

A Wharton Student's Guide to Returning from a Leave of Absence





Wharton Wellness

Welcome back!

On behalf of Wharton Wellness, we are pleased to have you back on campus. We know that the return from a leave of absence at Wharton can be challenging, but we are here to help you along the way.

In this guide, you will find tips and best practices for how to navigate your first semester back on campus. Through conversations with those who have taken leaves, we have identified common challenges and FAQs that we hope this guide will address to facilitate your return experience.

Thank you to Scott Romeika, senior director of the Undergraduate Division and advisor for Wharton Wellness, for making this guide possible, along with all of the students who have taken leaves and the Wharton Undergraduate community.

Sincerely,

Wharton Wellness

About Wharton Wellness:

[Wharton Wellness](#) is a G95-sponsored organization that works with faculty, administration, and the undergraduate community to improve the mental, social, and physical wellness of students at Wharton. Past initiatives have included working with Career Services to update its newsletter; opening additional study rooms in Huntsman during the weekdays; and working with professors to create virtual office hours and interactive practice sessions.

Wharton Wellness has also been working to enhance the student experience surrounding taking and returning from leaves of absence.

Contact us at whartonwellness@wharton.upenn.edu.

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Mental health support:

Penn offers a wide variety of mental health resources, such as:

- [CAPS](#)
- [Reach-a-Peer Line](#) (phone service available 9pm - 1am, 215-573-2727)
- [Student Intervention Services](#)

More resources can be found [here](#).

Returning Student Orientation

A great first step when returning to campus during the Fall and Spring semester is to attend Returning Student Orientation (RSO), a student-led event that brings together students from all four schools who have taken leaves. The event features a student panel, where students who have taken leaves in the past share their experiences. It also includes a meet and greet with panelists and other returning students.

Advisors from all four schools, [Weingarten Learning Resources Center](#), [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#), and [Student Intervention Services \(SIS\)](#) also attend the event. This provides an easy way for students who might be interested in these resources to get acquainted with the relevant staff members.

The Wharton Case Manager advisor emails returning students every semester with the details of this event. If you did not re-

ceive this email, please reach out to the advisor or Wharton Wellness to learn more. Everyone who has taken a leave is invited to attend, regardless of how long it has been since your return.

Contact us to learn more:

whartonwellness@wharton.upenn.edu



Meeting with Advisors

Talking to your [advisor](#) can be a helpful way to get reintegrated into school life. As you will know, it is required that students meet with their advisor upon returning to school, and this meeting is a great way to start.

The Wharton Case Manager is an advisor who works directly with students at all stages of their leave process. The Case Manager or your academic advisor can connect you with a leave of absence buddy (more details on the following page).



Buddy Program

Wharton Wellness has started a buddy program comprised of student buddies who have taken leaves of absence in the past and are willing to share their experiences with students thinking about taking leaves and those returning from leaves. The program will get you connected with a mentor who can help guide you through the return process by sharing their own experience and what they learned.

Please contact the G95 case manager, your academic advisor, or Wharton Wellness to learn more.



Reaching Out to Professors

Getting connected with professors can be a helpful way to re-integrate into academic life. We would recommend reaching out to the professors whose classes you will be taking during your first semester back in order to make them aware that you are a returning student. Professors have been known to be very understanding and helpful for returning students. If you cannot get hold of them by email, try going into their office hours instead. Students have found it most helpful to see professors within the first two weeks of returning to school.

Sample Email:

Dear Professor _____,

My name is _____ and I am a student in your _____ class. I just returned to school this semester from taking a leave of absence, and I am trying to ease my reintegration into academic life. I was wondering if I could arrange a time to meet with you to discuss how to best prepare for your class. Any guidance would be greatly appreciated.

Best,

Social Reintegration

Many students comment that social reintegration can be one of the toughest parts of returning from a leave of absence – particularly for students who take a full year off.

Some common questions students have include:

- Do I still have a “place” at Penn?
- How will my friends treat me after I return?
- Will I be able to rejoin old friend groups, or will they have moved on?
- If joining a new class year: will I ever feel a part of my new class?
- Should I rejoin my previous clubs? Should I join new clubs?
- Should I get connected with other people who have taken leaves?

The answers to these questions are highly personal, but are worth reflecting on and talking to friends, family, and advisors about, both before you get back to campus and during the first few weeks of your return.

Finding extracurricular opportunities:

Many students find it helpful to attend either the [SAC Activities](#)

[Fair](#), [Wharton Clubbing Night](#), or both, in order to get reacquainted with the extracurricular opportunities and even find out about new clubs that have been formed since taking the leave. Information about these events is emailed to students at the beginning of every semester.

More information on joining student groups can be found through the [Student Activities Council](#) and the [Wharton Undergraduate Club Page](#). You can also find information on [Campus Groups](#).



Wharton Clubbing Night

Social support:

There are many organizations on campus that allow students to build relationships with diverse groups of people.

