



University Housing
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Residence Life

Student Employee Supplemental Handbook

Academic Year 2026-2027

Introduction

Residence Life student staff are essential in upholding our mission to provide a safe and inclusive environment that supports personal development, community engagement and academic achievement. The Residence Life Student Employee Supplemental Handbook will set clear departmental expectations so student staff can be successful in their roles. **This handbook is subject to change, and student staff members will be notified of changes made.** All sections within this document are noted for both hourly and House Fellow student staff members unless noted otherwise.

Customer Service and Student Interaction

As a student staff employee, it is important to provide and create a positive experience for the residential community. To meet these expectations, student staff should strive to provide and possess

- A clean, comfortable, and friendly atmosphere
- Be present and attentive in the community
- Engage with residents in your community (greeting residents in passing, learning their names/pronouns, etc.)
- A desire to help others
- An understanding of resources both on and off campus
- Be flexible and adaptable
- Demonstrate empathy and care toward others
- Respond and communicate to emergencies
- A willingness to learn and be open to changes

Mandatory Work Dates

Each year, the department creates a [Mandatory Work Dates document](#) outlining required training sessions and events for professional and student staff. Staff must be in attendance and on time for all events listed in this document directly related to their roles. Directly related is defined as something within your position or a position that you supervise.

Additionally, we have created a Staff Training Attendance Policy. We have also outlined our August House Fellow Training time commitments. Both documents can be found on the [Student Employee Resources Sharepoint site](#).

Requests to miss any of the commitments must be submitted to your supervisor and will be reviewed by professional staff Leadership Team members. As part of your submission to miss an important date, you

may be required to submit documentation supporting your absence. Requests to be excused should be submitted at least one month ahead of time when possible, and **travel arrangements should not be made until approval is granted**. Approvals will be limited to life-changing events. All dates listed in the mandatory work dates document are subject to change pending campus or division changes, and updates will be provided to staff as soon as possible. In the event a student staff member misses a training session without consulting their supervisor or without approval, it may result in going through the Student Staff Discipline Process (SSDP).

Affordable Care Act (ACA) Hours

All student employees working longer than 89 consecutive days must average below 30 hours per week. Hourly Residence Life student staff positions vary in their weekly hourly time commitment, and the House Fellow position is a 20 hour per week job on average. Student staff are expected to track the number of hours they work each week to ensure that, combined with all other campus jobs, they are working less than 30 hours per week.

If you have additional questions about ACA expectations, please see this webpage:

<https://www.wisconsin.edu/ohrwd/aca/faq-ee/>

Employment and GPA Eligibility

Many Residence Life student staff positions come with eligibility requirements listed in the position description. If, at any time, a student staff member no longer meets these eligibility requirements, they may be separated from the position immediately. This separation may or may not relate to a concurrent Student Staff Discipline Process, depending on the circumstances. Examples of no longer meeting eligibility requirements include:

- No longer enrolled as a student.
- No longer in good standing with the University, such as being on disciplinary probation.
- Failure to abide by the University Residence Halls Contract, the Student Housing Handbook, and/or the University of Wisconsin System academic and non-academic policies and expectations.
- Not eligible to live in the Residence Halls (if the position requires the individual to live in, such as a House Fellow).
- Failure to maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 for House Fellows or cumulative GPA of 2.5 for Tutors in alignment with expectations set forth in the “GPA Requirement” section of this document.
- Working the minimum number of hours the position requires as posted in the position description.

As a student, it is imperative that you continue to progress academically while employed by Residence Life. House Fellows must have a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA and Tutors must have a minimum 2.5

cumulative GPA from UW-Madison at the time of application, job offer, at the end of the academic semester prior to employment, and throughout employment. GPA checks are completed at the end of the fall and spring semesters. Residence Life supervisors will make reasonable accommodations for staff to ensure they can succeed academically, such as considering academic schedules when scheduling meetings or negotiating deadline extensions when appropriate.

It is expected that student staff will maintain open communication with their supervisor regarding their academic progress, especially if there is a risk that their GPA will not meet the minimum GPA threshold or that they are at risk of being placed on academic probation.

Outside Time Commitments

Each position requires an engaged employee that meets their expectations so we can collectively serve our students. We know that you have a lot on your plate, and we encourage you to consider limiting your outside time commitments (other employment, clubs, etc.) so you can be successful in your role.

You should discuss your outside commitments (other employment, club involvement, etc.) with your supervisor at the beginning of each semester or when you add any new commitments so your supervisor can assist you planning on how to be successful in your position.

You are expected to meet all expectations outlined in your position regardless of your outside commitments.

