

Innis College
Residence Don Job Description 2017-2018

The role of the Residence Dons (“Dons”) at Innis College is diverse and comprehensive. Dons are expected to actively engage in forming and developing a mature residence community that is supportive of the academic goals of Innis College and the University of Toronto. Further, it is expected that the conduct and lifestyle of all Dons will serve as a role model for residents and the broader student population of Innis College and the University of Toronto. The Dons are responsible for advising and assisting residence students, for maintaining reasonable levels of conduct, helping to uphold safety and security, upholding positive community values, and for encouraging, developing and implementing activities, events and programs under the direction of the Office of Student Life.

General Duties and Responsibilities

In general, the Dons assist the Residence Life Coordinator (RLC) and the Office of Student Life in the overall administration of the Residence. The Residence Don reports directly to the Residence Life Coordinator (RLC), and is intensely involved in residence life. The Don agrees to fulfil a variety of duties that include but are not limited to:

- being familiar with and fulfilling the expectations set out in this position description;
- facilitating the transition of new students to residence, college and university life; attending residence and college orientation activities;
- supplying information on student life, residence and university facilities, and referral services including, but not limited to, medical, counselling and financial aid;
- maintaining regular, ongoing, contact with residents in their House and the residence through being visible, available, and approachable;
- encouraging an academic atmosphere, proper levels of quiet, and mutual respect and cooperation in residence to foster a positive learning environment in an inclusive community;
- responding to first aid emergencies and problems, assisting in emergency evacuations and responding to crisis situations as they arise;
- disseminating information about and encouraging participation in residence and college activities; initiating and supporting programs which help students to learn by being involved in all phases of residence life; encouraging residents to socialize and grow through the experience of community living;
- take responsibility for the development and implementation of the Personal Development Curriculum plans within an assigned House and support the Community Development Curriculums of the Innis Office of Student Life (under review);
- being familiar with, upholding and enforcing Residence and University policy and regulations;
- regularly reviewing the physical environment of suites and common areas in their house and reporting maintenance and security problems promptly to the Office of Student Life;
- participating in the development and operation of the government and judicial system of the residence and the college;
- assisting in administrative processes such as Residence Don Hiring and Residence Re-applications and others when requested by supervisor;
- maintaining residence records by utilizing the Residence Database (StarRez) including, but not limited to reports of dates and times of residence incidents and events
- carry out any other duties that may be assigned by the University from time to time.

Accountability and Responsibility

Residence Dons are directly supervised by the Residence Life Coordinator and work in conjunction with the Office of Student Life.

Each Don has specific responsibility for the administration and security of the House to which he or she is assigned and general responsibility throughout the Innis Residence. One Don will be delegated as a Transition & Support Don with specific responsibilities which may include but not are limited to: liaise with the RLC, Assistant Deans, the Dean, and Student & Residence Councils to ensure coordination of collective programming and curriculum implementation. Furthermore, the Transition & Support Don may be called upon to step into the role of a Don should the need arise, at the request of the RLC or the Dean.

It is required that all Dons act in a manner that respects students' confidentiality and demonstrates sensitivity to the complexity of the issues involved in residence living and residence administration. Prompt reporting of incidents and occurrences in the residence and direct, honest, timely feedback to residents and supervisors is also expected.

It is expected that each Don will:

- serve as "first contact" for information and assistance to the students in their House for those incidents which do not require the RLC to be involved, including (but not limited to): alarm clocks left on, noise complaints, enforcing house policy, etc.;
- deal first hand with House events and activities and with the day-to-day challenges of suite-style living;
- deal with various issues or conflicts that may arise in a House or a Suite;
- meet with the Don team each week to discuss House and Residence issues; keep the RLC informed of any occurrences and seek guidance and support from the RLC;
- involve the RLC, Assistant Deans or Dean at an early stage in issues that are beyond their own abilities and responsibilities;
- hold a minimum of one House Meeting each month;
- meet regularly with each resident and suite in both informal and formal capacities (e.g. suite contracts) and perform regular suite inspections in order to encourage neighbourliness and to ensure adequate cleaning and equitable sharing of suite chores (including all maintenance & housekeeping issues);
- be expected to interact with their House on a frequent and regular basis, attending the majority of House and Residence events, and to keep students informed of Residence, College and University events;
- attend Innis Residence Council (IRC) meetings in order to be apprised of events and issues of student governance;
- promote unity, spirit, cooperation and participation within their House;
- be expected to act as a role model for the students in the House and will uphold all aspects of the Innis Residence Occupancy Agreement and the University's Code of Conduct;
- be in good academic standing and be capable of balancing the time commitment of their role with their studies (it is expected that Dons will seek guidance and support from the RLC when needed);
- take the initiative and are responsible for the implementation of programming, and events as outlined in Residence Staff Training;
- manage a pre-determined budget for community development under the supervision of the RLC;

