



GRA Selection 101

An Introduction to Residence Life and GRA Selection at Boston University

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Welcome!

Welcome to Residence Life, and thank you for your interest in applying to our 2018/2019 Graduate Resident Assistant Selection Process!



The Graduate Resident Assistant (GRA) position is truly a special one. Indeed, the job of a GRA is to care about residents and the RA staff, and few people in this world can claim that they get paid to care about others. Of course, as a GRA, you will certainly assume your share of seemingly mundane tasks, but you may also respond to your share of daunting incidents—incidents that might necessitate medical, psychological, or police intervention. No matter how small or how big the task, you will soon realize that you add the human touch. In particular, you would, time and time again, demonstrate that you care for residents, RAs and the entire Residence Life community.

This document provides you with a short introduction to the GRA position. In the pages that follow you will read an overview of the department at Boston University that employs and coordinates the GRA program—Residence Life. You will see position descriptions, responsibilities, and compensation packages for our GRA job opportunities. You will learn about this year’s application process including information about eligibility requirements, deadlines, and submission guidelines. You will also be able to review answers to many of the frequently asked questions that we receive. It is imperative that you give this document a close reading and seriously reflect on its contents **before** you apply to our 2018/2019 Graduate Resident Assistant Selection Process.



Again, thank you for your interest in our program! We wish you the absolute best should you choose to apply. If there is anything that we or the rest of the Residence Life staff can do to assist you as you consider this opportunity then please don’t hesitate to contact us at Residential Education, 19 Deerfield Street (2nd Floor), 617-353-3540, resed@bu.edu.

Section 1

An Overview of Residence Life

Residence Life is best understood within a larger context of people, ideas, and organizations. The following information will clarify the place of the GRA job at our University.

1.1 History, Philosophy, and Goals

Residence Life can trace its history as far back as the early 17th century origins of American higher education—a time when educators recognized the responsibility that colleges had in cultivating appropriate patterns of social conduct, ethical behavior, and good citizenship. Residence Life in the 21st century operates upon the conviction that the living environment for residents plays a crucial role in developing the *whole* student.

Academic criteria are given priority in the selection and training of residential staff, in the formulation of standards for community living, and in the design of programs and services. However, the experiences that residents have outside the classroom can be just as educational. Through its policies, programs, and personnel, Residence Life functions like a curriculum, albeit a “hidden curriculum,” that enriches residents’ academic, cultural, interpersonal, emotional, and moral growth.

Residence Life has the following mission at Boston University:

Residence Life engages and connects students in residential and University communities, fostering students’ growth as leaders equipped to interact in a local and global context.

We strive to facilitate student learning and development in a safe and healthy experience defined by respect and dignity for all individuals.

1.2 Staffing

Residence Life manages 167 residences, which house more than 11,000 residents on campus. Our department is comprised of 30 graduate resident assistants (GRAs), 257 resident assistants (RAs), and 46 full-time professional staff. The **Assistant Dean of Students & Director of Residence Life** monitors all operations within Residence Life and is responsible for the overall management of the department.

The **Senior Associate Director of Residence Life**, the **Associate Director for Administration**, and the **Associate Director for Student & Staff Development** report to the Director of Residence Life and are responsible for coordinating the efforts of the full-time and part-time Residence Life staff in each of the residential campuses. The Senior Associate Director of Residence Life is responsible for the supervision of all full-time, professional staff. He also directs, monitors, and coordinates the daily implementation of University and Residence Life policies and procedures. The Associate Director for Administration is responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of standard operating procedures. He also serves as a liaison with Facilities Management & Planning, Housing, and other University departments.





The **Associate Director for Student & Staff Development** oversees staff recruitment, selection, and evaluation. The Associate Director also oversees Residential Education and coordinates the development and training of full-time professional staff, support staff, and resident assistants.

Our residence life program is divided into six distinct residential campuses, each of which are supervised by an Assistant Director. The six Assistant Directors supervise residence hall directors or area directors, full-time support staff, graduate resident assistants, and resident assistants; they also meet regularly to discuss policy issues and concerns in order to make recommendations to the Assistant Dean of Students & Director of Residence Life. Some of their primary responsibilities include the coordination of the residential campus move-in process, the selection, training, and evaluation of resident assistants, and the compilation of statistical reports concerning maintenance, housing, security, and student conduct issues.

