

The Heller School for Social Policy and Management

Brandeis University



Master of Public Policy Program (MPP)

Academic Policies and Procedures

(For Students starting in August 2025)

Brandeis University does not discriminate on the basis of race; color; national origin; ethnicity; shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics; caste; sex, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, including transgender identity; religion; disability; age; genetics; active military or veteran status; and any other characteristics protected under applicable federal or Massachusetts law in the administration of its educational or employment practices, programs or activities, including admissions.

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Corrections and Updates to Policies and Procedures: A Note to the Reader

Every effort is made to update this “Academic Policies and Procedures” publication. Updates and corrections may be published anytime during the academic year, and it is your responsibility to confirm that you are using the most recent version and amendments. The Heller School reserves the right to correct or revise factual information or policies and procedures that are not consistent or current with University policy, regulations or law.

Mission of the Heller School and the MPP Program Goals

Welcome to the Heller School. The Heller School for Social Policy and Management is devoted to the mission of knowledge advancing social justice. Since its founding as Brandeis University's first professional school in 1959, the Heller School has been committed to developing new knowledge and insights in the field of social policy and in health and human services management. Through its academic programs and research institutes, the Heller School embodies its mission of knowledge advancing social justice.

The Heller School has a long tradition of excellence in social policy. The Heller School offers five educational programs designed explicitly to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Heller's goal is to prepare the next generation of scholars, policy analysts, managers, and public leaders who will tackle society's most pressing social problems.

In 2007, it began offering an MPP to select and highly qualified candidates. The core curriculum is designed to provide a strong set of analytical skills necessary for understanding, evaluating, creating and recommending policy options. Conceptually, the core fits into three categories - **concepts, tools and methods**. The degree requires 56 credits over two years in full-time residence or the equivalent. 38 credits of core courses are required, as well as a 2 credit social justice course, chosen from an approved list. A minimum of 12 credits, typically 3 courses, is required in a concentration, which leaves 4 credits of additional graduate electives. Concentrations will provide students with in-depth expertise in a particular policy field. A final capstone paper will provide an opportunity to demonstrate analytical and policy expertise in a particular specialty.

MPP Program Requirements

The program requires 56 credits, or the equivalent of 14 full-semester courses:

- 38 credits of required core courses
- 1 two credit required social justice course, chosen from a list of approved classes
- 12 credits in an area of concentration
- 4 credits of electives, which may be either policy or management courses

The following are the core requirements for all concentrations:

Course Number	Course Name	Credits	Usual Semester	Semester Taken
HS 303a	Historical and Contemporary Developments in Social Policy (Doonan)	4	Fall 1	
HS 332a	Research Methods (Warfield)	4	Fall 1	
HS 404b	Applied Regression Analysis (Panas)	4	Fall 1	
HS 532b	Social Policy Analysis (Doonan)	4	Spring 1	
HS 405a	Econometrics (Panas)	4	Spring 1	
HS 372b	Economic Theory and Social Policy (Lynch)	4	Spring 1	
HS 341a	Public Finance (Bishop)	4	Fall 2	
HS 412f	Social Policy and Management Through the Lens of Equity (Piñeros-Shields)	2	Fall 2	
HS 307f	Policy and Program Evaluation (Erickson Warfield)	2	Spring 2 (Module 1)	
HS 403f	Policy to Action: Understanding Implementation (Soroui)	2	Spring 2 (Module 2)	
HS 336a	MPP Capstone Seminar (Piñeros-Shields and Kuttner)	4	Spring 2	

Students will also choose a 2-credit social justice class from a preselected menu of courses. If a student chooses a 4-credit course, 2 of the credits will count toward the elective requirement. Please see below for the current list of allowed courses. Students are also allowed to petition for other appropriate courses to count towards the requirement.

