Physics Graduate Student Handbook
Ph.D. in Physics
2023-2024

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A. Introduction

The GSAS and Physics bulletin contain the official statements of the policies governing Physics PhD students. The purpose of this handbook is to supplement the bulletin by providing more programmatic details and useful information. Please make sure you read the Bulletin carefully:

- GSAS
- Physics

The GSAS library of policies and procedures also contains much useful information

The specific requirements described in the current bulletin and in this handbook apply to students admitted in 2023 or later; students admitted earlier are instead governed by the bulletin at the time they were admitted. Please also be aware that the University Bulletin is a legal document governing all academic regulations. If anything in this handbook contradicts the Bulletin, the Bulletin will take precedence. In addition, please be aware that in the event of a public health emergency or other major event, the procedures listed in this handbook may change.

For convenience, here is a quick summary of the requirements for the PhD. For students without Advanced Admission:

- Core courses
- Laboratory course
- Three elective courses
- Colloquium attendance in first year
- Qualifying Exam
- Two semesters of teaching (including one TAing an undergrad course)
- Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) workshop
- Advanced Exam
- Annual check-ins
- Thesis & defense

For students with Advanced Admission:

- Three elective courses
- Colloquium attendance in first year
- Two semesters of teaching (including one TAing an undergrad course)
- Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) workshop
- Advanced Exam
- Annual check-ins
- Thesis & defense

If you have questions about the graduate program, including any of the material described in this handbook, please address them to the Graduate Advising Head (Matthew Headrick, headrick@brandeis.edu) and Academic Administrator (Anne Lazerson, lazerson@brandeis.edu). If necessary, they can direct you to the relevant resources. See the section, “Resources and ways to get help”, for more information.

B. Courses

You must enroll in a total of at least 12 credits each semester. The bulletin stipulates that "at least nine semester courses in physics numbered above 160 are required"; however, this requirement is usually automatically satisfied given the various specific courses required.

a. Core courses

The following courses are required and usually taken during the first year:

- PHYS 162a *Quantum Mechanics I* (fall)
- PHYS 163a *Statistical Physics and Thermodynamics* (fall)
- PHYS 164a *First-Year Tutorial* (fall)
- PHYS 161a *Electromagnetic Theory* (spring)
- PHYS 162b *Quantum Mechanics II* (spring)

These are 4-credit courses, with the exception of PHYS 164a, which is a 2-credit course. PHYS 164a includes presentations by faculty inside and outside the Physics Department on their research. To satisfy the requirement, these courses must be passed with a grade of B or better. The final exams for PHYS 161a, 162a,b, and 163a comprise the written part of the qualifying exam. You may be exempted from any of these courses (except PHYS 164a) by passing an exam equivalent to the final exam for that course before the end of the second week of the semester in which the course is offered.

We want to give each student the best possible chance to be successful in the core courses. While most students take them during their first year, in some cases it may be better to postpone one or more courses to your second year and take appropriate undergraduate courses during your first year in order to solidify your foundation in particular areas. To help diagnose any weaknesses in your undergraduate physics foundation, a short pre-test will be given in each core class (except 164a) during the first two weeks of the semester. If weaknesses are revealed by the pre-tests, or if you have any concerns about your preparation in certain areas, you will meet with the GAH and together develop a plan for completing the core courses.

The requirement to take these courses is automatically waived for students admitted with Advanced Admission. You are still welcome to take any of these courses if you feel you would benefit from them; however, they will not count towards your elective requirement.

b. Laboratory course

You are required to take one of the following graduate laboratory courses:

- PHYS 169 *Advanced Physics Laboratory,* or
- QBIO 120b *Quantitative Biology Instrumentation Laboratory*.

You are encouraged to satisfy this requirement during your first year, or at the very latest your second year. To satisfy the requirement, these courses must be passed with a grade of B or better. You may be exempted from the laboratory requirement by proving, to the satisfaction of the instructor of PHYS 169, that you have done well in a similar course elsewhere. For this purpose, you should provide the following information: when and where course was taken (institution and year); title and description/summary of course, or course syllabus if available; final course grade.