Each residence or residential campus is supervised by a Residence Hall Director or Area Director who is a trained educational administrator with knowledge and expertise in college and university residential living. Residence hall directors and area directors are full-time professionals with duties that include the selection, supervision, and on-going training of graduate resident assistants and resident assistants. In most cases, residence hall directors and area directors manage the hall/ residential campus office, conduct student investigations, and assist residents by providing referrals to academic and personal support services within the University.

Graduate Resident Assistants (GRAs) are full-time graduate students with a Bachelor's degree who aid residence hall directors and area directors in supervising resident assistants. Typical duties include supervision and performance evaluation of resident assistants, on-call responsibilities, and administrative duties. Other responsibilities may include student conduct hearings, office hours, and special projects as assigned by their supervisors.

Resident Assistants (RAs) are student staff members who work with residents living on their same floor or within their same residence. RAs are selected for their concern for fellow residents and for their leadership skills. RAs are trained to provide support and assistance to residents on a variety of issues. RAs are critical to the success of our program.



The six residential campuses, from east to west, include: **Lower Bay State Road**, which consists of Danielsen Hall, Myles Standish Hall, Kilachand Hall, Fisk House, and various buildings along Beacon Street, Raleigh Street, Bay State Road, and Commonwealth Avenue; **Upper Bay State Road**, which consists of The Towers, 575 Commonwealth Avenue, Harriet E. Richards Cooperative House, and various brownstone buildings along Bay State Road; **Warren Towers**, consisting of Fairfield Tower, Marshall Tower, and Shields Tower; **South Campus**, which consists of various residences on Park Drive, Arundel Street, Mountfort Street, Buswell Street, St. Mary's Street, Carlton Street, Beacon Street, and Commonwealth Avenue; **Upper Commonwealth Avenue**, which includes 33 Harry Agganis Way, 10 Buick Street, 1019 Commonwealth Avenue ; and **West Campus**, consisting of Claflin Hall, Sleeper Hall, and Rich Hall.



1.3 Residence Life's Part in Boston University

An organization's success cannot be measured by the sum of its parts. The same is true for Residence Life and its relationship to the broader framework of operations at Boston University. Residence Life is actually one of many departments that report to the Dean of Students. Other departments include Orientation, Student Activities, Judicial Affairs, Disability Services, the Community Service Center, and the Howard Thurman Center. Though there are many departments, our general mission is the same: to promote student success. Toward that end, our departments seek to coordinate with one another to support the academic mission of the university, to foster students' development, to provide services, and to educate students via various co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences.

For more information, visit <http://www.bu.edu/dos/>.

Section 2

Responsibilities and Position Descriptions



The vitality of any authentic university is founded upon ideals of excellence in research, teaching, and service. A community of higher learning cannot be realized unless its members also exemplify intrinsic values such as intellectual vision, honesty, temperance, justice, and wisdom. By accepting a position as a GRA, one is expected to work in accordance with these ideals of excellence.

The GRA positions are dynamic leadership positions within the Residence Life office. Professional staff rely on the GRAs to assist in the community running smoothly. A high level of responsibility is placed within the GRA role.

There are two types of GRA roles—the Graduate Resident Assistant for Administration and the Graduate Resident Assistant for Training & Development. The GRA for Administration is assigned to a specific Hall/Area Director to assist with the supervision and support of the RA staff. There is one GRA for Training and Development for each Residential Campus. They work with all of the RAs for the area on programming and event management. They also assist in the ongoing training and development of all of the RAs of the community.

Depending on the Residential Campus, the GRA may also have resident responsibilities of a floor or a house. Each Hall/Area Director may also assign various responsibilities to GRAs.

You will find more in depth position descriptions for each of the GRA roles on the following pages.

GRA for Administration Position Description

The Graduate Resident Assistant (GRA) for Administration serves as an assistant to the Residence Hall Director, Area Director, or Assistant Director. The GRA for Administration works closely with his/her director to determine the goals for the resident assistant staff experience, to respond to community issues, and to focus on supervising, supporting, and evaluating resident assistants. Responsibilities are always specified by his/her director and include, but are not limited to, the following:

Time Commitment

This is a part-time position (20 hours a week) with a primary commitment to duties rather than hours; the actual time worked may vary from week to week. This position is expected to be the GRA's highest nonacademic time commitment. In addition, some GRAs may have resident responsibilities.

