



RESIDENT STAFF HANDBOOK

GSSE 2021

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee

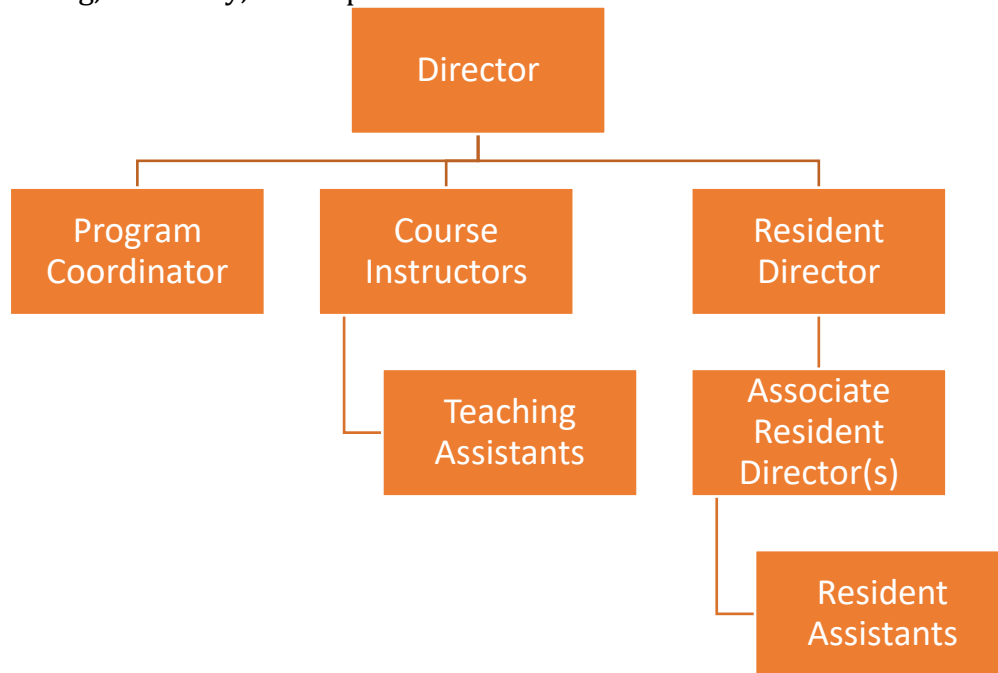
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Table of Contents

GSSE.....	2
The Role of the Resident Staff.....	2
Resident Director Responsibilities.....	2
RA Responsibilities.....	3
Salary and Benefits.....	4
Workload.....	4
Time-Off.....	4
Check-in/Emergency Duty.....	5
Evening Educational Activities.....	5
Objectives.....	5
Student Relations.....	5
Enforcement of Regulations.....	6
Security.....	6
Maintenance.....	6
Visitation.....	7
Alcohol/Drugs.....	7
Noise.....	7
Confrontation.....	8
Theft.....	9
Vandalism.....	9
Fighting.....	10
Firearms, Explosives, etc.....	10
Sexual Misconduct & Domestic Violence Policy.....	11
Introduction.....	11
Sexual Misconduct.....	11
Mandatory Reporters (MR).....	11
Student Behavior/Disciplinary Action.....	11
Disciplinary Action Protocol.....	12
GSSE Google Drive.....	12
Documentation.....	13

GSSE

Welcome to the Governor's School for the Sciences and Engineering (GSSE), an enrichment activity for outstanding students from Tennessee high schools who seek advanced study in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering. Students will be challenged to work independently, with appropriate guidance. Students accepted into this program are expected to display very high standards of scholarship, desire for learning, reliability, and deportment.



The Role of the Resident Staff

Resident Staff include the Resident Director (RD), Associate Resident Director(s) (ARDs), and Resident Assistants (RAs). They will report for duty on the Thursday before the students arrive on Sunday, and will remain in residence through the afternoon of closing day. They will go through training in the first 3 days (training schedule to be announced). GSSE provides students with a stimulating academic experience and a full range of residential and extracurricular activities.

