

Cover Page

Advising & Course Registration: A Guide for First Year Students

Beginning Your Academic Journey at Brandeis

Image of Academic Services logo, the Brandeis seal and the Louis Brandeis statue on a hill against a blue sky with colorful spring flowers and stairs in the foreground.

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Welcome to Brandeis Class of 2030

The purpose of this eBook is to introduce you to advising at Brandeis as well as guide you through the registration process that happens in our Workday Student Information System. Use this eBook to assist you in preparing for course selection for the fall semester as it includes valuable content, suggestions and videos from our advising team.

Watch and listen to the "Guide to Advising and Course Registration Welcome Video 2026."

Academic Services

Academic Services upholds a culture of inclusivity as we engage a diverse community of students, faculty and campus partners. We promote the growth of students as scholars and citizens through comprehensive advising and support over the course of their academic journey. We provide resources and opportunities that strengthen students' ability to define and achieve their academic goals, develop resilience and lead meaningful lives.

Academic Services Office, Mission Statement, 8/2016

Where to find Academic Services

Location Usdan East 130

Phone 781-736-3470

Email acserv@brandeis.edu

Website brandeis.edu/academic-services

Instagram [@brandeisacserv](https://www.instagram.com/brandeisacserv)

Image of a brown brick building (Usdan Student Center). The location of the Academic Services Office.

Who are my Advisors?

When you enter Brandeis, a professional staff Academic Services Advisor is assigned to you based on the first letter of your last name. Advisors provide holistic support, guidance and resources to assist you along your academic journey. Your academic advisor will reach out periodically during the academic year, but students are responsible for communicating proactively if they need support.

Link to Staff Advisor Assignments available from this page.

When you declare a major, typically in your sophomore year, you will also be assigned a faculty advisor in that department.

Meet with an Academic Advisor when you want to discuss...

Academic exploration and planning

- Major/minor selection
- Course planning
- Graduation requirements
- Academic opportunities
- Academic interests
- University policies

Academic Support

- Study Skills
- Dealing with setbacks
- Identifying and using resources

Personal Growth

- Goal setting
- Self-care
- Identifying strengths

The Roosevelt Fellows are...

- Peer academic advisors who offer an informed student perspective on academics.
- Junior and senior peer leaders that have specialized training and knowledge of the Brandeis curriculum, majors and campus resources.
- Available to talk with you about course registration and planning, exploring departments, understanding academic policies and adjusting to Brandeis.
- Support all students, including transfer students.

Watch and listen to the "Who are the Roosevelt Fellows" Video.

Meet with a Roosevelt Fellow when you want to...

Gain a student perspective on academic questions
Have informal conversations about your academic experiences
Discuss your academic and social adjustments
Review academic policies and degree requirements

Get help with course planning

Website bit.ly/rooseveltfellows

Instagram [@rooseveltfellows](https://www.instagram.com/rooseveltfellows)

Course Registration Dates

Registration Dates:

Fall 2026 course registration on Workday is open for new students from Tuesday, July 14 at 10am EST to Thursday, July 16 at 11:59 pm.

Students entering in Fall 2026 should register for courses in the Workday Student Information system. Class registration is conducted on a first-come, first-served basis, so please register early to maximize course choice.

Not sure where to begin?

Click on the links on this page to sign up to attend a group webinar and make an appointment with staff and peer advisors to begin your academic journey at Brandeis. Advisors can

- introduce you to academic advising resources and support
- discuss important topics related to course selection, registration and major declaration.

Links to Group Advising Webinar sign up form and Individual Advising Appointment Calendar available from this page.

Prepare for Registration

1. Familiarize yourself with the Brandeis Core. This is the foundation of your liberal arts education.
2. Discover academic programs of study in the University Bulletin, which features a listing of course offerings by department and details institutional policies and academic requirements.
3. Search for courses offered for Fall 2026 in Workday and the Registrar's Schedule of Classes. Develop a list of potential courses. Check to make sure you have the prerequisites for the courses you plan to take.
4. Review Academic Advising for New Students on our website. You will find recommendations for courses to get you started in a major or minor here.

Links to the Brandeis Core website, University Bulletin, the Registrar's Schedule of Classes, and Exploring and Declaring Majors website available from this page.

What is the Brandeis Core?

Watch and listen to the "What is the Brandeis Core?" Video.

The Core curriculum focuses on five broad areas to strengthen mastery of academic, personal, social, and career goals. Each area is interdisciplinary, rooted in Brandeis' bedrock values and focused on the highly complex, interconnected world in which we live.

Five images run across bottom of page including a brain, feather, leaf, and pencil and ruler.

How do I Complete the Core?