The laboratory requirement is automatically waived for students admitted with Advanced Admission. You are still welcome to take these courses if you feel you would benefit from them.

c. Electives

You must take three elective courses. To count toward the elective requirement, a course must be passed with a grade of B or better. Which courses are accepted toward the elective requirement is at the discretion of the Graduate Advising Head (GAH), and you should seek approval before taking a course if you wish it to count toward the elective requirement. Generally speaking, most classroom courses in the sciences numbered above 100 are accepted, including reading courses (PHYS 280) but not including laboratory courses. In addition, typically at least one course (or, for students whose dissertation research is outside of physics, two courses) must be within physics (i.e. with a PHYS course number).

The elective requirement is *not* waived for students admitted with Advanced Admission.

d. Required research courses

You should enroll in PHYS 213 *Advanced Exam Tutorial* while preparing for your Advanced Exam (usually during your second year, or first year for students with Advanced Admission); this is an 8-credit course. Once the Advanced Exam is passed, you should enroll in your advisor's section of PHYS 401 *Dissertation Research* every semester; this is a 12-credit course.

e. Other courses

In choosing other courses to take, we recommend seeking the advice of the GAH and/or your advisor or prospective advisor. Here we highlight two optional courses of special importance:

- PHYS 212 *Introduction to Research.* This is a rotation in the research group of a faculty member and also includes training in scientific reading, writing, and presentation skills. It may be taken with any faculty member, inside or outside the department, who agrees to supervise you. It can be taken during either, both, or neither semester during your first year; if both semesters then it is recommended to work in different groups during the two semesters. It is a 4-credit course, and does not count toward the elective requirement. Normally it may not be taken by students with Advanced Admission, who are presumed to be taking PHYS 213a,b during their first year.
- PHYS 280 *Advanced Readings.* This is for reading courses. PHYS 280 can also be used as a placeholder for a course taken at another university with which Brandeis does not have a formal cross-registration agreement, such as Harvard or MIT. For this purpose, you must obtain the consent of the instructor to informally attend their course, and enroll in PHYS 280 with a Brandeis faculty member. You must make arrangements for your coursework to be graded so you can be assigned a grade at the end of the semester. (In some cases, the instructor will let your work be graded along with that of the other students in the class.) PHYS 280 may not be used for a research rotation. This is a 4-credit course and may, with the approval of the GAH, count toward the elective requirement.

C. Exams & milestones

a. Qualifying Exam

The Qualifying Exam includes a written and an oral part. The written part consists of the final exams (or exemption exams, if passed) for PHYS 161a, 162a,b, and 163a. Any final exam that is not passed must be retaken.

The oral part consists of short presentations based on two original papers from the research literature, assigned in advance, and questions from members of the examination committee. You will be evaluated based on your presentations, understanding of the papers, and grasp of the underlying physics. The exam will be oriented towards testing basic physics at the level expected of a senior undergraduate. The oral exam is administered in January and in May. It only needs to be passed once; if failed in January it may be retaken in May.

After the January oral exam and again after the May oral exam, the faculty meet to evaluate the academic progress of each first-year student and to make a plan to help them achieve the required milestones or, if satisfactory progress is not being made, to recommend departure from the program.

The Qualifying Exam is waived for students with Advanced Admission.

b. Advanced Exam

During the summer following your first year and the first semester of your second year, you will prepare an Advanced Exam (AE) on a specialized research topic under the supervision of an individual faculty member who will normally become your thesis advisor if you pass the exam. Your AE declaration form should be submitted to the GAH by August 1 preceding your second year in the PhD program.

The purpose of the exam, held by January 15 of the second year, is to assess whether you're ready to make the transition from course work to thesis research. (The timing is modified for students admitted with Advanced Admission; see below for details. It may also be postponed in certain cases, depending on the student's particular circumstances, as determined by the GAH and prospective advisor.)

Passing the AE is how you officially become part of your prospective advisor's group, which entails a significant, long-term commitment on their part. The purpose of the AE is to give them the information they need about you, as a scientist, to make an informed decision about this commitment. The process of working toward the AE also gives you the information you need to decide whether you want to do your thesis work in your prospective advisor's group, and if not to switch prospective advisors in a way that is much less disruptive to all involved than after the AE.

