



Resident Assistant Application  
2003-2004

Housing and Residence Life  
Division of Student Affairs

**NOTICE:**

Please make four copies of the completed application  
and return the original and the four copies to the Herbert Hall Desk  
by 12:00 p.m., Friday January 31, 2003.

Spring 2003

Dear MSU Student,

Thanks you for your expressed interest in becoming a Resident Assistant for the 2003-2004 academic year. We believe you will find the position to be both challenging and exciting while offering you personal and professional growth opportunities.

It takes exceptional people to fill RA positions and the selection process is designed to enable us to learn as much as possible about each applicant while considering essential qualities and characteristics. The RA is expected to fill a variety of roles, ranging from student to university staff member. Please give this careful consideration as you complete the attached application and review the following:

- 1) RA Position Description
- 2) Application Packet
- 3) Common Questions about the RA Position
- 4) Quotes and Testimonials from Current RA's
- 5) Schedule and Important Selection Dates

Four copies of the completed application form are due to the Herbert Hall Desk by 12:00 p.m. Friday, January 31, 2003.

If you have any questions concerning the selection process, please contact us at 325-9339 or your Residence Director. Once again, thank you for your interest in becoming a Resident Assistant.

Sincerely,

Melissa Crews  
Assistant Director for Residence Life

Shelley Cresswell  
RA Selection Team Leader

## **Timeline for 2003-2004 Resident Assistant Selection**

January 22, 2003	Interest Session, Sponsored by RAA
January 27, 2003	RA Interview In-service
January 31, 2003	RA Applications due to Herbert Hall
February 1, 2003	RA Interview Round I
February 7, 2003	Notification for Round II
February 10-13, 2003	RA Individual Interviews Round II
February 17-20, 2003	Tabulate Interview Eval. & RDs rec.
February 24- March 5, 2003	Prof. Staff Interviews Round III
March 6, 2003	New RA Offer Letters
March 19, 2003	RA Offer Deadline
March 24, 2003	New & Returning RA Workshop

**Division of Student Affairs**  
**Housing and Residence Life**  
*Resident Assistant Position Description*

**Summary:** Serves as a member of the Vice President for Student Affairs staff in the Department of Housing and Residence Life and is directly accountable to a Residence Director. As an employee of the University, he/she is expected to abide by and uphold University regulations and civil law. Position responsibilities include assisting with advising, programming, discipline, administration, and general operation of the hall. Specific duties are outlined below.

***Skills and Responsibilities***

**Team Member**

An RA is expected to work cooperatively with fellow hall staff members and to attend and participate in all system-wide training activities, including programs, hall staff meetings, and any other meetings or activities deemed necessary by the Residence Director or the Office of Housing and Residence Life.

**Counselor**

1. An RA advises residents both individually and in groups concerning academic, social, and personal issues.
2. An RA provides group and individual counseling to the best of their ability and then to be aware of campus resources for information and referral of students to appropriate services.

**Crisis Manager**

1. Provide leadership during any crisis in the residence hall, including injuries, fire alarms, natural disasters, facility emergencies, etc.
2. Become familiar with and follow all institutional and departmental guidelines regarding emergencies.
3. Successfully complete prescribed training courses in CPR, First Aid, Food Preparation, and Alcohol TIPS Training.
4. Coordinate efforts with appropriate university departments, such as Campus Police Department, and community agencies, such as the Starkville Fire Department.
5. Whenever possible, seek to ensure an environment safe for residents and staff.

**Administrator**

1. Duty schedules and guidelines will be established in cooperation with the RD to ensure a staff member is available to residents in the hall.
2. RA's are expected to report to the residence hall on or before the date the residence hall opens following all vacation periods and remain until the floor is vacated or clearance is received by the hall director.
3. RA's are responsible for maintaining records, filing appropriate documentation, monitoring check-ins and check-outs, distributing information pertinent to residents, and reporting maintenance concerns using appropriate procedures.
4. RA's provide leadership in emergency situations and keep residents informed of emergency procedures.
5. RA's evaluate current policies and recommend changes.

### **Community Builder**

1. An RA is expected to work closely with their Hall Association officers and delegates to assess needs and plan activities for the floor and hall community.
2. An RA is responsible for informing residents of his/her function, as well as of the regulations. RA's are to establish rapport with residents of the floor, as well as the hall.
3. An RA is expected to know their residents and be aware of any special physical, emotional, or social needs.
4. An RA should work with residents to keep halls, study areas, kitchens, bathrooms, and lobbies clean and in good condition.

