



**PennState**  
Behrend

# MBA STUDENT HANDBOOK

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2023-2024

## Graduate School Policies

All Penn State University policies regarding graduate students are explained on the [Graduate School website](#).

## Pre-requisite Competence Guidelines

Prior to beginning the 30-credit MBA program, students will need to demonstrate competence in seven business disciplines: accounting, economics, finance, management, marketing, operations, and statistics. There are two routes to demonstrating competence in all seven areas: Show transcript grades (undergraduate or graduate) of B or better in these courses, within last seven years, OR take modules from [MBA iQ](#) for all or only those disciplines in which you need to demonstrate competence.

Modules are self-paced and can be started anytime. Students are given access by the Academic Director of the program. Each module finishes with a pass/fail examination which can be repeated. Students must attain a “pass” rating. All pre-requisites must be complete before beginning any MBA courses.

### Proof of Pre-requisite Competence form

All students must submit this form to Mr. Eric Robbins, Administrative MBA Program Chair. Access the [pre-requisite competence form here](#).

## Registration and LionPATH

LionPATH is Penn State’s student information system, which provides students with access to their academic, registration, and financial records. Students can enroll for classes, view/accept their financial aid awards, and view their tuition bills. The first time you access LionPATH you will provide your consent to do business electronically. This consent will be required annually.

### LionPATH Student Center

The LionPATH Student Center provides you easy access to the information you will use regularly. The information is grouped into logical sections and can be easily accessed using links and drop-down lists. You will view sections about Academics, Finances, and Personal Information.

### LionPATH Student Center: Quick Reference Boxes

The Quick Reference Boxes on the right contain items such as communication, holds, to do lists, milestones, enrollment dates, and advisor information. The To Do List contains items that you need to complete. Prior to each semester’s enrollment, a Pre-Registration Activity Guide will appear in your To Do List. It contains a Financial Responsibility Agreement as well as Emergency Contact information, both of which are required to be completed each semester. Completing this activity guide will release the Financial Responsibility hold and allow you to enroll during your enrollment window. The Enrollment Dates box contains the first day you can enroll in classes for the coming term. Your assigned advisor(s) will be listed in the Advisor box, clicking on their name will provide additional information.

### Dropping a Course

The drop procedure is used when a student needs to drop a course but still continues to be enrolled in at least one

other course during the same term. Refunds are made on a sliding scale, depending on when the Registrar's Office is notified. If a student stops attending a class and neglects to notify the Registrar's Office, the grade for the course will become an automatic "F" which becomes a part of the student's permanent record.

## **Withdrawal**

Students not able to complete a schedule of courses for a given semester may withdraw from enrollment in all courses any time up to and including the last day of classes. Doing this constitutes withdrawal from the University and changes a student's status to non-degree. Withdrawing students must notify the Graduate Admissions Office immediately for details. If a student neglects to complete a withdrawal form, the instructor may assign the grade of "F" for the course. Note that re-enrollment is not automatic. Students who withdraw must submit a [Resume Study application](#) with the Graduate Admissions Office. If readmitted to the program, students complete the MBA program in place at the time that they reenroll, just as a new student would.

## **Tuition Adjustment Policy (in brief)**

Tuition charges are calculated as of the first day of the semester/session. Requests to cancel registrations or reduce credits should be made prior to the first day of the semester/session to avoid being charged a portion of the tuition. [Charges are adjusted](#) based on the date of the last class attended, provided the official withdrawal form is presented within one calendar month of that date; otherwise, the adjustment will be based on the date the form is presented in the Registrar's Office. Contact Penn State Behrend Bursar's Office at 814-898-6224. Note that adjustments do not apply to fees.

## **Tuition Reimbursement Forms**

Students who will be reimbursed by their employer for the satisfactory completion of specific credit courses can defer the portion of employer funding to the end of the semester, provided they submit a Tuition Reimbursement Approval Form. A new tuition reimbursement form must be submitted each semester.

