

Massachusetts College of Art and Design
Department of Housing & Residential Life
Resident Assistant Job Description -- COVID Version

Leadership experience complements the academic curriculum at MassArt and empowers students to become more confident, engaged artists, designers and citizens. Students have the opportunity to apply for various paid positions to be held during their sophomore through senior years.

Student Leadership at MassArt is rooted in MassArt's Mission and Values and is essential to transforming MassArt's culture and community. All student leaders will be expected to uphold MassArt's missions and values as we work together to make MassArt a more equitable place to work, learn, live and make.

Description of Role and Responsibilities:

Resident Assistant (RAs) are vital to the division of Student Development and the Housing & Residence Life team at MassArt. RAs primary responsibility is in the creation and maintenance of a strong, vibrant community in which all students are able to thrive. To achieve this objective, RAs have the primary responsibility to develop positive and meaningful relationships with their residents and other members of the campus community. In this role, RAs respond to individual student and community needs by acting as a resource and referral agent to campus resources in order to assist students in both their transition to college life and to help students successfully navigate the campus and its resources. RAs are considered role models within their communities in addition to classroom and studio spaces. As a primary point of contact for residents, RAs serve as first responders for student concerns, such as academic or behavioral issues, roommate conflicts, or suspected policy violations.

As a team member of the Housing & Residence Life staff at MassArt, each RA is supervised by a Residence Director (RD) of their residence community. RAs are expected to interact with students, staff, and faculty in a professional and appropriate manner, with intentional effort placed in creating positive and productive working relationships. As such, RAs are expected to partner with student leaders and professional staff in order to facilitate a community focusing on student thriving. These partnerships are extended to but not limited to: Academic Affairs, Colleges of the Fenway, Office of Justice, Equity, and Transformation (JET), Pro-Arts, departments of Student Development, Public Safety and Capstone management. The core position description following are responsibilities which apply to all RAs.

- The Resident Assistant (RA) position is an appointment for one academic year, commencing in mid-August and ending in late-May.
- Resident Assistants will be required to sign an employment agreement which is binding for this time period.
- The placement of RAs depends on many factors and includes the overall composition of staff skill set, needs of the building, department, and the community served. The department recognizes that each building is unique, requires different needs, and serves different populations. While difference requires diversity in carrying out responsibilities, the expectations and responsibilities of the RA position remain similar.

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During the 2021-2022 Academic Year, RAs are expected to adopt and adhere to all policies regarding COVID-19 regulations as directed by the U.S. Federal government and the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the City of Boston. This includes, but is not limited to: maintaining appropriate physical distancing, wearing a facemask while in public, and practicing good hygiene including vigorous hand-washing. This change in human behavior will require the assistance of RAs to educate, train and deliver clear and transparent communication with the goal of encouraging community members to protect themselves and those around them.

Additionally, because physical distancing and the inability to gather for activities in a traditional format will occur, certain aspects of the RA position will inevitably be different. While our goals will remain the same, the approach will look different. It is very likely that most face to face activities/responsibilities will be virtual. However, there are a few functional areas of the position that will still require physical presence. The Housing & Residence Life team along with other administrators are developing protocols and procedures to address policy violations, mail operations, facilitated dialogue meetings, training, res-life meetings etc. in ways that reduce risk to exposure. It is important to know that RAs will be expected to engage in tasks that require physical presence (with students/staff) in order to perform their job. While it will be limited, it should be understood as part of the position. Lastly, because there will be a reduced residential population (occupancy), the number of RAs hired will also be reduced.

OVERVIEW OF RESPONSIBILITIES: *This is the main description of responsibilities, however there may be times that RAs are assigned other duties in order to support their community and the department.* Resident Assistants shall meet the following expectations:

Community Development:

- **Get to know your residents.** Establish an authentic relationship with each resident in your community. Participate in and encourage casual social interaction, maintain high and consistent visibility, be available to residents & ensure they understand the role of a RA. It is expected that all RAs will make a concerted effort to conduct meaningful one-on-one conversations with their residents to establish a relationship. Students who are engaging in remote learning should be intentionally included and thoughtfully invited to community events, traditions, and ways to connect.
- **Actively promote interactions between your residents.** Assist them to develop a community that supports their academic, artistic & personal identity development by demonstrating responsibility to each other & the MassArt community.
- **Provide weekly and monthly, on-going community development opportunities which reflects community needs.** All community development efforts should strive to cultivate a community which respects the intersectionality of all students and gives them an opportunity to flourish and thrive. This can be done by hosting monthly community programs during the academic year. During September, RAs must host one event weekly for their community. Beyond September, RAs should assess community desires and needs and create programs based on interest as

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outlined in the programming model.