### **Educator**

1. The RA is responsible for assessing, developing, implementing, evaluating, and supporting hall activities.
2. The RA is responsible for assisting residents' growth toward self-discipline by educating them about university and housing policies.
3. An RA acts as a role model for residents.
4. An RA confronts unacceptable behavior and works with residents to change their behavior when appropriate. When necessary, the RA refers the resident to the RD for additional counseling and evaluation.
5. Transmit, through both example and statement, an impartial attitude toward all persons, regardless of race, gender, culture, or life-style.

### **Terms of Employment**

1. RA's must be enrolled at MSU during the period of employment. They must have a 2.25 cumulative grade point average at the time of application. They must maintain a cumulative and semester 2.0 grade point average.
2. RA class—First year RA's are required to take and successfully complete COE 4513, a class designed to teach fundamental concepts and philosophy underlying the RA role.
3. RA's may not hold another job (except during vacations) while employed. They may not hold assistantships or fellowships.
4. Students who are selected for staff positions are expected to serve as academic role models. The Residence Life staff position is paid employment with attendant responsibilities and obligations. Outside activities should enhance, not interfere with either academic performance or staff responsibilities. If you are contemplating outside activities that would significantly impact your time commitments, contact the Assistant Director for Housing and Residence Life or your Residence Director to discuss the implications on your position. This includes student teaching, co-op, or other academic activities that might result in permanent employment.
5. RA's may not have roommates.
6. Length of employment requires an academic year commitment for a nine-month period, beginning with the fall RA workshop (one week prior to hall opening) and ending with hall closing.
7. Compensation for the RA position includes a private room fee waiver and a stipend of \$100.00/week. Students eligible for work study money may work as RA's; however, if an RA's work study award is in excess of the wages normally paid to RA's, she/he will be expected to perform additional duties within the hall to earn the extra money. These duties are to be worked out with the Residence Director.

## *Common Questions Asked about the RA Position*

### **How much time will I spend a week as an RA?**

On a philosophical level, you will be an RA 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Being a Resident Assistant means being a role model. It is important that you think about your behavior and understand what you do and why.

On a more concrete level, RA's spend an average of two hours per week in a staff meeting, can be on call as often as one night per week and one weekend per month, and spend two hours per month together with Residence Directors in individual meetings. The other time you spend on RA tasks such as programming, bulletin boards, door tags, counseling and availability depends both on the needs of your residents and your own schedule.

### **What does it mean to be "on duty?"**

Being on-duty means that you are available to respond to issues in your specific building. The exact time of on-duty shifts varies according to campus area, but generally weekday on-duty begins at 6 PM one day and ends at 6 PM the following day (with class attendance considered.) Weekend duty shifts vary according to area.

During your on-duty shift, you are expected to remain in the building at all times, except when attending classes. The number of on-duty shifts per semester varies according to the size of your individual staff.

### **When are staff meetings and why are they important?**

Staff meetings offer you the opportunity to interact with your fellow RA's and Residence Director. The interaction is an essential part of strong teamwork in each building. Staff meeting time will be determined with your RA team. RA's are expected to keep this time free of academic and other extra-curricular activities and allow at least one hour to discuss hall-related issues.

### **Am I allowed to leave the hall at night or on weekends when I am not on duty?**

We want RA's to develop friendships and interests outside the RA position. Learning to balance availability to residents and personal interests is one of the challenges of this position. RA's are expected to live in the hall, which means that you must be a visible presence in the hall community. Absences must be communicated to and approved by the Residence Director in advance.

### **What University policies do I have to follow?**

As a University student, you are subject to all university and residence hall policies. And, as a role model, remember that it is difficult to be a credible leader if you do not practice what you

ask other people to practice. If you are in violation of University or residence hall policies, you will be treated as any other student under those situations. In addition, your continued employment as an RA could be in serious question.

### **What types of issues will I encounter as an RA?**

There is not a specific list of issues that you will encounter. The specific issues depend on your community of residents. You may have a group of students who are particularly homesick or you may find that your residents are excited about being at MSU. You might encounter roommate conflicts, maintenance concerns, noise problems or even more serious issues such as suicide, eating disorders and alcoholism. It is important to remember that you have a variety of support systems available to you to address these issues.

### **What are some reasons I may be released from my work contract?**

RA's are expected to work for the entire academic year for which they are hired. You may be dismissed from employment if you violate a policy or law, are insubordinate, fail to fulfill the requirements of your position, transfer to another institution, drop below minimum hours, co-op, or withdraw from the University.

