Resident Assistant Position Description

Overview
This document contains four parts: the General Duties and Expectations of the RA Position; the Student Staff Code of Ethics; the Staff Disciplinary Policy; and the Third Year Staff Expectations. This document is intended to ensure effective and consistent performance of duties and expectations while highlighting the skills and experiences to be gained from the RA position. Failure to fulfill job responsibilities and/or any violation of university policy or state law may be grounds for termination. If any terms, or expectations are unclear, staff members should contact a supervisor immediately for clarification.

1. General Duties and Expectations of the RA Position
The Resident Assistant (RA) is a part-time, paraprofessional staff member of the Department of Housing and Residence Life (HRL). The RA is a valued part of the staff and as an employee has a responsibility to the Catholic mission of the University and the Department of Housing and Residence Life.

1-1. Period of Employment
This is an academic year appointment beginning with a start date approximately two weeks prior to the start of classes in fall semester and continuing through the day after graduation. The arrival and departure dates are not negotiable. All staff must plan accordingly, advising all who will need to be informed of these dates.

RAs are required to remain on campus 24 hours after halls close for all break periods and are also required to return to campus up to a minimum of 24 hours prior to halls opening at the end of all break periods.

1-2. Basic Expectations
a. The roles of the RA position include, but are not limited to, a resource person, programmer, policy enforcer, administrator, and role model. It is implicitly understood that RAs will respect confidential issues appropriately.
b. As a representative of the University and the Housing and Residence Life staff, RAs are expected to maintain a high level of job performance and to behave at all times in an ethical manner and a manner which upholds university and departmental policy. Failure to uphold this expectation may result in job disciplinary action.
c. As a representative of the University and the housing staff, RAs are expected to abide by and enforce all SHU Community Standards, HRL policies, State and/or Federal Laws anywhere on campus or in SHU owned or leased property. Being found responsible of a policy violation in a campus judicial hearing may result in immediate dismissal.

1-3. Academic Expectations
a. RAs in Aquinas Hall, Boland Hall, Xavier Hall, the Complex, and Ora Manor are required to maintain a cumulative 2.50 GPA. RAs in Turrell Manor are required to maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA. If this minimum is not maintained, it will be cause for termination. Grades will be checked after each semester.
b. Because compensation is issued via a grant, RAs must maintain full-time student status, which is a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester. Therefore, it is vital that any RA who will fall below 12 credit hours inform their supervisor immediately to get approval for an exception from the HRL Central Office.

1-4. Training
All RA staff members must attend all Spring, August, and Winter Training sessions. Spring Training takes places on a Friday afternoon in early to mid-April. August Training begins two weeks prior to the fall semester. Winter Training begins up to five days prior to the spring semester. In addition, on-going staff training occurs throughout each semester. Training involves full and active participation as well as day and evening commitments. Staff members are responsible for making travel and other necessary advance plans according to these training dates as well as informing all family and friends of these dates and the required attendance at these trainings.

1-5. Programming
RAs are responsible for meeting programming requirements as set forth by supervisory staff. Incorporation of theme related initiatives, academics, and active involvement of faculty and priests in residence are encouraged. Programs must be properly planned and advertised. Programming paperwork must be completed thoroughly and on time. Effective programming assists in creating a stronger community in the residence halls. Weekend programming is required.

1-6. Duty
RAs are required to remain on campus two weekends per month to assist in the development of the residential community. Night and weekend duty varies by building and is subject to the discretion of supervisory staff. RAs must check-in with Senior Staff on Duty when starting duty. Unapproved duty switches, failure to arrive for duty, or leaving the building during duty without prior permission may result in staff disciplinary action.
1-7. Staff Meetings
   RAs must attend and participate in all staff meetings and work-related activities. Supervisor(s) must give advance approval to miss any staff function. Staff meetings occur once a week, length and location indicated by supervisor(s).

1-8. Co-curricular Activities and Employment
   All RAs are expected to advise supervisory staff of all co-curricular activities so that they may discuss balancing these activities with academic success and job responsibilities. RAs may not exceed 10 hours of co-curricular activities such as sororities, fraternities, cheerleading, ROTC, athletics/intramurals, and clubs and organizations. RAs are not allowed to serve as a Peer Advisor or as an executive officer of the Student Government Association.