Forms may be obtained in the Penn State Behrend Bursar's Office or students can request a form by contacting the Bursar's Office at 814-898-6224. Completed forms should be returned to the Bursar's Office. If completed forms are returned by mail, they should be sent to: Penn State Behrend, Bursar's Office, 4651 College Drive, Erie, PA 16563-0102. Students receiving tuition payments from their employer can have the Bursar's Office bill their employer directly, sign their reimbursement check over to the college, or write a personal check covered by their reimbursement funds.

## **Continuous Registration**

An MBA student who completes consecutive terms without interruption (not including summer terms) is considered to have maintained continuous registration. Students who withdraw or miss a semester due to career or personal responsibilities may request to resume study by completing a [Resume Study application](#). Readmission requires satisfactory scholarship and available space in the program.

## **Registration Holds**

Some University offices are authorized to place registration holds on student records. Typical holds are either academic holds placed by the college offices, or financial holds placed by the Bursar, University Libraries, etc. Placing a registration hold immediately stops the student from adding courses for the current and future terms. Holds will be

put in place for unsatisfactory scholarship, late payments, non-payment, or failure to meet immunization requirements. Visit LionPATH to resolve these holds.

## **Transfer of External Credit**

The MBA program will accept up to nine credits of graduate course work done at an accredited institution. This translates into three courses, practically speaking. Acceptance of transfer credits requires that the content of prior course work match the courses/credits they replace in the program. Most of our MBA course structure is fixed so transfer credits must fit the criteria in the program. Transfer credits can be used as elective credits if the course(s) are appropriate for an MBA program.

Transferred graduate work must have been completed within five years prior to being admitted as an MBA degree candidate, must be of at least B quality, and must appear on an official graduate transcript of a regionally-accredited institution. Pass/fail grades are not transferable to an advanced degree program unless the former institution substantiates that a “pass” is equivalent to a grade of B (3.0) or better. Quarter credits must be converted to semester credits. Courses used in the fulfillment of prior earned degrees cannot be transferred into the MBA program.

Approval to apply any transferred credits toward a degree program must be granted by the MBA Program Director and the PSU Graduate School. To request transfer of credit, submit an official graduate transcript and course syllabus (or complete description of course) to the MBA Program Director.

## **Transcripts**

Unofficial transcripts for currently enrolled students are available through LionPATH. Unofficial transcripts cannot be mailed or faxed to students.

To obtain an official transcript, complete the form available online and send your request with a check. To obtain the form, visit the Registrar home page and select “Order Transcripts on the Web.” Transcript requests are normally processed within three working days of receipt. Standard delivery of transcripts is by first class U.S. postal mail. Special delivery is available for an additional fee.

## **Graduation**

Students who plan to graduate at the end of a term are responsible for filing an intent to graduate on LionPATH, in the beginning of the semester that they plan to complete degree requirements. Refer to the Academic Calendar to view the Filing Period.

## **Scholarship and Research Integrity (SARI) Training Requirements**

Penn State University requires Scholarship and Research Integrity (SARI) training for all graduate students. This requirement is based on a set of guidelines developed through the Office of the Senior Vice President for Research and the Office for Research Protections (ORP). The SARI training consists of two parts: (1) face-to-face introduction and discussion of organizing concepts for SARI and (2) five hours of online discussion-based responsible conduct of research (RCR) training. SARI training must be completed as a requirement for graduation. Details will be provided during Orientation.

## Academic Integrity

Maintaining academic integrity—scholarship free from fraud and deception—is an important educational objective of the Penn State Behrend MBA Program. Academic dishonesty can lead to a failing grade and/or other disciplinary action.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized prior possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor and securing written approval, or tampering with the academic work of other students.

In cases where academic integrity is questioned, a student will be given oral or written notice of the charge by the instructor. Procedures allow for a student to appeal the charge through informal discussions with the instructor, department head, dean, or campus executive officer. If a failing grade or referral to the Office of Conduct Standards is recommended, the student and instructor will be afforded formal due process.

## Grades

The Student Center section of LionPATH gives you immediate access to semester grades as soon as they are submitted by the instructor and recorded by the Registrar's Office.

