

## Peer Mentor Position Description

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### General Statement of Duties

Peer Mentors (PMs) are live-in, part-time, student staff members within first-year residence hall communities. Peer Mentors work to support students in their transition to college life through academic success mentoring, an in-hall curriculum, participation in move-in, New Students Orientation and Transition activities, engaging students in campus life and connecting them to academic departments, working with associated Residential Academic Program (RAP) faculty and staff, and supporting the overall mission of Residential Life.

### Supervision Received

Peer Mentors report to and work closely with Learning Communities Graduate Assistants (LCG) and Coordinators for Student Success (CSS). Peer Mentors also work closely with and receive direction from Residence Directors (RD) /Residence Hall Coordinators (RHC) within cluster.

### Contract Period for Peer Mentors

The Peer Mentor term of appointment is one full academic year (consecutive fall and spring semesters). The contract period includes all pre-semester training periods.

All Peer Mentors are required to be in-residence and to participate fully in all training and operational activities which commence prior to the opening of the residence halls for both fall and spring semesters. The contract period does not include Thanksgiving, Winter, and Spring Break periods. Peer Mentors are expected to stay through the last day of finals, unless released earlier by their supervisor, in the fall and spring semesters. PMs will receive compensation as outlined in the RAPMU Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Peer Mentors may be considered to serve as RAs in Summer Session Housing. RAs in Summer Session Housing are accountable to requirements and position responsibilities in the Resident Assistant position description. The contract dates for Summer Resident Assistants will be announced when positions are announced. RAs for Summer Session will receive the rate of pay outlined in the RAPMU Collective Bargaining Agreement.

### Housing Assignment

Peer Mentors are provided their housing assignment in a first-year residence hall community at the time of hire. This assignment is often based on matching the Peer Mentor's academic pursuits with a RAP or other program. When necessary, the University has a practice of relocating programs and activities, which may impact a Peer Mentor's placement. If this occurs, the Peer Mentor will be notified prior to the start of the academic year of their reassignment to a different room, hall or area.

### Qualifications

- Peer Mentors must be University undergraduate students enrolled in degree granting programs with at least six credits.
- A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75 is required at the time of hire and 30 calendar days prior to the commencement of fall training and 14 calendar days prior to the commencement of duties when starting the position at any other time during the year. If the Peer Mentor does not meet minimum GPA requirements by these deadlines, their employment offer for that academic year will be rescinded. A 3.00 cumulative GPA or higher is preferred. Between fall and spring semesters, any cumulative GPA that falls below a 2.75 will be reviewed and Residential Life will make a determination related to that Peer Mentor's ability to continue in the position for the spring semester.
  - *For Peer Mentors selected to work in Commonwealth Honors College Residential Community, a 3.4 cumulative GPA is required at the time of application and commencement of duties, as well as being in good standing as a member of Commonwealth Honors College.*
- Peer Mentors must have successfully completed (pass) EDUC391R: *CORE: Creating Opportunities for Residents to Engage* in order to be eligible to be selected for the position.

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- Peer Mentors must be free of current student conduct sanctions and have resolved any pending conduct charges 14 calendar days prior to the commencement of Peer Mentor Training for fall and 7 calendar days prior to the commencement of the Peer Mentor position when starting the position at any other time during the year. Each semester, Residential Life will review all Peer Mentor conduct histories.
- Peer Mentors must resolve any financial issues resulting in withdrawal from the University at least 14 calendar days prior to the commencement of the Peer Mentor position and 7 calendar days prior to the Peer Mentor spring semester training date.
- At the time of hire, Peer Mentors must have lived in a residence hall for at least one full semester at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. In addition, Peer Mentors must be eligible to reside in a residence hall at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.
- Peer Mentors must be eligible to work at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Peer Mentors must be able to perform the following physical requirements:

- Visually assess the community, surroundings and situations that occur spontaneously and respond appropriately
- Verbally communicate with residents and supervisors in casual and crisis situations
- Use and operate keys and computer systems

### Performance Management

Supervisors will meet with the Peer Mentors initially on an individual and/or staff basis to review the position description, establish goals, and outline expectations for the semester. Supervisors will meet regularly with each Peer Mentor to assess progress and performance. Annually, a formal performance evaluation is completed for each Peer Mentor. The performance evaluation incorporates feedback from residents. At the end of the Spring semester, an end-of-the-year evaluation is conducted and focuses on the Peer Mentor's strengths and areas of growth.

### POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

#### I. Residential Curriculum

- A. Peer Mentors are responsible for facilitating student learning by implementing and reporting initiatives as outlined in the Residential Curriculum for their residential communities. The initiatives outlined in the Residential Curriculum include:
- Self-Guided/Independent Learning Initiatives, including creating bulletin boards, newsletters, social media outreach, and other such written engagements with residents
  - Individual Connections (one on one and small group purposeful interactions with students in the community)
  - Events & Programs (small group and community events, including Residential Academic Success Center (RASC) programs)

#### II. Residential Academic Success Center (RASC) Hours and Student Interactions

Peer Mentors are expected to staff the RASC five hours per week as assigned. These hours will be between 4:00pm – 11:00pm and between Sunday and Thursday. Peer Mentors, through Individual Interactions (see above), develop mentoring relationships with first-year students. Mentoring takes different forms based on the needs of the community and may include RASC hours, time spent in the community, group interactions, or more personalized meetings with students.