### **Am I required to keep a certain GPA to be a Resident Assistant?**

Resident Assistants must have a 2.25 GPA to apply for the position and maintain a 2.0 GPA during employment. In the event that you are hired and fall below these requirements during the semester, you and your Residence Director will discuss probation.

### **How do I know what programs and activities to plan for my residents?**

Talk to your residents and find out what their interests and hobbies are. Find out what they would like to do and what information they need. Many of your residents have areas of expertise they might be willing to share with other students.

The Department of Housing and Residence Life bases our programming on a wellness model that includes 8 areas. These areas are emotional, physical, social, sexual, life planning, intellectual, cultural appreciation, and personal safety/crime prevention. Training for programming around these topic areas will be provided to RA's, and your fellow staff members and Residence Director can be excellent programming resources for you.

### **Can I be an officer in a campus organization, fraternity, or sorority and be an RA?**

Yes. You can be active in other campus organizations and still be an RA. Being an RA requires you to be available in the hall and to your residents whenever possible, so you will need to manage your time carefully. *Your RA position must be your primary out-of-class commitment.* Please discuss extracurricular activities with your Residence Director.

### **What is my role with the Residence Hall Association?**

As a spokesperson for your residents, it is important for you to have a working relationship with the Hall Association in your building. RHA can be an excellent source for programming resources. Your Residence Director will determine specific expectations regarding your involvement with your Hall Association.

### **What is a one-on-one?**

One-on-ones are the times that your Residence Director sets aside to meet with you individually. These meetings offer a great opportunity for you to discuss your progress as an RA, to set personal goals, to discuss problems in your area, and to have fun getting to know your supervisor. Your RD will set the expectation of time to allot for these meetings.

### **How much paperwork will I have to do?**

At the beginning of your RA position, it may seem that there is an incredible amount of paperwork to do. There are forms regarding check-in and check-out. Every program may require paperwork, and other reports may be required on a regular basis. Your RD will set these expectations.

### **Can I hold another job in addition to being an RA?**

No. The RA position is a very demanding job. We are concerned about your academic success as well as your success as a Resident Assistant and a well-rounded student (see Resident Assistant Position Description.)

### **Can I date my residents?**

No. There is a departmental policy regarding dating residents. Check with your Residence Director for specific guidelines. The underlying issues involved with dating your residents revolve mainly around your role as a student leader and the need to be able to be neutral, fair, and impartial in any situation. Will you be comfortable enforcing policies if the person you are dating is involved? Will you be neutral if a break-up should occur? Since you will be living with your residents, you may find that maintaining appropriate levels of professional distance will help you do your job more effectively.

### **Can I have a roommate?**

No, you may not due to the nature of confidentiality associated with the position. You utilize your room for meetings with residents and to complete paperwork such as narratives of incidents occurring within the building. Some of the student apartments' staff may have roommates.

### **How and when do I get paid for being an RA?**

A private room fee waiver and a weekly stipend are the compensation for the position. The room waiver will be applied to your account at the beginning of each semester, and the stipend of \$100.00 per week will be paid every two weeks.

### **Who are the people I will be working with?**

*Fellow RA's* are your primary support system. You will have anywhere from two to ten RA's on your staff. In addition, RA's in your specific campus area and across areas can be friends and resources for you.

*Residence Directors* are people who are working on a graduate degree and some have been RA's before or have experience working with student groups. RD's are your direct supervisor.

*Central Office Staff* include the Director, Assistant Directors, support staff, and maintenance/facilities staff. These individuals administer the overall operation of the Department of Housing and Residence Life and conduct long-range planning for the department.

*Campus and Community Resources* are an important help to the RA. You will get to know the resources on campus and in the community that will assist the residents on your floor and assist you in your job.

