on-going training and development sessions throughout the year;
- Complete any online training assignments that will be communicated by the Department of Housing and Residential Life via email in preparation for fall and/or spring training;
- Student RAs will be familiar with fire alarm systems and evacuation procedures as well as other emergency procedures;
- Student RAs will conduct duty office hours;
- Student RAs are required to proctor four (4) hours per week for the entirety of the semester. A semester is defined by the dates identified by the University academic calendar. Specific requirements and expectations will be determined and communicated by the Residential Safety Office;
- Participate in other University, Departmental, and building activities;
- Assist in the preparation for opening, closing, and transitions;
- Student RAs will complete various administrative tasks, including but not limited to a weekly report, incident reports, and duty logs;

#### **Crisis Response & Policy Enforcement:**

- Know, communicate, enforce, and abide by existing University and Residence Hall policies and procedures;
- Know and be prepared to enact all emergency and crisis procedures; to abide by this, all Student Resident Assistants are required to have a cellular phone or have a landline phone for their assigned residence hall room to aid in communicating in crisis or emergencies;
- Provide their phone number to be utilized in the event of an emergency or extenuating circumstances;
- Know University/community resources and make appropriate referrals;
- Report Title IX incidents immediately as directed by the outlined protocol.
  - While all community members subject to the Title IX policy have a duty to report any incident of Prohibited Conduct to the Title IX Coordinator, they must keep the matter private. Specifically, Student RAs must limit their report to only those individuals with a need-to-know, in a timely manner, and adhere to training protocols.
- Keep the AC and RD informed about all problems and concerns within the community;
- If a student indicates that they may cause harm to themselves or others, Student RAs are obligated to immediately report such information to their AC, on-call professional staff member, and NUPD;
- Assist with the student conduct process by submitting timely online incident reports to document situations;

- Participate in on-duty coverage during scheduled evenings, weekends, breaks, and holidays. While on duty, Student RAs are required to remain on campus and not permitted to leave campus without permission from the on-call professional staff member;
- Required to assist with egress drills during the course of the year;

### **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION POLICY**

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As representatives of the university, it is important that Student RAs conduct themselves at all times in a manner that maintains the university's positive image. If a Student RA receives a media inquiry, the Student RA must direct such inquiry to the AC or RD and the Director of Residential Life. Student RAs must not identify themselves as Student RAs or staff members of the university, nor should they represent that they speak on behalf of the University, should they choose to speak to the press.

Additionally, Student RAs should not forward, share, or screenshot internal information to anyone who is not a staff member of the Department of Residential Life, which includes posting on social media platforms.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

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Student issues and/or concerns must be shared with the AC or RD in a timely manner and adhere to training protocols. Student RAs are not to guarantee confidentiality to students. Student RAs are required to maintain confidentiality and not participate in idle gossip.

### **TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

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Training and development programs are important to the effectiveness and success of the Residential Life program and are designed to strengthen the Residential Life team. As such, Student RAs are required to attend and participate in these activities. Development activities will be held periodically focusing on leadership development and position skill strengthening.

### **STATEMENT OF ALCOHOL/DRUG USE**

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Student RAs are expected to serve as role models and uphold and abide by all department and university policies, as well as local, state, and federal laws. There is zero-tolerance for the use of alcohol or other substances in violation of policies or laws or in a manner which puts into question the Student RA's ability to exercise sound judgment or serve as an appropriate role model. Student RAs failing to adhere to these standards may be subject to removal from the role of Student RA, as well as disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct. For more specific information on Northeastern policies please refer to the Student Code of Conduct and the Guide to Residence Hall Living.

### **STATEMENT OF ETHICAL STANDARDS**

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Northeastern University is committed to providing equal opportunity to its students and employees, and to eliminating discrimination when it occurs.

Northeastern University does not condone discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, religious creed, genetics, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ancestry, and veteran or disability status. Moreover, the University will not ignore any form of discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment of any member of the Northeastern community. Nor will Northeastern condone any form of retaliatory activity against any person who brings a complaint of discrimination or harassment, or who cooperates in a complaint investigation.

Copies of the University's nondiscrimination policies and its grievance procedures are available in the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, 125 Richards Hall.