Responsibilities for Staff Supervision

Collaborate with his/her director to facilitate staff training and development opportunities, including August training, RA Conferences, Winter Training, and weekly staff meetings. Cooperate with his/her/their director to develop goals and objectives for supervising, supporting, and evaluating each RA throughout the academic year. Meet with individual RAs on a monthly basis, or as assigned by his/her/their director, to discuss both professional and personal matters. Read RA Weekly Reports and provide prompt responses to RAs regarding any questions or issues raised therein. Meet weekly with his/her director to discuss ongoing staff and student issues. Facilitate selected Wednesday Night Staff Meetings as delegated by his/her director. Attend regularly scheduled area-wide Senior Staff meetings with fellow GRAs and directors, as determined by the Assistant Director. Act as a role model to RA staff by promoting service to students in support of the goals of Residence Life. Clarify residential policies and procedures for RAs and students. Offer RAs assistance with the resolution of roommate conflicts, community concerns, and disciplinary problems. Assist with RA Selection and other departmental initiatives as determined by his/her/their director.

Responsibilities for Administration

Serve on the area-wide Senior Staff On-Call rotation as scheduled for weeknights and weekends.

Submit a weekly summary to his/her/their director compiling information from RA Weekly Reports, including maintenance issues, roommate conflicts, staff morale, and other noteworthy matters. Assist his/her/their director with routine administrative tasks such as move-in, vacancy reporting, supervising closings and openings, and compiling information for reports. Maintain weekly office hours to increase availability, approachability, and accessibility to RAs. Adjudicate selected student conduct hearings as assigned by his/her/their director. Act as a University representative to students, parents, neighbors, visitors, and alumni/ae when needed.

Responsibilities for Community Development

Serve as a co-advisor to the Residence Hall Association in order to support their programming and advocacy efforts, as determined by his/her/their director. Partner with Faculty in Residence to provide consistent support of their programming and outreach to students and staff. Meet students in the hall/residential campus by attending events and participating in community activities. Make referrals when necessary to other agencies within the University (e.g. SAO, ERC, Student Health Services, and the student service centers in the various schools and colleges).

GRA for Training & Development Position Description

The Graduate Resident Assistant (GRA) for Training & Development (T&D) serves as a primary coordinator of educational experiences for resident assistants and senior staff. The T&D GRA works closely with the Assistant Director to determine educational goals for the residential campus. The T&D GRA regularly coaches RAs on how best to facilitate high quality event participation endeavors. The T&D GRA also works with Residence Hall Directors, Area Directors, and GRAs within the residential campus to assist with their respective hall-staff training needs. Responsibilities are specified by the Assistant Director and include, but are not limited to, the following:

Time Commitment

This is a part-time position (20 hours a week) with a primary commitment to duties rather than hours; the actual time worked may vary from week to week. This position is expected to be the GRA's highest nonacademic time commitment. In addition, all T&D GRAs have resident responsibilities.

Responsibilities for Staff Supervision

Collaborate with Assistant Director to facilitate staff training and development opportunities, including August training, RA Conferences, and weekly staff meetings. Cooperate with Senior Staff to assess staff training and development needs. Meet regularly with Assistant Director to develop, plan, and implement ongoing educational sessions for the residential campus. Rotate attendance to each hall's Wednesday Night Staff Meeting; assist and support fellow Senior Staff members in the facilitation of their hall/cluster-specific training sessions. Meet with individual RAs from across the residential campus on a consistent basis to identify and troubleshoot problems related to their event planning and community development initiatives. Monitor RA Event Assessment Forms, track RAs event participation responsibilities, and follow-up with RAs according to determined deadlines. Attend regularly scheduled residential campus-wide Senior Staff meetings with fellow GRAs and directors, as determined by the Assistant Director. Act as a role model to RA staff by promoting service to students in support of the goals of Residence Life. Clarify residential policies and procedures for RAs and students. Assist with RA Selection and other departmental initiatives as determined by Assistant Director.