The AE consists of a written report and an oral presentation. The written report should not be longer than about 10 pages. It should be written as a scientific paper, complete with an abstract, references, etc. It should contain an overview of the topic on which you're planning to do your thesis research (or whatever topic you and your advisor have agreed on for the AE). This means it explains key previous work, the current state of the art, important open questions, and how you are attacking or planning to attack them. It may also describe new results you've already

obtained, if any. It is not necessary for you to have significant new results, and certainly not anything that would be publication-worthy, but it's good if you can at least describe work in progress. It should be written for someone who is in the same general field but is not necessarily familiar with the particular problem you're working on; therefore it should include a general motivation and overview before getting into technical details.

The oral presentation should be about 30 minutes long and should summarize what is in the written report. In style it should be a scientific presentation, like one you might give at a conference. Like the written report, it should be aimed at someone in the same general field but who is not familiar with your particular project, and should therefore include a general motivation and overview; it should not just jump right into the technical details. Your oral report is followed by a Q&A with the committee where they ask you about what you've talked about and probe your understanding of the general area and specific topic.

Beyond these general considerations, the expectations for your particular advanced exam should be discussed with your advisor. You should submit a draft of both the written and oral reports to your advisor with enough lead time for at least one full feedback cycle, and then submit the final written report to your committee at least a week before the exam.

You may want to take a look at the written and oral AE reports of more senior students in your prospective advisor's group, to get an idea of the expectations.

The student and advisor have the joint responsibility to assemble the AE committee, usually consisting of two faculty members in addition to the advisor, and to agree upon the AE topic and expectations. Usually at least two of the AE committee members are physics faculty. At most one may be a faculty member at a different institution.

In case you fail your AE, your prospective advisor may allow you to retake it. If not, you must look for a different advisor. The timing of your second AE will be decided by the GAH and prospective advisor, but generally speaking will be no more than 3 months after the first one if not changing advisor, and 6 months if changing advisor. You must pass your second AE in order to stay in the program.

c. Annual check-in & second advisor

The AE committee has two members in addition to the advisor. One of them is designated on the AE declaration form as the student's "second advisor". Your second advisor may be a Brandeis professor outside of the Physics Department; however, if your advisor is outside Physics then your second advisor must be within Physics. The second advisor's main roles are general mentoring throughout your program, helping to make sure you are on track, and back-up advising in case of problems between yourself and your advisor. Your second advisor may also provide intellectual and scientific advising. You should be given the freedom to choose a faculty member you are comfortable with as your second advisor.

After you have passed your AE, you should have a formal check-in meeting with your advisor and second advisor every year, around the anniversary of your AE. A few days prior to the meeting, you should give them:

- a one-page scientific update, summarizing your progress achieved in the prior year as well as your current and future work; and
- an updated IDP. An IDP (individual development plan) is a career development tool that is used to (a) maintain communication between you and your mentors regarding your long-term goals and career development; (b) help identify an appropriate career path based on your skills and interests; (c) assess current and missing skills and abilities for the desired career path; and (d) set specific goals to prepare for the desired career path. The IDP will evolve as your interests and experience level change over time. You can choose from among the many IDP formats available, which can be found by googling IDP.

The meeting itself should consist of:

- a brief (around 30-minute) scientific presentation by you describing results achieved in the previous year as well as the current status of your work and future plans, with Q&A;
- a review and discussion of the IDP; followed by
- a one-on-one discussion between yourself and your second advisor where you can talk frankly about your progress.

After the meeting, the second advisor is responsible for sending to you, your advisor, and the GAH, by email, a brief summary of the check-in and your progress. This summary should include a statement to the effect that an updated IDP was discussed.

The main purposes of the annual check-in, including the written report and IDP as well as the presentation and meeting, are:

- to give you practice and feedback on written and oral scientific communication;
- to help you and your advisor take stock of your progress toward the PhD and beyond, and to get an outsider's viewpoint (and, if useful, advice) on that progress; and
- to keep the department, in the form of the GAH, apprised of your progress.

d. Thesis and defense

At least six months prior to your planned graduation, together with your thesis advisor, you will assemble a dissertation committee. The dissertation committee must include your advisor, and typically also includes your second advisor and one or two additional faculty members. At least two members of the committee must come from the Physics Department. The committee must also include one "outside reader" from outside the department (either from another department at Brandeis or from another university). See the University Bulletin and GSAS website for more detailed instructions on choosing a dissertation committee: GSAS Bulletin, GSAS student resources.

