

Linfield College Resident Advisor Position Description

Since the Residence Life staff live and work in the same place, your personal life and RA responsibilities are interwoven. As a student, you have academic demands, recreational and social interests, as well as personal needs similar to the other students living in your area. As a staff member, you are considered a member of the Student Affairs division of the College and as such you are expected to fulfill your responsibilities in a conscientious and responsible way. This unique, and at times challenging, dual capacity as a student and Linfield College staff member gives you the potential to be unusually effective in making a positive difference on the campus.

The information in this document is designed to include the broad design of the RA position and expectations. However, personal judgment and consultation with other members of the Residence Life staff, the Area Director staff, and the Director of Residence Life are paramount to building a strong, consistent staff.

1. Staff Ethics and Personal Conduct

CONFIDENTIALITY: Conversations, situations, or interactions that involve residents' problems or behavior, must be in confidence. It is inappropriate for an RA to gossip – this disclosure of information undermines the role of the RA, and can result in a loss of trust from the community. Any confidential conversations are best held in a closed room or office, never in Dillin, Riley, or other public areas.

Do not discuss student information with other students. Share information with other RAs only after checking with an Area Director that it is ok to do so. Do not share information about other RAs with students or with RAs. If you have concerns about an RA, discuss this only with an AD or the Director of Residence Life.

However, not all information can or should be kept in absolute confidence, especially from your supervisor. Sometimes, in the interest of a student or staff member's wellbeing, sensitive information must be shared with the Director of Residence Life, an AD, or other professional staff. It can be difficult to discern when and what kind of information necessitates conferring with a colleague. The following guidelines may be helpful:

1. If information leads you to believe that a student or staff member is in need of professional help or assistance, you must share it with an AD or the Director of Residence Life.
2. If potential danger exists, either to the student or those living with or associating with the student, you must seek help.
3. If a student's behavior is disrupting the living environment for other students in the community, you must seek help. For example: chronic intoxication leading to damage or noise that causes expense or disturbance for others, as well as health problems for the student.
4. If an incident involves potential harassment, sexual misconduct or relationship violence, suicidal ideations or attempts, or bias, you must report this to an AD.

IMPARTIALITY: It is important that you interact with and treat all people impartially and consistently. Students are sensitive to all forms of favoritism or special treatment. Try to avoid being classified only as a member of specific clique or interest group, rather than an RA for your entire hall or area. If you are genuine and consistent in your approach, even close personal friends will understand that you need to interact and enforce policies in a consistent, equitable way with everyone.

INITIATIVE: An RA needs to take the first step in initiating conversations and relationships with students. It may feel uncomfortable and might take several attempts before a student will respond. Especially after a confrontation or negative interaction, the RA needs to be the person who re-establishes the relationship with positive communication. It is important to reach out to historically underrepresented students, including but not limited to GLBT students, students of color, international students, and first-generation students.

STAFF AFFILIATION: As a member of the Residence Life staff, you will be identified with the College and the College's staff. Your conduct as a role model is observed by a variety of individuals with many different ideas

of what is and isn't appropriate. Your personal and professional behavior should not jeopardize your mutual respect or personal association with any member of the community. Remember that people will view you as an RA at all times. As a member of the Residence Life staff, it is also important that you do not criticize your colleagues or their programs to students or other staff. You will want other staff members to come to you first with their complaints and criticisms, so remember that as you expect consideration from those you work with and who supervise you, you must also be considerate of them.

INTEGRITY: As a staff member, you have agreed to personally adhere to and enforce the College's policies and regulations. Under no circumstance is a staff member to violate these policies. Personal and professional integrity is the foundation of the program's integrity.

