



THE LION'S ROAR

The monthly newsletter for Penn State Berks

Important Dates



General

- 2024-2025 On-campus Housing Contracts Process Continues*
- Spring 2024 Course Registration Continues**

November 10

- Deadline to Request Fall Break Housing***
- Late Drop Deadline at 11:59p.m. (for full semester courses)

November 18 Residence Halls Close at 12p.m.^

November 20 - 24 Fall Break (No Classes)

November 22 Installment Payment Plan (IPP) Payment #4 Due^^

November 26 Residence Halls Re-open at 11a.m.

*Learn more about the **on-campus housing request process** [here](#) ✨

Course registration dates vary by student. Generally, dates are based on the total number of credits earned. **View the [Registration Timetable](#) ✨ **for more information**

***Break housing is not included in the residential housing contract.

In order to request housing during fall break, log into [eLiving](#) ✨ and choose **Contracts > Summer/Break Housing Request**

^All residents, except those approved for and have accepted a Break Contract, must vacate the resident halls (belongings can remain)

^^If you enrolled in the Installment Payment Plan (IPP) by the first payment (8/28), your second, third, and fourth installments are due on the 22nd of the three subsequent months. **Read more on the IPP, [here](#)** ✨

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SPRING 2024: WHICH CLASSES DO I TAKE?

The Spring 2024 semester begins on Monday, Jan. 8. NOW is the time to register for Spring courses! Check LionPATH for your course registration date under "Enrollment Appointment". This date varies by student and is generally based on the total number of credits earned.

FOLLOW THESE 3 EASY STEPS TO GET SCHEDULED.

- 1. REVIEW Current Course Progress** | Assess your current performance to determine if you might need to repeat a course in the next semester.
- 2. ADDRESS Holds & To-Do List Items** | Unaddressed Holds and/or To Do List Items can impact your ability to schedule your courses. Make sure to clear any outstanding items before your course enrollment date.
- 3. MEET With Your Assigned Academic Advisor** | This person can help you determine the best plan to remain on track towards graduation. Be honest with them about your current performance to ensure the most accurate planning. Find your assigned advisor on your LionPATH dashboard/home base in "My Advisors".



NOT GOING AS EXPECTED: ALTERING FALL 2023 ENROLLMENT

Academic Advising Center: 160 Franco
Email: bkadvisingcenter@psu.edu | Phone: 610-396-6280

LATE DROP VS. WITHDRAWAL

- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LATE DROP?**
 - Student action where they individually unenroll from one or more course(s) in the current semester.
- **WHEN IS THE LATE DROP DEADLINE?**
 - Friday, November 10, 2023, at 11:59p.m. for full semester courses.
 - **Pro Tip:** do NOT wait until Nov. 10 just in case you run into any issues and/or need support.
- **WHY MIGHT A STUDENT DECIDE TO LATE DROP?**
 - There are various reasons why a student may decide to late drop a course. The most common reason is because they are at risk of failing the course. A student may elect to late drop a course to protect their grade point average (GPA).
- **WHAT SHOULD A STUDENT CONSIDER AND/OR DO BEFORE LATE DROPPING?**
 - Check the syllabus to see how the final grade is calculated.
 - **ASSESS:** Is the final grade based mostly on exams or homework or projects? Are there enough of those assignments remaining to improve the overall grade?
 - Speak with the professor.
 - **DISCUSS:** The professor can determine if earning a passing grade is possible with the remaining assignments.
 - Speak with an academic adviser.
 - **QUESTIONS:** Is the course a major requirement? Does the course have a concurrent-requisite in the current semester? Is the course a prerequisite for another course in a future semester? Will dropping the course delay graduation?
 - Speak with Financial Aid.
 - **QUESTIONS:** Will you lose and/or have to pay back aid? Will there be financial implications in the current and/or future semester(s)?
- **WHAT SHOULD A STUDENT CONSIDER AND/OR DO AFTER LATE DROPPING?**
 - Pay the fee associated with dropping the course (this can be seen in LionPATH).
 - Adjust next semester's course schedule as needed.
 - Use the scheduled class time of the dropped course as focused study time for all remaining courses.

- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WITHDRAW?**
 - Student action where they unenroll from ALL courses in the current semester.
- **WHEN IS THE WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE?**
 - Friday, December 8, 2023, at 5p.m.
 - **Pro Tip:** do NOT wait until Dec. 8 just in case you run into any issues and/or need support.
- **WHY MIGHT A STUDENT DECIDE TO WITHDRAW?**
 - There are various reasons why a student may decide to withdraw from the university. The most common reason is because they are at risk of failing ALL of their courses. A student may elect to withdraw to protect their grade point average (GPA).
- **WHAT SHOULD A STUDENT CONSIDER AND/OR DO BEFORE WITHDRAWING?**
 - Speak with their assigned academic adviser.
 - **IMMEDIATE IMPACT:** Once the withdrawal is processed, **both** current semester and next semester courses will be canceled. If the student plans to return in the next semester, they will need to re-enroll. Learn more [here](#) 🙌
 - **QUESTIONS:** How will a withdrawal impact degree progress and/or graduation timeline? What is the re-enrollment timeline and process?
 - Speak with Financial Aid.
 - **QUESTIONS:** Will there be financial implications this semester and/or in the future? How will financial aid (i.e., scholarships, grants, and loans) be impacted if you don't re-enroll for the next semester?

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DEFERRED GRADES

If a student is prevented from completing a course within the prescribed amount of time, it is possible to have the grade for that course deferred. This allows students to complete the course at a later date. Approval for a deferred grade must be given by the instructor of the course and is typically approved only when extreme circumstances inhibited student progress.

Learn more about this option at

<https://www.registrar.psu.edu/grades/deferred-grades.cfm>

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



END FALL ON A HIGH NOTE

MAKING THE MOST OF FALL BREAK

- Review Starfish for flags, which are concerns raised by your professor(s). If a concern was raised by your professor(s), connect with them to discuss how you can improve.
- Allocate some of your Fall Break to your academics. Dedicate some amount of time to getting caught up and/or getting ahead. For example, you may decide to study for one hour per day, one hour every other day, or a few hours on just two days.
 - **Catching Up:** If you've missed assignments, check with your professors BEFORE the Fall Break about making them up or doing an alternate assignment.
 - **Pro Tip:** Only ask if you are sure you can commit to following through!
 - **Getting Ahead:** Review Canvas and your course syllabi to see what assignments and tests/exams remain. Begin working on those assignments and preparing for exams during break!
 - **Pro Tip:** establish a study schedule that you can start during Fall Break and continue through the end of the semester!
 - **Planning for the future:** Fall Break is a great time to search for Spring and Summer opportunities such as internships, jobs, and scholarships!

MAKING THE MOST OF TUTORING

1. **Make a plan:** Demand for tutoring increases around assessment deadlines. Establish enough time before your exam(s) and assignment(s) for tutoring.
 - **Pro Tip:** Make an appointment one week ahead!
2. **Try it out:** Even when you feel completely lost, it is beneficial to attempt your work alone. It can give you a clear idea of where you are struggling.
 - **Pro Tip:** Bring 2-5 attempted questions or problems to maximize your session. For written work, bring an outline or draft to the session.
3. **Bring course materials:** While tutors are trained to support specific subjects, it could be helpful for them to see the course lecture notes, textbook, study guide, and/or assignment guidelines.
 - **Pro Tip:** The more information they have, the better they can support you!



PEER TUTORING RESOURCES

Need help with Math, Science, or Study Skills?

Make an appointment with our [Learning Center Tutors here](#) 🙌

Need help with a paper, speech, resume, or other written material?

Make an appointment with our [Writing Center Tutors here](#) 🙌

Taking a MATH course?

Attend Peers & Profs on Mondays and Wednesdays during Common Hour (12:15-1:15p.m.) in 222 Luerssen. No appointment necessary!

Peer Tutoring is always FREE! 



STUDY SMARTER WEBINARS

WHAT: Learn how can you better monitor your learning and improve your study skills so that you don't waste time and effort on ineffective study strategies.

