

# BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

## Exchange Student Handbook



Office of Study Abroad

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# CHECKLIST

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## BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME

- Apply for a J-1 visa from local US Embassy or Consulate.
- Make travel plans for arrival and departure from Brandeis University.
- Complete the Medical Report form prior to leaving and bring completed form to Brandeis University.
- Create your Brandeis e-mail account.
- Watch the online orientation from the International Students and Scholars Office.

## AT BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

- Check in with the Office of Study Abroad in Usdan 169. We'll connect you with the Department of Community Living to pick up keys and get housing assignment. A campus map is included in this handbook.
- Attend orientation. Dates and locations will be sent to you prior to arrival. Get your campus ID card.
- Make an appointment with the Health Center to review your medical forms. To make an appointment, please call (781) 736-3677.
- Complete your check-in with the International Students and Scholars Office.

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# INTRODUCTION

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*We are excited to welcome you to Brandeis University!*

## ABOUT BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

Brandeis University is a community of scholars and students united by their commitment to the pursuit of knowledge and its transmission from generation to generation. As a research university, Brandeis is dedicated to the advancement of the humanities, arts and social, natural and physical sciences. As a liberal arts college, Brandeis affirms the importance of a broad and critical education in enriching the lives of students and preparing them for full participation in a changing society, capable of promoting their own welfare, yet remaining deeply concerned about the welfare of others.

Brandeis was founded in 1948 and is located in Waltham, Massachusetts, approximately 10 miles outside of Boston, Massachusetts. 3,599 undergraduates attend Brandeis and 7-8% of the student population is comprised of international students.



## ABOUT THE OFFICE OF STUDY ABROAD

The Office of Study Abroad, located in Usdan 169, is your primary contact while studying at Brandeis University. The exchange program that brought you here is administered jointly between the Office of Study Abroad and a comparable office at your home institution. In addition to admitting you to Brandeis University, we pre-register you for courses, assist with housing, and help with logistical support. Please feel free to come to us with any questions or problems before, during, or after your semester or year at Brandeis University.

## ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS OFFICE

The International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) is responsible for issuing the immigration documents required for international students to apply for a student visa. They also issue work authorization and advise on other issues related to maintaining legal status in the United States. The ISSO organizes a mandatory International Student Orientation each semester. In addition to these important services, the ISSO sponsors programs for international students throughout the year.

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## BEFORE LEAVING

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### OBTAINING A STUDENT VISA

As a participant of an exchange program to Brandeis University, you will most likely be entering the United States on a J-1 exchange visitor visa. The Office of International Students and Scholars will send you information on how to apply for your visa. Please follow these instructions very carefully.

Updated information on how to obtain a student visa can be found at:  
<http://www.brandeis.edu/isso/incoming/stepstosecurevisa/index.html>

### TRAVEL PLANS

As an exchange student, it is your responsibility to arrange for your arrival to and departure from the United States.

You should plan to arrive on campus on **Wednesday, January 7, 2015 between 9am and 5pm** to move into your residence hall. Orientation starts Thursday, January 8, 2015 at noon. Any arrival before this time will be on your own and your residence hall will not be available before January 7, 2015. Please be aware that the following immigration regulations are in effect for all J-1 students:

- New international students will not be permitted to enter the US more than 30 days before the start date of their program as indicated on the DS-2019 form.
- Upon completion of studies (i.e. the end date listed on the DS-2019), J-1 students are permitted to remain in the US for 30 days.

You will need to vacate your residence hall by 12pm noon on Friday, May 8, 2015.

### MEDICAL INSURANCE

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires all full-time students (both American and international) attending colleges and universities in Massachusetts to subscribe to a US-based insurance plan. You will be enrolled in and billed for the Brandeis University medical insurance upon your admission to the university.

Additionally, you are required to complete the Medical Report Form found in your online application account prior to leaving your home country. Please have this form completed by a doctor in your home country and then upon arriving on campus, make an appointment with the Brandeis University Health Center to review your forms.



## WHAT TO BRING

### **Documents**

- Medical and dental records, including certificates of immunizations and vaccinations and your Medical Report Form
- Information about medical conditions or treatments, prescriptions for medication (including generic and brand names), spare eyeglasses and a prescription.
- International driver's license

Wherever applicable, these documents should be accompanied by official English translations.

### **Linens**

Bring a sheet and towel for the first few days at Brandeis; sheets in the United States come in standard sizes to fit the beds. Purchase extra-long twin sheets if you are living in the residence halls. You may want to purchase these before arriving on campus, since shipping takes a while.