Resident Director Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the RD and ARDs include:

- Be involved in the planning of GSSE student activities, recruitment, selection, and training of RAs.
- Together with the Director of GSSE, the RD and ARDs act as the official and present day-to-day authorities of GSSE, including supervision of RAs, determination and assignment of their duties, and conflict resolution.
- Be active in leading frequent meetings among the Director of GSSE and RA staff.

- The RD and/or ARDs must attend and supervise in-person and/or virtual field trips or excursions off-campus, especially weekend trips. Clear modes of contact must be established prior to each trip.
- The RD and/or ARDs must supervise in-person and/or virtual Department Open Houses and Laboratory Tours. Clear modes of contact must be established prior to each event.
- Have extensive communication with the rest of GSSE staff (instructors, TAs, administrative staff).
- Establish boundaries for students in consultation with the Director.
- Maintain detailed records electronically (google drive, Facebook page, etc.).

RA Responsibilities

Each RA will be responsible for supervising the residential life of 10-12 students, and should be able to relate to the academic and creative life of the Governor's School community. The priorities of the resident staff are the health and welfare of the students and the fostering of community within the group. Many of these responsibilities would be carried out for a virtual program if necessary, while many are in-person program specific. Specific duties follow:

- Explain, support, and enforce the rules and regulations of GSSE.
- Supervise the students in dormitory if an in-person program.
- If an RA holds a valid driver's license, they are responsible for assisting with travel for GSSE students.
- Participate actively in planning and carrying out student orientation.
- Meet frequently with the students for whom you have direct responsibility to review general problems and responsibilities of group living and deal with specific problems.
- Develop and maintain an ongoing relationship with students, initiating contacts, and stimulating conversations. In order to foster these relationships, each RA should attend the equivalent of at least two classes a week with the students.
- RAs are responsible for fostering weekly events that build community among their students, such as ice-breaking events, outings, group dinners, tours of campus, outreach opportunities, virtual chats and games, etc. Out – of – bounds excursions need to be cleared with the RD or ARDs.
- RAs must be able to drive university mini-vans and 12-passenger vans for extra-curricular activities, including religious services on Sundays, therefore each RA must have a valid driver's license and proof of automobile insurance.
- Coordinate move-in and move-out of students at the beginning and end of school.
- RAs must be fully and readily committed to serving the students, supervising student behavior, ensuring the wellbeing of the students and staff, attending administrative meetings, and respectfully cooperating with rest of GSSE staff.
- RAs are expected to serve two duty nights a week as scheduled by the RD and ARD. Duties include check-in duty and on-call medical emergency.

By accepting the position as an RA, you understand that ***this is a 24/7 job and hours are unconventional***. Responsibilities include conducting floor meetings with your students, working with students in evening/weekend events, as directed by the RD and ARDs, etc. Although this is a job that requires a lot of responsibility and leadership, rest assured that this will be a very enjoyable and rewarding summer.

Salary and Benefits

GSEE will pay for your room and board during the school (June). Additionally, you will receive a salary which will be distributed either biweekly or monthly. Ultimately, payment distribution will depend on your status of employment with the University of Tennessee. For instance, if you actively work in a lab on campus and are on a bi-weekly pay status, then your GSSE salary will be distributed in equal dividends among the second week of June and the last week of June.

The total compensation for Resident Assistants is:

- \$1,800 if the program is in-person (4-week program)
- \$2,500 if the program is virtual (6-week program)

Workload

Many RAs are engaged on campus during GSSE through summer school, research, standardized testing studying, TA duty, etc., during the day. GSSE supports all of your individual endeavors; however, please be committed to GSSE responsibilities and be readily accessible and available. When on duty or in the presence of students, Resident Staff should have no visitors. A specific duty time is not the only time when you are needed. We need Resident Staff to be available (and accessible by cell phone) for any supply trips, emergency transports, food set-up, etc. There are also various committee responsibilities (recreational, social), team activities, plenary activities, and supervision of students on trips, lab tours, etc.

Be on duty at the time and place assigned. If you need to change your shift, swap with someone not on the shift with you. RAs should notify the RD or ARDs, so the change will be made on the master list. Keep the changes to a minimum, please! Each RA will be the first responder to any issues in the rooms for which he/she is responsible and should notify the RD or ARDs in case of emergency.

