Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility/Qualifications required for the RA position

All applicants must be currently enrolled UNL students.

Q: Are graduate students eligible to apply?

A: Yes! Graduate students are eligible as long as the position does not conflict with a graduate assistantship or teaching assistantship. There are several RA positions in upper-class housing areas; however, a graduate student may be placed primarily in undergraduate residence hall as well.

Q: I’m a transfer student. This is my first semester at UNL; can I still apply for an RA position?

A: Yes, as long as you are currently enrolled at UNL and meet our GPA and credit requirements. Since you will not have any grades posted on the University records system yet, you will need to submit a copy of your transcript from the college or university you attended the previous semester with your application. You also will need to make sure you are registered for at least 12 credits at UNL during the semester in which you apply for the position.

Q: What if I have already applied for an RA position before?

A: You will need to re-apply due to the time that has passed since your first application.

Q: Can I choose what building I am placed in? When I apply to be an RA, can I specify which floor I want? When do I find out about RA placement?

A: No, you cannot choose the building or floor you want. When you complete the application process, you are applying for any and all RA positions, not for a specific residence hall. Hall placement is determined by the Residence Director/Residence Manager and is based on the needs of the buildings as well as the applicant’s skill set. Candidates who are hired and accept a position will learn their floor placement after the position is accepted—in many instance this may be some time during the summer months preceding the official start date for the position.

The application process

Q: When are the information sessions?

A: The information sessions are listed on the selection website. [http://housing.unl.edu/ra](http://housing.unl.edu/ra) The purpose of these session is to give you more information about the selection process and a chance to ask specific questions to staff.
Q: When and how can I turn in my application and reference forms?
A: All candidates must click on “Apply Now” to create an account and follow the instructions to submit all applications materials online via our website.

Q: Do I have to submit my application online?
A: Yes. If you have issues submitting the application online, please contact Megan Dobmeier at mdobmeier2@unl.edu or 472-3872.

Q: What is the deadline for applications?
A: The deadline for applications is Monday, January 26, 2015 at noon Central Time.

Q: How do I apply if I am studying abroad during the Spring 2015 semester?
A: Complete the application process by Monday, January 26, 2015 and contact Megan Dobmeier at mdobmeier2@unl.edu to notify her you are studying abroad. If you are selected for an interview, you will proceed with an alternate interview process.

Q: I am an International Student, can I still apply for an RA position?
A: Yes, if you are enrolled full time as a UNL student. However, due to Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements, non-resident aliens are limited to work a maximum of 20 hours per week and, therefore are not permitted to hold outside employment (other than their RA position) at any time during academic sessions.

Q: What if I missed the application due date?
A: No application will be accepted after the due date.

Q: Can I apply…
In my freshman year for a 2015-2016 position?
A: Yes, as long as you meet the application requirements
As a transfer student in the fall semester?
A: Yes, provided you have lived on-campus at your previous institution.
If I was documented for violating a University policy?
A: This will depend on whether you are currently under Judicial Sanction. If your sanctions have all been satisfactorily completed at the time you submit your application, you will be able to continue in the process. Additional checks will be made throughout the selection process, and if you are found to be under sanction during any of these checks, you will not be able to continue in the selection process.
Q: I was documented for a Housing policy violation. Should I consider applying for an RA position?

A: It is difficult to answer this question without knowing the details of the situation you were involved in. Please see your ADRL/RD for a more definitive response to this question. The RA employment agreement does specify that you cannot be on any type of University disciplinary sanction and hold the RA position at the same time.

Reference Forms

Q: If I currently don’t live in a residence hall, can someone other than an RA write a reference for me?

A: Those students who do not currently live in a residence hall have the option of asking someone other than a current RA to write a reference for them. The person should preferably be a former employer or professional reference but in certain circumstances college professors, teachers, advisors, coaches, or religious leaders can provide a reference for you. As long as the person can speak to your ability to work as a team player, leadership skills, and quality of work that you perform. If you previously lived on campus, you can ask your former RA to complete the reference form for you.

Q: I live on campus; do I have to have both of my references be RAs?

A: No. Only one of the two references needs to be an RA. It is important to note that Residence Directors/Residence Managers and Assistant Directors of Residence Life are unable to serve as references since they are managing the hiring process and providing references would present a conflict of interest.

Position Responsibilities

Q: Do I already need to know how to confront people or deal with emergencies?

A: No previous skills are required to be an RA. All staff members are thoroughly trained before the academic year begins regarding potential situations that might arise. During RA training, and throughout the year, you will receive training in crisis intervention and emergency protocol. As a staff member, you have the full support of the on-call RD/ADRL, University Police and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) to assist in any situation.

Q: Do I have to stay until the hall is closed or return before the halls open?

A: As stated in the sample RA Agreement which is available for your review on our website (http://housing.unl.edu/ra) staff members are required to return before the halls open and stay until the halls closed. Details of dates and times, which are specific to each school year, are listed on that year’s current RA position description/agreement, which you will be able to review before starting employment with the department. At the end of the Fall and Spring semesters, RAs are required to remain in the building until each resident has checked out of the building and the building has been secured for the semester closing. Exact dates and times will
be included in the position offer letter. Some halls are vacation housing halls, and those staff members hired to work in them will be asked to serve during break periods as well.

