



PARENT AND FAMILIES GUIDE

Your student will be advised by a professional academic adviser in the College of Health and Human Development’s (HHD) Center for Student Advising and Engagement during their first year at Penn State.

We’re partners in caring about your student. College is a time for your student to launch into independence, but parents and families remain a big part of students’ support networks. As we work with your student this first year, to foster personal and professional growth, we also want to offer insight on what your student is managing at school so you can know how best to help.

Mission of Advising in HHD

Our mission is to provide safe spaces for students to explore academic strengths and goals. This mission includes guiding students to develop practices for achieving academic success, teaching students to utilize the full range of university resources and encouraging students to engage in academic and co-curricular communities. By collaborating with students to build relationships honoring students’ unique stories, advisers empower students to take ownership of their educational experience and to embrace civic responsibility.

The Advising Relationship—Parent and Adviser Expectations

Expectations of Adviser	Expectations of Parent
Advocate for students’ success and development by serving as a liaison with campus resources, faculty and staff and then teach students how to advocate for themselves	Advocate for your student if they are not able to themselves
Empower students to create a plan that will help them explore and determine their academic goals	Allow your student to take ownership of their academic plan and performance
Collaborate with students to generate solutions to challenges	Help your student discover their own voice and express their needs to their adviser
Respond to students within two working days upon receipt of an email from their Penn State account	Encourage your student to meet with their adviser at least once a semester and more as needed
Participate in professional development to keep informed and current	Help your students understand that they are responsible for their decisions and actions (or inactions) that affect their educational progress and goals
Adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)	Adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

When should your student talk to their adviser about...?

Topic	Ideal Timeline
Taking a Leave of Absence or Withdrawing from the university	<i>As soon as possible</i>
Academic difficulties or late course drops	<i>As soon as possible</i>
Exploring majors or change of major interest, minor interests	<i>Before scheduling for a future semester</i>
Courses to schedule for a future semester	<i>Early-Mid-semester before their registration date</i>
Internship, job shadowing, field experience, study abroad	<i>By the end of their first semester or beginning of their second semester</i>

Advising Agenda: Fall Semester 2020

Week	Activity	Deadline*
1	For questions on last minute course adjustments, students may come to the advising center to make sure their courses are fulfilling degree requirements.	August 29 (11:59 pm) Regular Drop Deadline, August 30 (11:59 pm) Regular Add Deadline
2-12	Students should make an appointment with their adviser to discuss academic goals, explore majors and courses for spring semester. They should schedule early, appointment times fill close to registration. They need to run a What-If Report to view their degree audit in LionPATH and look at the Suggested Academic Plan in the Undergraduate Bulletin. Students need to come to the meeting with some suggestions of courses they'd like to take.	Typically early November, find enrollment date for spring semester on the LionPATH home page.
6-8	Students should review their final exam schedule in LionPATH to determine their exam dates and times. If they have more than two exams scheduled for the same date, they should go to LionPATH and complete an Overload Conflict Exam Request Form.	September 28- October 18 Final Exam Conflict Filing Period
12	Meeting with an adviser before dropping a course is important to make sure your student is not falling below full-time status and that they are meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress for financial aid. After the Late Drop Deadline they will not be able to drop a course.	November 13 (11:59 pm) Late Drop Deadline
16	Students should meet with an adviser before withdrawing from all of their courses for the semester.	December 11 (5:00 pm) Withdrawal Deadline

Advising Agenda: Spring Semester 2021

Week	Activity	Deadline*
1	For questions on last minute course adjustments, students may come to the advising center to make sure their courses are fulfilling degree requirements.	January 16 (11:59 pm) Regular Drop Deadline, January 17 (11:59 pm) Regular Add Deadline
2-4 and beyond	If students are considering summer courses, internships or jobs that further their academic goals, they can meet with their academic adviser.	Summer enrollment opens the first week of February for everyone. See the LionPATH home page for date.
2-12	Students should make an appointment with their adviser to discuss academic goals, explore majors and courses for spring semester. They should schedule early, appointment times fill close to registration. They need to run a What-If Report to view their degree audit in LionPATH and look at the Suggested Academic Plan in the Undergraduate Bulletin. Students need to come to the meeting with some suggestions of courses they'd like to take.	Typically mid-April, find enrollment dates for each semester on the LionPATH home page.
6-8	Students should review their final exam schedule in LionPATH to determine their exam dates and times. If they have more than two exams scheduled for the same date, they should go to LionPATH and complete an Overload Conflict Exam Request Form.	February 15- March 7 Final Exam Conflict Filing Period
13	Meeting with an adviser before dropping a course is important to make sure your student is not falling below full-time status and that they are meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress for financial aid. After the Late Drop Deadline they will not be able to drop a course.	April 9 (11:59 pm) Late Drop Deadline
16	Students should meet with an adviser before withdrawing from all of their courses for the semester.	April 30 (5:00 pm) Withdrawal Deadline
18 and beyond	If your student has completed more than 29 credits with a GPA of 2.00 and has met Entrance-to-Major Requirements for their intended major...and...they have decided on the major they want to pursue, then they are ready to declare their major on LionPATH through the Update Academics function.	