Responsibilities for Administration

Serve on the area-wide Senior Staff On-Call rotation as scheduled for weeknights and weekends. Submit a monthly summary to Assistant Director, Residence Hall Directors, and Area Directors within the residential campus that outlines RAs' event participation as well as relevant training & development activities. Compile residential campus-wide community stats (including RAs event participation, training & development efforts, and RHA programs) for submission to the Associate Director for Student & Staff Development by end-of semester deadlines. Assist Assistant Director with routine administrative tasks such as move-in, vacancy reporting, supervising closings and openings, and compiling information for reports. Maintain weekly office hours to increase availability, approachability, and accessibility to RAs. Act as a University representative to students, parents, neighbors, visitors, and alumni/alumnae when needed.

Responsibilities for Community Development

Serve as a co-advisor to the Residence Hall Association in order to support their programming and advocacy efforts, as determined by the Assistant Director. Partner with Faculty in Residence to provide consistent support of their programming and outreach to students and staff. Meet students in the hall/residential campus by attending events and participating in community activities. Make referrals when necessary to other agencies within the University (e.g. SAO, ERC, Student Health Services, and the student service centers in the various schools and colleges).

Section 3

Training, Conditions of Employment, and Compensation

3.1 Mandatory Training Sessions

If you are selected as a GRA, you must attend mandatory training and education sessions throughout the year. For your information, the following list includes the dates and times that are dedicated to mandatory GRA education, training, and development. Keep in mind that additional session times may be scheduled as needed, and that all GRAs are required to attend all training sessions as a condition of their employment.

- 2018/2019 RA Orientation Meetings: Wednesday, April 11, 2018, 7:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. if you are on campus
- GRA Training: Begins Monday, August 13, 2018, at 9:00a.m. and continues throughout RA Training.
- RA Training: Begins Monday, August 20, 2018, at 9:00 a.m. and continues through the move-in and welcome back process, which concludes on September 3, 2018. GRAs are expected to participate in RA Training and help facilitate sessions.

Please note that training dates are estimates and are subject to change should the University's official 2018-2019 academic calendar be changed.

Please also know that all RAs are expected to attend regularly scheduled staff meetings and ongoing training exercises, which are held each Wednesday night of the academic year from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. This is a non-negotiable expectation.

3.2 Conditions of Employment

An appointment as a GRA is for one academic year, beginning with the August Training Sessions, and terminating, in most cases, within two days after University Commencement. GRAs are required to live and eat meals (where applicable) in their assigned residence. A GRA is expected to make the GRA position his or her highest non-academic priority; good judgment should be exercised in order to avoid excessive involvement in activities that might significantly reduce the GRA's availability to assist students. Additionally, GRAs must be enrolled in a full-time graduate program at Boston University for the entire academic year and maintain a 2.70 cumulative GPA. Lastly, GRAs must uphold all Boston University regulations and remain in good academic, financial, and judicial standing with the University.

3.3 Compensation

All GRAs receive a private room or apartment, which includes pre-set furnishings issued by the University. GRAs assigned to dormitory style rooms receive a dining plan. GRAs assigned to apartment style accommodations receive a room with a kitchen in lieu of a dining plan. Additionally, GRAs may receive small stipend.

GRAs do not receive free or discounted parking, nor do they receive free microfridge rentals.



Section 4

An Overview of the GRA Selection Process

4.1 Eligibility Requirements



GRA applicants are expected to meet the following eligibility requirements before submitting an application.

