

RA Selection 101

An Introduction to Residence Life and RA Selection at Boston University

What's Inside:

Welcome.....	p. 2
Section 1: An Overview of Residence Life.....	p. 3
Section 2: Responsibilities and Position Descriptions.....	p. 5
Section 3: Training, Conditions of Employment, and Compensation.....	p. 8
Section 4: An Overview of the RA Selection Process.....	p. 9

For interested applicants returning from studying abroad in fall 2017, new (*eligible*) transfer students arriving in January 2018, or current Wheelock College students, RA applications are due no later than **11:59PM on Sunday, February 11, 2018.**

Welcome

Welcome to Residence Life, and thank you for your interest in applying to our 2018/2019 resident assistant selection process!

The resident assistant (RA) position is truly a special one. Indeed, the job of a RA is *to care* about residents, and few people in this world can claim that they get paid to care about others. Of course, as a RA, 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 and your residents would soon discover that their university experience is more than meaningful; it is also life transforming.

This document provides you with a short introduction to the RA position. In the pages that follow you will read an overview of the department at Boston University that employs and coordinates the RA program—Residence Life. You will see position descriptions, responsibilities, and compensation packages for our RA 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 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.

Corinna Cusson & Yvette Vadnais Lancaster
RA Selection Committee Co-Chairs
Boston University Residence Life

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 RA 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. She 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. He also oversees Residential Education at 19 Deerfield Street and coordinates the development and training of full-time professional staff, support staff, and resident assistants.

Residential campuses are supervised by **Assistant Directors**, each of whom assumes primary responsibility for one of the six residential campuses. 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 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, administer local student conduct 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. They're an invaluable member of the University staff.

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 1047 Commonwealth Avenue; and **West Campus**, which consists 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.

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 an RA, one is expected to work in accordance with these ideals of excellence.

As a student, an RA retains his or her rights under the laws of society and under the University's Code of Student Responsibilities. Nothing in this discussion of the RA position description on staff ethics and personal responsibilities infringes upon the RA's rights as a student. However, an RA must recognize that as an employee of Residence Life, he or she is held to standards of behavior of a higher order than those of the residential population, which includes but is not limited to the requirement that an RA remain in good judicial standing at the University.

2.1 Areas of Accountability

Residence Life has developed five general responsibilities for the RA position. These areas of accountability should be viewed as guidelines for successful performance as an RA. Evaluation of an RA's performance throughout the academic year is based on the following areas of accountability:

Developing a Healthy Community

As the designated leader for a community, it is the RA's job to instill mutual respect, cooperation, and trust while also attempting to cultivate commonly shared values among many different individuals.

Assisting Students

It is the goal of the University to provide students with an academic education; however, such an opportunity can be hindered due to personal fears, uncertainties, and conflicts. Through observation, availability, and interaction within the community, an RA can anticipate residents' needs, identify potential problems, and make appropriate referrals to help residents overcome obstacles.

Providing Control

Order, civility, and respect for the rights of others are essential qualities of any community. Rules and regulations have been established to ensure that students' pursuit of their academic and personal growth is uninhibited. By learning, following, and informing the residents of the rules and regulations, an RA takes a lead in enforcing and appropriately citing all alleged violations of policy. All RA applicants should review the University's "nonacademic and residential policies" to know what they will be asked to enforce: <http://www.bu.edu/dos/policies/lifebook/residential/>.

Working as a Team Member

An individual RA's resources, talents, and skills are limited. However, by utilizing the skills and knowledge of teammates and other University staff members, a RA can provide thorough answers and direction for the numerous and often complex needs of the community.

Performing Administrative Tasks

Many University offices rely upon RAs to collect and submit pertinent data in order to successfully provide service and support to students. An RA's efforts to provide timely, accurate, and thorough information contribute to the smooth and effective operations of the University as well as the residence hall system.

2.2 Detailed Position Descriptions

The **RA** position is the most common student leader position within Residence Life. However, there are a few variations:

- **Fisk House**

Located at 146 Commonwealth Avenue near Dartmouth Street in Boston's Back Bay, Fisk House is a cooperative residence for female graduate students enrolled at Boston University. The Fisk House is managed by the Kilachand Hall Residence Life staff at 91 Bay State Road, and sponsored by the Boston University Women's Council. Fisk House provides housing accommodations for 16 students at nominal cost. It is the only subsidized graduate student residence at Boston University.