FERPA & Student Confidentiality

Residence Life student staff are privy to private or confidential information. Due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and ethical obligations, student staff members are responsible for keeping information private/confidential, except for reporting to professional staff members. This means student staff members should not discuss private/confidential information with peers (unless this is necessary while serving on duty together), residents, or any individuals outside of University Housing, including family members of residents. If a student staff member feels that another student staff member should be informed about something pertaining to a resident, they should first consult a professional staff member. Additionally, student staff must adhere to all expectations regarding student confidentiality and reporting as it relates to mandatory reporting and being a Campus Security Authority (CSA).

Keys & KeyWatcher Expectations

Responsible key usage is integral to the safety and security of our residents, staff, property, and buildings. The Division of University Housing is committed to preserving the privacy and safety of our

residents. Staff should never unlock a resident room or staff apartment without the permission of the occupant, unless there is an emergency or at the request of the UW Police Department or Madison Fire Department. For all unusual situations, please consult a supervisor. Keys and electronic methods, especially those that serve as Master, Sub-Master and Sequence Key access, are a serious responsibility. Each staff member is responsible for following these departmental procedures in alignment with the Divisional Access Control Policy.

Student Staff must follow all Key & Access Shop Expectations as listed below:

- Each employee is assigned a university ID known as the Wiscard. This provides electronic access to assigned work unit spaces and should be used only for work-related purposes.
- Employees may receive a hard key to “take home”. These are meant for use to gain access to entry level spaces where necessary. They are meant to only be used by the employee they are assigned to.
- University Housing keys/card access are issued for the sole purpose of performing necessary work or services in UW-Madison residential facilities. All keys must be returned to University Housing when a staff member leaves the position.
- Keys should only be removed when needed.
- Staff must not make or help in making duplicates of any key or access card.
- Staff members are expected to receive authorization from Residence Life professional staff prior to keying into any student’s room. This does not apply to lockouts if a room owner is present. Staff members should never key into a student’s room alone – if the room owner is not present, the staff member should find another staff member to be present with them while keying into the room.
- *Master Keys & Duty Key Sets*
 - Master keys are for use by Residence Life staff conducting departmental directives/procedures. Appropriate times for use of a master key are lockouts, emergencies, vacancy/occupancy checks, and checkouts.
 - Return master keys **immediately** after use.
 - Some buildings utilize duty key sets. Duty key sets should be picked up at the beginning of a duty shift and returned at the end of the shift.
- *KeyWatcher*
 - Employees who need to utilize work keys to access various spaces in University Housing will be assigned a profile in KeyWatcher. The profile will have the associated keys that are appropriate for the staff member (or in some cases, a contractor) to use to complete their work. When employees retrieve their work set of keys to conduct their work, keys must always:
 - Be attached to the person who has checked them out, through use of a lanyard or other keyholder device that is appropriate for the work being performed
 - Be stored in their assigned locations (where you retrieved them) when not in use either during the day, or at the end of your shift
 - When employees retrieve their work set of keys to conduct their work, keys must never:

- Leave the university campus
 - Be transferred to another person for use
- Staff must make sure the system registers the key being returned before closing the door (push the key all the way in).
- Keys should be checked out/returned by the same person; they should not be checked out for another person's use, including other Residence Life staff. This means that a staff member should never use a key designated for another staff member.
- *Lost or Misplaced Keys*
 - Any keys and/or wiscards that are misplaced or lost must be reported to a supervisor **immediately**. Staff are financially responsible for the cost of keys
 - If a key is taken home, lost or missing, each employee is expected to follow these steps:
 - Notify supervisor **immediately** to inform them of the status of assigned key(s).
 - If supervisor can't be reached, then call the RLC on Duty to inform them.
 - If the key is *taken home*, the supervisor will need to determine:
 - Can the keys be returned back to their assigned location immediately
 - If not (for example, employee lives an hour away), where can the keys be secured overnight and returned the next day.
 - If the key is *lost or missing*, the employee, in addition to contacting their supervisor should attempt to locate lost or missing keys.
 - If it is confirmed that the keys can't be found and need to be replaced, the Housing Access Office needs to be notified within 24 hours of employee reporting the keys lost/missing.
 - If an employee's Wiscard is missing, they are highly encouraged to notify the Wiscard office to lock the usage of their card until it can be found or replaced.
 - Misplaced vs. Lost: Keys that have a known location but that are not currently in a key box or in someone's current physical possession are considered misplaced.

Failure to abide by these expectations can result in staff disciplinary action and financial charges if keys are replaced or locks must be re-cored.

Keys that are not returned to the KeyWatcher location are considered misplaced, even if the staff member knows where they are located.

