

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

### Peer Leader – School of Public Health and Health Systems

**Department:** Living-Learning Communities, Student Development, Housing and Residences in partnership with the School of Public Health and Health Systems

**Grade:** Casual staff

**Remuneration:**

- \$200 WatCard flex dollars/term for use within your role (meals with students, guests, programming)
- \$300 honorarium/term (paid at end of term by academic faculty)
- An opportunity to give back and contribute to both your school and the students beginning your program

### **PREAMBLE**

The primary aim of the Department of Housing and Residences is to provide students with a positive residence experience, conducive to successful academic study and personal development. We endeavour to foster residence communities that are safe, comfortable and that meet the needs of our diverse resident population.

### **LIVING-LEARNING COMMUNITY STAFF**

The Co-ordinators, Living-Learning Communities, are accountable for all Living-Learning communities in the residence facilities. The Co-ordinators (with the specific faculty members) are responsible for implementation of academic programming, mentorship, and academic support through the Living-Learning Community programs.

Peer Leaders' main responsibilities include providing learning opportunities that compliment in-class studies, establishing informal relationships between students and faculty, providing academic related programming, and advising students on how to have a positive, healthy and successful residence and university experience.

### **GOALS OF LIVING-LEARNING COMMUNITY**

The main objective of a Peer Leader is to build relationships with students and create an environment where students:

- Live and grow academically and socially with other first year

students in their program

- Connect with a Peer Leader – an upper-year student who shares their experiences and facilitates academic “check ins”
- Establish networks with faculty, staff, alumni, and upper-year students from their program and faculty
- Enhance in-class learning by participating in academically focused cluster events facilitated by Peer Leaders (i.e. learning more about academic/career options, ePortfolio workshops)
- Participate in academic and leadership opportunities within residence, their academic program and faculty, and the on-campus community

Peer Leaders accomplish this by:

- Developing one-on-one relationships with the students in their cluster
- Learning about academic programs, majors, and specializations within the Living-Learning cluster
- Working individually and as a team to plan and promote academically focused cluster programming for the Living-Learning clusters throughout the term, this includes bringing students out to faculty/student society run events
- Inviting faculty members, alumnus or other special guests to participate in academic programming

### **PEER LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES (MINIMUM STANDARDS)**

\* These standards reflect the basic components and expectations by which a Peer Leader will be held accountable.

#### **Connection with Students**

- Interact in person with each of your students on a weekly basis (including room visits, meals together, cluster programs, etc.).
- Attend the Don’s first community meeting of the term.
- Be able to recognize each member of your cluster by the end of the second week of classes.
- Get to know each student well enough to be able to recognize behaviour that is out of character, and so that they feel comfortable approaching you with questions or problems.
- Maintain your availability during busy periods of the term-including final exams.
- Be inclusive of all cultures and avoid favouritism and/or the perception of favouritism.
- Be approachable and accessible
- Be knowledgeable and up to date on academic support available both in residence and around campus and be able to refer your

students to these sources

- Be the first point of contact for academic support for your students – make an effort to understand their academic and professional needs

### Communications

- Regular (weekly) formal and informal communication with your students (meetings, newsletters, email updates, blog, room and lounge visits, drop-in hours, etc.). Communicate any important information from your faculty or from Living-Learning Programs (i.e. Tutoring in Residence).
- Respond to any and all communications from students and your Living-Learning Coordinator within one business day. Seek out individuals who have missed information meetings or for whom there is a specific concern.
- Facilitate a one-on-one meeting with each student in your cluster (two in the Fall term, one in all other terms) to discuss their Student Success Plan.
- Keep the Co-ordinator informed of programming efforts in your cluster.
- Attend any events, team meetings, in-service trainings, and monthly one-on-one's scheduled by the Coordinator
- Follow instructions and carry out duties as instructed by the Coordinator

### Academic Programming

- Each term bring your cluster out to 2-4 large faculty/student society run events as recommended by the faculty
- Organize one cluster program per month (three per term).
- Involve faculty members, alumnus or other special guests in academic programming
- Promptly submit or post programming documentation as directed by the Co-ordinator.
- Accurately document all programming expenses, remain within your programming budget, and submit all receipts and spreadsheets to the Co-ordinator at the end of the term.