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS: In order to effectively enforce the alcohol policy, you must be known and seen as someone who follows policy yourself. Underage staff members may not consume alcohol. Underage consumption is a violation of College Policy and state law. If while in a social setting on or off-campus you see a situation where students are participating in inappropriate behavior (i.e. underage drinking, belligerence, noise violations, etc.) you must leave. Staff members of legal drinking age may not consume alcohol during or prior to any Residence Life activities, other than special programs such as Suburb Wine Tasting, in which alcohol is present in compliance with College policy and state and federal law. This includes programs, events, meetings, office hours, and duty. In addition, public intoxication or use of illegal substances (both federal and state) at any time is not allowed. Staff members are not to serve alcohol to underage students or to allow underage students to drink alcohol in College housing.

If RAs violate or fail to enforce the College drug or alcohol policy, it may result in the RA's termination from their staff position, and possible relocation within housing.

MASTER KEY USE: Keys and ID cards issued to the staff are their personal responsibility and must be used with utmost discretion. A lost master key could result in having to re-key an entire area, costing as much as \$5,000. Discretionary use of keys is imperative. Because your ID card gives you 24-hour access to all Residence Halls on campus as an RA, it is also a master key and should be treated as such. Misuse of the master key or ID card can result in the loss of trust and confidence of students and fellow staff members, as well as possible disciplinary action.

1. Staff members must personally open the door for a student when they are locked out. Under **no circumstance** is the master key/ID card to be given to any person who is not an RA.
2. You cannot grant access to a room or apartment to anyone who is not a resident of that room or apartment.

Only under circumstances in which the health and safety of a student is in question may staff key into a student's room or apartment. In these situations, an AD, safety officer, or fellow RA should accompany you. A staff member may also key in with the assistance of another staff member if an alarm clock or music is playing loud enough to disturb the community and the resident of the room is not present. Under **no other circumstances** should unauthorized entrance into a room be considered an option.

2. Specific Staff Responsibilities

INITIATING RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS:

Take the initiative to meet all of the residents in your area. Your goal is to know your residents well enough to be able to know when they may need assistance, encouragement, interventions, or even a celebration of a job well done.

1. Be both approachable and available for residents to contact you. Maximum presence in your room or apartment, especially during evening hours, is essential for establishing relationships. Your schedule should be posted on your door. It should indicate regular hours when you will be in your room available to your residents. Weekly check-ins with each resident are also crucial. With new students and transfers, more formal meetings will be required.

2. Attend campus activities and events with your residents when you are not on duty. Effectively use the various campus activities to get to know your residents. Taking a group to a campus event is also part of effective programming.
3. Initiate contact, make introductions, and stimulate conversations among residents of adjoining rooms or apartments. Initiate contact between students and other Residence Life staff members as well as members of the faculty and administration.
4. Serve as a peer mediator to the best of your ability, but refer students elsewhere as needed. Be part of an "early warning" system, identifying students who may have other needs. This will serve to alert appropriate staff and allow the possibility of getting assistance to these students.
5. Avoid conflicts of interest arising from personal relationships with residents. Dating or having a close personal relationship with students who live in your residence hall is strongly discouraged. Please discuss any potential conflict of interest with your AD.
6. Fostering diversity is important to both Residence Life and the Linfield community. As a leader in the building, other residents will look to you for cues on how to act in regards to diversity. Work to be inclusive and intentional in your interactions with residence and throughout the hall. Utilize offices on campus such as Multicultural Programs, International Programs, Learning Support Services, the Chaplain's office, etc. if you have concerns or questions about issues of diversity.

SERVING AS A KNOWLEDGEABLE CONSULTANT:

Be a resource person and referral agent for the College and community services such as the Student Affairs offices, Health Center, Financial Aid, Academic Advising, Learning Support Services, Counseling Center, Career Services, Multicultural Office, etc. Follow up with students whom you refer to see that they got the help they needed. Be a resource person for information regarding the various academic departments and their faculty members. You can be particularly helpful in encouraging students to utilize their advisors. Initiate contact among students and interest groups according to the needs and interests of the students.

PROVIDING PERSONAL ASSISTANCE:

Recognize individual needs or problems and deal with those that you are capable of handling. Act as a referral agent for students in need of professional assistance. Assist in a student's assessment of their communication and relationship skills and help the student mature in these areas. Help students identify and get involved with their academic and extracurricular interests.