- Have a cumulative GPA of 2.70 or higher.
- Be in good judicial standing at the University in August 2018 when the term of the GRA position begins.
- Be a certified full-time student who will serve for both fall and spring semesters of the 2018/2019 academic year (with graduate student status).
- Documented support from your academic department that provides your department's approval for a 20-hour/week position in Residence Life.
- Attend all training exercises. (The next academic year, GRA Training begins on Monday, August 13, 2018. GRA Training runs through opening exercises and formally ends on September 3, 2018.)
- Attend regularly scheduled staff meetings and ongoing training exercises, which are held each Wednesday night of the academic year from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.
- Assist with the opening and closing of residence halls when there is a vacation period. (Based on respective area staffing assignments, GRAs may need to stay on campus beyond the date/time that halls close and return prior to the date/time that halls reopen.)
- Serve in the on-call system on a rotating basis with other members of the hall/residential campus staff; 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m. on weekdays and 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. on weekends and holidays. (The number of on-call shifts depends on the size of the staff. Additionally, some of our staff are required to be on-call during the vacation periods to provide service for on-campus apartment residents.)
- Commit to the 20-hour per week time commitment of the GRA position, which is considered your first non-academic time commitment.
- Complete a U.S. Department of Justice Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9), a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) background check form.
- Where applicable, contact respective Financial Assistance advisor to discuss how a possible graduate resident assistantship would impact need-based financial aid.
- International applicants should contact the International Students & Scholars Office to discuss eligibility for a resident assistantship.

If a GRA applicant meets all of the above eligibility requirements, then they may submit an application during our 2018/2019 GRA Selection process.



4.2 Application & Interview Process

The online application for the graduate resident assistant position will walk you through the required components of the position. All portions of the application must be completed before your application can be submitted. Directions are included in the application, but note the following parts:

- **Eligibility Requirements.** Before submitting an application packet to Residence Life, an applicant must first determine if they are eligible for the GRA role utilizing the self-assessment form at the beginning of the application.
- **Advisor Approval.** Each applicant is required to submit a letter from their academic advisor confirming eligibility to be a GRA for Residence Life.
- **Letters of Recommendation.** Each applicant must submit one letter of recommendation with their application.
- **Cover Letter and Resume.** Each applicant is required to submit a resume and cover letter as part of the application.
- **Transcript.** Each applicant must submit an undergraduate academic transcript and a graduate academic transcripts (if applicable).
- **Boston University Acceptance Letter.**

The GRA application will be available starting February 1, 2018 for the 2018/2019 Academic Year. Applications will be accepted and reviews on a rolling basis until all positions are filled. Qualified candidates who submit their application after all positions are filled, may be reviewed as potential alternate candidates.

Section 5

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How does the GRA role differ from the RA role?

A: The GRA position has a high level of responsibility. Each Area/ Hall Director utilizes the GRA in slightly different ways, but every Area/Hall Director relies on the GRA in supporting the RA staff, and residents of the community. The GRA is responsible for co-supervising the RAs in the area. They are often the first person an RA will go to with questions. The GRAs serve on the next level of on call. Some GRAs are directly responsible for residents, serving in an RA role for a small community of residents, others do not have residents, and are more of an RA for the RAs.



Q: What does a typical week look like for a GRA?

A: A GRA will be balancing a full time class load, will be attending and assisting in facilitation of weekly Wednesday night staff meetings, responding to RA weekly logs, having one on ones with RAs, follow up on issues that may be occurring, meeting with your supervisor, and serving in an on call rotation. Many GRAs also have the opportunity to take on additional responsibilities to allow them to continue to learn and grow. This is a dynamic position that is administratively heavy, along with working interpersonally. Week to week the role may look different as the semester ebbs and flows.

Q: What does serving On Call look like for a GRA?

A: GRAs are part of the Senior Staff On-Call rotation. There are six residential campuses, and each residential campus has a Senior Staff On-Call rotation. This includes the GRAs of the area and the Area/Hall Directors. It ranges from 6-10 people serving in the rotation. There is someone on call whenever the office is closed. Shifts are from 5pm-9am on weeknights and 9am-9am (24-hours) over weekends and holidays. While serving on call you must have a 10 minute response time to your area of campus.

The RA on-call rotation responds first to many situations that arise. They call up to the Senior Staff On-Call when they need assistance. The Senior Staff On-Call also always has an Administrator On-Call who they can turn to if needed. There is always support for both students, and those serving on call.

Q: What's the difference between the GRA for Administration and the GRA for Training and Development?

A: Both job descriptions are provided earlier in this document, and can be a good place to start to understand the differences. The GRA for Administration works directly with one RA staff providing leadership and mentorship within the day to day job expectations. There is 1-3 GRA for Administration for each Hall/Area Director depending on the characteristics of the area, and 3-7 GRAs for Administration in a Residential Campus. Each of the six Residential Campuses has one GRA for Training & Development. They work with the Assistant Director and the Hall/Area Directors to work with all of the RAs for an entire area on event requirements, and other aspects of training and development. Both positions are highly valued and integral to operations running smoothly and supporting RAs and the students that live in our communities.



