

# Resident Head Job Description

## Housing & Residence Life The University of Chicago

Few University faculty or staff positions have closer involvement in the lives of College students than the Resident Head in Housing & Residence Life. By living in close proximity to students, Resident Heads share in many aspects of students' lives, from the excitement of intellectual discovery and the enthusiasm of new friendships to the loneliness of being away from home and the adjustments that come with learning one's limits. It is a demanding job, one that requires genuine enjoyment of students, a willingness to relinquish private time, and an acceptance of a semi-public lifestyle for ten-months of the year. The position, however, is also a deeply rewarding one and an important element in the education students will receive at the University.

### **Major Functions of the Resident Head Position**

Resident Heads fulfill a wide range of roles in their Houses, working as mentors, counselors, administrators, disciplinarians, activities and governance advisors, and general resource persons. Effectiveness as a Resident Head is greatly enhanced by knowing each of the students in the House. Resident Heads who know their residents well are in a position to offer support, encouragement, counsel, and help to those students, particularly first-and-second year undergraduates, who might profit from the attention and concern of an interested and informed Resident Head. Moreover, the Resident Head is expected to eat meals with students in the Dining Commons (8-10 meals per week); spend time with students in the House lounges usually at night and on weekends; and interact with students in formal and informal settings. In order to be successful as a Resident Head, it is necessary to enjoy being with students, and to be able to be active in establishing opportunities for interaction in both the Resident Heads' apartment and in the students' rooms and common spaces.

Resident Heads are not expected to provide direct professional services to students; but it is expected that Resident Heads are aware of students with serious medical, emotional, or behavioral problems in order to make appropriate interventions and referrals. The Resident Head is part of a larger support network for students that includes the professional staff in Housing & Residence Life, professional counselors and therapists in the Student Counseling Center, and the student's academic advisor in The College. It is expected that Resident Heads will consult with these professional staff in determining what steps taken would be most effective in helping a student.

### House Councils and Activities

Resident Heads provide leadership to students in creating communities that are supportive of the educational goals of the University. In all Houses, students elect a council of officers who, together with the Resident Heads, plan and carry out activities which will appeal to a broad range of residents. House activities include programs

that are socially, intellectually, and culturally stimulating and exciting. Typical activities in a House include intramural sports; receptions with faculty guests; study breaks (informal gatherings of the House, usually late at night, for refreshments and conversations), and trips off campus to movies, cultural events, sporting events, or restaurants. Each Resident Head is given a substantial expense fund to cover the costs of programming for students, and to support the activities of the House.

### Housing Administration

Resident Heads are responsible for assisting with the annual in-House lottery for their respective community. These processes are supported and overseen by Housing & Residence Life, however Resident Heads work with the students to administer a fair and transparent housing process. The Senior Associate Director for Occupancy & Administration oversees the area of room and board contracts and assignments and will have contact with all of the Resident Heads in these areas.

### Discipline

Students at the University of Chicago are expected to take a great measure of responsibility for regulating their own lives. As University officials, Resident Heads must see that students' rights are protected and that conditions in the House support the educational goals of the University. To those ends, Resident Heads enforce rules, and when appropriate, impose disciplinary sanctions upon students (after consulting with their Assistant Director) or refer disciplinary cases to other University administrators. Additionally, Resident Heads are also responsible for their conduct and for abiding by all applicable University policies.

### Staff Supervision

At least one Resident Assistant (two in larger Houses) is also hired in each House. These staff members, known as "RAs", are typically second, third, or four year undergraduate students and assist Resident Heads with their responsibilities. The Resident Head is responsible for establishing the direction and expectations for the RA's accomplishment of their duties in the House. Resident Heads are expected to supervise, instruct, direct, and develop these student leaders but, are also expected to engage a highly collaborative and collegial approach in the supervision of the Resident Assistant(s).

## **TIME COMMITMENT**

Resident Heads are expected to be in their House the majority of evenings and weekends, and to take most of their meals (8-10 meals per week) with their residents in the dining commons. Staff members do not have to be in the Houses at all times, but must be present enough to know what is going on, to be available to students, and to be perceived as being available. Staff members are expected to respond to major problems in the community, to maintain a safe & respectful environment, and to perform routine administrative tasks (responding to email, writing incident reports, etc). Successful staff members take the initiative in keeping in touch with their Assistant Director, their students and in anticipating problems before they become crises.