## *What does it mean to be a Resident Assistant?*

- “It’s been a good opportunity to have a feel of what it is like to hold a position that demands a good measure of responsibility and this will definitely be invaluable in my future endeavors.” --Bimbola Bukoye, Evans Hall
- “Being a Resident Assistant has given me a fresh perspective of MSU. My residents’ opinions on school policies, functions, and organizations have opened my mind to a more diverse approach to MSU.” --Stacie Weaver, Rice Hall West
- “Lifetime friends and lessons are what you get when you are an RA. My experiences as an RA have made my college years GREAT!!” --Gina Montesi, McKee Hall
- “Being an RA has taught me a great deal about being a team member and it has been a fun and educational experience.” --Sessums Hall RA
- “A lifelong experience that will linger forever. Freshmen full of confusion. Concerned parents. Friendships that last a lifetime. A feeling that will never leave your heart.” --Rice Hall East RA
- “It means building new relationships with new people, knowing you have helped a student and hoping you have made a difference in their college experience.” --Brock Owens, Hathorn Hall
- “Being an RA provides a network of resources, which not only helps residents, but the RA as well, to make the most of his/her college career.” --Regina Carroll, Hamlin Hall
- “Being an RA means learning about yourself and others. Through this learning and interaction you are able to develop and mature into the real you.” --Rhett Raum, Smith/Critz Hall
- “Being an RA means becoming a part of the bigger picture here at MSU...ultimately being an RA means influencing my residents to either love MSU or hate it based on how well I present it to them.” --Elmer Durrell, Arbour Acres
- “Being an RA has brought to my attention the importance of diplomacy in conflict management and the need for discretion in leadership roles.” --Aiken Village RA
- “The RA position affords me an exciting challenge and enhances my professional and social skills. I have experienced college life from a viewpoint few others may ever know: peer, counselor, educator and role model. In working with a unified team and being exposed to cultural diversity, my horizons expanded.” --Brandon Wallis, Cresswell Hall
- “Being an RA has allowed me to give more of myself to people who are in need. I believe that it is very important to have someone to go to in a time of need. I am that person.” --Myesha Davis, Hamlin Hall

# MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY RESIDENT ASSISTANT APPLICATION

Office Use Only DATE _____ CUM GPA _____
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**Please type. When complete, make four copies, then return the original and the four copies to Housing & Residence Life, Herbert Hall Assignments Office.**

## I. PERSONAL DATA

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Middle) (Last)

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name as it should appear on a name tag \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Current Residence Hall \_\_\_\_\_ Room \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Local Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

## II. EDUCATIONAL DATA

Present Classification: \_\_\_ Fr \_\_\_ So \_\_\_ Jr \_\_\_ Sr \_\_\_ Gr

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Point Average: Last Semester \_\_\_\_\_ Cumulative \_\_\_\_\_

**Candidates must have a 2.25 cumulative GPA to be considered and RAs must maintain a 2.0 to remain employed.**

Expected Date of Graduation \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be leaving campus to co-op? \_\_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be student teaching? \_\_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_

Other colleges or universities attended, including MSU. (Most recent first)

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME	LOCATION	DATES	DEGREE

**III. RESIDENCE HALL EXPERIENCE**

HALL	DATE	RA

**Preference will be given to those candidates who have lived in a residence hall for at least one semester.**

**IV. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Residence hall activities in which you have participated. List offices held, committees, etc.

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Other college activities in which you have participated. List offices held, committees, memberships, honors, etc.

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Volunteer Experience (community, church, school)\_\_\_\_\_

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Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently employed? \_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_\_NO. Beginning with the current position, list the last two positions which you have held.

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Other relevant experience: \_\_\_\_\_

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**If selected as an RA, you will have to terminate all other employment.**

## V. INDICATE HOW YOU BECAME AWARE OF THIS POSITION

**(Please check all that apply):**

_____	RA/RD	_____	Flyer
_____	Newspaper	_____	Interest Session
_____	Brochure	_____	Other (specify): _____

## VI. ESSAY QUESTIONS

In order for the Resident Assistant Selection Committee to learn as much as possible about you, please complete each of these statements in one paragraph. Please type your answers on a separate sheet of paper:

1. I, as a unique individual, perceive that my personal strengths and weaknesses are . . . .
2. I see the Resident Assistant position as one that . . . .
3. I see the "ideal" floor and/or hall situation as . . . .

## VII. REFERENCES

Please provide the names, telephone numbers, mailing addresses, and e-mail addresses for 3 references below. Indicate each reference's relationship to you i.e. current professor, former instructor, current RA, previous RD, etc.If possible, one reference should be completed by your current RA.

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Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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The information on this application is correct to the best of my knowledge, and I understand that any willful misrepresentation on my part will be grounds for termination from the application process as well as possible disciplinary action. I further understand that both my academic record and my discipline record will be checked, and I agree to allow these checks to be made.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Application

Mississippi State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, handicap/disability or Veteran status.

**PLEASE RETURN THE ORIGINAL AND FOUR (4) COPIES OF THE COMPLETED APPLICATION BY 12:00 PM, January 31, 2003. BE SURE TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING IN EACH COPY:**

- 1. THE THREE PAGES OF THE APPLICATION.**
- 2. THE TYPED ESSAY QUESTIONS.**