Time-Off

Resident Staff are allowed one day off-duty per week. You must notify the RD or ARD to receive approval as soon as possible. Your time-off may be declined, if too many RAs, or the RD and ARDs, are simultaneously off-duty. Thus, it is imperative for you to request time-off well in advance to ensure you receive your well-deserved break. The request of a 24-hour time-off period (allowed once per week) must be made at least 24 hours in advance. The request of a 48-hour time-off period (allowed once during the first three weeks of the school), the request must be made

at least 48 hours in advance. Take the time off to refuel, rest, relax and come back refreshed. Remember, you are “on duty” 24/7 except for your days off. No more than two RAs will be granted time-off during the same time period.

Special circumstances and emergencies will be considered if you must be excused from your duties. Please contact the RD or ARDs to submit your extended time-off request as soon as possible.

Check-in/Emergency Duty

Two RAs will be assigned to dorm check-in duty every night. Check-in on weekdays (Sun. - Thu.) is in the dorm lobby 9:00PM - 10:00PM. Check-in on weekends (Fri. - Sat.) is in the dorm lobby 10:00PM - 11:00PM. In addition, there will be in-room check-ins by 11:00PM on weekdays and 12:00AM on weekends. Those on duty are responsible for maintaining the GSSE student roster and updating the GSSE schedule board.

- Students will be given a warning for their first offense if they check-in five (5) minutes late. If a student checks-in five (5) minutes late on three occasions, then the student receives a demerit point and is referred to the RD or ARDs. If a student checks-in fifteen (15) minutes late, the student receives a demerit point without warning and is referred to the RD or ARDs. Please keep records of your actions (including justification) on the electronic forum, as directed by the RD or ARDs.
- If students are missing fifteen (15) minutes past check-in, notify the RD, ARDs, and the student’s assigned RA. This allows them to check rooms, call the student, etc.
- The aforementioned disciplinary protocol applies to both in-dorm and in-room check-in.

The two RAs on check-in duty (together with the RD and/or ARDs) are also on emergency duty in case of a student injury or illness.

Evening Educational Activities

Resident Staff are expected to attend all evening educational activities (lectures, lab tours, department open houses, etc.), unless excused by the RD or ARDs. This is to promote student engagement and respect to our guest lecturers and other faculty and staff who have devoted time to assist in evening enrichment activities.

Objectives

Student Relations

Your first objective is to become familiar with the students participating in the GSSE program, particularly those students under your direct supervision. Of utmost priority for the Resident Staff is a concern for the health and welfare of the students

and the fostering of community within the group. You will also want to develop a sense of community with fellow staff members. This is where you can get your best moral support.

Students often just need someone to listen in a way that shows caring, concern, and genuine interest. You should be able to be that person for any GSSE student, regardless of whether or not they reside on your floor. If you encounter a student with needs beyond your ability to help, convey the information to the RD or ARDs or the Director of GSSE. You should be available for discussions and be a resource person, a storehouse of “where to go for what” information. Helping can occur in a brief encounter in the hall if you have listened to a student express a need, a concern, or a complaint. Be sensitive to the needs and feelings of our students. In this sense, you are “on duty” 24/7.

Enforcement of Regulations

GSSE Rules and Regulations contains a list of general rules and regulations by which each student should abide. Enforcing these regulations is an essential part of your job. A copy of these rules is printed at the end of this handbook. All GSSE students and staff have a right to expect a proper atmosphere in which to live, sleep, and study. You will remind students of these regulations when necessary. If requests for cooperation are met with resistance, confrontations and/or violence, you are to refer that matter immediately to the RD, ARDs, or Director of GSSE. While it is your responsibility to maintain order, you are not expected to administer or threaten punishment beyond the referral stage. You are expected to maintain a pleasant attitude and exhibit proper diplomacy at all times. If you have reason to expect serious violations (drugs and/or alcohol or safety violations), you are authorized to enter a student’s room with or without permission. However, you should initiate a search of the area alone; call for assistance from the RD, ARD, or another RA.

Security

Security is everyone’s business, but you are responsible for the formal measures necessary to make the building as secure as possible against theft, vandalism, fire and personal attack. Each Resident Staff member must be thoroughly familiar with all entrances, locks, door alarms, fire alarms, stairways and special security measures. Your familiarity with these systems should be such that their operation is automatic, so that under the stress of an emergency you can perform the necessary duties.