MANAGING ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS:

Submit and follow up on all maintenance requests. Make sure that requests are getting prompt attention. If a work order hasn't been completed in five working days, call for follow-up information. In addition, inventory forms, program evaluation forms, and receipts must all be completed and submitted within 48 hours of the event or transaction, using a professional writing style. **Incident reports must be submitted within 24 hours of the occurrence.** Often, these administrative tasks can be completed during the weekly Residence Life Office hour.

ASSIST IN DEVELOPING RESIDENT LEADERSHIP (RESIDENCE HALL RAs):

Encourage your residents to take responsibility for their hall or apartment complex. This is done through programming, accountability for keeping the building or area clean, respect for neighbors, and respect for the cleaning crew and other College workers.

In an effort to ensure that students become actively involved in the governance of their community, each hall or apartment complex can and should have officers. Among other offices, each hall can have a representative on the campus wide Residence Hall Association (RHA). This group sponsors campus events, such as holiday activities, as well as gathering student opinions on various aspects of residence hall life.

Leadership Positions in the Residence Halls include, but are not limited to:

1. Residence Hall President
2. Wellness Chair

3. Green Chair
4. Residence Life Peer Conduct Board Representative
5. ASLC Senate Representative

ESTABLISHING A HEALTHY LIVING ENVIRONMENT:

A major responsibility for the Residence Life staff is to maintain a living/learning environment conducive to the attainment of academic success and the other goals involved in a college education. This includes interpreting and enforcing the College policies and encouraging mutual respect and care among residents. A goal of the Residence Life program every year is to continue to urge students to recognize an individual's right to study as well as sleep/rest in College housing. This includes establishing designated quiet hours beginning no later than 10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 12 midnight Friday and Saturday (earlier is better) and encouraging students to work out their noise level conflicts with each other in a constructive way that centers wellbeing and community.

"Own" the policies and rules. Being a part of the College's staff means supporting the policies yourself. If you have trouble or see problems with any of the policies, bring the problem to your Area Director, not to students. Refer policy violations to the Peer Conduct Board, via incident reports.

OPENING AND CLOSING OF RESIDENCE HALLS:

Some of the busiest and most important times for a staff member are at the beginning and end of each academic year. Each RA has their own responsibilities as a student, but also has a tremendous responsibility to residents and the College. At the beginning of the academic year, the RA staff will work to prepare the halls for the return of students and then to help form the community. At the end of the academic year, RAs must stay in their area past graduation (exceptions are made for graduating seniors) to ensure proper checkout of students and to return all supplies and keys. Specific start and end dates will be listed on the Residence Life contract each year.

3. Policies and Policy Enforcement

Living with a large number of people in a relatively small physical space proves an ideal opportunity to learn the "give and take" of a community. As a member of the campus community, a student can take advantage of the many privileges and opportunities the community offers. A student also needs to be aware of and personally invested in the responsibilities of community membership. As a staff member, you can greatly affect the feelings and experiences of students in integrating both personal freedom and community responsibility. As a staff member, your responsibility is to communicate and elicit compliance to the community standards that have been established by the College.

We will also encourage residents to be actively involved in establishing the guidelines and limits they would like to add to the College's policies in order to have a successful residential experience. All of the College policies fall into one of four categories:

1. Federal, state, and local laws or ordinances
2. Personal safety
3. Private or College property protection
4. Mission of the College

Most Linfield students understand the necessity of these regulations, yet there is always a visible minority who has a difficult time living within limits. Our task is to help all students understand their role as a community member and what responsibilities come with being a member of our community.

GUIDELINES FOR POLICY ENFORCEMENT:

1. **CREDIBILITY.** Residents must respect and respond to the directives of a staff member. **Staff members must comply with the policies in order to establish such credibility.**
2. **CLARITY.** All Residence Life policies and regulations are written in the "Guide to Living at Linfield" and in the housing contract. Each staff member should be thoroughly familiar with these publications and explicitly review the policies and procedures with all residents before any enforcement confrontations are necessitated.