WHEN: Nov. 1, 7, and 13

WHERE: Zoom. Register [here](#) 🙌



FINANCIAL AID: FAFSA NEWS

FAFSA APPLICATION 24-25

- The 2024-25 FAFSA application will **open in December**.
 - Typically, the FAFSA opens on October 1 each year. The Department of Education has significantly changed the FAFSA and needs more time to finish these changes.
 - Once the FAFSA is open to apply for the 2024-2025 academic year, Penn State Berks students will receive communication from Financial Aid
 - Learn more about changes to FAFSA from Penn State at <https://studentaid.psu.edu/node/1025> or from the Department of Education at <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/december-fafsa>
- The FAFSA must be **completed annually** to be considered for financial aid eligibility.
- In order to access the FAFSA, you will need your **FSA ID and password**.
- To complete the FAFSA, use **2022 tax documents** for yourself and your contributors (if you are a dependent student).
- Completing the FAFSA early can lead to **improved odds** of securing more FREE aid (i.e., grants and scholarships).
- After you've completed the FAFSA, monitor LionPATH for Holds or To Do List Items which may prevent aid from disbursing.
- Click the FAFSA icon to access the 2024-25 application.



IMPACT OF HOLDS & TO DO LIST ITEMS

HOLDS are typically, a notification. Many Holds provide a student with information regarding a change in their academic and/or financial status. Generally, students may need to access their To Do List to discuss/resolve the Hold. Unresolved Holds can prevent a student from (1) scheduling classes, (2) having aid disburse, (3) obtaining official transcripts, or (4) receiving a diploma.

Examples: Bursar Account Delinquent | Not Meeting SAP | Academic Warning/Suspend, Financial Aid on Hold | [MMR Immunization Hold](#)

See a detailed list of financial Holds [here](#)

TO DO LIST ITEMS are typically, a request for action. The university may require a student to submit additional documentation or complete an online task. Incomplete items may delay the processing of financial aid.

Examples that require student action: Sign Your Sub/Unsub MPN | Verify your dependency status | Verify parent household
See a detailed list of financial To Do List Items [here](#)

5 REASONS

YOU SHOULD FILL OUT THE FAFSA

Not really sure whether you or your child should fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or whether it affects you?

You should — and it probably does.

1

IT'S FREE.

The FAFSA doesn't cost anything to complete.

2

IT'S EASY.

The application has been majorly simplified over the past few years — and there are helpful pointers throughout.

3

IT'S FAST.

It takes most students just 23 minutes to complete the FAFSA: less time than it would take to watch your favorite show.

4

YOU PROBABLY QUALIFY.

More people qualify for federal student aid than you think — chances are, you're leaving money on the table by not applying.

5

IT MAY BE REQUIRED.

Many states, schools, and private scholarships require you to submit the FAFSA before they'll consider you for any financial aid.

Questions about your aid, holds, or to do list items?

Contact Financial Aid

Email: BerksFinAid@psu.edu

Phone: 610-396-6070*

014 Perkins Student Center

*No answer? Leave a message with your name, phone number, 9-digit PSU ID number, and reason for calling!

Questions about your bill?

Contact Bursar

Email: bkbursar@psu.edu

Phone: 610-396-6040*

125 Franco Building

*No answer? Leave a message with your name, phone number, 9-digit PSU ID number, and reason for calling!

Veteran's Benefits

The Registrar's Office is the point of contact for all VA certifications.

Contact by telephone at 610-396-6085

or via Email at BKVeterans@psu.edu



CAMPUS FEATURE: SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is a broad concept that focuses on the interlinked goals of social, environmental, and economic stability, equity and justice.

OPPORTUNITIES AT PENN STATE BERKS

- **Campus Garden:** Feel free to stop by any time to pick your favorite veggies, fruits, and herbs! Visit the campus garden between Thun Library and the Hintz Bookstore.
- **Sustainability Council:** Student are welcome to join this dedicated team of individuals who plan, organize, and promote sustainability events, initiatives, and educational opportunities for the campus and the larger community.
- **November Meeting:** Nov. 6 at 12:15p.m. in Gaige 247
- **Website:**

<https://www.sustainability.bk.psu.edu/sustainability-team/>

- **Instagram:** @sustainabilitypsubk
- **Contact Sustainability Council Chair:** Dr. Mahsa Kazempour via email at muk30@psu.edu

OPPORTUNITIES IN BERKS COUNTY

- **PA Commuter Services:** Commuter Services is a professionally staffed organization funded by federal Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality funds. Through free services, they work to reduce traffic congestion by helping commuters find alternatives other than driving alone. By using alternatives commuters can SAVE MONEY while also helping to improve air quality and create safer highways with fewer cars on the road.