Maintenance

You should not do the repair work in the halls. You must report the needed repair work to the housing staff before it can be done. Students should inform you of maintenance problems in their rooms.

Visitation

There is no cross-gender visitation allowed on dormitory floors or in rooms.

What to do if you encounter someone violating the visitation policy:

- Explain that the students are in violation of the visitation regulation.
- Get the names of the people involved.
- Escort the visitor out of the room and off the floor.
- Notify the RD or ARDs.

Alcohol/Drugs

The use and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or other drugs on UT property is prohibited. If you choose to drink alcohol or use drugs in the halls, if you drink and are underage, or if your job performance is diminished because you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs (whether consumed/used on UT property or not), you **WILL BE TERMINATED FROM YOUR POSITION.**

IN REGARD TO THIS POLICY -- If you find or suspect someone with alcohol or drugs:

- Identify yourself.
- Inform the person of UT Policy and the law, if minors are involved, and of the fact that by coming to the University of Tennessee, they agreed to abide by these policies.
- Have the person dispose of the alcohol or confiscate it (depending on the quantity and situation). The Resident Staff member will dispose of small quantities on the scene in the presence of the student. (Strongly encourage the student to pour it out).
- If you confiscate the alcohol, immediately contact the RD or ARD, who will call the Director of GSSE.

Helpful hints:

- If you are aware of or suspect the presence of alcohol or drugs, take action immediately. If possible, contact another RA to serve as a witness.
- Never say to students: "If I don't know about it, or if I don't see it, then it's okay."
- Remember: You have the authority to enter any student's dorm room with or without permission. Knock on the door and inform the student(s) that you are entering, then proceed. Entry into rooms **MUST** be gender appropriate.
- Remember: If you drink alcohol in the dorm, you will lose your position. If you allow students to drink alcohol, you will lose your position.

Noise

Disturbing other students, or staff by rowdy, boisterous, or disorderly behavior is not allowed in the residence hall. While stereos and other sound-producing, equipment are allowed in the hall, such equipment must not be audible outside of the students' rooms.

IN REGARD TO THIS POLICY

- If a student has a complaint about noise, be sure you know where the noise is originating. Knock on the door and identify yourself. Request the occupant to turn down the stereo, lower voices, or whatever is necessary to reduce the noise level. If the room door had been open, close it as you leave, explaining that this will reduce the noise in the hall. Diplomacy and a pleasant approach are essential in handling this touchy situation.
- If the noise from the same room or student persists, notify the RD or ARD who will contact the student to discuss the matter. They should inform the offender that further violations could result in more severe discipline.
- **Remember: Make sure your behavior does not create or contribute to an incident.**

Confrontation

A confrontation occurs any time a student or nonstudent becomes physically or verbally abusive to a staff member. A confrontation also occurs at any point when a person refuses to comply with a staff member's request that directly relates to his or her job.

When a confrontation occurs:

- Make sure you have identified yourself as a GSSE staff member. Evaluate the situation to determine your next step. In situations where more than one person is involved, solicit additional support from other staff members.
- If you decide the person is being abusive, do not pursue the original problem. Instead, attempt to de-escalate the immediate situation.
- Ask for the student's name and I.D.
- Report this incident to the RD or ARDs as soon as possible. Post a report of the incident on google drive.
- Do not add fuel to the fire! Remain calm and rational. A toe-to-toe shouting match in the hall can accomplish nothing.
- If possible, approach discipline problems one-on-one in the privacy of a room. This allows each person involved to be more flexible in discussion. This will help avoid getting to the point of a confrontation.
- If a person becomes overly aggressive or violent, call Police Services (4-3114) and the Director of GSSE.

Student Confrontation Policy:

- When a student infringes upon the rights of another individual or the community, the person(s) whose rights were violated should first confront him. However, some students will not take this step themselves. Support students by going with them to confront problems on the floor, if necessary.
- If, after confronting the inappropriate behavior of another individual, that individual does not attempt to alter his/her behavior, the injured student should

take steps to visit with a RA, the RD, or ARDs, and work out alternatives. This is a very difficult step for some individuals to take. Know when to step in and resolve problems that need resolving. This will help support the students and your role as Resident Staff.