One option is to buy your essentials online from the "Shop for College" section in the Bed Bath and Beyond website ([www.bedbathandbeyond.com](http://www.bedbathandbeyond.com)).



## **Clothing**

Students at Brandeis dress very informally: jeans, shorts, t-shirts, casual shirts, etc. Nevertheless, there will be some occasions for you to dress up, such as semi-formal and formal dances or special events with the faculty. Traditional dress is always welcome. You will need plenty of warm clothing for the winter: sweaters, fleeces and/or sweatshirts, and a winter jacket are essential. Heavy, waterproof shoes/ snow boots, gloves, a hat and scarf for snow will also be necessary, as will be an umbrella for rainy days.

Temperature averages for Boston are:

January: 36 °F	July: 82 °F
February: 39 °F	August: 80 °F
March: 45 °F	September: 72°F
April: 56 °F	October: 61 °F
May: 66 °F	November: 52 °F
June: 76 °F	December: 41 °F

## **Conversions and General Measurements**

Clothing sizes in the U.S. can vary. Be sure to try on any clothing or shoes before you buy them.

Be advised that high-quality winter jackets can be quite expensive, but we recommend that you purchase it after arrival, to make sure that it is warm enough. Some popular brands for winter jackets are Patagonia and North Face.

## **Books and Supplies**

Books are very expensive in the United States -- a semester's worth of books for an undergraduate is typically around \$500.00. You should probably bring along books (dictionaries, reference material) that you use often, or know you will need. Students recommend "renting" books from sites like [www.chegg.com](http://www.chegg.com) or purchasing books from other students at [mybrandeis.edu](http://mybrandeis.edu). We strongly suggest you consider buying used copies through sources like the Brandeis Bookstore, Amazon.com, Cheapbooks, Barnes and Noble, or eBay since they are less expensive than new books. You might also like to bring some books in languages other than English, which are harder to come by in the United States.

## **Electrical Devices**

The standard electrical output in the U.S. is 110V/220V, so most foreign electrical equipment cannot be used here. Bring electrical devices only if you will run them on batteries or a voltage converter.



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# ACADEMICS

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## BRANDEIS E-MAIL, SAGE, AND LATTE ACCESS

As an exchange student at Brandeis University, you will create a Brandeis e-mail account. This e-mail account is what faculty, staff, and other students across campus will use to communicate with you so check is regularly. You will also have access to Sage and Latte, which will contain your financial information (bills, etc.) and your course information.

### **E-mail**

To create a Brandeis e-mail account, follow these steps:

1. Go to <https://identity.brandeis.edu/identity/index>
2. Click on the link that reads "Create an official staff/faculty/student account"
3. Type in your information, and check off "Yes" to the question "Are you are an incoming student?"
4. Enter your Sage ID number, which was sent to you by email
5. Hit "Submit" and your account has been created
6. The UNET login name and password will allow you to access sage (where you will find future billing information) and LATTE (where you will access course materials). Please note that your UNet ID is your Brandeis email address minus the @brandeis.edu.

If at any time, you forget your UNet Password, go to <https://unet.brandeis.edu/cgi-bin/forgot-password>. The UNet Help Desk number is 781-736-7782. To access your Brandeis e-mail account at any time, visit <login.brandeis.edu>.

### **Sage**

Sage gives you access to view your financial documents and add or drop classes, among other things. To access Sage, open your browser and go to <https://sage.brandeis.edu>.

- Log in using your UNet ID and UNet Password.
- Press the 'Sign In' button.
- The Student Center page will open.

When using sage do not use the back button. Use the page navigation tools or breadcrumbs instead. To ensure account security, logout and quit your browser when you finish your Sage transactions.

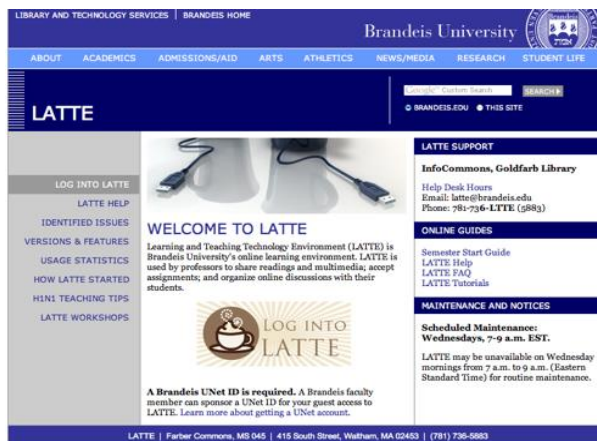
In Sage, you are encouraged to assign a sage Proxy account to any person (parent, spouse, etc.) who has some responsibility for making payments to the student account. You may create a

Proxy account at <https://sage.brandeis.edu> via the “Add / Delete Proxy” link in the “Personal Information” section of your Student Center in sage.