In general staff members are discouraged from being away from the Houses frequently. Some time away of course is not only useful but necessary for self-care. Any commitment or activity which requires you to be away from the House overnight or longer should be approved in advance by your supervising Assistant Director. As part of the absence request process Resident Heads will work with their Assistant Director to put in place a coverage plan during their absence and assist in finding another Resident Head who will serve as the emergency responder.

Ordinarily we advise that absences should be particularly avoided during the first 6 weeks of the Fall quarter, however there can be exceptions. Opening Weekend, O-Week, & End of Quarter Closings are times it is almost impossible to grant a request to be away (but please know we would always want to discuss a request away during those times). Our Halls are open for Thanksgiving and students are in residence so that is a time we ask our Resident Heads to be in attendance.

Resident Heads are not expected to remain in residence during the Winter and Spring interim periods, although they must remain until all students have checked out. At least one Resident Head in each House is expected to be back in residence no later than 8 am on the morning the halls re-open after Winter and Spring interim.

### Programs

Housing & Residence Life does not have a prescribed programming model for the Houses. Instead, Housing & Residence Life expects Resident Heads to offer programs based on the needs and wants of their individual communities. Housing & Residence Life does work with campus partners to offer a variety of opportunities and resources for Resident Heads to engage with students around pertinent issues such as student leadership development, community development, social justice, inclusion, diversity, and campus climate.

Resident Heads are expected as part of their community enrichment to host one study break per week. In addition to study breaks, Resident Heads convene a House meeting for the entire community every week (typically Sunday evenings), and meet with their respective House council regularly.

### Duty, Staff Meetings and Participation in Resident Deans Events

In all of the residence halls, a rotating duty roster is established which insures that at least one member of the resident staff (Resident Head or Resident Assistant) is present in a hall to handle emergencies every night when the halls are open. Staff members in each hall also meet as a group on a regular basis (usually biweekly) for staff meeting to discuss programs, community concerns, and the state of the Hall in general. In addition to attending individual House events, Resident Heads will be expected to encourage residents to attend events sponsored by the Resident Deans, especially those that occur in the building such as finals week study breaks or special dinners.

## **Relationship to Other Housing and College Staff**

### The Resident Deans

Resident Deans are appointed and are the intellectual stewards of the community. There are currently 8 sets of Resident Deans – Burton-Judson Courts, Campus North Residential Commons (2), Max Palevsky Residential Commons, Renee Granville-Grossman Residential Commons (2), International House/Stony Island, and Snell-Hitchcock Residence Hall. All Resident Deans are senior members of the university faculty. The Resident Deans offer programs and activities on a building-wide scale which are aimed at promoting a sense of community on a larger scale (working toward creating Hall affinity) and which cultivate students' involvement in intellectual and cultural programs, particularly those offered by the city. In addition, the Resident Deans take an interest in the general quality of life in the Houses and work directly with the staff in Housing & Residence Life in addressing related issues. They are actively involved in the decisions to appoint and re-appoint Resident Heads but do not provide daily direction to Resident Heads in their work with students or their House communities.

### Residence Life Staff

Housing & Residence Life is staffed by an Executive Director of Housing & Residence Life, a Senior Associate Director of Residence Life, and five Assistant Directors of Residence Life who provide overall direction for Residence Life and the housing staff. The Assistant Directors have oversight for various residential communities and work closely with the residence life staff in that area. The Assistant Director serves as the direct supervisor for the Resident Heads in their area.

The Senior Associate Director for Residence Life oversees the day-to-day management of the Residence Life program. The Executive Director has overall responsibility for the entire housing & residence life program. The staff, in close consultation with the Resident Heads, Resident Assistants, and Resident Deans, determine policies and procedures for the Houses. The Assistant Directors meet regularly (every other week) with the Resident Deans, Resident Heads, and Resident Assistants in staff meetings, and occasionally attend meetings of the student hall councils in their areas.

### Coordination with Departmental Partners

Housing & Residence Life supports the programs, services and operations of the residence halls. The Operations team led by the Senior Associate Director for Operations serves as a liaison to Facilities Services' housekeeping and maintenance function, as well as, directly supervising front desk operations, and providing various resident services (cable, laundry, rentals, etc.). A Residence Hall Manager manages these functions in each residence hall. Resident Heads are expected to work closely with the Residence Hall Manager. In addition, Housing & Residence Life works closely with UChicago Dining and their staff in addressing issues that affect the quality of life in the Houses and in the dining halls.