In Your First Semester

Navigating Health and Safety (HWL pre and HWL 1 module course)

In Your First Year

First-Year Seminar (FYS)

Before Graduation

You will complete these components throughout your time at Brandeis:

Core Competencies

- Oral Communication
- Writing Intensive
- Teamwork and Collaboration
- Technologies
- Quantitative Reasoning

Areas of Inquiry

- Creative Arts
- Humanities
- Science
- Social Science

Global Engagement

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Studies in the U.S.
- Difference and Justice in the World
- World Languages and Cultures

Health, Wellness & Life Skills

- Mind Body Balance
- Life Skills

Each bullet point = 1 course

*Successful completion of 30-level language course or equivalent. See Brandeis Core website for more information.

Link to Brandeis Core website available from this page.

What courses do I need to take in my first year at Brandeis?

First-Year Seminar (FYS)

First-Year Seminar meets the core first-year writing requirement, which aims to improve students' written communication skills during their careers at Brandeis.

- You will be placed in either CSEM (Composition Seminar) or FYS based on your writing assessment.
- In mid-June, you will rank your top choices for FYS sections.
- The Registrar's Office will enroll you in one of your top choices before registration begins. You can find the section, date and time of the class in your fall class schedule on Workday.
- Once registration opens, you are welcome to swap into another section on a seat-available basis.
- If the section you want is full, place yourself on the class waitlist. If you are placed in CSEM and need to swap into another section, you should contact registrar@brandeis.edu to make a request.

If you do not see a FYS on your fall course schedule you will be placed in a spring section at a later time.

Link to First-Year Seminar website available from this page.

HWL 1: Navigating Health and Safety

This component of the Brandeis Core is a two-part requirement: an online training course (to be completed prior to the start of the semester) and a 6-week module that you will take during your first semester at Brandeis:

HWL 1-PRE - What Would Brandeis Do? (Online Course)

Supporting Community Health and Safety is an important, mandatory online training that all new undergraduates must complete on Moodle during the summer.

The training will begin on August 3 and should be completed by August 21.

HWL 1: Navigating Health and Safety (Module Course)

All new students must complete HWL 1 in their first semester in either Module 1 (first six weeks of the semester) or Module 2 (last six weeks). Please enroll yourself in the section that best fits your planned schedule.

Note: HWL 1 is a non-credit class, so you will need to find at least an additional three 4 credit courses (or 12 credits) to register for.

Link to Navigating Health and Safety website available from this page.

Picture page

Image of a classroom at Brandeis. A professor is at the front of the room in front of a screen featuring a presentation and students are seen from behind attentive to the lecture at various tables with notebooks and laptops in front of them.

How Do I Build a Balanced Schedule?

Watch and listen to the "Tips For Building a Balanced Schedule" Video.

Image of a sample fall semester schedule with generic course suggestions and their numeric equivalents.

Category suggestions on the image include:

CSEM or FYS* writing course (4 credits)

Language or other Core Requirement (4 credits)

Fun/Exploratory Course (4 credits)

Course towards a planned Major or Minor (4 credits)

HWL-1 (0 credits, first semester requirement)

This is one example of how you may want to structure your schedule in your first semester.

*Please note: Due to space availability, you may not get into a FYS sections in your first semester. If this is the case you will be able to take it in the spring semester.

Sample Schedule 1

Sample 1 is an image of student "Parker's" schedule with a total of 18 credits. Courses include:

- BIOL 15b Cells and Organisms: A pre-requisite for most BIOL classes and helpful for HSSP

- CHEM 11a General Chemistry I & CHEM 18a General Chemistry Lab I: These introductory courses begin a year-long sequence of general chemistry lecture (CHEM 11) and lab (CHEM 18) and are a pre-requisite for most BIOL classes and are a typical med school requirement.
- HISP 20b: Parker wishes to continue with Spanish and took the placement test to test into the 2—level of the language.
- FYS 8b: This will fulfill the FYS requirement and it is in a topic that relates to Parker’s personal interests.
- HWL 1: This is required of all first semester first year students.

Parker’s interests include:

- Pre-Health; wants to be a doctor and go to med school
- Unsure of major, leaning toward Biology, Biochemistry, or Health: Science, Society, and Policy (HSSP).
- Took Spanish in high school and wants to continue with the language; took Brandeis language placement test and placed into HISP/Spanish 20.

Picture page

A visual representation of Parker’s Semester Schedule including days of the week and meeting times for the above-mentioned courses illustrated on a weekly calendar.

Sample Schedule 2

Sample 2 is an image of student “Alex’s” schedule with a total of 16 credits. Courses include:

- ECON 2a A Survey of Economics- Fulfills the QR requirement and relevant to politics.
- FYS 4b Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Medieval Spain- First Year requirement and relevant to their interests.
- HISP 10a Elementary Spanish I- Begins language requirement path and relevant to their interests.
- IGO 10a Introduction to International and Global Studies- A good introduction to the IGS department. It would be a core course for the IGS major if Alex decides to pursue this.
- HWL 1 Navigating Health and Safety- This is required of all first semester first year students.