## LATTE

Many professors use LATTE to store course information, so you can expect to use it in your classes. To access LATTE, open your browser and go to <http://www.brandeis.edu/latte/>

- Log in using your UNet ID and UNet password.
- Press the 'Log into Latte' image.
- The Student Center page will open.



### ***Need Assistance?***

*If you have any trouble setting up your UNet account or have questions, please contact Alisha Cardwell ([acardwel@brandeis.edu](mailto:acardwel@brandeis.edu)) so she can help you troubleshoot.*

## ENROLLING IN OR CHANGING CLASSES

Prior to arrival, the Office of Study Abroad will register you for the classes you requested on your application. Please keep in mind that you must be flexible about what courses you will take. We cannot guarantee that you will get all of the classes you request as some classes have restrictions and size limitations. If you need to make any alterations to the courses you selected on your application, please e-mail the Office of Study Abroad.

### **Add/Drop**

The first weeks of classes at the beginning of each semester is called the Add/Drop or “Shopping” period. During this time, you can make changes to your course schedule, adding or dropping courses as needed. Don’t worry if you do not have all of the courses that you need by the time classes start. You will have this period of time to make adjustments to your course schedule. Please contact the Office of Study Abroad if you would like to make any changes to your schedule during this time.

## TRANSCRIPT OF ACADEMIC WORK

At the end of your time at Brandeis University, an official transcript of the academic work you completed will be sent to your home university. Before the Office of Study Abroad can release

your transcript to your home university, however, you must clear any outstanding debts to Brandeis University that you may have.

## TUTORING SERVICES

The academic system in the US differs from other countries. You may spend more time in class than you would at home, and Brandeis professors often include class attendance as part of your final grade. Students are usually expected to complete a variety of assignments and are assessed throughout the semester. Students often participate actively in class discussions.

If you find yourself struggling, there are tutoring resources available to you. Brandeis Undergraduate Group Study (BUGS) is a program open to all undergraduates. Trained facilitators run small group sessions to go over course material and help prepare for exams. Group Study Leaders are undergraduates who have successfully completed the relevant course(s), are recommended by faculty, and have been trained by Academic Services. Find more information at <http://www.brandeis.edu/acserv/bugs/>.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Please note that as an exchange student at Brandeis University, you must abide by Brandeis' academic integrity policy and rights and responsibilities. You can view both at <http://www.brandeis.edu/svpse/academicintegrity/>.



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## YOUR FIRST DAYS IN THE U.S.

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### ARRIVING INTO THE U.S.

Upon arrival to the U.S., individuals will be asked by a U.S. Immigration Inspector to present the following:

- Passport with valid J-1 U.S. Entry Visa
- Appropriate Financial Documentation
- Brandeis Admission Letter and financial aid letter (if any)
- Certificate of Eligibility Form DS-2019

**Always carry these documents on your person. Do NOT pack them in your checked luggage, as you must show your documents to the CBP officer before you are allowed to claim your luggage.** The CBP officer may ask similar questions to those asked during the visa interview. Individuals should also be prepared to have their photo and index fingerprints digitally taken as part of the entry process.

If you do not have proper documentation upon arrival, the CBP officer may either deny your entrance to the U.S. or grant you a temporary 30-day entry as noted with a **Form I-515A**.

**Please contact the ISSO immediately in case of any difficulties entering the United States or if you are issued a Form I-515A.**

### GETTING TO BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

Below are some of your options to get to Brandeis once you arrive in Boston.

#### **Air Porter**

Air Porter is a year-round shared van service that is a convenient way for getting to Brandeis from the airport. It costs about \$39.00 for a one-way student fare to Brandeis. They will need your flight information, and a credit card number to make a reservation.

## **Taxicab**

A taxi to Brandeis from the Logan International Airport costs at least \$50.00. There will be taxis easily available at the airport. Within Waltham, you can use Checker Cab of Waltham at 781-647-TAXI.

## **Public Transportation**

You can utilize public transportation to get to Brandeis University. The subway is known locally at the "T". For more information consult the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority website at [www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com).

