

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 against a blue sky with yellow flowers in the foreground.

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Welcome to Brandeis

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 spring 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."

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)

What is Advising?

Advisors are dedicated to helping students make informed decisions about their educational, personal and career goals. Advising is an active, intentional and collaborative partnership between advisor and advisee. Advisors value the unique backgrounds, identities and lived experiences that Brandeis students bring to the advising relationship and to their individual academic paths.

Who are my Advisors?

When you enter Brandeis, you have a professional staff Academic Services Advisor, assigned based on the first letter of your last name, and a peer advisor, known as a Roosevelt Fellow. Advisors provide

holistic support, guidance and resources to assist you along your academic journey. Whether you are planning for a future semester, deciding on a major or minor, working to understand a policy that impacts you, celebrating an accomplishment or facing an academic challenge, advisors are here for you! Your academic advisor will reach out periodically during the academic year, but students are responsible for communicating proactively if they need support.

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

Who are the Roosevelt Fellows?

Roosevelt Fellows are peer academic advisors who offer an informed student perspective on academics. These junior and senior peer leaders have specialized training and knowledge of the Brandeis curriculum, majors and campus resources. They are available to talk with you about course registration and planning, exploring departments, understanding academic policies and adjusting to Brandeis. Roosevelt Fellows support all students, including transfer students. Do not hesitate to be in touch with them!

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

Course Registration

Advising appointments available:

Note sure where to begin? Make an appointment with an academic advisor to begin your academic journey at Brandeis. They can introduce you to advising resources and support, and talk through important dates and registration information for the Spring 2026 semester.

Spring 2026 Course Registration on Workday is open to new students now through Wednesday, January 26.

Students entering in Spring 2026 should register for courses in the Workday Student information system. Class registration is conducted on a first-come first-serve basis, so register as soon as you are able to maximize course choice.

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, details institutional policies and academic requirements.
3. Search for courses offered for Spring 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.

What is the Brandeis Core?

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

The Core curriculum uniquely fosters curiosity. It allows you to explore across disciplinary boundaries and acquire new perspectives in a shared academic experience rooted in open inquiry and inclusion.

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

How do I Complete the Core?

During Your First Year

You will complete the following during your first year at Brandeis:

First-Year Seminar (FYS)

Navigating Health and Safety (HWL pre and HWL 1)

Within Your Major

You will complete these foundational literacies within any major you declare:

Writing Intensive

Oral Communication

Digital Literacy

Before Graduation

You will complete these components throughout your time at Brandeis:

World Language Sequence

Difference and Justice in the World

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Studies in the U.S.

Creative Arts

Science

Quantitative Reasoning

Humanities

Social Science

Health, Wellness and Life Skills (2 modules)

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

First-Year Seminar (FYS)

First-Year Seminar is the centerpiece of the First-Year Experience and part of the Core requirements at Brandeis. The seminars will meet the Brandeis Core first-year writing requirement, which aims to improve students' written communication skills during their careers at Brandeis.

You should add FYS to your Spring 2026 course schedule. If the section you want is full, place yourself on the class waitlist. If you are not able to secure a seat in an FYS section, you will take it in the fall 2026 semester.

[Link to First Year Seminar Website](#)

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?

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

The training will begin on December 18 and should be completed by January 8. .

HWL 1: Navigating Health and Safety

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.

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](#)

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 spring semester schedule with generic course suggestions and their numeric equivalents.

Category suggestions on the image include:

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 Fall 2026 semester.

Sample Schedule 1

Sample 1 is an image of student “Parker’s” schedule. Parker is interested in pursuing pre-health coursework because they want to be a doctor and intend to apply to medical school after graduation. They are not yet sure of their major, but they are leaning toward Biology or Health: Science, Society, and Policy (HSSP). They will register for: BIOL 15b, FREN 20b, FYS 4a, MATH 2f, and HWL 1

Explanation:

BIOL 15b: Cells and Organisms. Pre-requisite for most BIOL classes and helpful for HSSP. 4 credits.

FREN 20b: Continuing French. 2nd level of French language since they already have experience. 4 credits.

FYS 4a: Medical Ethics. FYS requirement and topic that relates to their personal interest. 4 credits.

MATH 2f: Introduction to STEM Skills. 2-credit course that meets for 1 module (half of the semester). 2 credits.

HWL 1: Navigating Health and Safety. 1st semester requirement. 0 credits.

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. Alex is passionate about politics and global studies. They are interested in the socio-political history of Latin America, has no experience learned a 2nd language, and hopes to get their quantitative reasoning (QR) requirement over with as soon as possible. They will register for ECON 2a, FYS 76b, HISP 10a, IGS 10a, and HWL 1.

Explanation:

ECON 2a: A Survey of Economics. QR requirement and relevant to politics. 4 credits.

FYS 76b: Narratives of Migration. First year requirement and relevant to their interests. 4 credits.

HISP 10a: Element Spanish I. Begins language requirement path and relevant to their interests. 4 credits.

IGS 10a: Introduction to International and Global Studies. Good introduction to the IGS department. 4 credits.

HWL 1: Navigating Health and Safety. 1st semester requirement. 0 credits.

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 a health 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.

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 Appointment Calendar](#)

[Brandeis Core](#)

[Claiming External Credit](#)

[Exploring and Declaring Majors](#)

[New Student Enrollment Checklist](#)

[Placement Testing](#)

[Registrar's Office](#)

[Student Accessibility Support](#)

[University Bulletin](#)

[Workday Student Training Guides](#)

2025-26 Academic Calendar

2025-26 Roosevelt Fellows

Save the Dates

Advising Appointments Available

December-January

Spring 2026 Course Registration on Workday open for New Students

Through Wednesday, January 26

Move-In Day & Onboarding Activities for New Students

Sunday, January 11

First Day of Classes

Monday, January 12

Welcome Dinner Event – Invitation to follow

Wednesday, January 14

5:30-6:30pm

Sherman Function Hall

Winter Involvement Fair

Sunday, January 18

1-4pm

Levin Ballroom (Usdan Student Center- West)

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 through January 26th for students to make adjustments to their schedule.

Watch and listen to the "Closing" Video.