

# Brandon University Residence Assistant

## Detailed Job Description

*Updated January 2024*

To support a safe, inclusive, healthy environment in residence that is conducive for learning, the Residence Hall Programming Office team is looking for enthusiastic student leaders to fill the role(s) of a Residence Assistant. Residence Assistants offer student-centered and inclusive supports and programs to enhance the overall student experience. Reporting to the Residence Manager, an RA assists students' development during a critical and transformative time.

RAs are required to reside in residence and offer assistance to students living in their assigned communities. Living and working in residence has many advantages, including the chance to develop community with people from Canada and around the world with the common identity of being a BU student! Being an RA at BU offers student leaders a chance to apply their co-curricular learning in a practical setting, gain valuable leadership skills they will use throughout their lives, and the distinct opportunity to impact their community positively.

### Position Summary:

The position of the Residence Assistant (RA) requires an individual who is self-motivated, capable of functioning independently and as part of a team, is empathetic and fair, possesses excellent communication skills, and is willing to commit their efforts to the enhancement of Residence. RAs strive to offer enriching programming initiatives, foster a sense of belonging, and act as role models to their peers. The scope of the position includes advising, programming, student conduct follow-up, supporting building operations and administrative responsibilities. An RA's primary responsibility is to promote a positive Residence community, in accordance with the philosophies and expectations outlined in the Residence Handbook. Residence Assistants are under the direct supervision of the Residence Manager.

### Competencies:

The Residence Hall Programming Office (RHPO) is looking for candidates who possess the following foundational competencies and are seeking to continue their personal and professional development. This position will provide you with the opportunity to develop the following competencies. Outlined are examples of duties that fall under the core competencies for this role. For more information on position responsibilities and duties of the RA role please see "Position Responsibilities" section.

Competency	Definition	Responsibilities and Duties
<b>Teamwork and Cooperation</b>	Ability to collaborate is supportive and can work cooperatively toward goals, as a member of a team in a close community environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Work collaboratively with other student leaders to plan community development initiatives.</li><li>- Attending weekly staff meetings.</li></ul>
<b>Communication</b>	Ability to communicate clearly and effectively, in both verbal and written format, using	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Conducting follow-up conversations with residents on issues of concern utilizing restorative approaches.</li><li>- Aiding students as a peer supporter with personal, academic, financial, social or other concerns when possible.</li></ul>

	empathy and active listening techniques when necessary.	
<b>Organization and Planning</b>	Ability to effectively organize and prioritize, plan activities and maintain a heavy workload in a sometimes stressful environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planning, organizing and submitting program proposals and reports for all activities lead.</li> <li>- Reporting to the RHPO on a regular basis, incidents, activities, circumstances and conditions of the residence community.</li> </ul>
<b>Conflict Management</b>	Ability to calmly and assertively intervene, mediate and effectively communicate in sometimes confrontational situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mediating roommate disagreements.</li> <li>- Participating in a “on-duty” rotation and responding to behaviours in the moment that are violating the Residence Handbook.</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship Building</b>	Ability to establish rapport and respect in a genuine manner, often in unfamiliar circumstances, using diplomacy and confidentiality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct regular floor meetings to pass along or gather information, answer questions, and to organize events.</li> <li>- Establish, develop and maintain an open relationship with each member of your community, regularly interacting with each member on your floor/section</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	Ability to enthusiastically motivate and lead others in situations which may require quick action, and to enforce community rules. Ability to foster participation and lead events and activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supporting education and awareness of the Residence Handbook and related policies with your community.</li> <li>- Suggesting and delivering programs to meet identified students’ needs and interests.</li> <li>- Live on a floor in residence with students to act as a role model and provide leadership, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
<b>Problem Solving</b>	Ability to objectively and quickly assess a variety of situations, and respond through creative problem solving and appropriate application of policies, while maintaining fairness and respect for all involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicate residence and university policies to residents; act as a resource and referral agent to residents.</li> <li>- Address inappropriate/concerning behaviour and document for follow-up.</li> </ul>

## Position Responsibilities:

### Administrative Functions

- Assisting with Residence Check-in, helping with the completion of room checks and tracking and collecting roommate agreements;
- Completing room check forms for all residents transferring out, withdrawing, or otherwise leaving residence;
- Convening and chairing regularly scheduled floor/section meetings and submitting community reports following each meeting;
- Reporting to the Residence Manager on a regular basis, incidents, activities, circumstances, and conditions in the assigned area and where applicable, within the entire residence community;
- Completing weekly reports to be submitted to the Residence Manager;
- Fully completing Incident Reports and follow-up documentation as required or by request from the Residence Manager. Reports will be completed within 24 hours of the incident; Urgent reports with quick action required will be completed by 9:00 am the next day.

