

REACH Resident Assistant Roles/Expectations **(Adapted from the University Housing RA job description)**

The University of Iowa REACH (Realizing Educational and Career Hopes) Program, a two-year certificate program, offers young adults with learning and cognitive disabilities an opportunity to benefit from an integrated collegiate living-learning experience. Students are provided with the skills necessary to be independent and contributing members of the community. REACH students live on campus in Stanley Hall. With support from REACH staff, students improve their daily living skills and get involved in campus life to interact with their undergraduate peers. REACH students participate in courses and develop vocational skills through internships with local businesses.

Additional responsibilities of the four (4) REACH Resident Assistant positions include, but are not limited to:

- Leadership of a small community of young adults with learning and cognitive disabilities
- Empower REACH students to become independent in problem solving
- Build community among REACH students and undergraduate students on floor
- Serve on-call for the REACH community for about one week per month
- Monitor curfew check-in
- Support the student in daily living, social, and interpersonal skill development
- Provide one-on-one support to REACH students on personal, academic, and career issues.
- Collaborate with University Housing and REACH Program staff
- Participate in disability education activities

Being a REACH Resident Assistant requires time. REACH RAs are expected to be in their room or hall, available to residents and staff. Availability is especially critical during move-in weekend and the first few weeks of classes. Additionally, availability is important throughout the semester during the evenings and nights. The REACH Program views RA availability to residents as important as direct involvement with their residents. The following outlines the minimum requirements and major tasks within the RA job responsibilities:

I. Minimum Requirements

- A. Maintain a 2.5 cumulative GPA the semester before being hired and each semester during the term of employment. Each semester of employment applicant must achieve a minimum 2.0 semester GPA. RAs must pass 70% of all credits attempted each semester. REACH RAs must maintain full-time student status (12 semester hour during fall and spring semesters).
- B. Have a minimum of one year of on-campus living at the time of employment.
- C. Attend mandatory spring, pre-fall (August), and winter (January) training workshops; participate in ongoing training opportunities, including education on disabilities.
- D. Ability to demonstrate time management and organization skills.
- E. Excellent verbal and written communication skills. Ability to effectively work with a diverse population of residents and University Housing staff.
- F. Some knowledge of responsibilities and general procedures of residence life operations, dining operations, maintenance and custodial services, housing assignment, and building offices.
- G. Ability to develop and maintain strong working relationships with University Housing and REACH Program staff.
- H. Enroll, attend and successfully complete a 5-week RA Class, which will be offered in Spring 2009. The courses will meet one day per week for 1 credit hour.
- I. Be available to fulfill one full academic year of employment as a RA for the REACH program.
- J. Reasonable experience in using computers and Microsoft Office software.
- K. Creative and self-motivated individual with demonstrated leadership experience.

II. Develop and maintain connections with floor residents as individuals and group members

- A. Be an active influence on floor residents.
 1. Talk with, get to know, and be available to all residents in the REACH Program. Learn the names of the residents in your assigned area.
 2. Plan and facilitate meetings for REACH community and assist other RAs during floor community meetings.
 3. Get to know all REACH residents appropriately through formal and informal contact.
 4. Have meaningful interactions with REACH residents on your floor regularly.
- B. Get to know residents on the floor.
 1. Observe general behavior and group dynamics of residents.
 2. Be sensitive to those who bring academic, personal, or career concerns/issues to your attention.
 3. Be a good listener; be able to refer residents to appropriate campus resources.
 4. Be aware of residents' values, activities, and standards of behavior.
 5. Work at resolving conflicts on the floor (roommate, small group, etc.).
- C. Assist REACH residents and provide support to other residents.

1. Be accessible during move-in, help residents get acclimated to the REACH Program, floor community, hall and the campus.
2. Be available to assist residents with general concerns including transition, academic, and personal issues.
3. Mediate roommate and/or personal conflicts when requested or necessary.
4. Maintain confidentiality with regards to a resident's personal concerns, except when required to mandatory reporting per University policies and procedures.

- D. Coordinate opportunities for REACH residents to get involved in the hall.
1. Support REACH residents in involvement in hall government participation.
 2. Attend some meetings and functions of the floor and hall community.
 3. Serve as a resource person.

III. Maintain an atmosphere that is conducive to self-discipline and study.

- A. Serve as a role model to residents; set a positive example by own actions both on and off campus—REACH RAs are responsible for following all campus rules and regulations as well as all local, state and federal laws.
- B. Assist in development of each resident's personal growth.
- C. Be able to understand and clearly interpret all University, REACH and residence halls policies and procedures.
- D. Make residents aware of policies and regulations of the REACH program, residence halls and The University.
- E. Encourage student leaders to help interpret and support policies and regulations.
- F. Enforce and support residence hall rules and regulations and report all incidents to the Assistant/Hall Coordinator and REACH Coordinator of Student Life.
- G. Maintain an environment conducive for sleep and study.

IV. Support student development concepts by developing strong communities

- A. Encourage participation in REACH floor, hall, and campus activities.
- B. Plan and implement educational, social, and recreational activities to meet the needs of the REACH students.
- C. Encourage and support interactions of REACH students with floor mates and other RAs.
- D. Create a diverse environment where the rights of all residents are respected and where individuals are appreciated and valued for the differences they bring to the environment.
- E. Seek consultation from REACH staff to facilitate student involvement /participation in Student Life opportunities.

V. Fulfill administrative responsibilities

- A. Meet regularly with REACH Student Life staff to discuss activities, concerns, and accomplishments of individual residents and the floor as a whole.
- B. Keep the Assistant/Hall Coordinator and the REACH Coordinator of Student Life informed of problems, negative and positive behaviors, interests, activities, and needs of the residents.
- C. Work with dining staff, custodial services staff, maintenance staff and building office staff in areas of mutual concern.
- D. Submit accurate and timely reports and administrative papers, such as duty logs and move-in paperwork.
- E. Participate in the REACH RA on-call rotation; take duty seriously, as you are responsible for the well-being of the residents of the hall.
- F. Attend and participate in weekly staff meetings.
- G. Monitor evening logs for curfew and weekend whereabouts of the residents in the REACH community.

VI. Other Responsibilities

- A. Maintain professional and positive behavior toward all job duties.
- B. REACH RAs are required to remain on campus for closing of the halls at academic break periods.
- C. REACH RAs are expected to stay until the end of their academic year appointment (May 16, 2009).
- D. Any time away from campus must have prior approval by the REACH Coordinator of Student Life. REACH RAs are advised to spend one weekend per month away from campus—however, time away must be approved in advance and allow for proper staff coverage in the REACH community at all times.
- E. It is expected that enough time is committed to the position in order to fulfill the responsibilities of the position.
- F. Meals are provided according to the terms of the board contract and when food service is in operation. Provisions will be made for some of the workshop meals.
- G. REACH RAs are not allowed to have jobs outside of the REACH RA position. Major commitments in extracurricular activities must be approved by the REACH Director and Coordinator of Student Life or designee.
- H. REACH RA Re-appointment decisions will be based upon job performance and needs of the REACH Program.

To a large degree, RAs lose their anonymity when they assume the responsibilities of the position. Their conduct and personal experience reflects the respect they have for themselves and their position. RAs are responsible for conducting themselves and appearing in such a way that their examples mirror their own best judgment, maturity, and judicious concern for those individuals with whom they live and work.