RESIDENT ASSISTANT (RA) SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Opening Questions

- Of all of the co-curricular activities of which you are involved, what one do you like the most? What do you like about it?
- I noticed you participated in ____________. Could you tell us what you enjoy about that?
- I see that you live in ____________ building. What has your experience been like?
- How would someone else describe you?
- Why did you decide to apply for the RA position?
- How did you learn about the position?
- Why do you want to become a RA?

Ability/Desire to Make the Job a Priority

- How much time do you feel the RA position will take up during a typical week?
- What are some lifestyle changes you will need to make to accommodate the RA position?
- What other activities/commitments do you have planned for next year and are you willing to give anything up if necessary to accommodate the RA position?
- Where will the job fall on your priority list?

Education/Programming Skills

- If you had an unlimited amount of money to spend on an event, what would you do? What if you only had $5?
- Getting to know people who are like us is pretty easy. As an RA, you are required to reach out to students on your floor who are disconnected or different. How would you do this?
- What does “building a sense of community” mean to you?
- What do you believe is the most important quality for an RA?

Community Development

- What do you think community means?
- What role does developing a sense of community play for RAs?
- How would you go about building community on your floor?
- Do you have any experiences with developing community that you can share?
- What kind of relationship would you like to have with the residents in your community? How will your relationship impact your ability to do the RA job?

Self-Awareness/Development

- What do you believe is the most significant experience on your resume? What have you learned from this experience?
- What has been your biggest personal accomplishment?
- Why did you choose to attend Seton Hill University? How did you make this decision?
- What have you learned about yourself since your arrival at Seton Hill University?
- How will the RA position assist you in continuing to learn?
Self-Awareness/Development (continued)

- How have you changed/what have you learned about yourself since FR year?
- How can immaturity inhibit an RA from doing a good job?
- What would you expect your residents to say about you at the end of the year?
- What did you learn from your previous RAs? As an RA, what would you do differently and what would you try to emulate?
- How would you handle a situation where you can’t deliver what you promised?
- As an RA, you become a role model. How can you use this status favorably/unfavorably?

Helping/Communication Skills

- As an RA, you will come across a variety of issues. What issues would you be comfortable handling? What issues would you be uncomfortable handling?
- What qualities do you bring to the RA position?
- What would you do if a resident did not respond to your efforts to help him/her with an issue such as an eating disorder or depression and you felt it was really important that he/she get help?
- Describe/identify the characteristics of effective communication. How do you model these characteristics?

Diversity Advocate Skills

- What can you do as an RA to promote the issue of diversity?
- What do you believe is the role of an RA when he/she hears offensive comments made towards minority students?
- How would you react/respond to a situation in your building or floor where residents were experiencing racist and homophobic remarks written on their dry erase board?
- How do you feel about the topic of diversity?
- Do you see people from other cultures as having different needs? If so, what needs or concerns might they have?
- What has been your past experience(s) in dealing with people of other cultures? How would this experience relate to being an RA?
- As an RA how would you relate to community members you personally disliked?
- Describe someone who is different from you. What have you learned from this person?
- What under-represented groups can you identify on campus? Describe some of the needs that these groups may have.
- What have you done in the last year to enhance your current knowledge about people or cultures different from your own?
- How would you educate your residents on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans-gendered and questioning issues?

Mediation Skills

- Please tell us about a time when you had a conflict to resolve and how you resolved it. Follow up with: Would you have done anything differently?
- How would you handle a conflict on your floor between one resident with whom you are very close and one who you hardly know?
- Please give us some examples of your conflict resolution or crisis management skills.
- What do you do when you get angry during a conversation with friends/family?
- How would you get residents to share in taking responsibility of their actions and those of others?
- Describe a situation from a former job or experience when you knew you were dealing with a situation that was more than you could handle. What did you do?
Group Facilitation Skills

- How do you prepare/give presentations for class?
- If you were running a community meeting as an RA, what would you want to achieve in that meeting?
- How would you handle a resident on your floor that was having a negative impact on the community?
- What kinds of things would you do on your floor to get to know your residents individually?