### Working with a team

- When planning joint cluster events participate fully and contribute equitably to the workload for planning the program
- Attend, be punctual, and constructively participate in all program planning and team meetings.

- Never criticize a colleague, supervisor, faculty member, or policy in public. Discuss your concerns with the Living-Learning Co-ordinator.
- Be supportive of team members.
- Avoid any activity or behaviour that could cause you or other Peer Leaders to lose credibility.
- Follow-up on communications, important issues, and activities requested by teammates within 1 business day.
- Discourage gossip within your team and do not perpetuate it.
- Do not share any information regarding students or community issues with individuals outside of the living-learning team.

### Working with the Residence Life staff

- Maintain regular formal (emails, meetings) and informal (notes on their door, drop by visits, meals) communication with the Don(s) in your area.
- Communicate with the Dons on a regular basis to discuss programming ideas and student concerns, if applicable.
- Attend at least one community event organized by the Don(s) on your clusters' floor.
- Inform the Don(s) of when your cluster events are taking place and invite them to attend.
- Report any important information (concerns about a student, when a student violates residence policy) to the Don(s).
- Understand that the Don role and the Peer Leader role are two distinct roles which both help to support students. If you need clarification of the roles or encounter difficulties with the Don, discuss this with the Living-Learning Co-ordinator.
- Know the Residence Life Co-ordinator and Community Coordinator for your residence and how to contact them.
- Know what situations require referral and to whom to refer to.
- Know the role of the Front Desk Assistant in your residence, the resources available to you through Desk Services and how to obtain them

### Role Model Behaviour

- Abide by Waterloo Residences terms and conditions, faculty policies, and the policies of the University of Waterloo. Refrain from close friendships and romantic/sexual relationships with students in residence
- Be able to work with difficult people and situations, without public displays of conflict.
- Be proactive in challenging/addressing remarks, behaviour and "jokes" that are offensive and/or degrading to any individual.
- Use inclusive language at all times and teach students to do the same.

- Maintain professionalism online and be aware of any information posted in a public setting online (Facebook, Twitter, personal blogs, etc.).

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

The Selection Committee is looking to build a team of Peer Leaders with varied experience and talent.

The committee specifically looks for candidates with:

- Excellent communication skills
- Proven leadership ability
- Acceptable academic standing, as determined by the faculty
- Ability to work independently and as a member of a team
- Exercise good judgment
- Sincere desire to help others
- Familiarity with faculty, campus resources, service and academic opportunities

## **TIME REQUIREMENTS**

On average, 6-8 hours per week are required to fulfill Peer Leader responsibilities. Although each week will vary, a typical week consists of:

- 5-6 hrs/wk - Cluster Programs (formal and informal communication with students, planning)
- 1-2 hrs/wk - Administration (i.e. meetings, communication, evaluations)
- 1-2 hrs/month - Attending faculty/student society run events with your cluster

A commitment to the Peer Leader role as a principal extracurricular activity is required.

## **LIVING-LEARNING ORIENTATION**

Peer Leader attendance at Living-Learning Orientation is **mandatory**. Fall Orientation takes place during the second week of September, winter Orientation takes place in the first week of January. Peer Leaders appointed for both fall and winter terms (8-month contracts) must attend both Fall and Winter Living-Learning Orientations.

## **CONTRACT PERIOD**

- Commences at the beginning of the mandatory training program for the term for which he/she has been hired and concludes 24 hours after the final scheduled exam each term. Peer Leaders will be required to be available for the full period of his/her contract.

### Selection Process

A cover letter/resume and online application form for all applicants must be submitted. Successful candidates are invited to attend a personal interview. Final decisions will be made following the interview process.

Selected candidates must obtain a certified police check which concludes that no previous offenses have occurred.

Visit

[http://www.housing.uwaterloo.ca/live\\_learn/communities/peerleaders.html](http://www.housing.uwaterloo.ca/live_learn/communities/peerleaders.html) for more information about Living-Learning Communities and Peer Leader hiring timelines.

To apply, please complete the online application on the Housing and Residences website.

Please address any questions/concerns regarding your application, the application process, or the job description to the Coordinator, Desk Services and Living-Learning Administration, Melissa Geoffrey at [mgeoffrey@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mgeoffrey@uwaterloo.ca)