Q: How many weekends a month do I have to stay on campus?

A: RA’s are allowed 12 nights away per semester and these nights aware are coordinated in advance with their immediate supervisor’s permission.

Q: What is a duty night?

A: A duty night is when the RA is required to be in the building for a period of time during the evening/overnight hours (generally 7pm-7am). While the RA is on duty, the following responsibilities are met: Completing building rounds, interacting with residents, checking the security of the building, and responding to maintenance and emergency incidents. Following the last round, the RA is expected to remain in the building until the next morning.

Q: Will I have time for myself and see my friends in other buildings or off campus?

A: Absolutely! Time management is a key component to the RA position. Your immediate supervisor will help see that you are taking the time needed to live a well-balanced life. Of course, the position can be quite demanding. There will be times when you will need to make sacrifices for the position. The RA job is a student personnel position, and we cannot always predict when our students will require our attention.

Q: What is the difference between an ADRL and RD?

A: Assistant Directors of Residence Life (ADRLs) and Residence Directors (RDs) are responsible for the management of our residence halls. ADRLs are full-time professional staff members with a master’s level education in counseling or student development. In addition to directly supervising RD staff members, ADRLs have the responsibility of overseeing the management of multiple residence halls within their complex. RDs are responsible for the supervision of a residence hall and its associated RA staff.

Q: Will I have to work at the front desk of the complex in which I reside?

A: No you will not have to work the front desk. After your first semester if you would like to seek outside employment working the front desk is an option.

Q: How many hours am I going to have to work each week?

A: RA’s are not on an hourly schedule. The work load each week varies depending on the resident needs, programming efforts, and emergency situations. Most weeks RAs will work approximately 19 hours, other weeks (during training or building opening and closing) it may be more hours. RAs are encouraged to take one weekend away per month.

**Compensation**

Q: What is the compensation for the position?
A: RAs receive free room and board, as well as stipend that comes in the form of a direct deposit paycheck at the end of the semester. Here is a detailed listing of remuneration for the position:

- **RA Remuneration package in traditional halls include:**
  
  A singled room for the duration of your employment (subject to change based on occupancy demands)
  
  A full meal plan (unlimited 7-day dining options) when the dining halls are open
  
  $300 stipend (minus taxes) paid at the conclusion of the fall and spring semester for the first year of employment. Stipend amount increase to $350.00 after the first two semester of employment.

- **RA Remuneration package in Courtyards, Village, Knoll, University Suites, and East Side Suites:**
  
  A singled room in a multi-person unit for the duration of your employment
  
  A full meal plan (unlimited 7-day dining options) when the dining halls are open

- Extra Perks- Staff shirts, early move-in times, opportunity to work with a great team of peers and professional staff members, rewarding personal and professional growth experiences and opportunities to investigate helping professions as a career.

- Due to Fair Labor Standards Act requirements, international students are not able to hold outside employment at any time during academic sessions.

Q: I know that by being an RA, I will receive free room and board. How will this affect my Financial Aid?

A: The RA position can affect your financial aid or scholarship awards, however to determine how that will affect your situation specifically; please contact the Office of Financial Aid at 472-2030. RA room and board are non-taxable income and must be figured as such by the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships. Therefore, the position can affected your financial aid package for the year after employment begins.

**Training**

Q: When is 2015-2016 RA Training?

A: Training dates for the 2015-2016 academic year are August 9, 2015 through August 23, 2015. Move-in for student staff will begin approximately at 1pm on Friday, August 7, 2015. More
specifics about training dates will be provided post-hire to those individuals selected to be RAs. Additional training may take place a few days prior to the start of the spring semester. Throughout the semester, RAs may be required to attend scheduled on-going training sessions on issues relevant to Residence Life and Student Affairs.

Q: If I have a conflict, can I miss training or be late for it?
A: No. Attending RA training in its entirety is required to hold the position. Training lasts approximately two weeks and covers a breadth of information ranging from programming and confrontation, to community building and diversity. The time invested is critical to prepare RA’s to serve as resources for their residents

Q: What is the RA class?
A: The RA class is a fall or spring course in which new staff members learn about issues of diversity, community development, conflict mediation, student development theory, etc. Newly hired RA’s are expected to attend the class, and can take it for either no credit or for 3 hours of elective credit (the class is an EDPRS 497, Readings in Educational Psychology course). Registration for the course will take place after your hire. The course will end approximately the week of Thanksgiving Break.

**Summer Staff Selection**

Q: When is summer 2015 RA Training?
A: For summer 2015 staff, RA training begins Saturday, May 9, 2015. There is a week of intensive training through May 15, 2015. RAs are required to attend ALL training sessions, and you must be able to attend the entire week of training to be eligible for a summer 2015 RA position.