- Completing on-duty logs, documenting issues of concern and follow-up conversations held with residents within 24 hours;
- Thoroughly completing holiday room checks at the end of the 1st semester following residence holiday closing;
- Thoroughly completing final room checks at the end of the 2nd semester following residence closing;
- Regularly checking and responding to BU email communication from the Residence Manager and Office;
- Carrying out other administrative duties as assigned.

### **Assisting and Advising Students**

- Being consistently available to the students in addition to scheduled duty time and advising residents when available;
- Being familiar with academic and wellness services on campus and, utilizing and referring students as required, with an understanding of one's own personal and professional limits;
- Aiding students as a peer supporter with personal, academic, financial, social or other problems whenever possible, being prepared to refer to the appropriate resources;
- RA may be approached by students who have experienced challenges or exhibit high risk behaviours such as thoughts of suicide, sexual assaults, domestic violence, mental health concerns and self-harm. Residence Staff members are responsible for listening and providing resources to students; they do not provide counselling. To this end, all Residence Staff are trained in these high risk areas in order to provide an appropriate response and support to students;
- Aiding students by supplying information on (or directions to resources related to) residence life, course selection, facilities, and referral to campus and off campus resources;
- Mediating roommate conflicts and floor issues with the students involved, exploring possible solutions and referring as necessary;
- Encourage and support residents with their involvement within Residence and on campus;
- RAs will be available to their communities in times of need (including the first six weeks of the semester) while at the same time effectively communicating with residents about the competing demands on their time.

### **Building Operations/Ancillary Services Support**

- Being aware of health and safety conditions and knowing who to contact in the event of an emergency;
- Being aware of fire regulations, especially the RA's responsibility in the event of a fire or fire drill;
- Disseminating information to students regarding fire safety, personal safety, etc.;
- Ensuring that unsafe conditions are reported;
- Reporting damage or vandalism as soon as noted; Investigating damages or vandalism and attempting to identify the individual(s) responsible;
- Attending with after-hours building operations staff in response to an emergency repair to assist with access and to uphold safe working condition practices;
- Reporting on-going maintenance problems that have not been corrected.

### **Community Management**

- Understanding, role modelling and enforcing the Residence Handbook;
- Knowing and observing University and Residence rules and regulations;
- Supporting education and awareness of Residence rules and regulations within their community;
- Encouraging residents to take an active role in protecting, managing and building their own community;
- Assisting residents with their understanding of and application of community living;

- Promoting academics and lifestyle balance in the Residence; meeting with students in your assigned community twice a semester for a formal check in;
- Responding consistently, fairly and appropriately when violations occur, using restorative approaches to prevent more serious problems or reoccurrences, to ensure that residents are fairly treated, and to repair harm done to community and/or residents;

### **On Duty Requirements**

- Participating in an “on-duty” rotation. Which can increase in frequency during high risk periods (ex. Orientation Week, Halloween, Residence Social Nights);
- Being available within the residence hall at all times while on duty;
- Being observant of all shared areas within residence and taking appropriate action if concerns are identified;
- Must complete a minimum of three rounds on “busy” nights including but not limited to Friday and Saturday nights. On all other nights, a minimum of two rounds must be completed. The last round on a “busy” night must not begin until 1:00am whereas all other nights the final round must not begin until 11:00pm.
- Responding to calls and requests for assistance and support while on-duty (including, but not limited to: facilities, life emergencies, community expectations, lockouts, etc.)

### **Programming**

- Supporting and assisting in the implementation of programs as directed by the RHPO;
- Suggesting and delivering programs to meet identified student needs and interests;
- Creating a communications area on the floor that is regularly maintained for academic information and updates of events and initiatives on the floor, in residence, or on campus (e.g. bulletin board)
- Developing and implementing programs that fulfil the community development goals set out in the residence programming model;
- Play a key role in the management and delivery of Residence Orientation programming;
- Completing and submitting program proposals (where required) and program reports for all programs.