[Table Talk](#) is an organization that bring students who would not may not cross paths under ordinary circumstances together through conversation.

Penn's Cultural Resource Centers support exploration and celebration of culture and identity across academic and social. These include:

- [The Albert M. Greenfield Intercultural Center](#) is for students interested in enhancing their intercultural experiences through programs, advising, and advocacy.
- [La Casa Latina](#) promotes greater awareness of Latinx issues, culture, and identity at Penn.
- [The Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Center](#) is a home away from home for sexual and gender minorities and their allies at the University of Pennsylvania.
- [Makuu: The Black Cultural Center](#) is Penn's focal point for student activities, ideas, outreach, and support linked to Black culture and the African Diaspora.



Join the conversation.

- The [Pan-Asian American Community House](#) is a hub for Penn students interested in all facets of the Asian American culture. Through advising, leadership development, advocacy, social and cultural programming we expand student access to the University's resources.
- The [Penn Women's Center's](#) mission is to promote gender justice, and to empower, support, and advance personal and professional development for women and female-identified persons.

[Wharton Peer Advising Fellows](#) are Wharton seniors who are available to provide advice regarding academic, extracurricular, and professional concerns to fellow students.

A leave buddy may be able to give more individualized insight into how you can form new connections at Penn!

The [Wellness at Penn](#) website provides a list of organizations and opportunities that can be a good way to find out about ways to get connected with others.



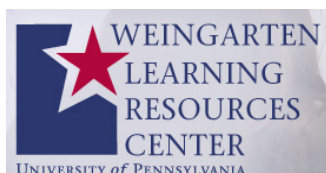
Sharpening Study Skills

Upon returning from a leave, some students face challenges in re-adjusting academically. After going on leave for a semester or longer, some find that the study habits developed during their time on campus have become rusty. In order to sharpen your study skills, a variety of academic resources exist, including the Weingarten Learning Resources Center and the Penn Tutoring Center.

Weingarten Learning Resources Center

Weingarten's [Office of Learning Resources](#) provides 1-on-1 consultations and group workshops for skills like reading, writing, study strategies, and time management.

For example, the WLRC offers Course Management, a 6-session workshop series for undergraduates across Penn returning from leaves or seeking to improve their academic standing. The workshop series focuses on exam prep, organization, academic writing, project management, and active study. It also includes individual consultations with experienced learning instructors at Weingarten.



Penn Tutoring Center

The [Penn Tutoring Center](#) offers both 1-on-1 and group tutoring sessions covering both core courses and other courses (by request).

1-on-1 tutoring can be by appointment or walk-in, and consists of satellite tutoring, college house tutoring, and private tutoring.



Satellite Tutoring

The Satellite Tutoring sessions are one hour of private tutoring in core introductory and intermediate courses. They are held in Van Pelt Library, Huntsman Hall, and Education Commons. The offered courses may change each semester, so students are encouraged to regularly check the course offerings and schedule at the beginning of each semester. [Appointments](#) are necessary!

College House Tutoring

College House tutoring is located in Ware and Harrison College Houses. It is private tutoring in core classes with no appointment necessary! However, it is important to check the [posted schedule](#) for courses, times, and locations.

Private Tutoring

All students may request a private tutor for a maximum of two courses per semester, subject to tutor availability. The process to request a private tutor is found on the [Tutoring Center site](#). It is *highly recommended* to request a tutor as early as possible in the semester. Appointments to request a tutor are available typically one to two weeks after the beginning of the semester.

Group Tutoring

The Tutoring Center also offers walk-in group tutoring sessions, which are student-led weekly review sessions. These sessions run on a [limited schedule](#), so be sure to consult regularly. The Tutoring Center also offers Workshops, which are problem-solving sessions where students can work in small groups solving problem sets in courses like MATH 103 and MATH 104.

Overview

We hope this guide will be helpful to you as you begin your journey back at Wharton. Please reach out to us (whartonwellness@wharton.upenn.edu) if you have any further questions.

Suggested to-do's for returning students

1. Set up a meeting with your advisor
2. Get connected with a leave buddy, or reconnect with your buddy if you had one prior to taking your leave
3. Start exploring opportunities to reinvigorate and/or make new social connections
4. Reach out to your professors
5. Attend Returning Student Orientation (held about week after school begins)
6. Look into workshops at Weingarten for sharpening your study habits and, as classes begin, consider requesting a private tutor or visiting tutoring sessions held by the Tutoring Center

Resources

Counseling and Psychological Services

Email: caps@pobox.upenn.edu

Phone: (215) 898-7021

Reach-a-Peer Line

Phone service available 9pm - 1am, (215)-573-2727

Student Intervention Services

Phone: (215) 898-6081

The Tutoring Center

Email: vpul-tutoring@pobox.upenn.edu

Phone: (215) 898-8596

Weingarten Learning Resource Center

Email: lrcmail@pobox.upenn.edu

Phone: (215) 573-9235