The Resident Assistant for Fisk House must be a female graduate student enrolled in a full-time program at Boston University. This is a 12-month position that requires working during University breaks as well as the summer months. Interested candidates can learn more about the Fisk House and the Women's Council at <https://www.bu.edu/buwc>

- **HER House**

The Harriet E. Richards House is a co-operative living community for undergraduate women. The unique housing experience is located on Bay State Road and provides low-cost housing alternative to make higher education a reality by lifting a financial burden. The position is 12-months including break periods. The RA must be a female identifying student accepted to or enrolled in a BU graduate program for the following year. There is an additional review process with members of the house as the RA is an active member of the co-operative environment required to participate fully as a member of the house in addition to the RA responsibilities. Interested candidates can learn more about the house at <http://www.her-house.org>.

- **Theology House**

The Theology House is located at 2 Raleigh Street abutting Bay State Road. Registered graduate students in the School of Theology can apply to reside in the house through the School's Admissions office. The Resident Assistant assigned to the Theology House is required to sign a 10-month contract and must be a full-time graduate student in the School of Theology. The Resident Assistant will work closely with Dean Lightsey and the School of Theology special program coordinator to create a collaborative living and learning residential environment.

- **90-92/94 BSR**

Resident Assistant candidates applying to be an RA at 90-92 and 94 Bay State Road will be required to sign a 12-month contract that includes working during the summer months. These brownstone buildings house a diverse group of students which includes a number of international students. Undergraduate students who select into the 90-92 Bay State Road residence have the option of signing a 12-month residence license agreement.

We also have RA positions in our Specialty Communities. Generally speaking, Specialty Community RAs conduct standard RA duties but focus their efforts on developing their respective Specialty Communities. Applicants interested in serving as a Specialty Community RA must qualify to live in that Specialty Community. (Specialty Community qualifications are listed here:

<http://www.bu.edu/housing/residences/specialty/list/>.)

Additionally, we also have GRA positions, which as mentioned previously are for full-time graduate students with a Bachelor's degree who serve in a supervisory capacity with Residence Life. These positions are often referred to as GRAs for Administration. A variation on the GRA position is the GRA for Training & Development position, which are limited in number. GRAs for Training & Development work closely with their respective Assistant Director to focus their efforts on the education and training of their respective residential areas RA staff. Information about GRA positions will be available starting February 1, 2018.

Resident Assistant & Specialty Community Resident Assistant

The Resident Assistant (RA) is a student staff member who helps to care for residents living within their respective community. RAs serve under the direction of a Graduate Resident Assistant, Residence Hall Director or Area Director. Generally, RAs are responsible for enforcing University policy, performing various administrative tasks, developing a sense of community, assisting students, and working as a team member within Residence Life. **Specialty Community RAs** also focus a number of their efforts on developing their respective specialty communities. Responsibilities are further specified by their 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 RA's highest nonacademic time commitment.

Responsibilities for Developing a Healthy Community

- Complete a minimum of eight community events each year, per the Event Participation Model.
- Schedule and conduct community meetings on a monthly basis.
- Learn residents' names, room assignments, and at least one other piece of information about them.
- Maintain a schedule that ensures visibility, accessibilities, and availability to residents on a consistent basis.
- Post all flyers and keep bulletin boards updated, attractive, and informative.
- Support local Residence Hall Association and Faculty-in-Residence.
- **Specialty Community RAs**: Complete specialty-themed bulletin boards and door tags.
- **Specialty Community RAs**: Relate at least four community events to specialty theme, and collaborate with Specialty Advisor on at least two community events.

Responsibility for Assisting Students

- Be knowledgeable about campus resources and able to make appropriate referrals.
- Assist residents to overcome obstacles such as personal fears, uncertainties, and adjustments.
- Aid residents in the mediation of roommate and community conflicts.
- Educate students to be tolerant of student differences such as race, ethnicity, politics, gender, religion, socioeconomics, age, sexual orientation, disabilities, and etcetera.
- **Specialty Community RAs**: Confirm criteria and expectations for specialty community and inform residents that criteria will impact ability to return the following year.