   RA employment may not exceed 10 hours per week. Exceptions may be granted for student teaching and nursing clinical practice in consultation with supervisor(s) and the Assistant Director for Training and Development. Any staff member wishing for any employment exception must meet with supervisory staff on an individual basis to discuss how all responsibilities will be managed. For all employment, an agreement will be signed and periodically reviewed to insure positive performance. If a staff member is unable to manage their commitments, a decision must be made as to which activities to drop. Further violations of this agreement may result in termination.

1-9. Evaluation and Placement
   Staff appointment and placement decisions are made based on each staff member's skills, personal interests and needs for the particular living environment. Resident Assistants are hired for the department, therefore assignments are subject to change at the discretion of the HRL Central Office depending on the needs of the department. Reappointment is not guaranteed and will be based upon a reapplication process including but not limited to a reapplication, interview, performance evaluation, and recommendations by supervisory staff. Reappointment is not automatic. If rehired, attendance is required at Spring Training.

1-10. Administrative Responsibilities & Duties
   RAs are responsible for assisting with the check-in and check-out processes each semester. RAs will assist in room change paperwork and room verifications. RAs are responsible for completing programming forms, incident reports, verification forms, and other miscellaneous paperwork. RAs are also responsible for assisting during Health and Safety inspections and during fire alarms. RA participation in Student Staff Selection, Room Selection, Open Houses, and Freshman Preview is also required. Each RA will be required to work (3) hours in the hall office each week. These hours will be utilized to assist with work that needs to be done in the office or at the front desk. Senior Staff will designate what work will be done during these hours. (Some RAs may be hired to work additional hours for pay by serving as a Desk Assistant or Office Assistant.) Ora Manor and Turrel Manor Resident Assistants will be required to fulfill this administrative responsibility in the Ora Manor or Turrell Manor hall office.

1-11. Compensation
   a. All Resident Assistants will receive a room and a meal plan 160 meals per semester and 400 pirate dollars as compensation.
   b. On-campus and Turrell Manor RAs will also receive voicemail and computer network access to be utilized in fulfilling job responsibilities. Staff are required to activate and set-up voicemail in their room on a land line phone.
   c. Ora Manor Resident Assistants will receive Internet access to be utilized in fulfilling job responsibilities.

2. Student Staff Code of Ethics
   Student staff members of Housing and Residence Life (HRL) at Seton Hall University have many responsibilities as a student employed by the University. Staff members must abide by and enforce all SHU Community Standards, HRL policies, State and/or Federal Laws anywhere on campus or in SHU owned or leased property.

2-1. Abiding by Policy
   An HRL student staff member is both a leader and role model for other students. Therefore, staff members are expected to act in a consistent, professional manner, to refrain from inappropriate or offensive communication or behavior, and to act in a respectful manner towards all residents. Staff members are expected to support, enforce and abide by all federal, state (civil and criminal) laws, and University, and Housing policies and procedures. If, for any reason, staff members violate the Community Standards or are party to a possible policy violation, they will notify their direct supervisor in a timely manner. In addition, not abiding by University and HRL policies will result in disciplinary action.

2-2. Scope of Position
   The RA position is a priority second only to academics. RAs have a primary responsibility for their floor/wing. As an employee of Seton Hall University, staff members have broader responsibilities within the campus community. It is
expected that all student staff members, when present, offer to aid in any conflicts and situations that may arise in any residence hall at any time.

2-3. Confidentiality
Student staff members are expected to maintain appropriate confidentiality of all residents/guests and other Residence Life issues, unless maintaining this confidentiality would compromise health and safety of residents/guests and/or staff members. Vital information should be reported in a timely fashion, only to the proper and necessary staff.

2-4. Decision-Making and Communication
Staff members must, at all times, exercise ethical decision-making skills and maintain open and honest two-way communication with supervisory staff regarding circumstances or issues that affect employment or this agreement.

2-5. Social Networking Sites
If staff members choose to have a Facebook/MySpace/Twitter or other social networking site account and/or an instant messenger account, they must ensure that only appropriate content/images are associated with the account as students (current and prospective) may encounter the account and it is vital that staff members remain a role model online and offline.

2-6. Intimate Relationships
As stated in the Sexual Harassment Policy in the University’s Student Handbook, “The University considers it inappropriate for any member of the community to establish an intimate relationship with a student, subordinate or colleague on whose academic or work performance he or she will be required to make professional judgments. The University requires that the individual cease such conduct and divest himself/herself of the professional responsibility for supervision or oversight, should an intimate relationship develop.” Given this University policy, it is expected that any student staff member who engages in an intimate relationship with a resident or another staff member will communicate with their supervisor(s) about the relationship and ensure that no conflict of interest develops.