Specific Ph.D. thesis requirements are set by your advisor and dissertation committee. Deadlines for thesis submission to the dissertation committee should be set by your advisor and approved by the entire committee. It is expected that you will ask all members of the committee precisely when they want or need the written document and that you will provide the finished document by whatever date is requested.

Upon completion of your dissertation work, you are required to give a public seminar on your research, followed immediately by a private thesis defense (student and dissertation committee only). The student and the dissertation committee can determine the modality of the defense (in-person, hybrid, remote). The thesis defense must meet requirements of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

e. Master's in passing

When students have completed the requirements needed to satisfy a Master's Degree in Physics, they have the option to apply for a "Master's in passing". Most Ph.D. students will qualify for a Master's in passing after completing their second year in the Ph.D. program. Briefly, students must complete and pass eight semester courses in physics (or, with the approval of the GAH, a related subject) numbered above 100. In addition to these eight courses, students must have satisfactory performance in the qualifying examination. The minimum residence requirement is one year.

D. Other requirements & expectations

a. Teaching

Each student must teach at least two semesters, including at least one semester as a TA in an undergraduate course; in the other semester, you may be a TA or you may take on another role such as supervising undergraduate research. Many students TA both semesters their first year and one semester their second year; however, this varies widely depending on many factors. The teaching requirement is *not* waived for students with Advanced Admission.

As a TA, you will be a member of the Service Employees International Union Local 509, and your TA responsibilities will be governed by the contract negotiated between the union and the university.

Among other things, this contract stipulates that your responsibilities should take up no more than 10 hours per week, on average over the course of the semester; thus, you may need to work more than 10 hours in certain weeks. (If your TA responsibilities are regularly requiring more than 10 hours per week, you should document the time you are spending and then bring the issue up with the course instructor. If necessary, you may also speak with the GAH and/or department chair.)

Every TA will also have an assigned hour or two each week staffing the resource room. (Time spent helping students in the resource room counts toward the 10 hour/week limit.)

Teaching Assistant assignments for the Fall are finalized during orientation shortly before the Fall semester begins, and TA assignments for the Spring are finalized shortly before the semester starts. All students who serve as Teaching Assistants or Teaching Fellows must complete a series of trainings: the Office of Equal Opportunity training, the Supporting Students Outside of Academics training, the Pedagogy training, and (for international students who have not received a previous degree from a US college or university) the International Pedagogy training. Students

only need to complete each training once and will receive emails in the semester they are first teaching with information about schedules and signing up.

Occasionally, there are also opportunities to grade in exchange for a supplement to your stipend. Such grading positions do not entail membership in the union. You must obtain the consent of your advisor (or, if you don't have an advisor yet, the GAH) to take advantage of such an opportunity.

b. Department colloquia & pizza talks

Every other week, the department schedules a colloquium, with either an internal or external speaker, on a topic of broad interest. On the weeks without a colloquium, at the same time, there is a pizza talk with a speaker who is a postdoc or advanced graduate student in the department. Attendance at these events is mandatory for first-year students (including those with Advanced Admission), and strongly encouraged for all students.

c. Responsible Conduct of Research workshop

At some point, preferably during your first year, you must attend a Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) workshop. These are typically offered in January.

E. Typical timeline

The following gives the pathway for a typical student. However, many variations are possible due to Advanced Admission, exempting courses, delaying courses, and other factors. Don't worry if you're not following this exact timeline.

Year 1

The first year is devoted to building a strong academic foundation, taking qualifying examinations, and by summer, beginning work toward your Advanced Exam (AE).

Fall semester: Enroll in PHYS 162a, PHYS 163a, and PHYS 164a. Enroll in PHYS 212, a lab course, or an approved elective. Attend the physics department colloquia and pizza talks. Serve as a TA.

January: Take oral qualifying exam. Attend Responsible Conduct of Research workshop.

Spring semester: Enroll in PHYS 161a and PHYS 162b. Enroll in PHYS 212, a lab course, or an approved elective. Attend the physics department colloquia and pizza talks. Serve as a TA.

May: Take oral qualifying exam (if not passed in January).

During your first year, you will meet with the GAH at least three times: at the beginning of the first semester; in January after the oral qualifying exam; and in May after the end of exams. The GAH is your main academic advisor throughout your first year and until you pass your advanced exam, and serves as a resource throughout your program.

