

“To protect the educational process and to provide for the safety of members of the University community and the institution’s property, the University has the responsibility to set and maintain standards of conduct for members of that community and for those seeking admission into that community.”

Therefore, a pre-admission review is required when known facts suggest that an applicant’s behavior may, as a student, endanger the health and safety of University community members, jeopardize property of the University or its members and visitors, or adversely affect the educational mission of the University.

If the University learns that an applicant for admission or reenrollment has been incarcerated or has been involved in other illegal activities, the University reserves the rights to determine the acceptability of the applicant or enrollee as a student. Such identified applicants are subject to review procedures administered by the appropriate office, such as Judicial Affairs, Office of Admissions, University Health Services, or the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services.

The review procedures may be used in considering requests for non-degree, provisional or degree admission, reenrollment and changes from non-degree/provisional to degree status. The following guidelines apply to the circumstances identified:

1. The applicants for admission and reenrollment will not be considered for enrollment on University campuses or property while incarcerated in any federal, state, county or city prison, or jail, including youth detention centers.
2. Applicants on **parole, probation** or any type of **intermediate punishment or house arrest**

program are subject to review procedures prior to consideration for admission or reenrollment.

3. Applicants with past disciplinary history or any type of disciplinary sanctions are subject to review procedures prior to consideration for admission or reenrollment.
4. Incarcerated individuals enrolled in University programs or courses conducted off-campus or off University property are subject to review procedures prior to consideration for a change from non-degree/provisional status to degree status.
5. Applicants with known emotional and/or psychological problems who have engaged in violations of the law, or past misconduct related to a prior university’s rules or policies that was disruptive or threatening to the functioning and well-being of self or others are subject to review procedures prior to an admission or readmission final decision.

A. No inquiries shall be made regarding an applicant’s background prior to the submission of an application.

B. When an application for admission is submitted, no pre-admission background inquiries shall be made regarding an applicant. However, if the University has a specific factual basis regarding an individual, which indicates the applicant may pose a substantial risk of harm or disruption to the University community, and then exclusion may be warranted.

To be considered for admission or reenrollment, consistent with these guidelines, the following review procedures will be required of those described by Circumstances 1, 2, 3, and 4.

1. Release of information from parole officers, prison officials, psychiatrists, psychiatric social workers, college administrators, and other professionals will be requested when the information has a direct bearing on the applicant’s behavior and suitability for enrollment at the University.

2. Personal letter of application from the applicant that shall set forth, where applicable:

A. In detail, the nature of the individual’s activities since incarceration, commitment, treatment, or applied sanctions.

B. The reasons why the applicant feels he/she should be admitted or reenrolled to the University.

C. The reasons why the individual believes he/she would be able to abide by the rules and regulations of the University if permitted to enroll, and;

D. Attach a list of references (individuals) including addresses and phone numbers that have been asked by the applicant to send reference letters.

Letters of reference should be on official letterhead and should include the length of time by dates that the reference person has known or had contact with the applicant. It should be noted that these reference letters may not be from family members.

(1) Long Term Community References-

A minimum of two references from reputable persons in the individual’s community, not relatives, who have had a long-term acquaintance with and personal knowledge of the applicant.

(2) **Supervisory Report and Recommendations-** The applicant should have two letters written by individuals who had direct supervisory responsibility. If the applicant has been attending non-resident courses or attending another college or university, there should be a letter from the department head, dean, or from the student affairs administrator. Instructors, advisors, and counselors may be used as community references and for additional letters of reference but not for supervisory recommendations.

(3) **Probation Report-** If the applicant is or has been under any form of probation or parole, then a letter from the supervising officer is required.

3. Depending upon the nature of the facts with respect to the applicant described by Circumstance #5, special requirements may be stipulated such as, but not limited to, a personal review, a psychiatric or psychological evaluation by CAPS, or a comprehensive diagnostic/treatment report from a duly recognized mental health practitioner of the University's choice.

As soon as all of the required and additional listed letters of references are received in Judicial Affairs or other appropriate University office and after any additional requirements are met, the completed file will be reviewed.

Individuals governed by Circumstance #5 may be reviewed by the Health and Wellness Center at Penn State Altoona. All other circumstances and correspondence relative to the above review, excluding the admission applications, shall be sent

to the Director of Judicial Affairs, 103 Harry E. Slep Student Center, Penn State Altoona, 3000 Ivyside Park, Altoona, PA 16601-3760. Letters of reference should be mailed directly to that address by the reference source. The Director of Judicial Affairs or designee will notify the applicant of the decision.

For additional information, please contact:

Dr. L. Jay Burlingame
**Associate Director, Division of Student Affairs/
Director, Office of Judicial Affairs**
Penn State Altoona, Altoona College
103 Slep Student Center
3000 Ivyside Park
Altoona, PA 16601-3760

Phone: 814-949-5065
Fax: 814-949-5805

ljb2@psu.edu

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Policy On Pre-Admission Review And Reenrollment For Applicants With Known Behavior Problems



“The Pennsylvania State University is an institution of learning and a community of persons with a special purpose. Members of the University accept their obligation to provide for its students an atmosphere which protects and promotes its educational mission and which guarantees its orderly and effective operation.”