Alex’s interests include:

- A passion for politics and global studies
- An interest in the socio-political history of Spain
- A desire to learn a 2nd language. Currently they have no experience learning a 2nd language.
- Getting to their Quantitative Reasoning and Science requirements over with as soon as possible. They are feeling a little nervous about these requirements, but are hoping to find courses in those areas that they enjoy.

Picture page

A visual representation of Alex's Semester Schedule including days of the week and meeting times for the above-mentioned courses illustrated on a weekly calendar.

Frequently Asked Questions

How many classes should I take?

4 or 4.5. A full course load at Brandeis is 16 credits, or 4 courses. Most courses at Brandeis are 4-credit courses, with some courses carrying 2 credits. Examples of 2-credit courses include some science labs, music ensembles, or experiential learning classes (such as Galaxy). For example, if you are enrolled in four 4-credit courses plus a lab, you would be taking 4.5 classes (18 credits). While it is possible to take anywhere from 3 to 5.5 classes (12-22 credits) per semester at Brandeis, the curriculum is designed so that students taking 4 classes per semester can graduate in 8 semesters.

When do I declare a major?

All new students come in undeclared. Students need to declare a major by the start of their fourth semester. This allows time in your first few semesters for academic exploration of a range of interests and fields. While it is possible to declare more than one major, only one is required to graduate (and no minors are required).

What do I do if the classes I want are full?

Every student will not get every class that they want to register for on the first try and/or in their first semester. There are, however, plenty of courses offered for every student to have enough credits for the semester.

Be flexible: Have a few backup courses saved in Workday.

Be patient: Add yourself to course waitlists.

Explore: Be open to discovering new areas of interest.

Quote page

Image of the top portion of the light of reason sculpture on the Brandeis campus against a blue sky with black graduation caps in the air.

Quote by Louis D. Brandeis "If we would guide by the light of reason, we must let our minds be bold."

Using Workday to Plan & Register for Classes

Watch and listen to the "Using Workday to Plan and Register for Classes" Video.

Course registration takes place in Workday, Brandeis' student information system. In this video you will learn how to:

- Log in to Workday
- Clear your holds and complete registration requirements
- View your external credits
- Search for classes and create a saved schedule
- Add yourself to waitlists and request prerequisite overrides
- Find module courses

Workday Terms

Onboarding

A series of tasks that you must complete BEFORE you can proceed to registration.

Registration Holds

Registration holds on your record will prevent you from being able to register. You can view and resolve holds through the Academics application or your student profile in Workday.

Job Aids

Job aids are how-to guides with screenshots and instructional videos. If you are stuck on how to complete a task in Workday, use a job aid to help you through.

Units

The Workday term for credits.

Workday Tips

Class Search Filters:

When using the class search tool on Workday, you will be able to filter your search by:

- Academic department
- Section status (open, waitlist, closed courses)
- Course tags
- Meeting patterns (class days/times)

Course tags are very useful to search for requirements within a major, or search for courses that satisfy a Brandeis Core requirement. For example, if you wanted to find courses that satisfy the Creative Arts (CA) requirement, you would type “CA” in the box and select “General Education requirements - Creative Arts.”

Request a prerequisite override. If you have already fulfilled a stated prerequisite (through a qualifying AP score, for example) and would like a faculty member to override the prerequisite for a course, you can request an override on Workday.

Claiming External Credit

A combined maximum of four courses (16 credits) from external sources may be applied toward the 128 credits needed for graduation at Brandeis. Use the Registrar’s website to review external credit policies and charts for qualifying scores. External sources include:

Advanced Placement/ International Baccalaureate Exams

A-Level

French Baccalaureate

Fall/spring pre-matriculation college coursework not needed for high school graduation

Fall/spring courses for students on an Admissions deferral or gap year

If you intend to use your AP/IB scores for placement/credit, you must have your scores sent to Brandeis. (Our College Board code is 3092)

Questions? Email transfer@brandeis.edu or visit the Registrar’s Office Website

How can I check if my AP/IB scores have been received?

See if your scores have been received by logging into Workday and clicking on the cloud icon at the top right to view your profile. From your profile, click on “Academics” in the left sidebar. The External Records tab will appear if your AP scores have been sent to Brandeis.

Once received, how can I claim my AP/IB scores?

Once your scores are on Workday, you can have them officially applied to your Brandeis record by emailing transfer@brandeis.edu. Once claimed, you'll see them on the Transfer Credit tab under Academics on Workday. Note: you can choose to forgo applying AP/IB credit to get a stronger foundation in a subject.

If I took college courses in high school, how do I know if those credits will count toward my Brandeis degree?