List of Approved Courses that meet the Social Justice Requirement

Course Number	Course Name	Credits	Usual Semester
HS 212a	Contemporary Issues in Gender and Public Policy (Bailey)	4	Fall 2025 (offered every other year)
HS 334f	Disability Policy: Intersections with Health, Poverty, Education and Family Policy (Warfield)	2	Fall 2026 (Module 2 – offered every other year)
HS 416a	Foundations of Social Theory: From the Early Twentieth Century to Critical Race Theory (Sampath)	4	Fall
HS 324f	Globalization and Welfare Capitalism (Kuttner)	2	Fall 2025 (Module 2 – offered every other year)
HS 307a	Immigration Policy and Human Rights (Piñeros-Shields)	4	Spring 2026 (offered every other year)
HS 317f	Labor Income, Labor Power, and Labor Markets (Kuttner)	2	Fall 2026 (Module 2 – offered every other year)
HS 528f	Law and Social Policy: Contemporary Issues--Racial and Ethnic Equality (Hill)	2	Fall (Module 1)
HS 273f	Law and Social Policy: Contemporary Issues--Gender Equality (Hill)	2	Spring (Module 1)
HS 320f	LGBTQ+ Justice - A History of Pride, Prejudice, and Policy in the United States (Chakoian)	2	Spring 2026 (Module 2 – offered every other year)
HS 323f	Participatory Action Research (Piñeros-Shields)	2	Spring 2027 (Module 1 – offered every other year)
HS 309f	Policy Approaches to Gender-Based Violence (Chakoian)	2	Spring 2027 (offered every other year)
HS 534b	Perspectives on Economic and Racial Equity (Piñeros-Shields)	4	Fall
HS 346b	Policy Perspectives on Criminal Legal System Disparities (TBD)	4	Spring 2027 (offered every other year)
HS 216f	Policy Perspectives on Women, Work and Inequality (Saroui)	2	Fall 2026 (Module 2 – offered every other year)
HS 314f	Race and Stratification in the U.S. Economy (Lynch) (not being offered in Fall 2025)	2	Fall 2026 (Module 2)
HS 322f	Sociological Perspectives on Housing Disparities: Race and Stratification (Meschede)	2	Spring 2027 (every other year)
HS 252f	Women, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding (Tamaru)	2	Fall (Module 2)

Dual Degree Course Sequence

Students in the Heller/Hornstein dual degree program take 30 core MPP credits at Heller and an additional 40 credits specified by Hornstein, as well as 10 elective credits for a total of 80 credits for the dual degree.

Declaration of Concentration

Each student must choose from among the following concentrations: *1) economic and racial equity; 2) health policy; 3) women, gender and sexuality; or 4) social policy* (social policy is for students who design their own concentration or combine existing concentrations). A student's concentration is formally declared by means of completing an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP), as explained in the next section.

Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)

Each student prepares an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) stating the planned coursework for the coming semester. The ILP must be approved by the student's advisor. It must be submitted to the MPP Program Manager by the end of the registration period. *An ILP may be modified at any time with permission of the advisor.* The modification must be filed with the MPP Program Manager. Note: Dual Hornstein-MPP students do not need to complete an ILP.

Changing Concentration

A student who is considering changing his/her/their concentration should discuss this with his/her/their advisor and/or the Program Director. All requirements in the new concentration must be met. If a student desires a change, it would be best to do so as early as possible. To make the change, the student must fill out a Change of Concentration form.

Course Requirements by Concentration

Students must take 12 credits in their concentration. The chart below shows the required course(s) for each concentration; students will then choose the remaining credits from a list of approved courses provided on the ILP. Some electives may not be offered each academic year. Please check the fall and spring course schedules for the most current listings.