From the airport, take the shuttle to Airport Station on the Blue Line. Take the Blue Line toward Bowdoin and get off at State Street. At State Street Station, switch to the Orange Line toward Oak Grove. You'll then get off at North Station where you'll switch to the Commuter Rail. You'll want the Commuter Rail going to Fitchburg (consult [www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com) for times and schedules). You'll get off at the Brandeis/Roberts stop and then make your way onto campus.

You can purchase a "T" pass at Airport Station and a ticket for the Commuter Rail must be paid for in cash on the train, so please have U.S. dollars available.



## **Arriving by Car**

Brandeis is located just 10 miles from Boston and is within easy driving distance of the region's major cities.

*Please let us know how you intend to arrive to campus. When you first arrive, please come to the Office of Study Abroad in Usdan 169 and we will connect you with the Department of Community Living to move into your residence hall. Please see the attached campus map for directions.*



## ON-CAMPUS HOUSING

Brandeis University has a number of residence halls across campus. As an international exchange student, you'll live in the Village residence hall with an American roommate.

### **Rooms**

- Traditional style residence hall with singles and doubles.

### **Features**

- Central air conditioning
- Common area lounge and a kitchen facility on each floor (nine total).
- Laundry facilities located on the first floor of A house.
- Multipurpose dance studio on the first floor of A House
- Gym open 24/7 with a student ID in B House
- Study room, seminar room, and TV lounge on the first floor
- Small lounges for studying and student use on each floor
- Elevator in A House



All residence halls and academic buildings have access to free wireless internet access. Please be aware that sheets, blankets, pillows, towels, etc. are not provided in the residence halls. Please see the above section on what to bring for more information.

## ON-CAMPUS MEAL PLAN

Your meal plan for the semester will be the 17 Meal Plan option which is 17 meals per week in Sherman or Lower Usdan. This plan includes \$725 in Dining Points (to use in a la carte locations) and also includes 5 guest meals per semester. Sherman and Lower Usdan are "all-you-care to-eat" dining halls.

For more information on dining hall details, see

<http://www.brandeis.edu/services/campuscard/mealplans.html>.

## CHECKING IN AND ORIENTATION

Upon arrival, please proceed first to the Office of Study Abroad in the Usdan Student Center, Room 169. Please see the attached campus map for directions. We will then connect you with the Department of Community Living who will help direct you to your residence hall.

Orientation begins January 8, 2015 at noon. You are expected to participate in all of the mandatory orientation activities, including the ISSO session for international students. A full orientation schedule will be given to you prior to arrival.

## RECEIVING MAIL

Your address to receive mail is:

Attention: Your Name  
415 South Street, MS 073  
Office of Study Abroad  
Waltham, MA 02454

The Office of Study Abroad will then alert you whenever you have mail delivered.

## RESOURCES AND WAYS TO BE INVOLVED ON CAMPUS

As an international semester exchange student, you'll have access to all of the same resources and activities as undergraduate students. Brandeis University has many resources available to students and different ways to be involved on campus.

### **Student Clubs & Events**

Brandeis has more than 250 student-run clubs and organizations, including service organizations, cultural awareness groups, performing groups, spiritual and religious groups, sports and games clubs, student leadership and activism groups, student publications, a television station (BTV) and a radio station (WBRS). For more information, visit <http://www.brandeis.edu/clubs/>.

If you are on campus for the fall semester, you'll be able to experience:

- Fall Fest
- International Education Week
- Louis Louis Week



If you are on campus for the spring semester, you can experience:

- Spring Fest
- Festival of the Arts
- DEIS Impact
- Culture X

### **Gossman Sports Center**

The Gosman Sports Center is open every day of the week and has an indoor pool, tennis and basketball courts, weight room, exercise equipment, and more. See more information at <http://www.brandeisjudges.com/facilities/schedule>.

### **Spiritual Life**

The chaplains of Brandeis University warmly welcome you to the Brandeis community. As Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders, we welcome students of all faiths. We are here to be of service to the entire Brandeis community.

Brandeis encourages and supports all expressions of spiritual and religious life on campus. The university's three chapels — the Berlin Chapel (Jewish), the Bethlehem Chapel (Catholic) and the Harlan Chapel (Protestant) — serve as the focal point of spiritual and religious activity on campus. In addition, a Muslim prayer room and resource center are located in the Usdan Student Center.

See more information at <http://www.brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/chaplaincy/>.

### **Brandeis Bookstore and Library**

The on-campus bookstore is the place where you can buy collegiate clothing, gifts, books and all class materials. For additional information, please visit [www.brandeis.bkstr.com/](http://www.brandeis.bkstr.com/).