#### III. Community Development & Policies

- A. Peer Mentors should be a visible, active and positive presence in the residence hall community. They are expected to work individually and collaboratively to help first-year students experience a positive transition to UMass Amherst and to assist in the creation of an inclusive, academically-focused community. Peer Mentors should also regularly attend residence hall programmatic events and community initiatives sponsored by the Peer Mentor Staff, Resident Assistant Staff, House Council, Academic Partners, Residential Life, and other campus agencies.

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- B. Peer Mentors must role model respect for University policy and respond to community concerns when needed. Peer Mentors will be expected to role model appropriate community standards in their personal behavior at all times. As employees of Residential Life, Peer Mentors are expected to abide by Massachusetts State Laws regarding alcohol and controlled substances and all University policies and residence hall policies. Violations of Massachusetts State Laws or University Policy regarding alcohol and controlled substances in the residential environment or the creation of a significant fire or life safety issue constitute unacceptable behavior on the part of a Peer Mentor and will likely result in termination from the position. Furthermore, Peer Mentors, as employees of Residential Life, must contact the appropriate Residential Life staff members should they witness any inappropriate student conduct. Peer Mentors should familiarize themselves with the policies of the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Residential Life and be prepared to engage students in conversation about acceptable community standards.
- C. As a responsible community member, Peer Mentors are also expected to react appropriately to crisis situations as outlined in Residential Life incident response protocols. The primary responsibilities of a Peer Mentor in crisis situations are implementing safety measures and making appropriate referrals. This requires Peer Mentors to be able to access contact information of Residential Life Senior Staff, RAs on-duty, On-Call Staff, and critical campus resources, such as UMPD, Health Services, Center for Counseling and Psychological Health, and Rape Crisis Hotline.
- D. Peer Mentors are Campus Security Authorities (CSA) under the Clery Act and Responsible Employees under Title IX. Peer Mentors are expected to follow all guidelines for CSAs and Responsible Employees as outlined in their training and incident response guidelines.

### IV. Training & Meetings

- A. Peer Mentors are required to participate in annual staff training, which occurs prior to the commencement of Fall and Spring semesters. Dates are outlined in the *Peer Mentor Employment Contract*.
- B. Peer Mentors are required to attend all staff meetings. Staff meetings will generally be one (1) hour per week, not to exceed one and a half (1.5) hours per week except when unusual circumstances arise that require longer meetings. Staff meeting times will be scheduled around the staff's academic schedule. PMs may schedule other jobs and activities after your cluster's staff meeting time is established.
- C. Peer Mentors will attend a monthly staff meeting for all cluster staff (PMs, RAs and senior staff) to enhance communication, receive on-going training, and collaborate on upcoming initiatives.
- D. Peer Mentors will also meet with their supervisor in a regularly occurring 1:1 meeting. All meeting times will be determined at the start of the academic semester, taking into account the academic schedules of Peer Mentors. One-on-one supervisory meetings shall generally last one half (.5) hour, not to exceed one and (1) hour except when unusual circumstances arise that require longer meetings.
- E. Peer Mentors will participate in ongoing in-service training as determined by Residential Life, including online training modules.

### V. General

- A. The Peer Mentor position is a part-time position. PMs will work on average 15 hours per week during the academic year and 40 hours per week during each of the pre-semester training/residence hall move-in weeks. Over the course of an academic year, the position averages out to 15 hours per week. However, some periods of time will require greater staffing

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demands (such as move-in, New Students Orientation, Welcome Week, and other special events).

The Peer Mentor position is a live-in position. Peer Mentors are expected to live and sleep in their own rooms.

A PM may hold a second part-time job or student leadership role, however, the PM position is the primary job and takes precedence over and supersedes any other employment or student leadership position.

Peer Mentors will be required to complete a variety of administrative duties to contribute to Residential Life and the RFYE program. These duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Assisting with annual Peer Mentor selection by conducting interviews and information sessions, distributing posters, and nominating residents
- Completing assessments of trainings, programs, and procedures as determined by Residential Life and/or the Division of Student Affairs and Campus Life
- Participating in Residential Life search processes as assigned to interview candidates for Residential Life positions

- B. The Learning Communities Graduate Assistant or Coordinator for Student Success may expect other related responsibilities and duties.

I indicate by my signature below my acceptance of the Peer Mentor position and my acceptance of the above Position Description.

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT ID

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

CBU Status: UAW 2322 Resident Assistant Peer Mentor Unit