By early April at the latest, you should reach out to faculty members to discuss research opportunities and the possibility of working with them on the AE for the upcoming summer. Placement in a group for the summer is by mutual agreement of the student and faculty member, and is the first step toward taking the AE in the fall, which, if passed, formalizes the student-advisor relationship. Subject to your being in good academic standing, the department will support you for the summer. The group may be outside of the physics department.

Summer 1

Begin working toward your AE. AE declaration form (including name of second advisor) due August 1.

Year 2

Fall semester: Enroll in PHYS 213a (with your prospective advisor) and at least one other course, typically one of your remaining required courses such as a laboratory course or an approved elective. Continue working toward your AE. Attend the physics department colloquia and pizza talks. Possibly serve as a TA.

Late in the fall semester or in early January: take your AE.

Spring semester: Enroll in PHYS 401 (with your advisor) and carry out your thesis research. You may also enroll in a course toward completing your course requirements. Attend the physics department colloquia and pizza talks. Possibly serve as a TA. If desired, apply for your Master's in passing to be conferred in May.

Summer 2 and continuing summer terms

You are expected to carry out your thesis research full time; the registrar's office will enroll you in CONT 250 for academic credit.

Year 3 and continuing years

Enroll in PHYS 401 each semester and carry out your thesis research. Complete any remaining course requirements, such as electives, in your third year. Attend the physics department colloquia and pizza talks; at least once, give a pizza talk. Complete the annual check-in with your advisor and second advisor.

Year 5 or 6

Write and defend your thesis and graduate. Congratulations, you now have a PhD!

F. Advanced Admission

A PhD student who has completed prior graduate study that, in the judgment of the department, is equivalent to our first-year sequence, may be admitted with Advanced Admission status. The decision to grant Advanced Admission is made by the department at the time of admission based on the student's application file, is spelled out in the admission offer letter, and cannot be changed once the student arrives at Brandeis.

If you have Advanced Admission status, then you effectively start out as a second-year student. Specifically, the core and laboratory course requirements, as well as the written and oral parts of the Qualifying Exam, are waived. (You still have the option of taking any of these courses if you feel that they would be helpful to you; however, they will not count toward the elective requirement.) The other requirements (elective courses, attendance at colloquia during your first year, RCR workshop, teaching, and Advanced Exam) are *not* waived.

You must take the AE in your first year, although the deadlines are shifted somewhat: the AE declaration form is due November 1 of your first year, and the AE must take place by April 15 of your first year. That means that you should start working toward your AE as soon as you start, enrolling in PHYS 213a in your first semester and 213b in your second semester.

G. Graduate student roles in the department

There are several ways in which graduate students participate in the governance of the department.

A key role is played by the Graduate Department Representatives (GDRs). At any given time there are two GDRs, who serve overlapping two-year terms. GDRs are chosen by the faculty following a vote by the graduate student body. The GDRs organize various community-building activities for the physics graduate students. They serve as a channel of communication between the faculty and graduate student body, organizing town halls for the students and attending departmental faculty meetings when appropriate. They also serve as a liaison between the physics student body and the rest of the university, including the Division of Science and GSAS. The GDRs receive a small remuneration.

Graduate students are also represented on important departmental committees, such as:

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
- Graduate Admissions Committee
- Colloquium Committee.

These students are chosen by the committee chairs after a call for volunteers.

You must receive permission from your advisor (or the GAH, if you do not yet have an advisor) in order to take on any of these roles, or any other remunerated role in the university (grading, teaching a summer course, etc.).

H. Resources and ways to get help

At many points during your graduate career you will probably have questions you'd like to ask someone, great ideas you'd like to share, or concerns you'd like someone to address. Please know that there are many people here on campus to answer those questions, help, and support you. Before we go into specifics of whom to ask for help, please know that the majority of people on campus are "responsible reporters." This means that they are obligated to share any information that has been disclosed to them regarding discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct with the Office of Equal Opportunity. If you are hoping to have a confidential conversation about one of these topics, you will find a list of confidential resources later in this section.