- If you have any questions about confrontations, see the RD, ARDs, or the Director of GSSE.

Theft

Thefts can be a serious problem in any residence hall setting. While loss of property is a serious problem in and of itself, a bigger problem is often the dissension and accusations that occur on floors where thefts have happened.

IN REGARD TO THIS POLICY

- Encourage students to lock their doors when the room is empty. Place signs around the halls reminding students to lock their doors and check for unlocked doors.
- Discourage students from keeping large sums of money and jewelry in their room. If they must have these things, ask them to store them out of sight and not to talk about the fact to anyone else.
- If thefts do occur, document them and notify Police Services and the Director of GSSE. Be sure to keep an accurate record of what was lost, when and by whom. This will help identify the items, if the thief were to be caught. Call Police Services (4-3114) and have them complete a theft report.
- Keep your eyes and ears open. Be aware of strangers who are walking around on your floor and in the building - do not be afraid of asking them why they are there. Only people associated with GSSE should be in the residence hall.
- Be aware of suspicious people in the parking lot.

Vandalism

This problem is usually found after the fact. When you find an area or object vandalized, post an incident report on google drive, giving as much information as possible, and notify the RD or ARD.

IN REGARD TO THIS POLICY – If you find someone in the act of destroying property:

- Stop them, if possible, but do not place yourself in danger.
- If it is not possible to stop the vandalism, identify the person and call Police Services (4-3114).
- Notify the RD or ARDs who will immediately contact the Director of GSSE.
- The students staying in the vandalized area may know who caused the damage. Talk with your students to develop an atmosphere of shared responsibility so they will want you to know who was responsible.
- Remind people that vandalism not only causes them a great inconvenience, but “costs money.” Vandalism is a serious problem.

Fighting

Fighting is not allowed or tolerated. The Resident Staff must take action swiftly and carefully to prevent any injury to individuals, or damage to the building.

IN REGARD TO THIS POLICY

- Evaluate the situation and then take action as needed. Post an incident report on google drive on the occurrence no matter how slight or severe you deem the problem to be, and notify the RD or ARDs.
- Do not put yourself in a position to get hurt. Call for assistance, if needed, from fellow staff members or Police Services (4-3114).
- If you feel the situation is too volatile for staff to handle, call Police Services (4-3114) immediately.
- Follow up with the people involved the next day after things have cooled down. Find out what happened and try to put an end to any further trouble.

Firearms, Explosives, etc.

All firearms, explosives, firecrackers, bottle rockets, smoke bombs and related paraphernalia are strictly prohibited. This includes BB guns, air guns, stun guns, knives and any other type of weapon.

IN REGARD TO THIS POLICY

- This policy is in effect for the obvious reasons of health and safety of all students.
- Besides common sense and concern for health and safety, individuals must be aware of the potential for psychological panic when these dangerous items are in evidence.
- Evaluate the situation and then take action as needed.
- Do not put yourself in a position to get hurt. Call for assistance, if needed, from fellow staff members or Police Services (4-3114).
- If you believe the situation is too dangerous for staff to handle, call Police Services (4-3114).
- The item(s) involved need to be confiscated. If firearms or other weapons are present, contact Police Services (4-3114) immediately.
- Turn the item(s) over to Police Services immediately. Be sure to get a receipt of confiscated goods.
- Post a full report on google drive and notify the RD, ARDs, and Director of GSSE immediately.

Sexual Misconduct & Domestic Violence Policy

Introduction

Title IX of the Education Amendments (1972) prohibits any form of sex discrimination and protects people from discrimination based on sex in educational programs or activities which receive Federal funding. Students are strongly encouraged to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the appropriate campus officials and/or University Police (4-3114). Under the law all Universities must designate a Title IX Coordinator. The University of Tennessee Title IX Coordinator is Jennifer Richter. The Title IX Coordinator serves as a point of contact for any student who wishes to discuss a concern, and is based in the Office of Equity and Diversity, 1840 Melrose Avenue (phone 865-974-2498; email jrichter@utk.edu) – visit <http://sexualassault.utk.edu/title-ix-coordinators/> for more information. By law, once notified and a reasonable University connection is established, the University must act.