- **Direct residents to campus resources.** Provide regular communication of events, deadlines & interests to students. To this end, RAs are expected to regularly communicate with their communities, as well as post notices and information promptly.
- **Participate in creating a community.** Be actively involved in the planning and execution of larger community or residence hall programs on a monthly basis as discussed with and directed by your supervisor.

General Expectations:

- **Demonstrate & promote an awareness and appreciation of cultural and individual identity diversity.** Strive to make all students feel welcome and respected. Foster a spirit of support and learning about identity, intersectionality, and cultural diversity among residents of your community.
- **Conduct outreach to residents needing support.** Maintain authentic relationships that enable holistic support for residents needing it. Follow up with students struggling in and outside of the classroom and provide access to appropriate resources.
- **Be Flexible and Adaptable to Change.** Working with human beings is complex and comes with many obstacles that sometimes require deviation and exception from standard practice. Be open to, and willing to accept the level of ambiguity and fluidity that is inherent within both the RA role and the Department of Housing & Residence Life.
- **Be present.** Whether online or physically on campus, it is important that students know who you are and the resources you provide. in residence when the hall is officially open.
- **Maintain student privacy.** As an RA, you will be witness to a multitude of student experiences, both good and bad. As such, it is inappropriate to share private information with the general public, including but not limited to friends, other students, or faculty. However, it is important to note that you cannot maintain confidentiality. There are instances in which you must report intimate details of an incident or conversation. As such, RAs cannot withhold confidential information from Housing & Residence Life professional staff, Dean of Students, Vice President of Student Development or Title IX Coordinator. Questions regarding student privacy or confidentiality are invited to be asked of your supervisor.
- **Be helpful.** Use active listening skills and set appropriate limits (RAs are not expected to fill the role of licensed counselors). Assist with student questions, offer referrals, and assist with community building-wide check-in and check-out procedures. Use active listening skills and set appropriate limits (RAs are not expected to fill the role of licensed counselors).
- **Role model appropriate behavior.** Demonstrate familiarity with MassArts academic
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policies, code of student conduct and the applicable residence hall regulations presented in the Housing License. Educate and explain policies to residents and confront those who violate policies calmly, reasonably, and fairly. Exhibit mature decision making behavior while maintaining and good judgment.

- **Maintain high personal and ethical standards.** Demonstrate behavior with professionalism appropriate to the position. *Staff may be subject to termination if they are found to be in violation of any Residence Hall or College policy.*
- **Be a Resource and Referral Agent.** Learn about college services, resources, and helpful faculty and staff members. Refer students as needed and appropriate to a helpful campus resource or partner.
- **Check communication centers daily.** This includes MassArt email, physical mailbox, and other communication points as designated by your RD. It is expected that you are able to respond to messages within 48 hours (as necessary).
- **Serve** on a residence hall committee as assigned.
- **Limit other employment** to an appropriate amount set in collaboration with your supervisor.
- Complete additional appropriate and reasonable duties as assigned (i.e., surveys, schedules, reports).

Team Member & Campus Partner:

- **Engage in weekly staff meetings & other staff events as required for RA position.** Meet with your supervisor weekly. Participate in weekly staff meetings, fall training, winter training, RA selection & training sessions as necessary. See 'Time Commitment' for more details.
- **Collaboration among staff and departments.** It is expected that RAs work as a team to support one another and residents within and across areas. RAs are expected and invited to work actively with JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) principals in mind, and as such should seek to partner with campus partners in order to cultivate their communities. Campus partners include, but are not limited to: Academic Affairs, Academic Resource Center (ARC), Center for Art and Community Partnerships (CACP), Capstone Management, Chartwells, Colleges of the Fenway(CoF), Counseling & Wellness, International Education Center (IEC), Office of Justice, Equity and Transformation (JET), Pro-Arts, Public Safety, SGA, Student Development, and others.
- **Participate in Department and Campus events.** RAs are an essential role of the Residence Life team and assist in Staff Selection, Open House Tours, Orientation, Major Exploration Events, focus groups, building closings and openings. See 'Time Commitment' for more details.

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On-Call Coverage and Community Standards Education for 2021-2022 Academic Year: :

- Participate in the RA on-call evening rotation. While on call, RAs will make themselves available by phone to assist with student concerns, address possible policy violations, and assist with referring any relevant issues to the appropriate campus resource.