Most issues can be best addressed by those closely associated with your graduate program or with Division of Science staff and faculty so we encourage you to seek assistance from this group first. We recognize that sometimes there may be a particular person that you are more comfortable speaking with or that one faculty member may be holding multiple roles/positions, but we suggest that you reach out to for assistance in the following general order (see schematic at the bottom as well):

a. Faculty

- **Your PI/Advisor:** Your first stop should be your PI/advisor, if you have chosen one by this point. Your advisor will have the most intimate knowledge of your research/program progress and career goals, and is here to help train and guide you. PIs usually have regular meetings with their students and this is a good time to bring up concers. If you are in a program with lab rotations and you are still rotating, you should feel comfortable talking to your rotation PI.

- **Your second advisor:** You are always welcome to reach out to your second advisor. While not tied to your progress as closely as your PI/advisor, they will be familiar with your progress in your program and will have sufficient background knowledge on your project and your goals to provide personalized support. They will be an especially good resource if you have concerns about some aspect of your project design or results. Also keep in mind that while annual meetings with your advisor and second advisor are required, you can call additional meetings at any time.

- **GAH (Graduate Advising Head):** This faculty member oversees your grad program as a whole, and is here to support all students in the program. They will be extremely knowledgeable in the program's requirements and are also tuned in to the current GSAS and University policies. Early in your grad career when you have not yet chosen an advisor, it is the GAH's job to support you. Later on, the GAH may be a good person to contact if a few students from different labs have shared concerns. The specific faculty member who fills this role may change from year-to-year, so check with your program administrator or check your program website for the current GAH first.

- **Your program's Department Chair:** This faculty member oversees the department that your grad program falls under and is a step above your GAH. If you have concerns that aren't necessarily specific to your grad program but are relevant to the department as a whole, the chair may have good insight. Chairs are good to talk to if concerns are shared with other populations in the department such as staff, postdocs, or undergraduates. The specific faculty member who fills this role may change from year-to-year, so check with your program administrator or check your program website for the current Chair.

- **The Head of the Division of Science:** This faculty member oversees the entire Division of Science, and works to support all of the departments and graduate programs within the sciences. The head of the Division of Science has frequent meetings with individual program and department chairs, as well as with leaders across the University, so they will be knowledgeable about current Division and University practices. They are here to support and advocate for the entire science community. Talk to them if people from different graduate programs or departments have a shared concern or to raise. In particular, concerns about research integrity should be brought to the attention of the

Head of the Division of Science. As with the DGS, the faculty member in this role can change from time-to-time. In academic year 2023-2024, the chair of the Division of Science is Bulbul Chakraborty.

b. Staff & students

In parallel to these program-level and Division-level faculty resources, there are non-faculty resources within the Division who you can go to for help. The following are good places to go to for help:

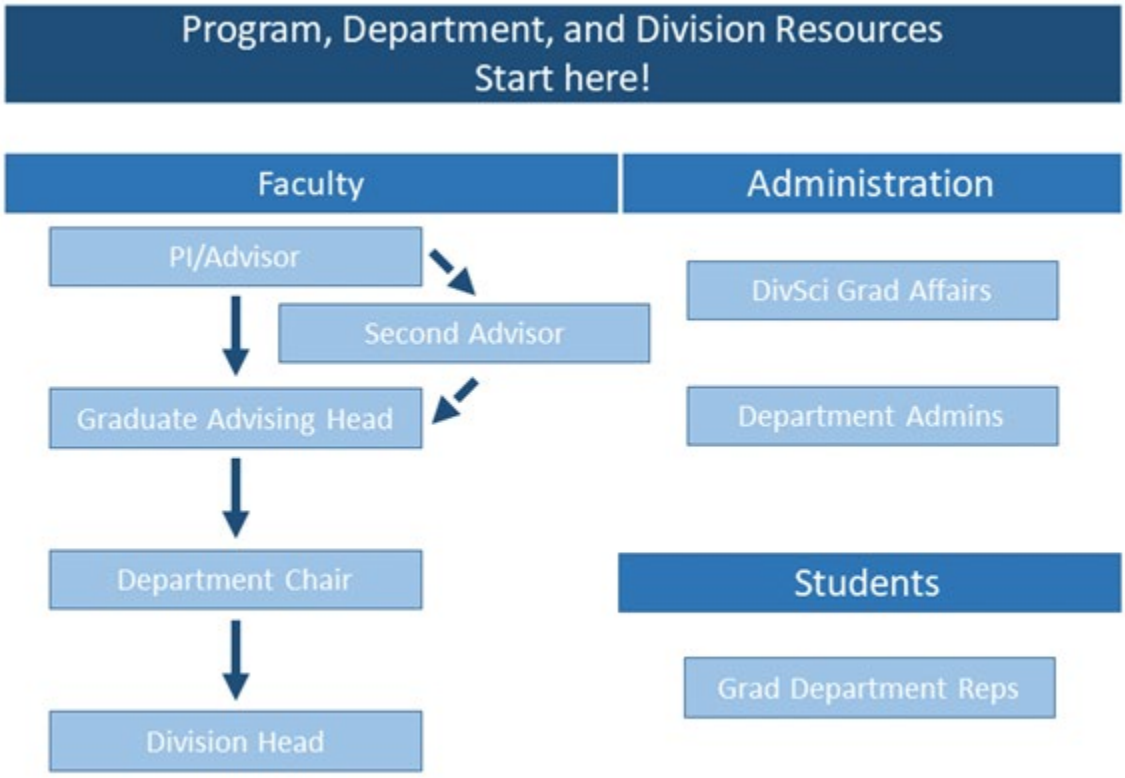
- **The Division of Science Grad Affairs Office:** This office is the administrative home for most of the graduate programs within the Division of Science(Computer Science and Psychology are the exceptions). The staff here work closely with grad students and faculty to administratively oversee those graduate programs and to monitor student progress. The staff in this office know your program's faculty, are well-versed in your program's requirements and policies, and are up-to-date with the other sources of support on-campus. If you are unsure about who to talk to first, the DivSci Grad Affairs Office is often a good place to start as they can help you decide who to approach and how to have that conversation. Within this office, Anne Lazerson is the primary contact for your graduate program. You should also feel free to contact Maryanna Aldrich, who oversees this group.

