

# Interview Tips and Helpful Hints to Prepare You for the RA Selection Process

## ➤ Know the Position

Research the position and even the Office of Residence Life. Talk to current RAs from different buildings to find out their opinions of the position. Gathering more than one opinion can help you see different sides of the job. Additionally, by talking to RAs from different buildings, you will gain knowledge of buildings other than the one(s) you may have lived in. It may be worthwhile to check out the Residence Life website as well since that will be the university department for which you would be employed.

## ➤ Practice Your Answers

Practice your answers to a variety of questions. Begin by preparing your 60-second personal statement: Your answer to the, “Tell me about yourself,” question. Write at least five success stories to answer behavioral interview questions. Typical behavior based questions focus on understanding a specific situation or challenge that you have faced that will demonstrate a particular quality or skill that is relevant to the position. To maximize the effectiveness of your answers, try using the STAR system.

- S → Describe a Situation
- T → Talk about the Task
- A → Explain the Action you took
- R → Talk about the positive Results

When responding to questions, answer as directly and honestly as possible. Don't tell the interviewer what you think s/he wants to hear. Instead, think back to your preparation and use answers that sell your skills. The most important thing is to be yourself and focus on positive qualities. Never apologize for your lack of anything. Another important point is to be sure that for every answer you give, you back up everything you say with examples.

If you talk quickly, count to 3 before answering questions right away. Take a couple seconds to think about what you are going to say so your response is accurate and appropriate. You don't want your answers to sound canned, instead you need to sound thoughtful.

## ➤ Answering Frequently Asked Questions

While we won't provide you with specific questions that are asked during an interview, we will give you some characteristics that we look for in candidates:

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Communication Skills                 | 10. Self-confidence             |
| 2. Honesty/Integrity                    | 11. Leadership Skills           |
| 3. Teamwork Skills                      | 12. Organization Skills         |
| 4. Motivated/Willing to take initiative | 13. Detail Oriented             |
| 5. Strong work ethic                    | 14. Friendly                    |
| 6. Interpersonal skills                 | 15. Self-awareness              |
| 7. Analytical skills                    | 16. Creative                    |
| 8. Flexibility/Adaptability             | 17. Well-mannered/Polite        |
| 9. Diversity Awareness                  | 18. Possessing a sense of Humor |

➤ What to Wear

Since the interview is a formal interview, you should dress accordingly. While we don't expect that you wear a full suit, jeans, t-shirts, and pajamas are not going to impress us. Remember that what you are wearing helps to determine our first impression of you. Dressing for success by spending time on your appearance.

➤ Upon Arrival to the RA Interview

- Arrive Early – enter the building 7 minutes before your appointment
- Review your prepared stories and answers
- Stand and greet your interviewer with a hearty (not bone crushing) handshake
- Smile and look into the interviewer's eyes

➤ During the RA Interview

- Try to focus on the points you have prepared without sounding rehearsed or stiff
- Relax and enjoy the conversation
- Ask the questions that you have prepared and learn what you can about the job
- At the conclusion, thank the interviewer and determine the next steps

➤ Group Process

Group process day is another formal part of the selection process and is mandatory for you to attend if you wish to be considered for the RA position. Group process is a time where we are able to watch you interact with other candidates. This portion of the process gives insight into teamwork, leadership, and critical thinking as current RAs and Hall Directors observe the small groups. You will be given time at the end of your session to complete a self-evaluation and comment on the activities of the day.

Some hints for Group Process:

- Dress is casual; jeans and t-shirts are acceptable.
- It is imperative that you arrive on time – we will start without you!
- Bring a writing instrument and be prepared to interact with other candidates.

➤ Ice Cream Social

This is an informal part of the selection process and is not mandatory. This event gives you time to interact with RAs from different buildings and ask questions that may still be lingering about the job or the process. Additionally, all residence halls will have information on their specific hall – traditions, programs, hall demographics, and photos for you to explore.

Some hints for the Ice Cream Social

- Dress is casual; jeans and t-shirts are acceptable.
- This event does have some structure so please arrive on time.
- Come prepared with questions that you may have for RAs and Hall Directors.
- Have an open mind and explore all of the residence hall's displays

**If you need additional help, don't be afraid to stop by Career Services for more interview tips and practice sessions!**