### Additional Student Services in the College

The Housing & Residence Life staff maintains a very close working relationship with the Office of the Dean of Students in the College where the academic advisers of the undergraduate students are located. Advisers and Resident Heads (in consultation with their Assistant Director) are expected to confer frequently throughout the year to discuss their concerns about particular students as they seek ways in which they may assist those students.

### Knowledge of Campus Partners & Student Resources

Resident Heads must develop a good working knowledge of the services offered to students by other offices of the University, in particular, Career Advancement, the Center for Leadership and Involvement (CLI), Student Counseling Services (SCS), Student Disability Service (SDS), the Center for Identity & Inclusion (CII), and Student Health Services (SHS). We have found that the students who can benefit from the services of these and other University offices are more likely to use such services when encouraged to do so by their Resident Heads.

### **Eligibility and Qualifications for the Resident Head Position**

Each of the 39 Houses has a Resident Head assigned to it. Resident Heads are individuals or couples who have a primary connection to the University as a faculty member, advanced graduate student, or an exempt university employee. Candidates must be at least 25 years of age and emotionally mature. Graduate students should minimally be in their second year of study. Resident Heads may be either coupled, or single. Couples with children are welcome. Preference will be given to candidates with previous live-in residential life staff experience.

### **Terms of Appointment**

The appointment as Resident Head is an annual appointment with reappointment subject to a satisfactory review each year. It is expected that Resident Heads plan to be in the position a minimum of 2 years. Most candidates remain in the position for 3-5 years. Incumbents seeking to be re-appointed beyond a fifth year will be determined on a case by case basis. Appointments may be terminated at any time if Housing & Residence Life concludes that such termination is appropriate.

Resident Heads must maintain their full-time student, staff, or faculty affiliation with the University throughout their period of employment. The appointment takes into account the compatibility of the candidate's current primary academic or professional undertaking at the University with the requirements of the Resident Head position. While only one member of the applicant couple must have University affiliation, a change in the original affiliation may be a reason for review of continued appointment.

The Resident Head position exists in Workday, the University's HR/Payroll system, as a 20 hour per week position. The University requires that all graduate students who have multiple jobs on campus which results in

them working more than 20 hours per week receive permission from their dean of students. If you are a graduate student, and you hold ANY additional jobs on campus, Campus & Student Life Human Resources needs a letter from your dean of students granting permission for you to work more than 20 hours per week.

### Compensation

Resident Heads are provided with apartments in House where they are assigned. Apartments can be provided fully furnished, partially furnished, or unfurnished, depending on the needs of the particular Resident Head(s). Please note that all residence halls are non-smoking, including the RH apartments. Resident Heads can expect to occupy the apartment on a year-round basis if the appointment is renewed for the next academic year. Resident Heads may be asked to re-locate to another apartment in Housing if construction or renovation projects that occur during the summer so require. Resident Heads whose appointments have ended with the Spring Quarter of a given year, must vacate their apartments by July 15.

Each Resident Head apartment contains a University telephone (landline) and wireless computing network connection. Local and on-campus calls are covered by the landline.

Resident Heads are also provided with board when the dining halls are in service during the three quarters of the academic year. Resident Heads are expected to eat the majority of their meals (at least 8-10 meals per week) at the House table in the residential dining halls with their students.

Resident Heads receive an annual stipend (\$8,400 for 2018-2019) which is paid beginning with the last pay period in October through the last pay period in May. For tax purposes, salary stipends are considered taxable income. As Resident Heads are required to live in Housing, and take most, if not all of their meals in the dining halls, the value of the apartment accommodations and required meals is not considered taxable.

During the term of the appointment, and after appropriate review and consultation, Housing & Residence Life may remove a Resident Head for inadequate or improper performance of responsibilities or for conduct that, in the judgment of Housing & Residence Life, may be detrimental to the House or may compromise the effectiveness of the Resident Head. In addition, Resident Heads will be removed should they no longer have an affiliation with the University. In the event that Housing & Residence Life determines that a removal or termination is appropriate, the Resident Head must vacate the House within the time determined by Housing & Residence Life.

The Resident Head appointment may be renewed if, in the judgment of Housing & Residence Life, reappointment is in the best interest of the House and Housing & Residence Life. A decision on reappointment is ordinarily made in the spring and is based upon an assessment by the Assistant Director and the Resident Deans along with the Executive Director or Senior Associate Director of Residence Life taking into consideration the Resident Head's contribution as well as the overall needs of the House community.