Q: What if I’m only interested in a summer 2015 RA position, and don’t want to be considered for an academic year position?
A: You still complete the application and interview process, and will only be considered for summer positions. Please make sure that you indicate on your profile which position(s) you are interested in and you will be directed to complete the appropriate application(S) online.

Q: What is the term of employment for summer RA positions?
A: Employment dates are May, 9, 2015 through August 14, 2015.

Q: Can I hold another job on/off-campus if I am a summer RA?
A: Summer RAs can hold up to 20 hours/week of outside employment, based on approval from their Residence Director. Under no circumstance are academic year RAs permitted to hold positions that require more than 10 hours a week.

Q: If I’m applying for a summer RA position, do I need to complete a Housing contract as part of the Summer Housing Sign-Up process?

A: Yes, all applicants must complete a summer housing contract and pay the deposit if they intend to live on campus during the summer 2015 term. RA employment offers will not be made until Friday, March 6, 2015.

General Questions

Q: How do I become a Resident Assistant? What do I do, and when?

A: Look through this website for all of the information you will need on the process. Read through it and if you still have questions, contact Megan Dobmeier, at mdobmeier2@unl.edu or by calling 472-3872

Q: What are you looking for in a Resident Assistant (RA)?

A: The Office of Housing and Residence Life is looking for students who are responsible and able to model strong leadership; outgoing and excited to develop students; knowledgeable of the campus community; dedicated to building relationships; looking for a challenge; adept at performing administrative tasks and committed to diversity.

Placement is conducted in early March with all professional staff present. Each candidate is evaluated and matched to a living environment. Many criteria are taken into consideration when hiring student staff and placing them in communities. In no particular order, some of the primary criteria we look for include:

- Educational potential
- Leadership skills
- Open-mindedness
- Class standing
- Discussion facilitation skills
- Academic major and/or understanding of community needs
- Ability to work in a team setting
- Appreciation for diversity

As you can see, qualifications are a strong consideration, yet the possible contributions of the candidate to the respective communities play a major role in our hiring process. Because of this philosophy, our commitment is to hiring the most qualified individual for the environment. It is important to remember the Student Staff Selection Process, as with many job interview processes, is competitive and we have a limited amount of openings every year. Some
individuals are offered positions and some are not. We recommend all candidates to focus on preparing themselves to be the best possible candidate they can be. If you aren’t offered a position this year, we encourage you to reapply next year.

Q: What happens if I don’t complete part of the selection process? What if I miss a deadline?

A: You will not be able to continue in the RA selection process, and will be ineligible for hire. This includes if you have a reference miss a deadline, so please make sure they are submitting their reference for you in a timely fashion.

Q: What if if am offered an alternate position?

A: Your application will stay in our active alternate pool and will be considered if any positions become available after the main selection process ends. Alternate pool candidates will be considered to fill open positions that are identified anytime from February 2015 until February 2016 (unless the alternate pool candidate withdraws from the pool, no longer meets the academic requirements of the position, or has had student conduct issues).

Q: If I’m applying for an RA position, do I need to complete a Housing contract as part of the Returning Room Sign-Up process?

A: Yes. All Students who want to live on campus next fall will need to complete a housing contract. If you receive an RA position, your previous contract will be cancelled, your deposit returned and you’ll be required to complete an RA Housing Contract.

Q: Can I hold another job on/off-campus if I am an RA?

A: RA’s in their first semester of work cannot hold outside employment, Any staff member in their second semester of service (or later) who desires to work another job must have prior approval from their Residence Director and can work no more than 10 hours per payroll week (Thursday to Thursday). Staff who have served as a summer RA can count the summer term of employment as a semester of employment and can, therefore, hold outside employment during the fall semester.

Q: If I’m an RA, will I have a roommate?

A: RA’s in apartment-style buildings, in Knoll Hall, University Suites, and East Side Suites, will live in units where they share a unit/bathroom with 1-3 other residents. You will have a designated time period during which you can choose your own roommates; but if you have no preference or no preference by the required deadline to submit roommate information, you will be assigned roommates. RA’s in the traditional halls do not have roommates. Please be aware that if occupancy demands in the residence hall dictate, it may be necessary for RAs to be assigned roommates on a temporary basis.

When this happens, every effort is made to expedite the relocation of the RA’s temporary roommate so as to minimize the amount of time that the RA will have someone sharing their living space.
Q: What if I am not living in Lincoln but want to participate in RA selection?

A: You must contact Megan Dobmeier at mdobmeier2@unl.edu and explain your situation and the reasons why you are not able to participate in the interview process. In some instances, accommodations can be made to allow out-of-town candidates to participate in the selection process, but others cases it is simply not possible. For this reason, each potential candidate’s circumstances are evaluated individually.

Q: Can I be heavily involved in athletics, band, student organizations, and other activities, and still be an RA?

A: That’s not likely as it will take you away from your primary function as an RA, which is to be visible and engaged on the floor for which you have been hired to serve. For returning staff with a demonstrated track record of solid job performance, extra-curricular roles outside of the RA position will be discussed in advance with their supervisor. This will require special permission, and will be reviewed each semester.