- support and assist Office of Student Life in implementing policy;

In addition to regular and on-going responsibilities, all Dons are required to be available for a rotating mandatory “on-call” duty. This system ensures that at least one Don is present in the building on any given weekday or weekend evening and helps to foster safety, and a positive sense of community. Students will continue to contact their own Don, as needed, and only contact the Residence Don On Call in the event of emergencies or when their own Don is unavailable. This system exists as a guaranteed support system and is not a replacement for the day-to-day availability of each Don in their respective Houses. Some On Call shifts may be longer than others, and weekday on call shifts require the Residence Don On Call to perform office hours. The Residence Don On Call is supported by a secondary-level emergency on call 24/7.

Availability

The role of the Residence Don requires a high level of availability to the Residents, generally and specifically at different times of the year. Availability falls under the areas of:

A. General Availability

The role of the Don demands a reasonably high level of availability in residence. Experience has shown that the prime time that the Dons are needed is approximately from 5:30p.m. until midnight and on weekends – this should be used *as a guide* to planning a Don’s time in residence. As well, Dons should be available for “Office Hours” within their suite, throughout the building, and in the office when they are on call. However, this should not detract from Dons’ general availability as they must be visible, available and approachable outside of these times. Time management and balance is an important issue and the Residence Life Coordinator will support Dons in these areas throughout the academic year.

Aside from academics, it is expected that all Dons will give first priority to the position. The responsibilities of being a Don must take precedence over all extra-curricular activities and other jobs.

Specifically (but not limited to) the Dons are NOT permitted to accept other employment, participate on a varsity athletic team, or agree to any other activity requiring a significant time commitment, without obtaining the prior written approval of the Residence Life Coordinator.

B. Training

Each Don is expected to be available for staff training at various times prior the beginning of the fall academic term in which they will be an active Don. The training period involves:

- training, mentoring and leadership sessions in the current academic winter term prior to leaving for the summer, including the study period prior to the start of exams
- successful completion of a First Aid Course
- approximately two weeks of staff training in August at the Innis Residence and the central University of Toronto’s Residence Staff Training (some evenings included and under review)
- two central In Service training days (October and January)
- any staff development or training sessions as requested or provided by the RLC

The August training sessions are mandatory and intensive and it is expected that all Dons give their full attention to training during these weeks. In particular, Dons should not plan on working and should limit personal commitments they may have during this time period (including weekends and evenings). Should any Don require any accommodations due to accessibility they should communicate this with the Residence Life Coordinator prior to the start of Residence Staff Training.

C. Administrative

All Dons are expected to be present in the residence throughout the term, including during holiday periods such as Reading Week. Dons must discuss any proposed absences (e.g. holidays) of more than two days and nights with the Residence Life Coordinator. Dons must arrange any overnight absences with neighbouring Dons so as not to leave the residence unsupported.

In order to support the administrative operations of the Residence, all Dons are expected to be available during the following time periods:

- Labour Day weekend to assist with general residence move-in;
- Orientation Week to assist in the acclimation of students to residence, college and university life as well as to assist in administrative processes associated with the beginning of the academic year;
- U of T Discovery Day – usually one Saturday in the fall;
- Until the closing of residence at the end of the first term exam period to facilitate room and suite inspections;
- During the move-out process in April/May to assist in facilitating room inspections and to carry out the evaluations for re-applying residents.

Success in the Role of the Don

The role of the Don demands a high degree of initiative and creativity. It is a position with immense opportunities for the Don's own growth and personal development, as the Don will gain experience and skills in roles of leadership, organization, conflict management, and counselling - among other skills. The Don's primary function is to offer direction and assistance to the residents and programming events & workshops to the broader Innis community.

Dons will undergo a Performance Evaluation process in late December/early January with the Residence Life Coordinator that includes a Self-Evaluation, RLC Evaluation, and reviewing feedback submitted by students through the winter survey.

Successful Dons are:

- interested in the role and are willing to learn to be more effective in it under the direction of the RLC;
- far enough along in their personal development that they seek to understand the role in order to communicate it to others, and thereby be able to aid others in their development;
- enthusiastic participants in the Residence and the College;
- visible, available, approachable, empathetic, professional, and tactful in the community;
- good listeners, tactful and able to communicate effectively with a wide variety of individuals and in various circumstances;
- open and comfortable with giving and receiving on-going feedback;
- sufficiently self-confident and mature that they are able to exert the influence of their person and role in situations where a resident's behaviour is open to question
- aware that they are imperfect – with a realistic assessment of their personal limitations; Dons will readily ask for help and support from the RLC and other available sources such as other Dons (when appropriate).