# Experiential Learning: Small Group Discussions

## What Are Small Group Discussions?

Small Group Discussions (SGD) are faculty-led discussions that offer first year students the opportunity to connect with faculty and other students, learn about academic departments and share thoughts about academic life. The goal of SGDs is to help you understand that building relationships with faculty is an important skill to develop at Brandeis, and that these relationships will benefit you throughout your undergraduate years. The SGD is an opportunity to practice this skill, and to be coached by faculty on how to approach and then sustain relationships with your instructors and other faculty across the university.

In [*fill in semester name and date, e.g., Fall 2021*], approximately [*fill in number*] SGD sessions will be offered, and you are encouraged to attend up to two. These informal 50-minute sessions of five-to-ten participants are specifically designed for all first-year undergraduates to get to know faculty members and other first-year students, and they are a way to build a sense of belonging for students learning on campus and remotely.

Each small group discussion will focus on one of the following two topics:

### Professor's area of study and career path

Faculty will describe their academic and professional background which could lead to conversations about specific majors, advanced degrees and career paths, how writing skills are used in different fields, and how getting to know faculty members can help students determine their academic and career paths.

### Adjusting to university-level academics

Faculty will lead conversations about how to start and finish the semester strong, offer suggestions on getting to know faculty, explain the importance of writing skills in any major, address questions/concerns about balancing curricular and co-curricular activities, and highlight resources on campus.

When you are sent a link inviting you to sign up for a Small Group Discussion, you can select a discussion based on the faculty and topics of most interest to you. You are strongly encouraged to attend at least one SGD this semester!