

# ADMISSIONS

## Admission to Penn State

Penn State's tradition of academic excellence, investment in student success, and commitment to providing unrivaled opportunities make the University a great place to study, but it is the dedication of our students, faculty, and staff that make it truly exceptional.

We are looking for students that want to share in the passions and talents of our Penn State community. Discover how your Penn State years will not only shape your academic and career pursuits, but will broaden your perspective, establish life-long connections, and set the stage for your future.

Find your place at Penn State.

## Steps to Apply

Learn the first steps to apply to Penn State and more about the University on the Undergraduate Admissions website (<https://admissions.psu.edu>).

## Statement of Basic Academic Admission Policies

Admission to credit courses or degree candidacy at Penn State is governed by policies established by the University Faculty Senate. Although specific applications of these policies may vary from year to year, from location to location, and from program to program, all University admissions are governed by the following general policies:

1. As an institution of higher education, Penn State is committed to making post-high school education available to all who possess a high school diploma or its equivalent without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications. Penn State does not discriminate against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.
2. The primary responsibility of the University is to residents of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Consequently, within limits expressed from time to time by the Board of Trustees of the University, preference shall be given to Pennsylvania residents in the various admissions processes.
3. In order to meet the variety of goals and objectives of the population, the spectrum of offerings is designed to enable persons with a variety of objectives—both degree and non-degree—to receive a higher education. Although access to educational opportunities of the University is open to all, courses offered for credit are available to those holding a high school diploma or its equivalent. Policies governing admission to degree candidacy are established by the University Faculty Senate (with a delegation of policies governing admissions to graduate programs to the Graduate Faculty of the University) under a general policy of offering admission to those whose past academic performance indicates a reasonable probability of success.
4. Undergraduate students are admitted to either baccalaureate degree candidacy or associate degree candidacy. To be admitted to degree candidacy, the individual must present an academic performance record that indicates a reasonable probability of their success in their chosen program. In the case of first-year student admission to undergraduate degree candidacy, performance is measured through a holistic assessment. In the case of advanced standing admission, performance is measured either through success in non-degree programs and courses of the University or by success at some other institution of higher education.
5. Within the space available in particular programs and at particular locations, admission shall be offered preferentially to those whose performance record indicates the highest probability of success in the chosen program—with this process continuing until all available spaces are filled. Although exceptions to this policy may be made from time to time (for example, recipients of scholarships with restricting qualifications), these exceptions may be made only for applicants who meet at least the minimum admission and entrance requirements.
6. If a college or school requires restrictions on its baccalaureate admissions, the priorities or targets established must include provisions to consider qualified students in each of these groups:
  - Admissions Group I - **First-year Admissions:** Applicants who hold a high school diploma or equivalent, who present fewer than 18-semester credits of baccalaureate work (from Penn State or another regionally accredited institution), who meet minimum college or school entrance requirements, and who meet minimum college or school admission standards.
  - Admissions Group II - **Penn State Advanced Standing Admissions:** Applicants who (1) request baccalaureate degree re-enrollment, presenting 18 or more semester credits; (2) request a change from Penn State associate degree to baccalaureate degree status, presenting 18 or more applicable semester credits; (3) request a change from Penn State provisional degree to baccalaureate degree status, presenting 18 or more applicable semester credits; or (4) request a change from Penn State non-degree to baccalaureate degree status, presenting 18 or more applicable semester credits. In all advanced standing admissions at Penn State, the student must have a grade-point average of at least 2.00 and must meet the minimum entrance and advanced standing requirements of the college or school. However, a Penn State student who has had an interruption in enrollment of no fewer than four calendar years and whose cumulative grade-point average is less than 2.00 may petition for re-enrollment with academic renewal in accordance with Senate Policy 57-00.
  - Admissions Group III - **Other Advanced Standing Admissions:** Applicants who have not been students at Penn State and request baccalaureate degree status at Penn State, presenting 18 or more applicable semester credits from a regionally accredited institution. In all advanced standing admissions, it is understood that the applicant must have a cumulative grade-point average of 2.00 as computed at Penn State and meet the minimum entrance and advanced standing requirements of the college or school. However, a student who has not met the entrance requirements or achieved a cumulative grade-point average of 2.00 (on a 4.00 scale) for all graded courses taken at all institutions previously attended, and who has had a four-calendar-year absence from the institution(s), may apply to enroll in credit courses as a provisional student in accordance with Senate Policy 10-00. An applicant who has had an absence from the institution(s) of fewer than four calendar years, and who has not met the entrance requirements or has achieved a cumulative grade-point average of less than 2.00, may apply to enroll in credit courses as a non-degree student in accordance with Senate Policy 14-00.
  - Within these three groups, no special consideration will be given to any group; applicants will be admitted to the college or school on the basis of academic competition (e.g., SAT I scores, grade-point averages, grades in required courses in the college or

other degree-granting units, and other evidence predictive of baccalaureate degree performance where available, valid, and reliable).