2-7. Illegal Drugs
Staff members have a responsibility to be role models regarding the use of illegal drugs. Staff members will not sell, trade, transfer, purchase, promole, or possess, in any manner, illegal drugs. Staff members will not abuse medications for which they have a prescription.

3. Staff Disciplinary Policy
This policy has been developed to provide staff members with a complete description of the continuum of sanctions that will be imposed in response to any concerns with their job performance. Because the Department of Housing and Residence Life is committed to the growth and development of the paraprofessional staff, supervisors will work closely with Resident Assistants so that there is a thorough understanding of their obligations to both themselves and resident students. The Department's philosophy of progressive discipline sees staff performance concerns as an opportunity to allow a staff member to grow and correct certain behaviors. There are however situations that will warrant a staff member being removed from the position without the benefit of the progressive disciplinary process. Examples of those situations are listed later in this section.

3-1. Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to clearly detail and inform staff of the continuum of sanctions: Documentation Form, Letter of Warning, Probation, and Request for Resignation/Termination. These sanctions may be imposed alone or in conjunction with judicial action. The sanctions may begin at any point on the continuum. Depending on the seriousness of work performance issues, probation and/or termination may be the first or only job action.

3-2. Procedures
a. At the first indication of a staff performance deficiency, the Residence Hall Director (RHD) will gather the facts. If written documentation from a third party is needed, that information is gathered.

b. A meeting with the staff member will be requested to discuss the performance concern(s). The RHD will discuss the reasons for the meeting, allowing the staff member to present his/her side of the issue. After this meeting, the RHD will follow through with an outcome letter and sanctions (if any) as deemed appropriate.

c. If a staff member is placed on probation, or if the performance concern is of a serious nature the meeting may involve the Assistant Director, RHD and the RA. After this meeting, an outcome letter will describe sanctions (if any) are issued.

3-3. Sanctions
a. Documentation Form: This form is used for minor concerns as a reminder to the staff member of the inappropriateness of his/her behavior, the expectation that it does not reoccur, and what the expected behavior
should be in the future. A copy of the form is given to the staff member and a copy is forwarded to the Assistant Director for Training and Development to be placed in the central file.

b. Letter of Warning: A warning letter is used for repeated minor concerns or more serious performance concerns. It will be a summation of the discussion the supervisor had with the staff member, outlining specific behaviors that warranted the meeting, and what is to be expected in the future. The copy of the letter is given to the staff member and a copy is forwarded to the Assistant Director for Training and Development to be placed in the central file.

c. Probation: There may be times when a written warning may not be sufficient in addressing certain behaviors, especially if prior warning has already been given. The probation letter will summarize the discussion the supervisor had with the staff member, which will cover all the points that led up to such action. The letter will outline what level of performance is expected, focusing on specific behaviors. Probation is a time period that allows a staff member to regain an acceptable level of performance. An action plan may be developed that facilitates this goal. The copy of the letter is given to the staff member and a copy is forwarded to the Assistant Director for Training and Development to be placed in the central file.

d. Resignation/Termination: When a pattern of behavior or choices emerges and/or the staff member has not adequately responded to the terms of probation, an HRL professional staff member may move to begin the process of termination/resignation. There are also some performance behaviors that may lead to immediate dismissal regardless of any prior history. The Assistant Director will review all matters pertaining to such action to insure consistency with prior decisions, and to protect the staff member against possible bias, before final determination is made. The staff member's resignation may be requested. In the event that a resignation is not received, a letter of termination will be presented to the staff member. In some instances, termination will be immediate and no request for a resignation will be made. This will be at the sole discretion of the HRL Central Management Team.

3-4. Appeal
A staff member wishing to appeal a probation or termination decision may do so. All appeals must be in writing, outlining new information that was not known or available at the time of the probation or termination decision. The new information must be directly related to the performance issues that led to the probation or termination decision. All written appeals are to be submitted to the Associate Director of Housing and Residence Life within five business days of receiving notice of a decision from the RHD. An investigation will be made, and the results will be furnished to the appellant within five business days. The appeals conference will be held with the Associate Director, Assistant Director, RHD, and the appellant present. Upon approval, a neutral third party may serve as witness to the appeal hearing as designated by the Associate Director. Once an appeal decision is rendered, it will be final.