*Keep track of deadlines: Select Academic Calendars at registrar.psu.edu.

What to expect during their first semester

Post NSO

Course availability during NSO can be limited. Students may not get the exact schedule they want, but advisers will work with them to ensure they have everything they need and that the courses they have scheduled are fulfilling graduation requirements. Students may change their schedule after NSO, if they choose. They will receive information on changing their schedule in a welcome email that will be sent by their adviser after NSO. If they do change their schedules, or if they have any other questions, encourage them to reach out to their academic adviser. Also encourage your student to spend some time on the After NSO website exploring Penn State specific systems and resources.

Homesickness

College is a huge transition and it's completely normal for students to feel uneasy or overwhelmed while they adjust. In the first couple weeks of the semester, remind your student that this discomfort is to be expected. Encourage them to take small steps each day, get out of the dorms and around people, and be open to new and different experiences. Homesickness usually subsides by the end of the first semester. If it does not seem to be getting better, recommend your student talk to their adviser and/or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at Penn State.

Getting Involved

Students should start to build their support system at Penn State in their first semester. Suggest students get to know their adviser, professors, teaching and learning assistants and fellow students. Reinforce starting out with one or two student organizations or clubs in the fall so their schedule is not overwhelmed. Students can always add or take away student activities later. Encourage your student to get involved in an organization in their intended major.

Study Strategies

Getting good grades in college is probably going to be more difficult for your student than it was in high school. Students should plan 2 hours of study time for every hour they're in class. This means they should plan about 6 hours of study time, per week, for each 3 credit course. Suggest studying for their classes every day and study for understanding and application, instead of cramming before an exam or studying strictly for memorization. Students should know material well enough to teach it to another person. Encourage them to find a study partner or study group. Students struggling in a course should first meet with their professor and/or TA and then seek out tutoring services, if available.

Housing

Students typically start looking for housing for the following year in October. This can be stressful at this point, students are still establishing their friend groups and tend to feel unsure about who they want to live with the following year. Encourage them to trust their instincts and make the best decision they can with the information they have.

Scheduling

Students will schedule in early November for the spring semester. Students should make an appointment with their adviser prior to their enrollment date to discuss course options. Encourage them to schedule their appointment early in the semester while there are still plenty of appointment times. During that first appointment their adviser will talk about their transition to college as well as go over the requirements for their intended major, how to run and read a degree audit, show them the Suggested Academic Plan and go over any other questions they may have. Unlike their first scheduling experience at NSO, students will schedule on their own in LionPATH for all subsequent semesters. While it's fine for them to talk to other students about course selections, remind your student that this should not take the place of a meeting with their academic adviser.

Resources

	Description	URL
Office of the Bursar	This office is your contact for all billing, payment, or refund questions	bursar.psu.edu
Office of Student Aid	Contact this office for information and questions about financial aid, such as grants, loans, work-study programs or scholarships	studentaid.psu.edu
University Registrar	Produces and maintains official academic records from registration to graduation.	registrar.psu.edu
Parents' Rights Relating to Educational Records	Parent legal access to student records	registrar.psu.edu/confidentiality/parent_rights.cfm
Parent and Family Portal	Regular communications with parents and families about resources, the student experience, and how families can be involved	psu.campusesp.com
Financial and Life Skills Center	This office aims to provide students with the tools to manage financial resources effectively for a lifetime or financial well-being. They offer workshops, webinars, self-study modules, and personal one-on-one meetings with students	financialliteracy.psu.edu
Student Disability Resources	Responsible for coordinating support services, reasonable academic accommodations, and promoting disability awareness in the university community	equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources
Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)	Provides group and individual counseling, crisis intervention, and psychological and psychiatric evaluations for students as well as prevention and consultation services for the University community	studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling
Penn State Crisis Line	This line can be used for consultation if you know your student is experiencing a crisis. Call 24/7 877-229-6400 Text 24/7 "LIONS" to 741741	studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/crisis-intervention
Penn State University Police	University Police and Public Safety is responsible for the protection of and service to Penn State's students, faculty, staff, and visitors.	police.psu.edu/contact-us
Student Care & Advocacy	This office provides support and helps advocate for students facing challenges, such as hospitalization, medical emergencies, long-term illness, mental health concerns, death of an immediate family member, food or housing insecurity, natural disasters, academic distress, unexpected events, and more.	studentaffairs.psu.edu/studentcare
Office of Diversity and Inclusion	Promotes and enhances the diversity of the college's student body. Assists with recruitment and retention of students from racial/ethnic groups that are underrepresented in HHD majors and in the occupations that promote human health, development, and well-being.	hhd.psu.edu/college/diversity