### Grading Policy

Grades are given solely on the basis of the instructor's judgment as to a student's scholarly attainment. Any one of nine quality grades (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, D, F) may be given to a graduate student for course work. A grade of A indicates exceptional achievement; a grade of B indicates substantial achievement; a grade of C indicates acceptable but substandard achievement; a grade of D indicates inadequate achievement and is a failing grade for a graduate student. A required course in which a D has been obtained cannot be used to meet degree requirements. A grade of F indicates work unworthy of any credit and suggests the student may not be capable of succeeding in graduate study. The grade-point equivalents for each possible grade are 4.0, 3.67, 3.33, 3.0, 2.67, 2.33, 2.0, 1.0, and 0, respectively.

Changes in assigned and recorded grades are possible only to correct errors made in calculating or recording the grades, not to allow a student to improve a grade ex post facto, or to permit long-delayed completion of a course. Senate Policy states in the Student Guide to University Policies and Rules that no grade change can be made more than one year after the end of the term in which the course was taken.

### Deferred Grades

If work is incomplete at the end of a term because of extenuating circumstances, the instructor may report DF in place of a grade, which will appear temporarily on the student's record. It is not appropriate to use the DF either casually or routinely to extend a course beyond the end of the term or to extend a course for a student who has failed so that the individual can do extra work to improve the grade. The DF must be removed (i.e., the course must be completed) within nine weeks of the beginning of the succeeding term (six weeks for summer). If the course is not completed and a grade assigned within the extended time period, a grade of F replaces the DF.

## **Unsatisfactory Scholarship**

The Penn State Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin describes unsatisfactory progress to be "one or more failing grades or a cumulative grade-point average below 3.0 for any term or combination of terms...." If you exhibit unsatisfactory scholarship, you will be asked to achieve a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 within your next 12 credits and maintain a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 or better until all other degree requirements are completed. A minimum grade-point average of 3.0 is required for graduation.

## **Other topics**

### **Full-time and part-time student course loads**

For scheduling purposes, the Penn State Behrend MBA program distinguishes between part-time and full-time status. Part-time students (typically those fully employed) are limited to six credit hours in an academic term. Full-time students can enroll in a maximum of twelve credit hours per term provided they are working no more than 20 hours per week

### **Employment Relocation**

On occasion, MBA students are relocated by their employers while the student is enrolled in the MBA Program. If this happens to you, contact the Director of the MBA Program. We will make every effort to assist students in this situation.

It is unlikely that arrangements can be made to finish courses mid-semester so it best to delay the relocation until the end of the semester when that is possible. Elective courses might, however, be available through other universities' MBA Programs (a maximum of nine credits can be transferred into the Penn State Behrend MBA Program) or through Independent Studies. Arrangements to meet program requirements using these or other alternatives must be made by the student in consultation with the Director of the MBA Program. Official transcripts for courses taken in other programs should be sent to the Director of the MBA Program. Relocated students must still complete the Intent to Graduate form when their course work is done.

### **Time to Complete Degree**

The Graduate School allows a maximum of eight years for completion of MBA requirements.

### **Course Absenteeism**

Attendance at MBA classes is required. It is MBA faculty policy that a student who misses more than one class in the blended format automatically fails the course. If a student anticipates that work will call for missing more than one class, it is best not to register for that course. Individual faculty may have their own attendance policies, which may include participation grades based on attendance or grade-related penalties for absences. Individual faculty may also have policies regarding make-up examinations. See the syllabi of courses and their instructors for further information regarding policies on absenteeism. Faculty websites provide syllabi and details for currently offered courses.

### **Confidentiality of Student Records**

The University recognizes individuals' privacy and the confidentiality of student records as described in the Family

Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Certain directory items may be released without the student's permission and may be made available to the public without prior consent as they are considered part of the public record of attendance. Students are entitled to request that these directory items not be made publicly available.

## 400 level Electives

Students can take up to six credits of 400 level business classes as electives in the MBA program. Course work at the 400 level must be approved by the director of the MBA program and cannot have been used for another degree.