- **Your Department Administration:** These staff work in your department's office and are here to help their entire department community. These staff may be a bit less familiar with your graduate program requirements, but they know your department's faculty and any non-grad-program details about your department well.

- **The DivSci Pre-Award Office:** If you are applying for grants or fellowships, please loop these staff in. They may be able to provide guidance and help you navigate the submission process.

- **Your program's Grad Department Representatives (GDRs):** These graduate students were elected to represent the student body in your graduate program. One of the roles of the GDR is to bring concerns from students as a whole to the program faculty or to GSAS, so if you have a concern that you are comfortable discussing with your GDR it's a good idea to let them know. They cannot bring these concerns to the faculty to advocate for all students if they don't know about them, and there may be other students with similar concerns. Your GDRs may hold a student "town hall" once a semester or year to bring up issues, and this is a good forum to discuss some topics that may be weighing on your mind.

Below is a flow chart demonstrating the general hierarchy of sources of support:



Outside of the general hierarchy of Division of Science places to go to for help, that are various other entities on campus here to support students. These resources on campus are dedicated to supporting graduate students:

- **The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS):** GSAS oversees all graduate programs within the school of Arts & Sciences at Brandeis and is invested in the success of all graduate students in these programs. If you have a topic that you'd rather discuss with someone outside of the Division or want a non-DivSci perspective on, the staff in this office are a great resource for graduate students. GSAS is also a good resource if you are uncomfortable discussing a topic with any of the resources mentioned so far or if you have not made sufficient progress in those discussions. Depending on the topic that you have raised with faculty or administrative staff, they may have already contacted GSAS for advice/assistance on how to help or to handle the next steps. GSAS and your program/department faculty or the Head of the Division of Science frequently work together to support students, resolve problems, and enact positive changes. Please visit their staff directory to explore the areas GSAS can help with. If you are in a research group with limited funding, GSAS provides conference and research awards for PhD students and Master's students. They also strongly encourage students to apply for external fellowships and grants.

- **The Office of Graduate Affairs:** This office is a home and source of support for all graduate students at Brandeis, including those studying at the Heller School, the Rabb School, or the International Business School. Graduate Student Affairs provides students with information and events about graduate life at Brandeis and community resources.

- **The Graduate Student Association (GSA):** Supported by The Office of Graduate Affairs, the GSA is an independent student body that represents all graduate students and provides a platform for graduate students to raise issues and concerns and build community. If you have a concern about an issue affecting graduate students that extends past your program, department, and the Division of Science, the GSA is a good group to talk to. To connect with them, visit their website to see the current year's grad student executive committee.