◦ **Learn more:** <https://pacommuterservices.org/>

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- **Nov. 9 at 1 p.m.** | GreenGov Webinar: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair. Learn about innovations with "repair cafes," a way to build intergenerational equity and reduce waste by having elders teach repair skills to keep items working and out of landfills. Learn more and register [here](#)
- **Nov. 15 at 7 p.m.** | Flood Bound, film and post-film discussion exploring impacts of climate change on Appalachian region-flooding but also in how communities are trying to remain resilient to these challenges. Learn more and register [here](#)



COMMUTE PA

Earn rewards for every green trip you take!

- Download the free Commute PA app
- Complete your profile with home & school addresses
- Search for carpool matches to share a ride to school
- Find transit route information; resources for biking & walking
- Record your carpool, vanpool, walk, bike, telecommute (online classes) or transit trip
- Earn points to redeem for discounts
- Enter monthly drawings



1.866.579.7433
PaCommuterServices.org
michele.scribbick@pacommuterservices.org



Campus Compost Route

brought to you by the Sustainability Council

Contact Dr. Mahsa Kazempour for more information
muk30@psu.edu

CONNECTED AT BERKS AND BEYOND

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE LIST

- **24/7 Penn State Crisis Line** can be used in consultation to support someone who is experiencing a crisis or for yourself. The Penn State Crisis Line can be used at all PSU campuses. However, the caller must be in the U.S.
 - Call the line at 1-877-229-6400
 - Text the line by texting “LIONS” to 741741
- **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention** offers resources and tips on how to support a friend -- or get help yourself.
 - Check it out at <https://seizetheawkward.org/>
- **Counseling Services** are available to all Penn State Berks students for FREE.
 - Learn more at <https://berks.psu.edu/counseling-services>
- **Red Folder** at Penn State is a guide to help faculty, staff, student leaders, and others who interact with students to recognize, respond effectively to, and refer Penn State students in distress.
 - Review resources specific to Penn State Berks at <https://redfolder.psu.edu/campus-resources/>
- **WellTrack Boost** is a tool designed to help understand the activities associated with changes in mood and motivation, as well as to identify patterns in daily activities and how they are associated with changes in emotional states.
 - Get FREE PSU access at <https://psu.welltrack.com/>
- **Online Mental Health Screenings** are free and anonymous for several areas of mental health, including depression, anxiety, academic distress, eating concerns, frustration level, family stress, and alcohol use.
 - Begin a screening at <https://tinyurl.com/CAPSScreening>
- **Life Hack Kits** are free step-by-step wellness packages designed to help navigate and demystify the perplexing parts of being human.
 - a. Learn more at <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/wellness-services/life-hacks>

CAREER SERVICES



A message from Tish Jepsen, Director of Career Services: If you are graduating and are still looking for a full-time job, please email Career Services for an appointment! We are happy to assist you with your resume, interview prep, and the overall job search process. Remember, employers are hiring now for Spring and Summer!

Schedule with Career Services via email at ncl102@psu.edu or telephone at 610-396-6368

How to Secure Career & Internship Experiences:

- Meet with a professional in Career Services
- Attend Career Fairs
- Participate in on-campus recruiting and internships events
- Develop employer contact list
- Explore ALL job opportunities
- Read professional journals
- Interview for jobs on campus, at job fairs and independently

NOVEMBER CAREER EVENTS

- **November 1:** Networking for Success (career fair) from 11:30a.m.–1:30p.m. in the Gaige Lobby
- **November 8:** Interviewing & Networking Workshop from 12:15–1:15p.m. in Perkins 3
- **November 13:** Etiquette Lunch from 12:15–1:15 in Perkins 7 (MPR)
 - Sign-up required! RSVP at <https://forms.office.com/r/gdVh0TNcGK>
- **November 28:** Graduate School Workshop from 12:15–1:15pm in Perkins 3



FOOD PANTRY

The Nittany Corner food pantry was funded and established by the Penn State Berks class of 2017. Pantry items are FREE to Penn State Berks students!



Visit the pantry in the Cohen Lounge
in Thun Library