As an international exchange student, you'll also have access to check out books at the Goldfarb and Farber Libraries. The library houses borrowing services, equipment loan, research help, library collections, the Getz Multimedia Lab, Academic Computing, the Technology Help Desk, classrooms, Archives & Special Collections, and other services.

### **Psychological Counseling Center**

Some students find adjusting to a new culture and new academic environment very challenging. The Psychological Counseling Center provides counseling for students in times of stress, and encourages them to ask for help with their most immediate concerns. Our staff is experienced in dealing with deeper developmental and psychological issues ranging from stress and depression to substance abuse and eating disorders.

All concerns are addressed with sensitivity to and respect for diversity and individuality. We maintain the strictest standards of privacy and confidentiality, and serve as a resource to the entire Brandeis community. If you need to schedule an appointment, please call 781-736-3730 or e-mail [pcc@brandeis.edu](mailto:pcc@brandeis.edu).

## OFF-CAMPUS EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Visit [www.brandeis.edu/isso/helpful/activities/index](http://www.brandeis.edu/isso/helpful/activities/index) to view off-campus theaters, restaurants, museums, music and more. Find more information about Waltham, MA at [www.discoverwaltham.com](http://www.discoverwaltham.com).



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## CAMPUS CONTACTS

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**Office of Study Abroad**

Usdan 169

(781) 736-3483

[abroad@brandeis.edu](mailto:abroad@brandeis.edu)

**International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)**

Kutz 215

(781) 736-3480

[isso@brandeis.edu](mailto:isso@brandeis.edu)

**University Police**

(781) 736-3333

**Waltham Police**

Dial 911

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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*Should I open a U.S bank account?*

Dealing with a new currency and cost of living is never easy. Many students and scholars find themselves converting dollar prices into their own currency (and are shocked at the results) when buying inexpensive, everyday items. It can be hard to get a sense of what Americans consider expensive. It makes sense, therefore, to make your initial purchases in the company of experienced international or American peers. Soon you will be thinking in dollars!

We recommend that you carry at least \$1,000.00 in traveler's checks to defray initial costs for arrival and travel in the U.S. Remember that the budget estimates provided to you by your school/department are only estimates. Your actual costs may be significantly higher (or lower), depending on the lifestyle you choose. It is very important to realize that your financial situation will not change substantially once you arrive. Make sure that you can afford to pay your fees and have sufficient funds for living expenses before you leave home. For undergraduate students, excellent academic work will not result in increased financial aid at Brandeis, and the money you make working on-campus should be thought of as incidental rather than a significant contribution to your educational or living expenses.

While not necessary unless you obtain an on-campus job, you may want to open a U.S. bank account. Visit any local bank to do so. You do not need a social security number to open an account.

*How should I make calls from the U.S.?*

Students typically choose to buy a cell-phone. Some companies require customers to have a social security number in order to provide cellular service; some others like [www.universitymobile.com](http://www.universitymobile.com) do not. Be aware that if you lack credit history in the United States, some companies may require that you make an initial deposit that will be returned to you a year after you first signed your contract.

Mobile/Cellular Phones:

A popular option is to buy a cell phone. For more information check [AT&T](#), [Verizon Wireless](#), [T-Mobile](#) or [Sprint](#) to figure out which carrier best fits your needs. You may want to check with students who have been here for recommendations regarding coverage, plans and benefits.

### Local, Long-Distance and International Calls:

All phone numbers in the United States consist of a three-digit area code followed by a seven-digit number. The area code for Waltham is 781. To make a local call (i.e. with the same area code) dial the area code and the seven-digit number. Local calls are normally not billed, or are inexpensive. To dial long-distance within the U.S., dial 1 + area code + seven-digit number. Numbers with an 800, 888 or 866 area code are normally toll-free.

To make an international call, you must dial 011 first to get outside the U.S. + country code + city code + number you are calling. Long-distance and international calls are often quite expensive, so make sure you know the rates before you dial. Many international students are often shocked and surprised by their first phone bills. To reduce costs, we strongly recommend using a calling card when calling internationally.

One way to reduce costs is to call using a phone card.

Some phone cards send monthly bills, while others deduct the cost of phone calls from an initial deposit made by you until the deposit runs out. You can buy these cards anywhere in the U.S., online (at places such as [Calling Card.com](http://Calling Card.com)) but your best bet would be to talk to someone from your home country, or explore the internet to see which company will work the best in your case. Try [Hello College](http://Hello College) or [Skype](http://Skype) to compare rates.

*Can I work while in the US, either on or off campus?*

Unfortunately, as a J-1 international student, you cannot work on or off campus.