There are some offices on campus that specialize in specific topics and who will almost always be the best resource for those topics:

- **The Office of Research Administration (ORA)**: ORA, which reports to the Vice Provost for Research, can help with issues related to research integrity and compliance. If you want to discuss the possibility of research misconduct, you may wish to report things there directly.

- **The International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO):** ISSO supports all of Brandeis' international students and scholars. This office determines visa eligibility and prepares and issues visa documents. If you ever have any questions about your Visa or any of the associated reglations (e.g. travel, CPT, OPT), you should reach out to your ISSO advisor. They can advise students on rights and responsibilities and provide guidance regarding issues that may impact your legal status. Their website also has a collection of useful information for international students.

- **Student Acessibility Support**: If you are a student with a disability and in need of academic or non-academic accommodations, this office can support you and help you navigate this process. The definition of a person with a disability is broad, and may students who do not think of themselves as students with disabilities may qualify for support under the law. Even if are you not sure if you will quality, you are encouraged to reach out to SAS.

As mentioned at the start of this section, there are some topics that responsible reporters on campus cannot keep confidential, and those are issues of discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct. The office on campus that addresses these issues is the **Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO).** OEO provides information regarding support resources, information about taking action (internal resolution processes and criminal action), inquiries and investigations into concerns, processes to address grievances, and training for the Brandeis community. Please visit their website for contact information and steps (and an an online form) to file a report. You are welcome to contact a resource listed above for support or advice about these topics, but they will be obligated to share the issue with OEO.

If you would like to have a *confidential* conversation with someone on campus, the following are our on-campus confidential resources:

- **The Brandeis Couseling Center (BCC)**

- **The Brandeis Health Center**

- **The Prevention, Advocacy, and Resource Center (PARC)**

- **The University Ombuds**

- **The Chaplians in The Center for Spiritual Life**

I. Further information & resources from GSAS

The GSAS staff are available to support you with academic and non-academic matters. Please visit their staff directory to see the full range of topics they can help with.

Annual reviews

As per the Bulletin, in order to be in good academic standing, students must be making satisfactory academic progress by meeting the following standards:

- All grades in classes that count towards the degree are a B- or above (or the program's threshold for advancing in the curriculum, if higher than a B-). If classes in a program are credit/no credit, the student must have received credit for all classes that count towards the degree.
- The student has no unresolved Excused Incompletes (EIs) past the published deadline from the Registrar's office for the terms in the current or prior academic year. Final incompletes (I) cannot count towards the degree.
- The student is completing non-course milestones (i.e., comprehensive exams, language requirements, prospectus defense, etc.) on the program's typical timeline.

If a student is not making satisfactory academic progress, the program will recommend to the Graduate School that the student be placed on advising alert. Advising alert is still considered good academic standing, but it signals that there are emerging concerns about the student's ability to remain in good academic standing for the next review period. The purpose of advising alert is to facilitate proactive academic supports and strategies for the student and to ensure that the program and the Graduate School are working together to support the student's success.
The Graduate School will automatically place PhD students who are on extension of their time-to-degree into the advising alert category.
A student who has a concern about an academic decision may utilize the academic grievance process to seek resolution. An academic grievance is appropriate for academic decisions and milestones like comprehensive or qualifying exam results, language exams, or grades in coursework. It cannot be used for non-academic issues.

Research funds

GSAS provides conference and research awards for PhD students and Master's students. They also strongly encourage students to apply for external fellowships and grants–this gives you both the good experience of practice in articulating your research projects and, if you are successful, additional money!

Professional development

Be sure to visit the GSAS Professional Development webpage. Here, you can set up appointments with the Professional Development team and can also access resources to help you with many aspects of the professional development and job search process. In addition, there are many profiles of GSAS alumni with insights into their career journeys.

Leaves

The university makes several kinds of leave available to graduate students: a health leave of absence, a personal leave of absence, and pregnancy accommodation and parental relief. You can

view the full policies, including the processes for initiating and returning from a leave, in the Bulletin or on the GSAS website.

Workday

Workday is where you register for courses and also allows you to access information about your own student record. For example, you can view your academic progress or check which required teaching training sessions you have completed. If you work an hourly job, you will also enter your hours there. There are many job aids that explain how to complete tasks in Workday.