



LEAVE AND RETURN POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

Students take time away from their studies for a wide variety of reasons including:

- work on a political campaign
- manage a medical concern
- fulfill a family obligation
- pursue career-related opportunities
- complete military service
- take a break

While interrupting your studies to take time away may seem intimidating, a leave is a means to the successful completion of a degree, not a barrier to graduating. Approximately 5% of each graduating class spends at least one semester on leave from Penn during their undergraduate studies. Almost all Penn students who take a leave of absence return and complete their degrees.

If you are considering a leave, take time to think carefully about your goals for your time away and for when you return. Speaking with an academic advisor is an important first step. Depending on your circumstances you should get advice from other sources as well. Students taking time away in order to manage a medical condition should discuss the leave with their healthcare provider. Your school advising office will help you connect with other campus resources as you prepare to take a leave of absence, such as Student Registration and Financial Services, Housing, and International Student and Scholar Services.

Students typically take a leave for a full academic year. Individual circumstances may require more or less time; the length of the leave is determined by the school. Students on leave should remain in contact with their advisor and update them about changes in plans. The return from leave process supports students in a successful re-entry to academic life at Penn. When preparing to return, students must consult their school advising office to develop a plan that includes connection with appropriate resources.

SCHOOL OF NURSING LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICIES

A leave of absence for a period of up to one academic year may be granted when circumstances necessitate the interruption of academic work. At the written request of the student, such leaves may be extended for no longer than one additional year. This period may include either consecutive or nonconsecutive terms.

A leave of absence does not automatically change the time limit (5 years) for completion of the program. Students who are on leave for more than two years in total may be withdrawn from the program and asked to re-apply. These restrictions do not include time spent in the military.

Students who wish to take a leave from their studies must request a leave of absence using the [Leave of Absence Request Form](#). PhD students who are considering a leave of absence must meet with the Director of Advising and Student Affairs to review relevant policies and procedures. All leaves must be approved by the School of Nursing in advance. Students who are not in good standing or who have disciplinary action pending against them require special approval. Discontinuance of study without permission from the University does not constitute a leave of absence.

Students who are requesting a leave of absence due to medical reasons will be required to provide supporting documentation and may be asked to consult with Student Health and Counseling as needed.

Once the leave of absence is approved and takes effect, the student's PennCard will be deactivated, and access to University services and facilities will be restricted.

Students who are not in good academic standing at the time of the leave of absence will return to the same academic standing status they held (for example, probation) when they left.

Students cannot receive Penn transfer credit for courses taken at another institution while on leave of absence.

Tuition will automatically be refunded for students who request a leave of absence and drop their course(s) prior to the end of the 'Course Selection Period'. This date can be found on the [University's Three-Year Academic calendar](#). Students that need to request a leave and drop a course after the Course Selection Period in the third or fourth week will receive 50% tuition and fees back. Students that need to withdraw in week five and beyond are 100% financially responsible for that tuition; no refunds are given.

Please note that this policy pertains only to courses taken during the fall and spring semesters. Summer courses operate on a [different refund schedule](#).

For information on refunds/credits for non-tuition charges (such as housing and dining), students should contact those offices directly.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE DEADLINES

Students considering a leave of absence are strongly encouraged to request a leave prior to the start of the semester in question. If a student has been granted a leave after the semester has started, the following deadlines apply:

- Students who request a leave of absence after the drop deadline but prior to the withdrawal deadline will be withdrawn from their courses, with a notation of "W" on their transcript for those courses.
- Requests to take a leave of absence after the withdrawal deadline will be considered only in extremely extenuating circumstances and only with the proper supporting documentation.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE PROCEDURES

To request a leave of absence:

1. Meet with an advisor in the Office of Academic Affairs to discuss your request and to develop a revised plan of study.
2. Complete the [Leave of Absence Request Form](#), and be sure to include a detailed description regarding the reasons for your request and how you plan to use your time away from the University.

The leave request will be evaluated by the Office of Academic Affairs. If the request is approved, students will receive a confirmation letter outlining the terms of the leave and any conditions that must be met prior to making a request to return. Once approved, students should consult with the Office of Student Information (Suite M-24, Fagin Hall, compliance@nursing.upenn.edu or gradcompliance@nursing.upenn.edu) regarding any clinical compliance requirements that will need to be maintained while on leave, depending on the desired semester of return and the revised plan of study.

The following website will provide a list of other offices (including housing, dining, financial aid, etc.) students may need to contact as they prepare to take a leave of absence. Students are required to review this information and follow up as necessary: <https://srfs.upenn.edu/student-records/withdrawals-leaves>.

International students should also contact the International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) office to discuss any immigration considerations and paperwork related to the leave, 215-898-4661, iss@pobox.upenn.edu.

RETURN FROM LEAVE POLICIES

Students who are on an approved leave of absence and who wish to resume their studies must complete the [Leave of Absence Return Form](#). PhD students must contact the Director of Advising and Student Affairs to discuss their return request and relevant policies and procedures.

Students should refer to their leave of absence letter for information on their return, including deadline dates and conditions. It is important to take note of these dates in advance and to plan ahead. The School of Nursing may deny any requests to return that come in after the specified deadlines.

Students who wish to participate in advance registration for the semester in which they are planning to return should submit their request at least two weeks prior to the advance registration period in cases where this occurs before the specified deadline to request a return.

In addition, please note the following policies:

- Students who have holds on their record must have these holds cleared before their return can be approved. Holds may be placed by Student Health and Counseling, Office of Student Conduct, Student Registration and Financial Services, or other offices, and students are responsible for contacting the respective offices directly.
- Students who were not in good academic standing at the time of the leave of absence request will return to the same academic standing status they held (for example, probation) when they left.
- Students cannot receive Penn transfer credit for courses taken at another institution while on leave of absence.
- A leave of absence does not automatically change the time limit (5 years) for completion of the program. Students who are on leave for more than two years in total may be withdrawn from the program and asked to re-apply. These restrictions do not include time spent in the military.

The return from leave request will be evaluated by the Office of Academic Affairs. If the request is approved, students will receive a confirmation letter outlining the terms of the return and any steps that must be taken. Once approved, students should consult with the Office of Student Information (Suite M-24, Fagin Hall, compliance@nursing.upenn.edu or gradcompliance@nursing.upenn.edu) regarding any clinical compliance requirements that need to be fulfilled, depending on the student's semester of return and revised plan of study.

The following website will provide a list of other offices (including housing, dining, financial aid, etc.) students may need to contact as they prepare to return from leave of absence. Students are required to review this information and follow up as necessary: <https://sdfs.upenn.edu/student-records/withdrawals-leaves>.

International students should also contact the International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) office to discuss any immigration considerations and paperwork related to the return from leave, 215-898-4661, iss@pobox.upenn.edu.

QUESTIONS?

Please consult with an advisor in the Office of Academic Affairs, Suite M-18, Fagin Hall, 215-898-6687, advisor@nursing.upenn.edu.