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Concentration	Required Course(s)	Credits	Semester Offered
Economic and Racial Equity	HS 534b Perspectives on Economic and Racial Equity (Piñeros-Shields)	4	Fall 1
Health	Health Policy Track: HS 513 Issues in National Health Policy (Doonan)	4	Fall
	Behavioral Health Policy Track: HS 513 Issues in National Health Policy (Doonan)	4	Fall
	AND at least one of the following courses:		
	HS 412b Substance Use and Societal Consequences (Green)	4	Fall 2025
	HS 572a Economics of Behavioral Health (Hodgkin)	4	Spring 2027
	HS 586a Issues in Addiction Treatment (Reif)	4	Fall 2026
Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies	HS 212a Contemporary Issues in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies (Bailey)	4	Fall 2025
	AND		
	HS 216b Policy Perspectives on Women, Work and Inequality (Soroui)	2	Fall 2026
	AND		
	HS 320f LGBTQ+ Justice - A History of Pride, Prejudice, and Policy in the United States (Chakoian)	2	Spring 2026
	AND		
	HS 309F Policy Approaches to Gender-Based Violence (Chakoian)	2	Spring 2027

General Social Policy

The General Social Policy concentration is for students who want to design their own concentration or combine existing concentrations. The core degree is in social policy and a concentration is necessary to demonstrate the application of policy analysis skills in depth in a particular policy area. The student may design a concentration in a self-defined social policy area, subject to the approval of the program director. At this point, a new advisor in the chosen area of concentration may be appointed to assist the student. The core requirements are the same as for all other concentrations.

MPP Capstone

The MPP capstone paper will demonstrate the ability to provide detailed policy analysis and use many of the skills acquired throughout the program. The capstone paper will also be presented orally to the Heller community at the conclusion of the capstone seminar class in the second year. Successful completion will demonstrate superior writing, oral communication, and analytical skills. It will also show a keen awareness and understanding of the political, organizational, and fiscal factors influencing the policy environment. The paper and presentation will highlight a social problem, evaluate alternative solutions, and make policy recommendations. Alternatively, it will provide a detailed policy or program evaluation with recommendations for improvement.

Each student will have a second reviewer in addition to the instructor of the capstone seminar. Second reviewers should be in the student's area of policy concentration and interest. The student's concentration advisor may serve this role or assist the student in finding a second reviewer. Reviewers can be from within Heller, within Brandeis University, or from the outside. They should possess a minimum of a master's degree in public policy or a policy-related field. This requirement can be waived by the instructor if the reviewer under consideration has significant professional expertise in the area of interest but does not have a master's degree. Second reviewers must be approved by the instructor of the capstone seminar.

Academic Advising

In most cases, a student's academic advisor is the chair of his/her/their concentration. Students should meet with their advisors each semester during course registration to discuss educational goals and Individualized Learning Plans. They can also turn to the Program Director and the Program Manager for advice on course selection.

Students may change concentrations or faculty advisors. To change concentrations, a student should complete a change of concentration form and submit it to the Heller Office of Student Records. To change advisors within a concentration, students should obtain the agreement of a faculty member who will become their new advisor and then alert their former advisor and the Program Manager. For assistance with choosing a new advisor, students may consult with the Director of the Program.

Registration and Course Enrollment

Every resident, post-resident, and continuation student must register at the beginning of each term, whether attending regular courses of study, carrying on research or

independent reading, writing a thesis or dissertation, or utilizing any academic service or facility of the university. Registration requires enrollment in a course—whether a regular course, independent research, or a status course for post-resident and continuation students.

Students work closely with their program managers (academic advisors) in planning their program of study. All students file an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) with their program office. At the end of the registration period for each term (see the University's Academic Calendar for specific dates), no additional courses may be added to a student's schedule and enrollment is considered to be final, unless a student formally drops a course prior to the drop deadline.

Before each semester begins, the Assistant Director, Academic and Student Services notifies students about registration procedures and deadlines. Students register online using Workday (<https://www.brandeis.edu/workday/>); a Brandeis email account is required to access the system. Failure to register by the stated deadlines will result in administrative withdrawal by the University. Students must register for MODULE I, MODULE II and FULL SEMESTER courses during the initial registration period for the semester.

Health Exam and Health Insurance

Every student must have a health examination report and evidence of health insurance coverage on file at University Health Services. A student who has not completed the University's health requirements or who has outstanding financial or other obligations will have a "hold" placed on their account and will not be allowed to register. If holds are not cleared up by the last day of the course enrollment period, students will be administratively withdrawn from the University. Once a student is administratively withdrawn from the University, he/she/they will be required to reapply for admission in a subsequent semester.