## Independent Study

An Independent Study is typically a 3-credit hour elective course designed by a student with a graduate faculty member to explore a topic of the student's interest that is not covered in available courses. A student may request an Independent Study as a means of finishing elective courses necessary to earn the MBA **if the student is relocated by an employer**. An Independent Study cannot be used as a substitute for an Advanced Required Course. Independent Studies must be approved by the Director of the MBA Program in consultation with the supervisory MBA faculty member.

Considerations for approval of Independent Studies projects will include, but are not limited to:

- Previous experience of the student
- Student's GPA – must be at least a 3.00
- Reason for the Independent Study
- Usefulness of the Independent Study
- Number of hours of work by the student that the Independent Study is expected to entail – should be at least 90 hours for a 3-credit course
- Availability of a course that covers the same material – If a comparable course is available within the year, the Independent Study will not be approved.

In order to schedule an Independent Study, you should discuss the topic with an appropriate professor in the MBA Program. For example, if the proposed study is related to finance, a finance professor must be the supervising faculty member. Professors will work on Independent Studies as their schedules permit. Independent Study projects can be arranged with non-MBA faculty. These would be treated as undergraduate 496 courses and subject to the two 400-level class rule. That is, a 496 project would count as one of the permissible two 400-level classes in a student's MBA program.

If a faculty member is willing and able to work with the student, the MBA Independent Studies Approval and Records Form should be completed by you and the professor. The form is available in the Black School of Business Office or from the Director of the MBA Program. That form should be submitted by the professor to the Director of the MBA Program within the first ten days of the semester. The student must then register for the course through the Registrar's Office, either in person or online.

Independent Studies must be completed during the semester for which the student registers for the Independent Study. Extensions will be given only when either the student or the professor has an emergency situation occur. No more than three credits in total can be earned through Independent Study.

## Textbooks

Students can buy textbooks at the University bookstore located in the Reed Union Building. Students can pick up the books or have them postal mailed for an additional shipping charge. They can also be ordered from this Behrend

website. Finally, ISBN numbers for texts are posted so they can be purchased through other means.

## **PSU Immunization Requirements**

The Pennsylvania State University requires all incoming degree-seeking students and all students living in Penn State housing to be compliant with immunization requirements. Information can be accessed online about [immunization requirements](#).

## **Penn State's Computing Technology**

A Penn State Access Account provides students with a PSU e-mail account and consists of a user ID and password that enables Penn State students, faculty, and staff to use the full range of online services and resources on or off campus. Your user ID is the "public" part of your Penn State Access Account. This is the part you should share with others so that they know where to send electronic mail. Your user ID (sometimes referred to as "username" or "userid") is usually your initials followed by a 1- to 3-digit number such as xyz101. The letters are lowercase.

PSU e-mail accounts will be a prominent method of communication in all MBA courses. Get in the habit of checking your PSU e-mail account frequently. If you normally use another internet service provider (ISP), please consider forwarding your PSU e-mail to your alternative ISP account so you will be sure to receive important program communications.

## **Phone, Email addresses, Websites & Fax Numbers**

### **Black School of Business**

Office: 814-898-6107  
Fax: 814-898-6223

### **Director of the MBA Program**

Office: 814-898-6509  
Fax: 814-898-6223

### **Career Services**

Office: 814-898-6164  
Fax: 814-898-6455

### **Bookstore**

Office: 814-898-6236  
Fax: 814-898-6423

### **Bursar's Office**

Office: 814-898-6224  
Fax: 814-898-7595

### **Financial Aid Office**

Office: 814-898-6162  
Fax: 814-898-7595  
[behrendfinaid@psu.edu](mailto:behrendfinaid@psu.edu)

### **Graduate Admissions Office**

Office: 814-898-7255  
Fax: 814-898-6053  
[PSBehrendMBA@psu.edu](mailto:PSBehrendMBA@psu.edu)

### **Lilley Library**

Office: 814-898-6106

### **Police & Safety Services**

Office: 814-898-6101

### **Registrar's Office**

Office: 814-898-6104  
Fax: 814-898-6382  
[regbd@psu.edu](mailto:regbd@psu.edu)