7. To ensure a proper educational mix of students and to further broaden the educational opportunities offered by the University, the University Faculty Senate and the University administration from time to time may authorize various specialized programs. These programs may permit applicants who do not meet the basic qualifications for admission to degree candidacy to be admitted to such candidacy. These programs may also permit, in selected situations, exceptional students who have not earned a high school diploma or its equivalent to enroll in University credit courses. Such specialized programs may include up to 10 percent of the total admissions group for the University in any one year and up to the maximum of 15 percent of the admissions to any geographic location of the University.
8. Within this general policy, the colleges and school of the University, with the concurrence of the University Faculty Senate, may impose certain educational background requirements (Carnegie Units) that must be completed by an individual before being admitted to degree candidacy.

## Admission Requirements

### Minimum Requirements for Admission to Degree Candidacy

To be eligible for admission consideration to the University as a degree candidate, either as a beginning student or as a student with advanced standing, an applicant must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Graduation from an accredited secondary school. Penn State requires proof of graduation or a GED for admission to four-year degree programs.
2. Completion of the required units of preparatory work as indicated under the heading Minimum Carnegie Units.

A secondary school diploma issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, or appropriate authority in another state, may be accepted as equivalent to graduation from an accredited secondary school and as equivalent to the minimum secondary school units required for admission, as indicated under the Minimum Carnegie Units heading, with the exception of math and world language.

The University accepts the definition of a secondary school unit as established by the Carnegie Foundation. A unit represents a year of work in a subject in a preparatory school or secondary school, provided that the work done in that subject is approximately one-fourth of the total amount of work regularly required in a year in the school.

The University reserves the right to deny admission to any applicant for admission for any reason the University determines to be material to the applicant's qualifications to pursue higher education.

Admission to degree candidacy is specified in terms of enrollment in a college or school of the University or in the Division of Undergraduate Studies. Entrance to a baccalaureate major is a subsequent step that normally occurs near the end of the second year of study. Both for admission to a college or school and for entrance to a major, a student must satisfy the requirements of the University, of the particular college or school, and of the major area. In special circumstances, the University may need to further restrict admissions to a college or school and entrance to majors because of space limitations.

## Baccalaureate and Associate Degree Programs

Review the basic requirements for two-year and four-year degrees, as well as the additional requirements for special programs.

See the minimum number of secondary school units required for admission consideration to a baccalaureate degree program on the Admission Requirements page (<https://admissions.psu.edu/apply/requirements/4year>).

See the minimum number of secondary school units required for admission consideration to an associate degree program on the Admission Requirements page (<https://admissions.psu.edu/apply/requirements/2year>).

## First-Year Admission

An applicant for admission as a beginning student in the first-year class must meet the minimum requirements for admission to degree candidacy prior to the time of matriculation. All offers of admission are conditional until these requirements have been met.

Each applicant is evaluated on the basis of a holistic assessment. Admission decisions are made on the basis of this holistic assessment in relation to the requested area of enrollment (academic program), space availability, the quality of the credentials presented by other applicants, and such other academically relevant information deemed appropriate by the Undergraduate Admissions Office and approved by the Senate Committee on Admission, Records, Scheduling, and Student Aid.

When openings at the requested location or in the requested program of the University are filled, qualified applicants will be offered admission to their alternate choice of program or location or notified of campuses where openings still exist.

## College Entrance Tests

Applicants for first-year admission to the University are required to submit scores of the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) of the College Entrance Examination Board or the American College Test (ACT). SAT or ACT results of the junior-year testing periods are recommended. Exceptions to the requirement for scholastic assessment test scores will be granted to adult learners who have been out of high school for five or more years or are veterans with four or more years of service. Exceptions to the required courses completed also may be granted. Adults may be requested to submit a statement of personal goals or to participate in an interview.

## Selection of the Area of Enrollment

It is necessary for an applicant to indicate one of the academic units of the University in which they want to study. If an applicant is undecided about the choice of an academic unit, they may seek enrollment in the Division of Undergraduate Studies.

## Changing the Area of Enrollment

An applicant who has been admitted to an academic college or unit of the University may not change to another without satisfying entrance requirements of the college or other academic unit of the University.