Staff members with access to KeyWatcher may not use their access to perform a lockout for themselves. They must contact another staff member, who must follow all lockout procedures as they would for any other student.

Residence Life Shared Spaces & Resources

Student staff utilizing shared spaces and/or resources must agree to the following:

Shared Spaces

- I understand that shared spaces include resource rooms, Residence Life Offices, the Center for Cultural Enrichment, and storage rooms.
- I agree to keep shared spaces clean. If I use supplies, tables, or have trash, I agree to clean up after myself.
- I will ensure shared spaces are in good condition before leaving including:
 - Returning furniture to its original position.
 - Turning lights off if I am the last person to leave.
 - Locking doors and ensuring they are closed if I am the last person to leave.
- I agree to take trash outside to appropriate receptacles if I create excessive trash that cannot be reasonably contained within provided trash receptacles.
- I agree to abide by unit-specific expectations for shared spaces, such as refrigerator use.
- I agree to encourage others to keep shared spaces clean.
- I agree to only bring residents or other non-staff individuals into shared spaces for a Housing-related purpose, and to never leave residents unattended without a staff member. I also agree that I am responsible for the actions of residents/non-staff I bring into shared spaces.
- I agree to be mindful of those around me and the identities that people may hold when conducting conversations and my use of profanity and/or offensive language in the shared space.
- I understand that I may use shared spaces such as a Residence Life Office to study or work on an academic assignment, but that Housing-related work takes priority.

Resources

- I understand that 'resources' includes but is not limited to:
 - Equipment.
 - Technology equipment (including computers, printers, laminators, silhouette/cricket machines, etc).
 - Food and beverages.
 - Office supplies.
 - Craft supplies.
- I agree to keep resources in their designated location when they are not being used at an event or being stored in preparation for an event.
- I agree to use dry-erase boards and other writing surfaces appropriately, including erasing when I am done.
- I agree to use resources for housing-related events and activities only. This means I will not use resources for (including but not limited to):
 - Personal academic use (i.e. class assignments, projects, syllabi, slide decks).
 - Personal use.
 - Student organizations.
 - Other employment.

- o Other involvement.

Financial Responsibility

Residence Life Student Staff are expected to:

- Abide by all financial policies set forth by the UW Division of Business Services and University Housing Business Services.
- Follow all unit- or area-specific expectations regarding financial processes.
- Submit all appropriate documentation in a timely manner, including itemized receipts.
- Only use Dining debit cards (aka blue cards) with prior authorization for Housing purposes. Being granted permission once does not constitute permission in the future (i.e. approval for one event does not mean approval for all future events).
- Be honest and forthcoming when requesting and using funds.
- Use funds and supplies purchased with funds for Housing purposes only.
- Be responsible when suggesting items for purchase by seeking out low-cost options, checking inventories, and considering alternatives.

Communication

Social Media

The University has created some guidelines for social media use, which can be found here:

<https://universityrelations.wisc.edu/policies-and-guidelines/social-media/>.

University Housing Social Media:

Anyone creating posts or content, responding to questions and comments, or representing University Housing in a social platform (this includes posting from a Housing social account or responding from a personal social account if you are doing so in an official capacity) will need to review UW-Madison's social media policy and sign the University Housing Social Media Policy Agreement Form that they agree to abide by and follow these guidelines. You must consult with your supervisor to complete this process and submit the appropriate paperwork to Marketing prior to utilizing University Housing social media in these capacities.

Personal Social Media:

Residence Life professional staff will investigate concerns that are shared regarding potential violations of state or federal laws, university, UW System, or University Housing policies found on any social media platform. This includes (but is not limited to) common social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter), TikTok, YikYak, Reddit, and communication platforms such as GroupMe and Snapchat.

Social Media Philosophy

If you choose to connect with residents on social media, it is important to consider how the content you post might positively or negatively affect your ability to build community with residents or serve as a role model. If you choose to represent yourself as a University Housing employee in your personal social media account, you may be held responsible for any content posted that may not align with University Housing values.

Cell Phone Policy (House Fellows)

Some employees may be asked or directed to utilize university-funded cellular service/phones (i.e. duty phone). In these circumstances, employees must adhere to the following expectations:

- University-funded cellular service/phones (i.e. duty phones) should be used for University business only – personal use is prohibited.
- Employees in possession of university-funded cell phones are expected to protect the equipment from loss, damage, or theft.
- University-funded cell phones should be used in compliance with local, state, and federal laws and ordinances, especially in accordance with regulations around operating a moving vehicle.
- Do not use a university-funded cell phone for any work that is a violation of state or federal law, or university or housing policy.
- Consider whether texting or a phone call is the appropriate form of communication, especially if on duty – you may sometimes be asked to text specific information, but otherwise a phone call should be your first attempt at contact.
- Do not send insulting or discriminatory messages and/or content.
- Pictures should only be used for official documentation and should not be of individuals or personally-identifying information such as WisCards or government identification (i.e. driver's license, passport).