Choosing Courses

Course syllabi are available on Moodle Courses and course evaluations as well as other program material can be accessed on the Current Students page on the Heller web site. If a new syllabus is not ready, students should request one from the professor teaching the course.

It is required that students meet with their academic advisors during the registration period. Please note that the Heller School reserves the right to cancel classes with low enrollment.

Heller students are not permitted to register for more than 20 credits per semester distributed as evenly as possible between Module I and Module II within the semester. Permission to take over 20 credits may be granted by the student's academic program under special circumstances.

Tutorials (also known as Directed Readings or Independent Study)

Students may wish to design an independent study project that allows a more in-depth approach to a topic than is offered by an existing course, or that allows exploration of a topic for which there is no appropriate course offering. Students should not take a tutorial until having completed the first semester at the Heller School.

Credit for a tutorial is equivalent to either a full semester course or a half semester module course and should include the equivalent amount of reading and writing as a regular course. Written work might be in the form of one longer paper, several shorter papers, critical essays on a body of literature, or appropriate data analysis exercises.

To take a tutorial for credit, a student should identify a faculty member willing to supervise the tutorial. After conferring with the faculty supervisor, the student must write a proposal describing the tutorial which includes:

- the topic of the tutorial
- how it fits in with the student's general plan of study
- what material the student plans to read
- what written work the student plans to do
- how the student will be assessed for his/her/their work
- the frequency of meetings with the supervisor

The faculty supervisor must approve the proposal. After obtaining this approval, the student completes a tutorial request form, which is available from the Office of Student Records. The form must be signed by the faculty supervisor and the Program Director and returned to the Office of Student Records to be put in his/her/their official file before the end of the registration period in order to be enrolled in the course and to receive credit for the tutorial. The student will be registered for course HS 392a.

A student should take no more than one tutorial as part of the requirements for the MPP degree. If there are special circumstances, a student should see his/her/their advisor and then the Program Director before proceeding with a second tutorial.

Internships

While not required and not offered for credit, internships in the summer between the first and second year can be a rewarding and invaluable part of the learning process. The Assistant Dean of Career Development works closely with MPP students in exploring opportunities. In addition, students should use their advisor, network, colleagues, and other Heller resources to actively seek a paid internship. There are also opportunities for paid internship placements through the Eli Segal Citizen Leadership Program and the Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy. International students should consult with the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) to obtain necessary employment authorization before they begin any internship.

When the budget allows, matching funds are also provided through the Legacy Fund. Students who secure paid internships can apply for matching funds of up to \$2,500 (the amount paid by the organization plus the amount funded by Heller cannot exceed

\$5,000). Students will need to submit a one-page letter describing the organization and the work to be undertaken and specifying the amount of time to be spent on the internship and the compensation. Students will also need to provide proof of the internship placement, including the compensation, by submitting a copy of the official offer letter.

If after attempting to secure funding, a student can only find an unpaid internship in their area of interest, or the perfect internship cannot provide funding, upon availability we will make unmatched funding available. The process is to send us a copy of your offer letter (or email) indicating that it is unpaid, even after the student informs them of the potential match from Heller, and how many weeks and hours per week you will be working. We will provide a decision on the provision of unmatched funds after reviewing these documents. In the past this funding has ranged between \$1,000 and \$2,000.

Auditing Courses

The privilege of auditing courses without paying a fee is extended to all regularly enrolled full-time graduate students. Auditors may not take examinations or expect evaluation from the instructor. No credit is given for an audited course. To audit a course, students must submit the Add/Audit/Drop form or contact the Office of Academic and Student Services by the deadline established in the Academic Calendar. Instructors, at their discretion, may choose to accept or decline auditors.

Graduate Courses outside the Heller School

Students are allowed to take graduate courses outside of Heller, either in other Brandeis departments or at one of the consortium schools.