Responsibilities for Providing Control

- While serving on-call, respond professionally and appropriately to incidents, crises, and emergencies.
- Educate community on the rules and regulations for safe and secure campus living.
- Confront inappropriate behavior and alleged violations of University policy.
- Document all incidents accurately and thoroughly, and submit timely reports.

Responsibilities for Working as a Team Member

- Attend and participate in all RA staff training, education, and information sessions such as August training, winter training, RA conferences, and weekly Wednesday night staff meetings from 7:00 p.m.-11:00pm. Support departmental programs associated with RA recruitment and selection processes, and Admission Open Houses.

- Maintain a positive attitude and refrain from conduct that lowers team morale.
- Meet monthly with supervisor(s) to discuss performance and experiences in Residence Life.
- **Specialty Community RAs:** Meet Regularly with Specialty Advisors.

Responsibilities for Performing Administrative Tasks

- Follow established guidelines for all office tasks (e.g., on-call, key sign-outs, etc).
- Stop by hall/residential campus office daily, check RA mailbox, monitor Blackboard, and keep BU email in working order.
- Participate in assigned opening, closing, and move-in shifts as directed by supervisor(s).
- Complete RA weekly reports, incidents reports, event assessment forms, and other administrative tasks by all deadlines.

Section 3

Training, Conditions of Employment, and Compensation

3.1 Mandatory Training Sessions

The success of any RA and the strength of the RA program is dependent upon quality supervision and training. If you are selected as an RA, 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 RA education, training, and development. Keep in mind that additional session times may be scheduled as needed, and that all RAs are required to attend all training sessions as a condition of their employment.

- **2018/2019 RA Orientations Meetings:** Wednesday, April 11, 2018, 7:00PM -11:00PM
- **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.

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 an RA is for one academic year, beginning with the August Training Sessions, and terminating, in most cases, within two days after University Commencement. RAs are required to live and eat meals (where applicable) in their assigned residence. An RA is expected to make the RA 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 RA's availability to assist students. Additionally, RAs must be enrolled in a full-time academic program at Boston University for the entire academic year and maintain a 2.70 cumulative GPA. Lastly, RAs must uphold all Boston University regulations and remain in good academic, financial, and judicial standing with the University.

3.3 Compensation

All RAs receive a private room or apartment, which includes pre-set furnishings issued by the University. RAs in dormitory style rooms receive a dining plan. RAs in apartment style rooms receive a room with a kitchen in lieu of a dining plan. Some RAs receive small stipends based on their number of residents and/or other responsibilities.

Additionally, RAs receive on-campus telephone service, a SportsPass, and ResNet service. RAs do not receive free or discounted parking, nor do they receive free microfridge rentals.

Section 4

An Overview of the RA Selection Process

4.1 Eligibility Requirements

RA 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 RA position begins.
- Be a certified full-time student who plans to serve for both fall and spring semesters of the 2018-2019 academic year (with junior, senior, or graduate student status).
- **Graduate and doctoral candidates may require documented support to their application, from their academic department that provides their department's approval for them to hold down a 20-hour/week position in Residence Life.**
- Attend all training exercises. (Next academic year, RA Training begins on Monday, August 20, 2018. RA 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, RAs 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 RA position, which is considered their first non-academic time commitment.
- Upon request, 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 their respective Financial Assistance advisor to discuss how a possible 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 an RA applicant meets all of the above eligibility requirements then they may submit an application during our 2018-2019 RA Selection process.

The online application for the 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 RA role utilizing the self-assessment form at the beginning of the application.
- **Supplemental Application Materials.** If an RA applicant is interested in being considered for a Specialty Community RA position, they must attach a supplemental essay(s).
- **Essay.** Each applicant must submit an essay regarding their interest as part of the application. See the application for exact prompt and guidelines.
- **Letters of Recommendation.** Each applicant must have a recommender submit one letter of recommendation via the online form as part of the application.
- **Cover Letter and Resume.** Each applicant is required to submit a resume and cover letter as part of the application.