3. **CONSISTENCY.** Enforcing policies in a fair, sensitive, and consistent manner is a mandate. Giving five warnings to one student and one warning to another would create animosity. Some staff members have erred in believing that residents' loyalty and friendship could be obtained by ignoring enforcement. What was misconstrued as a short-term friendship resulted in a long-term loss of respect for those individuals, as well as the entire staff.
4. **DOCUMENTATION.** Each staff member must document all policy related conversations with residents in order to have appropriate follow-up. Make sure to report this information to the other RAs in your building or area as well as your AD.

4. Qualifications

Resident Advisors are responsible for the Residence Life program in their area, under the immediate supervision of the Area Director. The RAs work closely with the ADs in Residence Life where they are under the overall direction of the Director of Residence Life. The College considers Residence Life a vital facet of each student's education at Linfield and places a great deal of trust in the work of the RA. Therefore, a thorough selection and training process is in place, and high standards for job performance are expected. RAs must meet the following qualifications:

1. RAs must maintain at least a 2.5 cumulative GPA. Suburb RAs must be third year students when their contract begins.
2. RAs must have lived at least one semester as a full time student on the McMinnville campus.
3. RAs should demonstrate sincerity, approachability, enthusiasm, acceptance, leadership, sensitivity, honesty, and flexibility. Overall maturity and judgment are vital criteria.
4. RAs should be able to communicate effectively with individuals and in small groups, make decisions under pressure, collaborate, and exercise good judgment.
5. RAs should show interest and willingness to interact extensively with other students, and to serve as a positive role model for students in all matters pertaining to college life.
6. The Director of Residence Life must approve an RA's large time or work commitments, such as student teaching or intercollegiate athletics. There should be no expectation on the part of the applicant that such a request will be granted.

5. Staff Training and Meetings

Staff training and education is ongoing and essential to individual staff being able to perform at a high level. The following are required of all staff:

1. Attend all sessions of the staff orientation/training prior to the fall and spring semesters.
2. Attend and participate in the staff meetings, as well as individual meetings with the Area Director and/or the Director of Residence Life throughout the year.
3. Participate in the staff duty schedule 3-4 weekends each semester.
4. Work one hour per week in the Residence Life Office.
5. Enroll and participate each semester in the RA In-service Class, IDST 062.

6. Terms of Employment

1. A staff memorandum of agreement contains the broad requirements of the position, and will be signed by each staff member each year. The term of employment will be for the academic semester.
2. RAs are placed in specific Residence Halls or Suburb Areas, but are responsible for enforcing policy throughout the Residence Life system. In addition, RAs may be moved to a different area, if deemed necessary by the Director of Residence Life.
3. Resident Advisors are expected to spend at least 20 hours weekly fulfilling the RA duties and responsibilities; this includes, office hours, one on one meetings with your AD, program planning and evaluation, administrative duties and time in your hall interacting with your residents.
4. All staff members must be present for opening and closing of College Housing both at semester and vacation breaks. Specific dates are listed in the Residence Life Staff Contract. RAs are not responsible for staying on campus when the College Housing is closed.

5. Each RA must meet programming requirements as determined by their Area Director and the RLA for Program Development. Please refer to the current programming manual.
6. Any staff member who does not fulfill the requirements of the position will be held accountable and sanctions will result. Such sanctions may include additional office or duty time, assisting in class preparation, specific service assignments, or probation. Staff members placed on probation will receive written notification of the terms of the probation. If the expectations outlined in the terms of probation are not met by the end of the probationary period, the staff member will face either further action or dismissal. In certain situations, the Director of Residence Life reserves the right to dismiss a staff member immediately.
7. Remuneration depending on years on staff and type of housing. Your contract indicates your specific stipend.

Linfield College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, physical handicap or other disabling condition in its educational programs, admissions, activities, or employment policies.