## Previous Attendance at Another College

An applicant must state on their application whether they have ever attended any other college or university. Failure to indicate, at the time of application, previous registration at another college or university may result in refusal or cancellation of admission. An applicant who has attempted fewer than 18 semester credits at another regionally

accredited college or university will be considered as a first-year applicant. An applicant who has attempted 18 or more semester credits at another regionally accredited college or university subsequent to high school graduation will be evaluated as an advanced standing applicant.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT APPLYING FOR ADMISSION TO PENN STATE (<https://admissions.psu.edu/apply>)

## Advanced Standing (Transfer) Admission

An applicant who has attended any regionally accredited college or institution on the college level and attempted 18 or more semester credits subsequent to high school graduation may be considered for admission with advanced standing. Attendance at any and all other institutions must be reported at the time of application. Failure to indicate, at the time of application, previous registration at another college or university can result in refusal or cancellation of admission.

An applicant for admission with advanced standing must meet the minimum secondary school requirements for admission to degree candidacy prior to the time of matriculation. Advanced standing applicants are considered for admission on the basis of the applicant's requested academic program, space availability, and the academic quality of their work at the previously attended institution(s). A minimum cumulative grade-point average of at least 2.00 (C) out of 4.00, as computed for Penn State students, is required, although certain areas of study may have additional requirements. In addition, an applicant must be in good academic and nonacademic standing. An applicant whose overall grade-point average is less than 2.00 (on a 4.00 scale) but has a grade-point average of at least 2.00 (on a 4.00 scale) at all institutions attended in the four years prior to the requested enrollment semester may apply for admission as an advanced standing student with forgiveness. An applicant who has not attempted any collegiate level course work four years prior to the requested enrollment semester may also apply for advanced standing with forgiveness. An applicant who does not meet the minimum requirement of a grade-point average of at least 2.00 and does not meet the criteria for advanced standing with forgiveness may enroll in credit courses as a non-degree student in accordance with applicable policies and procedures.

Advanced standing credits may be awarded for college-level work taken at regionally accredited institutions provided Penn State offers a similar class and the course grade earned is equivalent to a grade of A, B, or C at this University. The credits also must be useful to the student's program of study. An academic adviser determines which of the transferable credits are applicable to the program of study at Penn State. Credits are transferred, but grades and grade-point average are not. Advanced standing students enter the University without an average and their average begins with the completion of their first semester of study at Penn State.

Under certain circumstances, the University may need to restrict advanced standing admissions to a particular college or school because of space limitations.

Entrance to a major is an additional step beyond admission to a college or school. It involves additional academic requirements and may be subject to additional restrictions because of space limitations.

## Application Procedure

In all cases where work has been taken at other institutions, an official transcript from each place of attendance must be submitted directly to the Undergraduate Admissions Office by the registrar of the institution

attended. An applicant currently attending another institution also must provide a schedule of courses in progress or to be completed before enrollment at Penn State, including course name, number, description, and number of credits. The applicant's secondary school record must be submitted directly to the Undergraduate Admissions Office by the secondary school. The Undergraduate Admissions Office may require the applicant to send a description of the courses that they have taken at the college previously attended. All credentials become part of the permanent records of the University.

## Entrance to a Major

An advanced standing degree candidate may be admitted to a college or school of the University. To be eligible for entrance to a major, a student must meet the entrance-to-major requirements of the University, of the college or school, and of the program area. Under certain circumstances, further restrictions or exceptions on entrance to majors may be required because of space limitations. Students are expected to work with advisers and to utilize current information about entrance requirements and restrictions when exploring academic program alternatives and making program and course selections.

## Changing the Area of Enrollment

An applicant who has been admitted to an academic college, school, or major of the University may not change to another without satisfying entrance requirements of the college/school and major to which they want to transfer.

## Provisional Students (Degree Seeking)

An applicant seeking to pursue a degree program and holding a high school diploma or its equivalent but without the criteria required for admission as a degree candidate may be accepted as a provisional student and enroll in credit courses, if space is available, to pursue a program leading to either a baccalaureate or associate degree if the following criteria are met:

1. The student is making satisfactory progress toward admission as a degree candidate. Progress is satisfactory if a student has completed 18 credits with a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 2.00 (on a 4.00 scale). If a student has completed 18 credits with less than a 2.00, then they are given a warning. A student who has completed 27 credits with a cumulative grade-point average of less than 2.00 will not be permitted to enroll as a provisional student in any subsequent semester unless the student has earned more than a 2.00 grade-point average in the most recently completed semester. No student regardless of cumulative grade-point average, who has completed 36 credits will be permitted to enroll as a provisional student in any subsequent semester.
2. There is space available after degree candidates have been accommodated.
3. The student has not been dropped for unsatisfactory scholarship from any college or university previously attended. If a provisional applicant attended another college or university and attempted 18 or more semester credits within the last four calendar years, the applicant must have at least a 2.00 (on a 4.00 scale) cumulative collegiate average. However, if it has been four or more calendar years since the applicant attended the other college or university and the cumulative grade-point average is less than 2.00, the applicant is eligible for provisional admission consideration.
4. The student has not been dismissed or suspended for nonacademic reasons from any college or university. An applicant not in good standing at another accredited college or university for disciplinary

reasons must consult with the director of the Office of Judicial Affairs for admissions clearance.

**NOTE:** An applicant holding a baccalaureate degree or higher is not eligible to enroll as a provisional student. The applicant is referred to the graduate non-degree program.

### Admission of Provisional Student as a Degree Candidate

A provisional student may apply for admission as a baccalaureate degree candidate with advanced standing to a college or school of the University, or to the Division of Undergraduate Studies, upon completion of at least 18 credits with at least a 2.00 cumulative grade-point average. All these credits must be earned at this University. To be eligible for admission, the provisional student must satisfy the academic requirements of the University and the college of enrollment.

## Nondegree Students

A person enrolled in a course who is not a degree candidate or provisional student is classified as a nondegree student. A nondegree student must either hold a high school diploma or its equivalent to take undergraduate courses. Exceptions may be made by the Undergraduate Admissions Office for students currently enrolled in high school (dual-enrollment students).

A nondegree student who has not been dropped from degree or provisional status by this University or any other college or university for unsatisfactory scholarship will be listed as a nondegree regular student and may enroll in any number of credits, not to exceed the typical credit load of a full-time student per semester if criteria 1, 2, and 3 below are met. Students who have changed from degree candidates to nondegree regular or nondegree students who intend to become degree candidates must also meet criterion 4.

A nondegree student who has been dropped from degree or provisional status by this university or any other college or university because of unsatisfactory scholarship will be listed as a nondegree-conditional student and may enroll in a maximum of 12 credits per semester if criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4 (on the following list) are met.

1. The student has completed the prerequisite for the courses to be scheduled or has obtained permission from the instructor to schedule the course.
2. Space is available after degree candidates and provisional students have been accommodated.
3. The student has not been dismissed or suspended for nonacademic reasons from any college or university. An applicant not in good standing at another college or university for disciplinary reasons must consult the director of the Office of Judicial Affairs for admission clearance.
4. The student has obtained academic advising/counseling from an adviser/counselor designated by the academic unit to which admission or re-enrollment is desired.

### Limitations to Enrollment as a Nondegree Student

A student in nondegree status (regular or conditional) may remain in that status for a maximum of 30 credits, at which time the student must be accepted into a degree program to continue taking credit courses. Nondegree conditional students must achieve a semester grade point average of 2.01 or higher every semester or will be dismissed from the University and may only re-enter through the academic renewal process. Students in nondegree status who are not eligible for a degree program after completing 30 credits may continue to take credit courses provided

a semester grade-point average of more than 2.00 continues to be earned and they have written support from their intended major. Students who do not meet these provisions will be dropped and may only reenter Penn State through the academic renewal process. Nondegree regular students who are in good academic standing and do not intend to earn a degree may continue taking credit courses as long as a cumulative grade point average of 2.00 is maintained.

A student must be admitted, or reinstated and re-enrolled, as a degree candidate to apply the credits earned as a non-degree student toward fulfilling the requirements for a degree. The dean of the college or school of enrollment shall decide which credits may be used to fulfill the degree requirements.

A non-degree application can be obtained on the Office of the University Registrar website (<http://registrar.psu.edu>).

## Admission of Nondegree Student as a Degree Candidate

A nondegree student may apply for admission as a baccalaureate degree candidate with advanced standing to a college or school of the University, or to the Division of Undergraduate Studies, upon completion of at least 18 credits earned at this University with at least a 2.00 cumulative grade-point average. An applicant who has completed at least the equivalent of two years of baccalaureate degree work before applying for admission as a baccalaureate degree candidate must have the approval of either the dean of the college or school in which enrollment is desired or of the director of the Division of Undergraduate Studies if the student wants to enroll in that division. To be eligible for degree admission, the nondegree student must meet the academic requirements of the University and the college or school in effect at the time of application.