4.2 Application

The application process takes place during fall 2017 for resident assistantships beginning in August 2018. (Students accepted to fall 2017 Study Abroad programs may receive consideration in the early spring of 2018; see details at the end of this section). Only undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled in programs located on the Charles River Campus and Medical Campus may apply. **RA applications must be submitted electronically, no later than 11:59 p.m. on October 29, 2017.** Applicants are both permitted and encouraged to submit their applications electronically, prior to October 29. Applicants can expect the following portions of the selection process:

- **RA Information Session:** RA applicants may attend one of the optional RA Information Sessions. A complete schedule of information sessions can be found via the Residence Life website (www.bu.edu/reslife).
- **Application Review Phase:** All RA applications will be reviewed thoroughly by the staff selection team; however, only a limited number of applicants will be invited to participate in the RA Selection Class. (Consequently, the RA Selection process ends here for applicants who have not advanced to the RA Selection Class. Applications will be kept open for the remainder of the 2018/2019 academic year. Should an opening arise, and we feel that an applicant's qualifications match our needs, we will be in contact with the applicant to schedule an individual interview. Additionally, if an applicant is eligible and interested in applying for the 2019/2020 selection process, please keep in mind that information will be available via our Residence Life website (www.bu.edu/reslife) the following year.)
- **RA Selection Class (selected applicants only):** The RA Selection Class serves as the final phase in the RA Selection process and is restricted to a limited number of applicants only. No applicant is guaranteed a seat in an RA Selection Class. *Our RA Selection Classes meet during the weeks of February 26th and March 12th. (Please be aware that Spring Break week falls between the two class weeks- March 5-9, 2018, and should be considered in any travel plans.)* The RA Selection Class serves as a venue to review pertinent RA leadership competencies, to assess applicants' interpersonal skills, and to afford more opportunities for interaction between Residence Life professional staff and RA applicants. Thus, it's a mutual exchange; applicants have the chance to learn just as much about us as we want to learn about them. Applicants will be given the opportunity to work as a group to problem-solve their way through case studies and will meet with fulltime professional staff members. Each RA Selection Class session will last approximately 2 to 2.5 hours, and must take place in person. (Telephone or Skype is not permitted.) The classes will be taught by one or more members of the Residence Life professional staff. Applicants are encouraged to review their applications prior to their class as they may be asked to elaborate on the information provided. Preparation for the class should also include a review of this document, "RA 101: A Short Introduction of Residence Life and the RA Selection Process at Boston University." Specifically, applicants will discuss the section entitled "Areas of Accountability for Resident Assistants." It may also be helpful to be familiar with the "Residential Policies" section of the Boston University Lifebook (www.bu.edu/lifebook).
- **Notification:** All RA Selection Class participants will be notified of final decisions via email by April 3, 2018. Please note that only a limited number of applicants will be offered RA positions. All offers are singular in nature and applicants are not afforded the opportunity to request an alternative RA assignment. The staff selection team puts forth a great effort to assign successful applicants in appropriate locations that most closely match our personnel needs. (Consequently, the RA Selection process ends here for applicants who are not offered RA positions. Some applicants may be placed on our Waiting List, which means that their applications will be kept open for the remainder of the 2018/2019 academic year. Should an opening arise, and we feel that an applicant's qualifications match our needs, we will go to our Waiting List and contact an applicant. Additionally, if an applicant is eligible and interested in applying for the 2019/2020 selection process, please keep in mind that information will be available via our Residence Life website (www.bu.edu/reslife) the following year.)
- **2018/2019 Orientation Meeting:** Any applicants offered a resident assistantship as a result of participation in the application process must attend their respective 2018/2019 RA Orientation Meeting on Wednesday, April 11, 2018, from 7:00 p.m. -11:00 p.m.

4.3 Information for Limited Spring 2018 Selection Process

A limited spring 2018 RA Selection process is available for those eligible students who were studying abroad in fall 2017, new (eligible) transfer students to Boston University in January 2018, and current Wheelock College students. Interested candidates must submit their RA applications electronically no later than **11:15 p.m. on Sunday, February 11, 2018**. Upon submission of an RA application, eligible applicants will sign up to participate in an RA Selection Class that meets over the course of two sessions during the weeks of February 26 and March 12, 2018. (Please be aware that Spring Break week falls between the two class weeks- March 5-9, 2018, and should be considered in any travel plans.) The RA Selection Class serves as a venue to review pertinent RA leadership competencies, to assess applicants' interpersonal skills, and to afford more opportunities for interaction between Residence Life professional staff and RA applicants. All class participants in this process will be notified of final decisions with other applicants by April 3, 2018.