College courses taken while in high school can be used for external credits if a B- or better was earned, and the course did not count towards high school graduation. More information on this as well as the

petition process to get these credits onto your Brandeis record is located on the Registrar's Office website.

Placement Testing

Placement tests are not required in all subjects. Students are expected to complete the writing assessment (refer to page 12) and the math placement. For other subjects, placement tests are important if you need to determine the appropriate starting level for a course/s you wish to take or if you want to test into a higher level of a course.

- You should utilize these tests early, before the start of registration.
- You should be in touch directly with the academic departments should you have any specific questions regarding the test or your readiness to take a course in that subject area.

Subjects utilize placement tests:

biology, chemistry, computer science, economics, languages, math, physics

To learn more about placement testing visit the placement testing website.

Picture Page

Four thumbnail images centered in the middle of the page with the words "Make your Mark"

Images include students in a classroom, students with laptops sitting around a table, a student working on an electronic device on a table near a laptop, and students smiling and sitting next to one another working on a craft.

Other Academic Opportunities (page 1 of 2)

Beyond majors and minors, there are many academic opportunities and paths at Brandeis for you to explore. Here is some information about a few of them that may interest you. Click to learn more about:

Study Abroad

Pre-Law

Pre-Health Advising

World Languages and Cultures

Other Academic Opportunities (page 2 of 2)

Study Abroad

Brandeis students are able to study abroad any summer, during the fall or spring of their junior year or fall semester of their senior year. (Given the residency requirements, be sure to talk with an academic advisor about your interest in studying abroad.) All majors and minors can study abroad! As an entering first-year student, we recommend starting or continuing to study a foreign language, especially since programs in countries where French, Hebrew, Italian or Spanish is spoken require a minimum of two semesters of language study.

Pre-Law

If you are considering applying to law school, the best thing to do is to take substantive classes that interest you, in any subject. Law schools do not favor applicants from any particular major, nor is it required for an applicant to declare multiple majors to be competitive. You are invited to join the Hiatt Pre-Law Listserv for weekly announcements about events, opportunities, announcements and job/internship postings and to touch base with the pre-law advisor in the Hiatt Career Center.

Pre-Health

Pre-Health Advising supports students interested in any health profession, including medicine, dentistry, physician assistant, nursing, optometry, veterinary medicine and more! A pre-health advisor can help you explore different health professions, connect you with opportunities to gain experience and eventually guide you through the application process. For students who indicated an interest in pre-health, please keep an eye out for a separate email from Pre-Health Advising with additional information.

World Languages & Cultures

Watch and listen to the "Why Take a Language Course?" Video. Video by Zev Ross '24

Helpful Websites

Click on any of the following topics to get to a website with additional information.

[Academic Advising FAQs for New Students](#)

[Advising 1:1 Appointments: Sign Up Link](#)

[Advising Webinars: Sign Up Form](#)

[Brandeis Core](#)

[Claiming External Credit](#)

[Exploring and Declaring Majors](#)

First Year Seminar Courses

New Student Enrollment Checklist

Placement Testing

Registrar's Office

Student Accessibility Support

University Bulletin

Workday Student Training Guides

2026-27 Academic Calendar

2026-27 Roosevelt Fellows

Save the Dates

Monday, June 15 – Monday, July 13

Group Advising Sessions

1:1 Appointments with Advisors

Sign Up Now!

Tuesday, July 14 – Thursday, July 16:

Fall 2026 course registration opens for new students

Friday, July 17 – Wednesday, September 9:

Course registration open for all undergraduates

Sunday, August 23 – Tuesday, August 25:

New Student Orientation*

*Getting to Know Academics at Brandeis

August 24 and 25

Orientation events offered will focus on your academic experience at Brandeis. From defining your liberal arts experience, to meeting faculty and departments, to gaining knowledge about academic success resources, you will definitely be ready to start your academic journey at Brandeis!

Wednesday, August 26:

First day of classes

(& the annual Roosevelt Fellow ice cream social!)

What Our Students Say About Advising

Images of quote bubbles containing the following quotes:

“Academic advising ensures students to feel comfortable with their choices and offers suggestions that are helpful for their academic goals. I can connect with an advisor whenever I am feeling confused about a course or any other academic related discussions. I think academic advising plays an important role in shaping the future of students.”

“[My advisor] answers all my questions and always helps me when I’m anxious and/or need support.”

“My academic advisor is nice, patient and knowledgeable about majors, minors, and class options.”

“[My academic advisor] is fantastic! She is very knowledgeable about academic policies and campus life, provides helpful solutions and information and is extremely kind and a great listener.”

We hope you find this eBook helpful as you plan out your first semester at Brandeis. A reminder that registration remains open throughout the summer for students to make adjustments to their schedule.

Watch and listen to the "Closing" Video.