Peer/Student Role Modeling Skills

- Why do you want to want to be an RA?
- Would you describe an RA as a role model? Follow up with: If so, how? OR If not, why not?
- It is often said that RAs live in a fishbowl. What are your thoughts on that?
- Describe your leadership style. Give an example of a time when you felt you were successful as a leader. Give one example of a time when you felt you were not as successful as a leader. What would you have done differently in that situation?
- Looking at your past RAs, what would you incorporate from their styles and what would you try to avoid?
- Please define what the term “role model” means to you. Follow up with: How would you use this as an RA?
- How would you describe your style of leadership?
- What kind of skills would you bring to the position?

Customer/Student Service Skills

- What part of the position will be the biggest challenge for you? Follow up with: How will you overcome that?
- What do you think are the challenges of working in a residence hall that is primarily made up of first year students? What do you think are the challenges of working in a residence hall with continuing or transfer students?
- If you got a letter in the mail tomorrow telling you that you had been hired as an RA, what would you be most excited about and why?
- What do you like most about your current floor community? Follow up with: What do you like least and how will you work to prevent that from happening?
- What would you do at the beginning of the year to facilitate interactions amongst your residents?
- What do you think an RA spends the most time on?

Student Conduct Skills/Standing

- What kinds of things frustrate you? How do you handle your frustrations?
- What is your biggest pet peeve about human nature? Follow up with: How would you deal with a resident who lived on your floor with this characteristic?
- Please tell us about a time when you had to be assertive. Follow up with: How did you feel? What was the outcome? What did you learn from this experience?
- Please relate a time when someone made a statement with which you strongly disagreed. Follow up with: How did you react?
- If you could change a university policy, what would it be and why?

Administrative Skills

- Given the responsibilities of an RA, how would being an RA change your lifestyle?
- Please describe your organizational skills and your time management skills.
- Do you work better under pressure or do you prefer to plan ahead? Follow up with: Please give an example of a time when you had to work the opposite way.
- Do you find it more difficult to ask for help or to admit you are wrong? Follow up with: Please share an example.
- How does the RA role compliment your future goals?
Understanding of the RA Role

• Describe your concept of the RA position.
• Identify the three most important skills an RA should possess and explain why.
• How do you feel the RA position would change your lifestyle?

Ability to be a Liaison

• How could you justify enforcing a policy that you yourself might not believe in?
• What role do you typically play with your friends? Follow up with: Do you think that would change at all if you were a member of the Residence Life staff?
• If you were an RA, how would you handle a situation in which you were asked to complete an RA task with which you did not agree?
• On a scale of 1 to 10, how do you rate your own level of responsibility and why?

Staff/Team Relation Skills

• What does “being a team player” mean to you?
• What kinds of things do you think enable building staff members to work together well? Follow up with: What kinds of things do you think block effective teamwork?
• What type of person would you find it most difficult to work with? How would you try to facilitate a relationship with this person?
• Tell us about a time when you were working in a group situation and someone was not pulling his or her weight. What did you do?
• How do you typically handle situations where you confront friends/family with concerns?
• Please describe to us what you feel the RA position entails.
• What qualities do you possess that make you a qualified applicant for this student leader position?
• What do you think you will contribute to the office of Residence Life? Your staff? Your residents?
• What will you expect from your supervisor? Other RAs? The Office of Residence Life?
• Please describe a leadership experience you have had. What did you learn from that experience? (Leadership)
• What are some skills you would like to develop to help you become a better leader? (Leadership)
• Is it your natural delegation to take on a project all by yourself or do you delegate?

Programming

• Tell us about a program/activity that you have planned and implemented.
• What are some of the current needs of students?
• What resources would you use to assist in your programming?
• What programs do you believe help first year students/returning students?

Quick Mini Scenarios

• One of your residents has placed a swastika in a visible place in his/her room. The sign is making many of your residents uncomfortable, and they come to you asking if the resident can be moved. How would you handle this situation?
• As an RA, you have developed some good relationships with your residents. You’ve developed an especially good relationship with one particular resident who is of a sexual orientation different than your own. You begin to notice that he/she is developing a serious crush on you. How would you handle the situation?
• You become aware that there is vomit in your bathroom frequently and at different times of the day. What would you do in this situation?

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