1. Graduate Courses in Other Departments at Brandeis:

Students are encouraged to avail themselves of the rich graduate offerings and outstanding faculty in other parts of Brandeis. Graduate-level courses in the departments of sociology, economics, education, and politics may be of particular interest. To sign up for these courses, a student should discuss their intent with their advisor, note it on the ILP, and then sign up for the course through the regular registration process.

2. Graduate Courses Taken at Consortium Schools (Graduate Cross-Registration):

The Heller School has [cross-registration agreements](#) with Babson College, Bentley University School of Business Administration, Boston College, Boston University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Urban Studies and Planning), Regis College, and Tufts University (excluding the Fletcher School). Information on courses for cross-registration at each of the host institutions is available at the graduate school office of each institution. Full-time graduate students may enroll in one graduate-level course per term (excluding the summer term) at any one of these institutions that fits reasonably into their educational goals and does not duplicate a course offered at Brandeis, with several provisos:

- Consortium schools do not allow cross-registration in some of their graduate programs, or in particular courses.
- Students need the permission of the instructor to register.

- Outside courses may not be used to substitute for courses offered in The Heller School's curriculum unless there are serious and unavoidable extenuating circumstances. In such cases, the student should secure the approval of their faculty advisor and the Program Director. The approval should be put in writing in the student's official file.
- Full-time students are permitted to take a maximum of **four** courses outside The Heller School and may take no more than one consortium course per semester. These consortium privileges are not applicable to part-time students.
- Students should obtain a copy of the course description from the school, discuss with advisor and list on Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) in the semester the course is taken.
- Consortium privileges **do not extend** to the summer term. If a student wishes to enroll for a summer course at one of the consortium schools, he/she/they will be responsible for paying full tuition to that school.
- Due to differences in academic calendars among the colleges in the consortium, it is not advisable for degree candidates to enroll in a cross-registered course in their final semester.

The consortium schools have a tuition sharing agreement, so students who register for a course at one of the consortium schools do not have to pay tuition there but must still pay full tuition at Brandeis.

A student should follow these [instructions](#) to register for a course at one of the consortium schools.

Withdrawal from Courses

A student may withdraw from a course if they find that for any reason it is not satisfactory, or if they are unable to complete the requirements. However, the student must officially withdraw by submitting an Add/Drop form to the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs and Student Experience by the deadline posted on the Brandeis academic calendar. The withdrawal policy for courses taken at consortium schools may differ from Brandeis' policies, and students must conform to those policies.

Exceptions and Waivers

The Program Director must approve any exception or waiver of an academic requirement. An example of such an exception is waiving a course that a student has already taken at the graduate level at a comparable institution. To obtain a waiver, the student must fill out a petition for waiver of a required course and submit the form along with a transcript and a course syllabus for the prior course to the course instructor and the Program Director. The course instructor will review the syllabus and make a recommendation to the Program Director, who will make the final decision and inform the student. Students must have received a grade of B or higher to be eligible for a waiver. Once the student receives written approval, they must submit the approval, transcript and syllabus to the Office of Student Records to be placed in their official file.

Students who waive a course requirement must replace the waived course with another graduate course appropriate for credit within the program. When initiating the course waiver request, the student should discuss with the academic advisor or the Program Director which alternative course(s) is/are of interest. In the written request made to the course instructor and the Program Director, each alternative course should be named and, if it is not taught at Heller, its catalog course description or syllabus should be attached.

Evaluation Procedures

Attendance

All students are expected to attend classes regularly. In addition, an individual faculty member may establish attendance requirements for all students in the course, and may insist on the completion of all assignments even if a student was not in attendance for the period.

Students must come to class prepared to share their questions and thoughts and to participate in the learning process. Many courses have a class participation requirement.

In rare circumstances, a student may have to miss more than a week of class due to serious illness or to family emergencies. In these cases, a student should be in immediate contact with their program advisor to discuss what options may be available. Because class participation and peer learning are important aspects of the Brandeis educational experience, students who miss more than two weeks of class ordinarily withdraw from the semester.

