

Monash Residential Services

The Role of a Resident Advisor (Residential)

Context

The first four Mission Goals of Monash Residential Services (MRS) are to provide and develop an environment within each location on campus that:

- Provides care, support and enrichment for the residential community in academic, cultural, personal, social and recreational matters;
- Has regard for the individual and group needs of the residential population, bearing in mind the multi-cultural nature of each residential location and the wider Monash University community;
- Recognises and values diversity (e.g. nationalities, beliefs, abilities, talents, interests, etc);
- Creates opportunities for mutually beneficial interaction between the members of the residential community
(<http://www.monash.edu/accommodation/contact/about-us>)

Monash Residential Services gratefully acknowledges that there are current residents who demonstrate a strong commitment and willingness to undertake and be involved in a range of voluntary activities, programs and initiatives that contribute to the enhancement of community life in their Hall or Site and wider residential community.

As volunteers, Resident Advisors cannot be rostered 'on-call' – their contribution to their hall is entirely voluntary - and is essentially a community support, engagement and development role which demonstrates a strong commitment to actively participating in enriching and promoting community life within their Hall and wider residential community. As an acknowledgement of the contribution to residential communities made by Resident Advisors, an MRS Resident Advisor Scholarship may be offered to residents.

(<http://www.monash.edu.au/students/scholarships/mrs-residential-advisor.html>)

Eligibility for scholarship

To be eligible applicants must:

- Be an Australian or New Zealand citizen or holder of a permanent resident visa or humanitarian visa, or
- Be an international student, and;
- Be a current full-time undergraduate, honours, or postgraduate student enrolled at a Monash campus in Australia (subject to special consideration from the Director, Monash Residential Services), and;
- Be a current resident with Monash Residential Services, and;
- Have been appointed a Resident Advisor with Monash Residential Services

Retention of Scholarship

To retain a Resident Advisor scholarship, the holder must:

- Remain in residency with Monash Residential Services
- Maintain a full-time enrolment, variation to this is subject to special consideration from the Director, Monash Residential Services; written permission must be sought from the Director for a RA scholarship to be granted/retained should a RA move from a full-time to a part-time enrolment;
- Not be in breach of any current *Monash Residential Services – Conditions of Residency* (refer <http://www.monash.edu/accommodation/current-residents/regulations-and-policies/conditions-of-residency>);
- Maintain a minimum of a pass weighted average mark of 50% (Fifty percent);
- Maintain the support of the Residence's College Head as an appropriate, designated community leader in their Residence – as a result of ongoing conduct and contribution to their residential community and MRS more broadly.

Expectations of a Resident Advisor

Resident Advisors are expected to uphold and model exemplary behaviour and conduct and be an example to others as well as an ambassador for their Residence and Monash University. The conduct of Resident Advisors is expected to be at an exceptional level at all times within Residence as well as when the resident is (reasonably perceived as) representing or engaging in activities associated with their Residence or MRS.

Resident Advisors are expected to complete any requirements outlined in the application form for Resident Advisors, including, but not limited to:

- Completing accredited Mental Health First Aid Training
- Obtaining a Victorian *Working with Children Check (Volunteer)* card
- Completing Monash University Equal Opportunity (Students) online training
- Fulfilling any designated MRS Required Training Commitments – as outlined in the application and appointment process.

Resident Advisors contribute to the creation of a Residential Support Team within their Hall. The *Expectations* set out below are a means to achieving the above Mission Goals and are to be fulfilled in collaboration with, and support of, the whole of the Residential Support Team of each residential hall or MRS site. The central expectation is that RAs will be the model resident – actively promoting the values and expectations of MRS in their actions (both formal and informal). RAs are expected to inform their College Head of information which is important to the residential community and/or has the potential to impact the experience of residents or the reputation of MRS – RAs must disclose to their College Head or other appropriate person(s) at MRS, any personal conduct or situation(s) outside of MRS, within the University or wider community, which has the ability to influence the reputation of the RST and detrimentally impact MRS.

Broadly, the expectations of RAs within their residence fall into the following 5 categories:

1. Community Support:

- Provide a first point of reference for support to residents and refer resident onto the appropriate Residential Support Team Officer (RSTO) (College Head, Deputy College Head, Residential Support Assistant) to deal with their problem where required.
- Demonstrate leadership and support in an allocated stairway/floor/unit etc.
- Engage in a respectful, appropriate manner with every person in an allocated stairway/floor/unit etc.
- Be aware of attitudes and behaviour patterns of the residents in stairway/floor/unit etc (as well as the wider residential community) and refer any concerns or issues onto the appropriate RSTO to address.