- RAs must be reachable by Student Development, Public Safety, or Capstone management staff and able to respond during their on call shift. RAs will complete a nightly log describing their on call shift.
- Assist residents to address conflicts & mediate discussions with JEDI principals in mind. Maintain student privacy when discussing personal or sensitive issues and report to the supervisor on call appropriately.
- Learn and adhere to all College and residence hall policies and procedures.
- Communicate and explain rules to residents clearly and consistently.
- Serve on-call during the week and weekend as assigned.
- Be available at 5pm through to 8am for at least one night a week (with no other standing obligations). RAs are expected to sleep in their own residence hall rooms while on call and be available by phone for emergencies.
- Enforce college policy by confronting policy violations as they occur.
- Report community standards or residence hall violations immediately using the college's on-line reporting system.
- Participate in mailroom and/or office hours as assigned while on-call. Assist other mailroom duties when asked by the supervisor.
- Participate in student engagement or programming while on-call and/or on rounds.
- Submit nightly duty reports when on-call.

Time Commitment:

Due to the nature of the RA position, it should be understood that work as a staff member in the residence halls is not easily translated into hours worked per day or week, and the time as a role model spent is a 24/7 position.

- **Week to week time commitments.** As a general guideline RAs should expect an average of 10-15 hours per a week of regularly scheduled responsibilities (e.g., staff meetings, one on one supervision meetings, etc.) and general presence with your community and resident follow up. Hours may fluctuate depending on the time of year (e.g. RA Training, Move in and Closing).

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- **Openings and Closings.** RAs are expected to remain in the residence halls until buildings close for the holiday and/or break periods. RAs may leave after all administrative work is completed or given permission by professional staff member/s. If a conflict exists, RAs are required to submit an official request at least 2 weeks prior to the conflict with an explanation. The department will determine whether the request can be approved. A modification of dates requested may be asked.
- **Prioritization of RA position.** RAs must hold the RA position as their primary non-academic commitment the two weeks prior to fall move in for Fall training. Any additional non-academic commitments during this time must be discussed well in

advance with your supervisor.

Training and Development:

- RAs are required to attend mandatory Fall and Winter Training sessions. Fall training is expected to start by mid-August and run through the first day of classes. Exact winter training dates will be made available by mid-Fall semester and will most likely take place the week prior to Martin Luther King (MLK) day.
- Arrive prior to the hall's opening in the fall (mid-August) and spring (mid-January), as directed, in order to assist with administrative duties and participate in staff training.
- Reserve two hours per week for staff meetings and/or in-service training. This time is often in the evening and dependent on staff academic schedules.
- Attend weekly individual supervisory meetings with your supervisor.
- Participate in on-going Social Justice Series (SJS) events assigned by your supervisor or by the Department. The SJS event times may fall outside of normal staff meeting times.
- Complete required reflections as outlined by your supervisor or the facilitator of the SJS. Please note: Barring extenuating circumstances, if there is a conflict in your ability to attend the SJS event, you must notify your supervisor 2-weeks in advance. Your supervisor will substitute the missed SJS event with an appropriate and reasonable assignment that meets the requirements.
- Attend RA conferences as assigned. Note, RA conferences may fall outside of normal training times and/or on weekends.

Qualifications:

All full-time students in good academic and disciplinary standing with the college are invited to apply, Undergraduate students preferred. Good academic and disciplinary standing throughout the employment term is required. Students in the Art Education program fulfilling their teaching practicum requirement are not eligible for holding an RA position. Staff members must also agree to have their academic transcript reviewed by Housing & Residence Life professional staff during term of employment.

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Compensation:

Compensation changes yearly and is dependent on rent rate increases. Resident Assistants will receive an estimated \$3,494 housing charge for the 21-22 Academic Year. A final estimated charge will be provided with the offer letter. Resident Assistants will be compensated through the cost of a discounted room and a waiver of the College Residence Life Staff meal plan (equal value to that of the College's "Regular Meal Plan"). RA compensation is distributed in the form of a scholarship; as such, your financial aid may be affected. For all questions regarding financial aid, please contact the Office of Student Financial Assistance at financialaid@massart.edu or by phone at (617)879.7849.

Please note, once the meal plan has run out, the department will only offer supplemental funds for you based on an approximate amount used during training periods. Determination of use will be confirmed by Chartwells transaction histories. RA Staff are limited to spending \$250 at

the C-Store per semester. If staff exceeds that amount, they may not receive supplemental funds from the department. After the department's contribution, the staff person will be responsible for adding any additional funds to his or her meal plan).

Additional opportunities for paid compensation may be available during college break times (Thanksgiving, mid-year, and spring break times) for serving in an optional on-call rotation. Details of available break on-call shifts will be made available during the fall and spring semesters.

For additional questions regarding the RA position, please direct questions to the Office of Housing & Residence Life at housing@massart.edu or by phone at (617) 879.7750.