Laptop Policy

Laptops may be used in Heller classrooms at the discretion of the course instructor. The instructor may ban them or restrict their use. In no case shall students use laptops for purposes other than taking notes or other instructor approved tasks. Surfing the web, email and messaging are not permitted under any circumstances and are a breach of professional conduct.

Laptops are not permitted to be used during exams unless the instructor deems them integral to the taking of the exam. The use of laptops and other electronic devices are strongly discouraged during student presentations and generally prohibited by course instructors. Cell phones must be silenced during all classes and may not be used during exams.

Instructor Evaluation of Student Performance

Students have the right to receive meaningful feedback regarding their performance in a course.

- If students do not receive feedback, they have the right to approach the instructor or the Program Director.
- Each instructor may give feedback in any way they deem appropriate. This might include written comments on papers and exams, personal meetings, etc. The course syllabus must inform the student how feedback will be delivered.
- If a student requests to meet with an instructor, the instructor is obligated to respond to this request.

Grades and Course Standards

Graduate students are expected to maintain records of distinction in all courses. Letter grades will be used in all courses for master's degree-level students.

Any letter grade below B- is considered unsatisfactory and will not be counted toward credit for degree requirements. There is one exception to this rule. For master's programs in which students are in residence for four semesters or more, students may receive a grade of C+ in two courses throughout their program and still earn graduate degree credit for such courses. Students are not allowed to receive a grade below B- in the capstone course of their respective programs (MPP Capstone for the MPP Program). If a student receives two grades of C+ in one semester and one of the C+ grades is not eligible for degree credit (e.g., master's programs in which students are in residence for two or three semesters), the Program Director may decide or create a committee to decide which course will count toward degree requirements.

When a student receives two unsatisfactory grades, a faculty committee comprised of the Program Director, the student's faculty advisor, and a professor from one of the courses in which the student received an unsatisfactory grade will review his/her/their academic performance and potential for degree completion. The committee will recommend to the Dean whether the student should stay or be asked to leave the program. The Dean will make the final decision, in consultation with the student and the committee (as the Dean considers appropriate).

Grade Appeal Process

All Heller course instructors make independent decisions about their grading process and are supported in those decisions by the Heller School's program and administrative staff. However, a student who feels that they have been graded incorrectly or unfairly in a course taken for credit may take the following actions:

1. The student should contact the instructor to set up a meeting within seven business days after the grade in question is made available. If such a meeting results in a mutually acceptable solution, the grade will be adjusted accordingly.
2. If the meeting does not result in a mutually acceptable solution, the student should submit a written statement, specifying the nature of the complaint and the remedy desired, to the Program Director within seven business days of the meeting. Although there will be a presumption in favor of the instructor, the Program Director or his/her/their designee will take into account all evidence presented by the student and will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible, normally within seven business days, from submission of the complaint. Final disposition of the appeal will be in writing to all parties involved. The decision of the Program Director or his/her/their designee is final.

At each level, the agreed-upon resolution or decision should be in writing. Each party should retain a copy, and the original decision should be forwarded to the Assistant Director for Academic and Student Services for placement in the student's academic record. The Assistant Dean of Academic and Student Services is available to consult with the student at any step in the grievance process.

Incompletes

A student who has not completed the research or written work including examinations for any course may receive an Excused Incomplete (EI) or a failing grade at the discretion of the course instructor. A student who receives an EI must satisfactorily complete the work of the course in order to receive credit for the course and a letter grade. An incomplete must be made up no later than the date set by the instructor, but by no later than the date published in the Academic Calendar for the term.

An EI that is not resolved by the published deadline will become a permanent incomplete (I).

Student Course Evaluations

Students evaluate every course taken at the Heller School by filling out a standard evaluation form online with questions about the instructor and the course content. Heller considers such student input important and takes these evaluations seriously. Evaluations are anonymous, and instructors do not see the course evaluations until after they have turned in all grades. Course evaluations are available on the Current Students page on the Heller website. Students are urged to **discuss courses with their professors while they are in progress**. Students should not feel that they must wait until the end of the semester to voice their concerns on the course evaluation form. Instructors are also encouraged to open opportunities through Moodle for students to anonymously provide feedback about the course. These opportunities should be provided mid-course so adjustments can be made during that semester.