Employees may also choose or be asked to utilize their personal cell phones to conduct business on behalf of the department. University Housing is not responsible for loss or damage caused to personal cell phones, even when being used for business purposes.

Written Communication Policy

Residence Life student staff will regularly use their Wisc email for job functions, and some may have access to other communication platforms, such as Roompack. The following lists of dos & don'ts are not all-inclusive but serve as examples of how email and other written communication tools should be used and what should be avoided. Remember that you are working as a University Housing employee when you are engaging with certain email communication and with any University Housing software system. The information in an email and other written communication should be considered a record and is subject to state open records laws.

Do:

- Check your email regularly and respond to work-related messages within 24-48 business hours.
- Have basic awareness of cybersecurity and report any emails that seem suspicious. UW-Madison Information Technology has helpful resources to detecting spam emails, such as this: <https://it.wisc.edu/learn/learn-how-to-recognize-and-report-phishing/>
- Consider what is the most appropriate or best form of communication. If the subject of the transaction is sensitive or confidential, a phone call or a face-to-face discussion may prove to be a better option. You may sometimes be asked to follow up with an email afterwards.

Don't:

- Use your staff connections (such as your resident list, Housing professionals, Roomcompact information, coworkers, etc.) to send unauthorized marketing content or solicitation emails.
- Send insulting or discriminatory messages and/or content. Email and other written information should be considered a record and is subject to state open records laws.
- Conduct any work that violates state or federal law, or university or housing policy.

Student Staff Discipline Process

In order to provide a positive and effective working environment, it is essential that each staff member perform all of the expectations listed in their job description, departmental and divisional expectations and documents, unit/supervisory expectations and documents; in addition to abiding by all departmental, divisional, and university protocols, ethical standards, policies, etc. If a staff member does not fulfill the responsibilities of the position, the Student Staff Discipline Process (SSDP) will be used to address performance issues and behaviors conflicting with expectations, possibly resulting in termination. Full information on the process, the potential outcomes, and the work rules can be found [here](#).

University & Housing Policies

Student staff members must be in good standing with the University and University Housing at the time of application, hire, start of employment, and through the duration of employment. Non-academic misconduct records will be checked consistently throughout employment and all non-academic misconduct will be reviewed for employment consideration. Residence Life Student Staff should be aware of and comply with the policies listed below. If you are documented in an incident or police report, it is expected you will notify your supervisor promptly.

- UWS Code of Conduct
 - https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/17
 - https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/18
- Student Housing Handbook

- o <https://www.housing.wisc.edu/residence-halls/life/expectations/student-housing-handbook/>
- Sexual Harassment Policy
 - o <https://compliance.wisc.edu/documents/uw-madison-policy-on-sexual-harassment-and-sexual-violence/>
- Non-Discrimination Policy
 - o <https://compliance.wisc.edu/eo-complaint/>
- Consensual Relationship Policy
 - o <https://kb.wisc.edu/ohr/policies/page.php?id=53039>
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior
 - o [Hostile and Intimidating Behavior – UW–Madison \(wisc.edu\)](#)

Use of Alcohol & Other Drugs

Residence Life has high expectations for all student staff members including responsible and legal use of alcohol and drugs. Due to this student employment position, it is important for Residence Life student staff members to commit to the following expectations to serve as a role model and maintain credibility. Violation of any of the expectations listed below may result in student staff employee discipline including termination.

- Student staff will abstain from the consumption of alcohol and/or drugs prior to and/or during any university event/function where you might be (or if a reasonable person perceives them to be) in a position of responsibility, including university field trips and programs.
- Student staff 21 and over may responsibly have, possess, and/or consume alcohol when they are not working. Staff members are expected to use a “night away” if they find themselves under the influence of alcohol at a level that would compromise (legally or if a reasonable person perceives) their ability to lead, serve as a role model and/or carry out their positional duties (example: vacating the building safely for a fire alarm).
- Student staff are expected to comply with University and Departmental policies, as well as state and federal laws concerning the possession, consumption, and use of alcohol and/or other drugs.
- Student staff less than 21 years old may not illegally possess or consume alcohol; this applies to student staff members on and/or off campus.
- Student staff are expected to confront a fellow staff member’s illegal use of alcohol and/or drugs. The expectation is to follow a positional protocol and immediately report this behavior to a supervisor.
- Student staff should not attend events with residents from their community where alcohol and/or other drugs will be present on or off campus (i.e., bars, house parties, fests, tailgates, etc.).
- Student staff may not use illegal drugs and/or medication not prescribed to them.