### **Team Development**

- Attending weekly staff meetings, and regular meetings with the Residence Manager;
- Encouraging idea sharing, team building and a respectful and positive work environment amongst teammates;
- Collaborating with and supporting Residence Council teams;

### **Additional duties**

- Assist with Brandon University Open House (Winter Term)
- Participate in Residence Staff hiring and recruitment initiatives
- Other related duties as assigned.

### **Minimum Qualifications:**

- Full-time Brandon University student in good academic standing; Hold a minimum GPA of 2.5 in the term prior to RA selection; any additional extra-curricular commitments may not exceed 10 hours/week
- Residence living experience preferred; previous RA experience would be an asset
- Good study habits, time management skills, organization, goal setting, problem solving and multi-tasking skills
- Good communication and interpersonal skills including flexibility, and ability to function as part of a team
- Sound understanding of university student experiences and factors that may impact success
- Ability to exercise independent judgment, take initiative and be creative
- Minimum of 4 months of post-secondary studies;

- Previous leadership experience would be an asset

### **Conditions of Employment:**

- Have, or would be willing to get up to date Emergency First Aid and CPR certification. A copy of the certificate must be provided to the Residence Manager prior to start date. **The Residence Hall Programming Office will not reimburse the cost of Emergency First Aid and CPR certification.**
- Have a current and valid WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System) training. A copy of the certificate must be provided to the Residence Manager within a week of start date.
- Live in assigned staff accommodation and take part in the residence meal plan. RAs are not permitted to share a room with another person (unless prior written authorization is received from their Residence Manager).
- Offers of employment are contingent on candidates maintaining a GPA of 2.5, and good residence conduct standing. Any violations of the Residence Handbook or University Policies may result in an offer of employment being retracted.
- Any other proposed employment or extra-curricular activity must be discussed with and approved by the Residence Manager. Student success practices suggest ten to fifteen hours per week of additional employment or extra-curricular involvement is a guideline to support academic success. An RA position is a significant time commitment; therefore additional activities outside of the role may have negative consequences on academic performance.
- Residence Assistants may not normally work in other positions for more than eighteen (18) hours per week.
- Completed criminal record with vulnerable sector check required. A copy must be provided to the Residence Manager within a week of start date. **The Residence Hall Programming Office will not reimburse the cost of Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check.**
- RAs are required to remain in residence until 24 hours after the last exam in December and in April conditionally based on the completion of administrative duties. They should also be prepared to spend part of the reading week breaks and long weekends on campus. RA's can expect to be on-call for at least 1 weekend per month.
- Prior to signing an employment contract for the RA position, proposed time away for academic practicums, placements, field school, pre-booked travel tickets etc., must be discussed with and approved by the Residence Manager.

### **Training Requirements:**

RAs are expected to complete the following training requirements in the timelines specified:

- Attend residence staff training during from approximately August 23<sup>rd</sup> -August 29<sup>th</sup>, prior to the start of classes in September; This includes training on the weekends;
- Complete residence staff training over email correspondence from July to August 2024

### **Performance Standards:**

In addition to fulfilling the RA position responsibilities and duties, the incumbent is required to agree to and abide by the Residence Staff Performance Standards, provided in Appendix I.

### **Performance Evaluation:**

The performance of RAs will be regularly evaluated by the Residence Manager. The extensive detail above is included to provide as clear an indication as possible of performance expectations. When performance is perceived to be below standard, the matter will be discussed immediately and confidentially between the RA and the Residence Manager.

### **Statement of Understanding:**

All Residence Staff must abide by their contract of employment, indicating that they have read their Position Description and understand the duties, employment dates and expectations as set out by the Residence Manager, those discussed during team meetings and training, and those documented in the Residence Staff Professional Standards, Residence Agreement, Residence Handbook, other Residence Policies, and other University policies.

### **RA Selection Process:**

There are two phases in the selection of Residence Assistants. The first phase is the RA Application. All applications must include a cover letter, current resume, two references (contact information only), and a completed online application questionnaire (available at time of posting). Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria: quality of resume and cover letter, suitable experiences, academic standing and quality of responses to questionnaire. Only those candidates with the strongest applications will be selected for an interview. Applicants selected from for first phase will be invited to attend a panel interview. The duration of the interview will be approximately 15-30 minutes. During the interview, applicants will be asked a variety of questions focusing on their abilities, past student leadership experiences and residence experience. Questions will be targeted to access key competency areas as outlined in the position description. All successful applicants will be notified of selection results within 1 week of the interview.