Satisfying Residency Requirements and Maintaining Student Status

Residency Requirements

Students satisfy residency requirements when they have completed the required courses, concentration courses, electives, and the Capstone Paper, as laid out in the program of study. For MPP students the residency is two years full-time or the equivalent. To maintain their status:

1. All students must have their tuition payments (or fellowship payments on their behalf) current. If tuition payments are not made on time, a student will not be allowed to register for courses or to graduate.
2. Every student must have a health examination report and evidence of health insurance coverage on file at University Health Services.

Any student unable to meet these requirements must speak with the Program Director immediately.

Program Time Limits

All students must complete all the degree requirements that are in effect at the time of matriculation within six years of matriculation.

Leave of Absence

Personal leaves of absence up to one year will normally be granted to students in good academic standing who present compelling personal reasons. Students can also take a Health Leave of Absence. Returns from leave may be subject to conditions established at

the inception of the leave. A student who has been granted a leave of absence is **not** considered an active student during the leave. Time spent on authorized leaves of absence will not be counted toward the maximum time permitted to complete degree requirements. If, for any reason, a student must extend a leave of absence, he/she/they must request such an extension in writing before the leave of absence expires. Failure to do so will result in involuntary withdrawal from the University. Students who extend their leaves of absence beyond one year may lose departmental funding.

Please refer to the [Heller 2025-2026 Bulletin](#) for more information about Personal and Health Leaves of Absence.

Pregnancy Accommodation

Brandeis University is committed to supporting pregnant and parenting students. The University acknowledges that pregnancy, breastfeeding, lactation, and parental status are protected under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"), 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq., and other applicable state and federal laws. Under this Policy, there are different stages of pregnancy during which the University can provide support and accommodations.

Please refer to the [Heller 2025-2026 Bulletin](#) for more information about Pregnancy Accommodations.

Graduate Student Parental Relief

To assist full-time graduate students in balancing academic, teaching, and research responsibilities with parenting demands, Brandeis University provides eligible graduate students with support in the form of Parental Relief immediately after their child's birth, adoption, or placement in foster care (for a child up to the age of six). Parental Relief permits students to maintain full-time status—along with the same level of guaranteed funding and other benefits—while postponing deadlines, completion of course assignments, examinations, and other academic, research, and teaching requirements for up to eight consecutive weeks.

Please refer to the [Heller 2025-2026 Bulletin](#) for more information about Graduate Student Parental Relief.

Voluntary Withdrawal

A student who wishes to withdraw voluntarily from the Heller School during a semester must do so in writing to the program director and must file his/her/their request with the [Office of Academic and Student Services](#) before the last day of instruction of the semester. Failure to notify in writing of a withdrawal may subject the student to loss of eligibility for refunds in accordance with the refund schedule outlined in the "Fees and Expenses" section of the Heller Bulletin. Permission to withdraw voluntarily will not be granted if the student has not discharged all financial obligations to the university or has not made financial arrangements satisfactory to the Office of Student Financial Services. When a student withdraws during or at the end of a semester, course enrollments are not expunged from his/her/their record, rather a grade of W ("dropped") is entered for each course.

Administrative Withdrawals

Students who do not comply with registration procedures, medical documentation requirements, and financial obligations are subject to administrative withdrawal from the University. Any Heller student receiving notification of impending administrative withdrawal should immediately contact the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs and Student Experience.

Billing and Payment Procedures

Students will be billed for half the total tuition in the summer (for fall term) and in the fall (for spring term). Students who have not paid the prior semester tuition charges may not register for courses. If a student has not received a bill, or has a problem regarding bill payment, he/she/they should contact the Office of Student Financial Services. It is the student's responsibility to pay tuition in a timely manner.

If a student is receiving a full or partial tuition scholarship, the scholarship will be divided equally between the semesters and deducted from the tuition and fees for the semester. This will be reflected on the tuition bill.