Sexual Misconduct

Sexual Misconduct is defined as dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault. It may also include actions which constitute sexual harassment. All of these matters constitute a violation of UT sexual misconduct policy (<http://sexualassault.utk.edu/university-policy-procedures/>).

Mandatory Reporters (MR)

A University employee who has the authority to redress sexual misconduct, has the duty to report incidents of sexual misconduct, or who a student could reasonably believe has this authority or duty is charged with mandatory reporting. For more information, please read: <http://finadmin.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2013/05/Enclosure-for-Memorandum-to-Program-Directors-re-Mandatory-Reporting-Law-4831-0358-9907.pdf>

Student Behavior/Disciplinary Action

It is important for all RAs to discipline equally and fairly. This is to promote a unified RA community and authority to instill respect in the students. It is important to recognize that you will be interacting with high school students for the entire month and to be readily aware of typical high school behavior. However, these students must be addressed and be confident that other Resident Staff members will support you.

Please check and update the GSSE Google Drive for any disciplinary action taken on students and the resulting consequences. In addition, disciplinary protocol can be found in the Google Drive. RAs should consult with the RD and ARDs regularly regarding disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Action Protocol

Demerits

- ✓ 1 demerit: The student is referred to the RD/ARDs who decide on appropriate disciplinary action (e.g., student is suspended from all excursions about the UT campus unless going to and from class or accompanied by an RA).
- ✓ 2 demerits: The RD and Director of GSSE discuss appropriate disciplinary action. Student's parents/guardians are called. Student may face expulsion from GSSE at the discretion of the Director of GSSE.

1 Demerit Offenses

- student leaves or is not within the boundaries of the UTK campus established by the Resident Staff.
- student is disrespectful to a GSSE staff/faculty member or an invited guest;
- student is found in an area specifically designated for the opposite gender (floors, rooms, etc.).
- student un/intentionally misses class and/or mandatory event without previously notifying an RA with a *legitimate* excuse, such as illness.
- student is late to class and/or mandatory event **more than once**.
- student is late to or fails to check in at the designated check in time:
 - student is allowed a 5 minute grace period where the student may check in late and face no immediate consequence. If, however, the student arrives during this grace period more than three times for the duration of the GSSE term, on the fourth offense and all subsequent offenses the student receives a demerit. If the student arrives to check in after 15 minutes, the student receives a demerit.

2 Demerit Offenses

- Student mentally or physically abuses/harms another student.
- Student engages in inappropriate sexual contact (sex, fondling, make-out, etc.) with the opposite or same gender.
- Student engages in underage drinking and/or illicit substance abuse.

It should also be noted that the consequences herein aforementioned are concrete, with only exceptions being made when consequences are left to an RA's discretion and/or the RD/ARDs deems appropriate.

GSSE Google Drive

The GSSE google drive is the electronic depository for all documents and records pertaining to the day-to-day activities of GSSE, including organization of events, assignments of duties, disciplinary actions, etc. It facilitates communication between Resident Staff members, including others (Director of GSSE, etc.). It is maintained by the RD and ARDs. Resident Staff should be thorough in their reports and include all

details needed, so that accurate and complete records are maintained for all activities.

Documentation

An incident report is just that, a report of an incident. It is not a discipline sanction or a warning.

WHAT TO NOTE (IN FIRST PERSON):

Who: Please, be specific in getting correct names and spellings.

What: Describe the situation, the policy in question, and the essence of conversation. Documentation of positive behavior, achievements and personal concerns is as important as documentation of discipline concerns. Be sure to note any one-on-one conversations that were initiated by you or one of your students.

When: State the time, day, and date; and be specific because the event you document may correlate with another concurrent activity being reviewed by Police Services.

Where: Specify the exact location of the event.

Why: State the reason behind the incident as you see it.

A discipline case can only be valid if the documentation is accurate and complete.

All documentation - at whatever step of the discipline process should aim to:

Clarify the student's status in relation to said violation.

Be objective, clear and concise. You are not writing an editorial!

Remember: if it is not documented, it did not happen.

File: The incident report should be posted on the google drive, and the RD, ARD, and Director of GSSE must be notified.