- Student Staff may not possess, use, transfer, offer, and/or be under the influence of any intoxicating substance while fulfilling the position's duties. This prohibits using any alcohol or drugs prior to reporting to work, during breaks or meal periods, or in conjunction with any University, and/or Departmental activity.
- Student staff may not possess, use, transfer, offer, share, attempt to sell or obtain, manufacture, or be under the influence of any drug and/or similar substance and may not have any drugs of similar substances present in the body.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, rather serve as an outline for the legal use, possession, and/or consumption of alcohol and/or other drugs. It is expected that student staff are aware of and comply with all policies, Wisconsin state laws, and federal laws regarding the use of alcohol and other drugs. Failure to abide by these minimum standards may result in employee discipline, including termination.

House Fellow Specific Information

Housing Contract (House Fellows Only)

Since House Fellows are residents of University Housing, you are required to sign and abide by the Student Staff University Housing Contract.

Nights Away (House Fellows Only)

A night away is defined as a night in which a House Fellow does not return to their unit by 2:30AM, or a night in which a House Fellow is present in their unit but is unable to fulfill their job responsibilities. House Fellows must use a night away for either of these circumstances starting the day August training starts through the day the residence halls close, excluding break periods.

All House Fellows receive 15 nights away per semester. Nights away should be approved by a supervisor before use, except for extenuating circumstances. House Fellows should consult with their supervisor for unit-specific expectations regarding requesting a night away. Nights away are intended to provide some separation between work and life for House Fellows, and to give House Fellows some time away from their building.

Typical reasons a night away is not approved (this list is not exhaustive):

- To ensure a minimum of 50% of staff is in the building.
- If the night away conflicts with a date listed in the Mandatory Work Dates document and the request is denied.
- A House Fellow has already used their allotted nights away.

House Fellows are highly encouraged to use nights away consistently throughout the semester. Nights away can be taken consecutively; however, using more than 4 nights away in a row will result in a loss of pay for the 5th day and beyond, which will be reflected in their stipend pay for that pay period.

While all House Fellows are given 15 nights away each semester, we acknowledge that sometimes events happen that are out of our control, and which necessitate being off campus. Requests to exceed 15 nights away must be approved by your supervisor in consultation with an Assistant Director.

There are certain times of year that have specific expectations regarding nights away, which are listed below. Nights away must still be requested and approved during these periods. Exceptions to these expectations due to extenuating circumstances must be approved by your supervisor in consultation with an Assistant Director.

- **Training/Move-In Periods:**
 - House Fellows may use up to 2 nights away during August training, with a maximum of 1 night away per week of training.
 - House Fellows may use up to 1 night away during January training.
 - Note: nights away usage during training does not excuse a House Fellow from completing all training requirements & attending all sessions.
- **Break Periods (Fall, Spring)**
 - Specific times and dates when Residence Life student staff are released for breaks are indicated in the Mandatory Work Dates document. If a staff member wants to leave early or return late from a break period, they will need to request permission from their supervisor and use a night(s) away.
- **Finals Week/Closing Periods (December and May):**
 - House Fellows may use up to 2 nights away during finals week.
 - House Fellows may not use nights away to leave early during semester closing periods.

Compensation (House Fellows Only)

House Fellows will receive the stipend listed in their appointment letter.

- House Fellow Stipend (see on appointment letter).
- House Fellow Meal Plan.
- Single/Double room - House Fellows will be assigned to a specific staff room which is subject to change at any time based on Divisional needs. The Division of University Housing reserves the right to assign a non-staff member roommate if occupancy demands warrant it.

If a House Fellow leaves their position early, the date listed in a House Fellow's official resignation letter, leave of absence form, or other similar documentation will be used to determine the date that the meal plan will end and the final date of the House Fellow's stipend.

Duty (House Fellows Only)

Duty is a SERVICE for our residents! It is a time to develop relationships, serve as a resource, and support residents. During this time, we look to ensure our communities are safe and well maintained.

Duty Coverage, expectations and additional information can be found [here](#).

Closing Statement

Many of our policies and staff expectations have been outlined in this handbook, and we encourage you to contact your supervisor with any questions or concerns related to your job duties, expectations, and policies. The contents in this handbook should be used to guide all student employees to be successful within positions. By accepting your student staff role, you agree to abide by the policies and expectations in this document. **This handbook is subject to change, and student staff members will be notified of changes made.**