You can find information about payment options on the [SFS website](#).

University Policies

Health Insurance

Each year, all full and 3/4-time students, must enroll in the qualifying Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) or waive the plan and report their own comparable health insurance coverage. This does not include international students. All international students are automatically enrolled and do not have the option to waive the Student Health Insurance Plan. The cost will be added to their student account. Brandeis requires this because international health insurance plans are often not recognized in the US and do not comply with the Massachusetts Student Health Plan Regulations and the Brandeis University waiver requirements. You can find more information on the [Student Health Center](#) website.

Academic Records

The MPP Program office maintains a complete record of courses taken, relevant correspondence, special arrangements, exceptions, or permissions. The file in the Program Office is the student's official record, so if there are any special exceptions, permissions, or waivers, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that a written copy has been submitted to the MPP Program Manager. It is recommended that students keep copies for their own records. Documentation in the official file is audited to determine student eligibility to graduate. Regardless of conversations that may have informally taken place, if a matter is not formalized in writing and in the official file, it will not be considered in the audit.

Disability Accommodation

If you are a student with a documented disability and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in a class, please visit the [Accessibility Office page](#) for more information on services and accommodation requests.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is central to the mission of Brandeis University and the Heller School. As stated in [Section 4 of *Rights and Responsibilities*](#), “Every member of the University community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. A student shall not submit work that is falsified or is not the result of the student’s own effort.” Allegations of academic dishonesty by students are reported to the Department of Student Rights and Community Standards.

Student Conduct Board

The University establishes standards of student behavior and reserves the right to suspend or permanently dismiss students whose conduct warrants such action. These standards apply to all Heller students. The University will give due notice and, if requested, a hearing before the appropriate body. The Department of Student Development and Judicial Education administers the student judicial system. Standards, policies, and procedures are published in the *Rights and Responsibilities*, published by the Department of Student Rights and Community Standards.

Graduation Procedures

May Commencement Ceremony

Each year in May, Brandeis holds a Commencement ceremony. Aside from May graduates, graduate students who completed their degrees in August of the previous year or February of the current year are invited to participate. Typically, master’s level students on track for a completion by August of the current year may also participate.

It is University policy that all graduate students participating in commencement exercises must wear a cap and gown. In February, students receive a form requesting measurements for height, robe size, and head size.

Degree Completion; Graduation Eligibility

Students are eligible for graduation from the MPP Program after satisfying the following:

1. Completion of Course Requirements for the Degree:

Students must successfully complete all coursework, including the Capstone paper, to receive their diplomas. **Students in a dual degree program must complete all requirements for both degrees before being allowed to march in graduation.** For example, an MPP/Hornstein student who completes MPP coursework in December will march the following May even if all of the requirements were met for one of the degrees by the previous May.

2. Other Requirements:

Students are responsible for discharging all financial obligations to the University. The University registrar will notify students of the specific date by which this must be done. Financial obligations include tuition, course materials, library fines, parking fees and fines. Books or materials on loan from Goldfarb Library, faculty, or others must be returned.

Students will be requested to complete a Degree Application indicating exactly how their name should be printed on their diploma. All graduates, whether or not they are able to attend commencement, will be required to submit this information upon completing degree requirements.

For students graduating, lockers and mailboxes must be cleaned out within the final week of residency. Belongings left in lockers after a student graduates will be discarded. Mailboxes should be cleaned out during the final week.

Transcripts

Current and former students should request official transcripts of their records from the Office of the University Registrar. At this time, students can order official paper transcripts free of charge. Brandeis University has partnered with the National Student Clearinghouse to allow current and former students to obtain official electronic transcripts to be sent to themselves or a third party in a secure manner. The fee for an electronic transcript is \$4.65. This fee is payable directly to the National Student Clearinghouse. Official transcripts will be issued only to those students whose financial records with the university are in order.

Brandeis University Records Policy

Annually, Brandeis University informs students of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended. Brandeis University is committed to their enforcement. A copy [of the policy can be found here](#). Questions concerning the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act may be referred to the Office of the University Registrar.