2. Living Environment:

- Deal with minor conflicts and breaches of rules and regulations, and refer breaches and incidents to the College Head.
- Maintain effective relations with residents and resolve problems that may arise between residents in a constructive and fair manner.
- Uphold and model exemplary behaviour and conduct by adhering to the rules and regulations of MRS and be a good role model for general codes of behaviour.

3. Promotions/Information:

- Develop information sheets, flyers, newsletters and / or social media content as a means for promoting activities and for disseminating educational information.
- Display and distribute notices, forms, and surveys generated by MRS or own residence. Follow up with residents for completion and return of forms and surveys.
- Be active within social media communities – promoting MRS and Residence activities in an appropriate manner
- Provide information regarding studies, MRS, events, facilities, the local area etc.

4. Community Development:

- Actively promote and participate in community life.
- Promote and support cultural lifestyle diversity by organising and participating in social, recreational and educational activities.
- Have a strong involvement and presence during the orientation period (Semester 1 and Semester 2).

- Monitor the specific needs and requirements of 1st year students and assist in the assimilation of various cultures, age groups, etc. within the residences.
- Help residents develop a respect for other residents and the property of their residence and MRS.
- Encourage residents to participate in all residential activities.
- Actively promote to fellow residents MRS' initiative towards energy reduction by reducing and or recycling waste and conserving resources.

5. Social/Recreational:

- Organise a variety of activities/functions throughout the residential year that cater to the diversity of the community.
- Provide support and guidance to any resident committee, resident focus group and/or residents' society.
- More specifically, residents may be invited to explicitly contribute to one or more aspects of their residential hall community in their role – for example, facilitating activities associated with:
 - Community functions and events;
 - Sports and recreational activities;
 - Information technology activities;
 - Promoting multicultural understanding, academic skills and environmental initiatives;
 - Health and well-being.

It is very important to recognise that Resident Advisors hold a defined and official position of leadership within their Residence, and as such their behaviour and inter-personal relationships within their Residence must be exemplary – especially in the commission of activities which reflect the *Expectations of a Resident Advisor*.

All Resident Advisors will be provided with operating guidelines by the relevant College Head to assist them with tailoring their contribution to the specific needs of their residential community, and will be offered a range of training relevant for their role. These operating guidelines may be provided in the form of documentation during RST training programs, or as other written or verbal instruction. The specifics of these guidelines will be within the scope and spirit of the five areas of expectations, and be appropriate for the efficient management of the Residential Support Team.

Resident Advisors are not employees of MRS or the University and should ensure that they do not represent to students, staff or others that they are employees of MRS or the University. A resident's voluntary contribution to their Hall and wider residential community as a Resident Advisor does not carry any commitment by MRS or the University, for future employment opportunities.

Other items of consideration

- Monash Residential Services reserves the right at any time to advise residents they no longer require their voluntary contribution to the community as a Resident Advisor.
- All residents living at a Monash Residential Services site, despite their role:
 - are bound by the terms of their individual Residency Agreements;
 - accept and acknowledge that they will abide by MRS Accommodation Fee Regulations, the Conditions of Residency and other regulations as are specified on the MRS web page.
 - must pay all requisite fees at the times specified;
 - ***accept all other such regulations as are specified in Resident Advisor online induction and to abide by the disciplinary authority of the College Head, MRS Site Managers or other appropriate persons.***

Challenges

Resident Advisors may reasonably expect to encounter challenges within their role. All efforts will be made to provide Resident Advisors with training and support to deal effectively with these challenges, some of which may include:

- Dealing with residents who may not listen to reason.
- Sometimes feeling like the residents do not appreciate their efforts.
- Balancing work, study and *personal* time with your contribution to the residential community
- Being committed to ongoing personal development and challenging pre-conceived ideas/values.

- Being tolerant of interruptions to personal time.
- Understanding that they will be privy to information which is not to be discussed in the wider MRS community – understanding the importance of individual privacy as well as procedural and operational matters which must not be discussed outside of the formal Residential Support Team.

Rewards

In addition to the possibility of a MRS Resident Advisor Scholarship, the position of a Resident Advisor provides the opportunity to:

- Be part of a community and to lead, foster and nurture that community.
- Assist new residents' transition to on-campus life through sharing your own experiences.
- Develop leadership skills through attendance at MRS training workshops.
- Undertake certified training courses – developing personal and professional skills
- Help make MRS a more exciting and enjoyable place to live.
- Gain new perspectives on a diverse range of issues through working in a team and with residents from diverse cultures and backgrounds.
- Know you can 'make a difference'.