Q: Can a GRA work in a part-time job?

A: Residence Life requires GRAs to maintain their positions as their highest non-academic time commitment. A part-time position (other than the graduate resident assistantship) could make it difficult to be effective academically and as a GRA. While Residence Life permits GRAs to work part-time jobs, we do not encourage this practice for GRAs. Any GRA wishing to maintain a part-time job must receive permission from his or her Residence Hall Director or Area Director. Additionally, international students are advised to discuss the impact of the GRA position with the staff at the International Students & Scholars Office (located at 888 Commonwealth Avenue).

Q: Can a GRA have a roommate?

A: GRAs are not permitted to have roommates. GRAs receive single rooms or apartments and are expected to use this not only as a living space but also as a space for resolution of conflicts as they concern residents. The GRA, therefore, must be afforded a degree of privacy that cannot be maintained in the presence of a roommate.

Q: Are there facilities for married GRAs?

A: Yes; married GRAs are assigned to facilities that can accommodate their needs. Facilities for married GRAs are extremely limited, and it is suggested that married applicants consult Residence Life as to the availability of these spaces.

Q: What support systems are available for GRAs in crisis and incident situations?

A: Residence Life maintains communications and assistance networks with a variety of University departments and offices such as Student Health Services, University Police, Housing, Facilities Management & Planning, and school and college academic support services. These and other University offices and departments are continuously available as part of a student support network for the staff of Residence Life. Additionally, GRAs are given the appropriate training to be referral agents and to accurately respond to common incidents and crises.

Q: Is an applicant's financial assistance affected by accepting an RA position?

A: If you receive need-based financial assistance, federal regulations require that residence staff compensation be included as part of your financial assistance package. This compensation will first replace self-help, need-based loans and/or work-study awards. If you have any questions about the impact of a resident assistantship on your financial assistance package, you should contact Financial Assistance directly.

Financial Assistance for Graduate Resident Assistants

The Impact on Eligibility for Need-Based Financial Aid

Federal regulations and Boston University policy requires that graduate student resources, including compensation for services of any type, be taken into consideration when calculating a student's eligibility for need-based financial aid. As a result, a student's Resident Assistant compensation must be incorporated into a need-based financial aid package. **If a student's award includes federal or BU need-based aid, the combination of all need-based aid, merit awards and Graduate Resident Assistant compensation cannot exceed the student's calculated financial aid eligibility.**

A financial aid package may consist of three types of aid: scholarship/grant, loans and student employment. Loans must be repaid and student employment aid must be earned, but neither is the case with scholarship/grant aid. Need-based scholarship/grant aid includes but is not limited to Boston University scholarship/grant, Charles River Housing Grant, Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), and State Scholarship/ Grant.

When an adjustment to a need-based financial aid package is required as a result of including Graduate Resident Assistant compensation in the package, the loan and employment portion of the award is reduced first. Loan and employment aid is reduced before scholarship/grant. Federal Work-Study and need-based student loans (such as the Subsidized Federal Stafford Loan and the Federal Perkins Loan) are either reduced or cancelled before scholarships or grants are affected. Since the **Unsubsidized** Stafford Loan is not a need-based loan program, it can exceed a student's calculated financial eligibility. Scholarship/ grant aid is reduced only if necessary to avoid aid in excess of calculated financial eligibility. Assistance from all sources (need, merit or credit-based) cannot exceed a student's total Cost of Attendance.

BU Residence Life notifies BU Financial Assistance of students selected as Resident Assistants; in some cases the notification is received after a financial aid award has already been made. **If a student who is selected as a Graduate Resident Assistant receives a Financial Aid Award Notification, which does not include the Resident Assistant compensation, the student should immediately notify his/her Assistant Director at BU Financial Assistance. The Assistant Director will adjust the financial aid package to include the Graduate Resident Assistant compensation.**

Please contact BU Financial Assistance should you have questions about your aid and Resident Assistantships by calling 617-353-2965 or e-mailing finaid@bu.edu.