3-5. Severe Job Action Behaviors
The following is a list of some job performance behaviors that may lead to immediate dismissal, without the benefit of the progressive discipline procedure outlined above. Please note that this list is not all-inclusive, and therefore should be used as guidance on what the Department views as severe behaviors.

a. Assault
b. Threats/Harassment, including Sexual/Racial Harassment
c. Insubordination
d. Deliberately providing false information
e. Missing training/duty without notification
f. Violating any University and/or HRL policy and/or procedures
g. Being under the influence of drugs at any time or under the influence of alcohol if underage or on duty
h. Misuse of University funds and property
i. Loss/Misuse of sequence lock key

3-6. Violations of SHU Community Standards and/or HRL policies
As a representative of the university and the housing staff, student staff members are expected to abide by and enforce all SHU Community Standards, HRL policies, State and/or Federal Laws. Violations of any of these policies or being found responsible in a campus judicial hearing may result in immediate dismissal.

3-7. Removal From a Position
Once a staff member has been removed from a position, 48 hours will be given to vacate the assigned room. The staff member will be responsible for following proper check-out procedures with the RHD, and for returning all items on loan during the employment period, i.e. Staff Manual, keys, etc. Priority with new housing will be offered, if requested, and will be based on availability. All charges will thus be prorated on the amount of time remaining in a given semester. The Department will cover room and board costs only up to the effective date of termination/resignation. It is the practice of the Department to deny living privileges in the hall or apartment area where a staff member is terminated, for the remainder of that particular semester.
4. Third Year Resident Assistant Expectations

These expectations were created to provide upcoming third year Resident Assistants with direction and guidance as they enter their third year of service. Being a third year Resident Assistant is an important and esteemed position in the department and on campus. With the greater emphasis as a leader on the HRL staff comes a greater level of responsibility on the part of the third year staff member. Within that responsibility is the opportunity to have more of a voice in the department as well as to become a leader for the entire staff, not just the building staff. What follows are the expectations that the Housing and Residence Life Department have of the third year Resident Assistant. These expectations were created with the intention that they would serve to enhance the third year RA’s leadership and advance their skills as a person and within the department. Failure to meet these expectations will be handled in accordance with the Staff Disciplinary Policy, as with any other job expectation.

Our goal as a department is that third year RAs will have, or will gain by their third year, experience in two or more different residence halls. While the placement process varies annually due to a number of circumstances, in ideal circumstances HRL will aim to insure that all third year staff have experience in two or more different residence halls.

Expectations of all Third Year RAs:

a. **Training:** Third year RAs will take a leadership role during August and Winter RA/TIR Training.
   - Assist with training for new staff at the beginning of August Training
   - Assist with in-hall training (hall tours, fire safety practices, etc.)
   - Present as an individual a breakout session for all staff during Winter Training

b. **Professional Staff Interviewing:** Third year RAs will help with professional staff interview processes, if requested.

c. **Advisory Board Involvement:** Participation in at least one Advisory Board is expected. Advisory Boards will meet approximately twice a semester. There are four Advisory Boards:
   - HRL Director’s Advisory Board
   - Housing Services Advisory Board
   - Selection Advisory Board
   - Training Advisory Board

In addition, at the discretion of supervisory staff, additional responsibilities will be determined and communicated within the first two weeks of the academic year. Expectations may vary, but will generally include two or more of the following:

a. **Hall Council:** Third year RAs will be consistently involved with Hall Council – assist in promoting elections, attend meetings and programs, etc.

b. **Resource Room:** Third year RAs will be responsible for upkeep and inventory of the resource room.

c. **Staff Development:** Third year RAs will lead at least one staff development activity for building staff each semester.

d. **Recognition:** Third year RAs will coordinate a monthly recognition of RAs.

e. **OTMs:** Third year RAs will encourage NRHH OTM submissions by personally submitting at least three per semester.

**Anti-ism Statement**

The Department of Housing and Residence Life has a commitment to actively combat racism, sexism, heterosexism or any other discrimination that seeks to suppress another group or individual. As such, while acting in their professional role, HRL Student Staff Members will not engage in any type of activity that exhibits the above characteristics (i.e. jokes, bias, insults or gossip) and will confront inappropriate actions, comments and/or remarks.