

Exploratory Academic Advisor Handbook

Living the Open Curriculum and
Advising Students as They Navigate It

2024

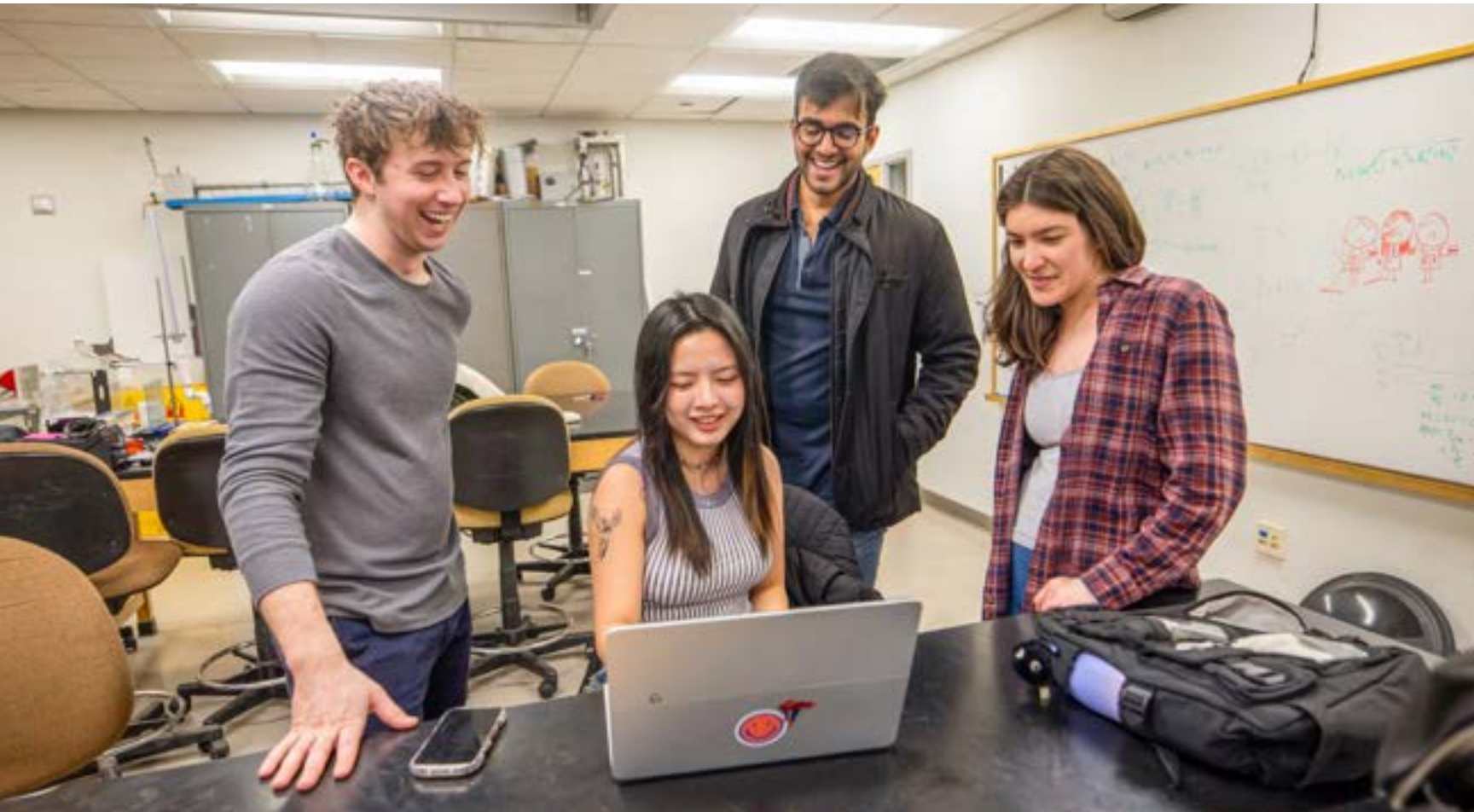


BROWN



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Living the Open Curriculum and Advising Students as They Navigate It

Brown’s “New Curriculum” was adopted by the faculty in 1969, after a year of collaborative study and debate — led by approximately 80 students and 15 faculty members — about the need for educational reform. The key components remain in place to this day: no distribution requirements across traditional fields of knowledge, a simplified grading system without grade point averages and ranking, the option to take a course without a letter grade (for satisfactory/no credit) and an invitation for students to “concentrate” rather than “major” in broad, often interdisciplinary fields of study. Additionally, the faculty institutionalized the opportunity for students to design their own independent concentrations and independent studies for academic credit.

Within Brown’s Open Curriculum today, students choose from more than 80 concentration programs and hundreds of courses. Students have the opportunity to study abroad or take a semester off, engage in research within or outside of their concentration and take advantage of summer programs and internships across the globe. The curriculum ensures students great freedom in directing the course of their education, which means that they often feel both excited and overwhelmed by the range of these choices.

The process of making these choices will require that students develop a capacity for ongoing reflection about their learning process and adopt a “growth mindset” that encourages an openness to people, ideas and experiences that may be entirely new.



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LIBERAL LEARNING GOALS AND CORE COMPETENCIES

Despite the freedom students have to focus their studies narrowly, our enrollment data reveal that the majority of Brown undergraduates distribute their courses across the curriculum; year after year, they actively choose to pursue [Brown's Liberal Learning Goals](#).

Brown's Liberal Learning Goals

As students study areas broadly across the disciplines and deeply within a selected concentration, they become competent in a group of academic skills that enable them to examine knowledge critically, produce scholarship of their own and use these transferable skills as they set out on a career pathway and connect learning to life outside the classroom. These core competencies — reading, public speaking, critical reading, data analysis, problem solving and research — are skills students practice and hone as part of coursework, research and other co-curricular opportunities. The College provides students with an array of programs and opportunities to develop and practice these skills.

The First-Year Advising Triad

THE EXPLORATORY ADVISOR

Role: Assisting Advisees as They Explore and Make Meaning of the Open Curriculum

As students chart a meaningful intellectual journey throughout their time at Brown, your role is unique in that you provide them with the support it takes to explore the academic freedom that the Open Curriculum offers. Indeed, many students will be charting new academic territory, and many will face unexpected challenges as they work to determine the best path for them.

In order to achieve this, students are encouraged to build a community of advisors. As a student's assigned exploratory advisor, you will serve as a cornerstone in this advising network.

Formerly referred to simply as first-year and sophomore advisors, we are using the term "exploratory advisor" to highlight the role in helping students to think broadly about the opportunities in their first four semesters prior to declaring a focal area and beginning work with a "concentration advisor" in the latter half of their time at Brown.

Becoming an architect of their own education can feel daunting, especially because most incoming students were schooled in a highly structured environment. They will begin to ponder life after college, and likely challenge their assumptions and goals. Additionally, given the current diversity of the student body — which includes students from around the world, those who are the first in their family to attend college and students in the process of exploring aspects of their identity — it is essential that we provide a strong advising system that supports a variety of needs. Your role as one of



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their first academic advisors is to take an interest in your advisees' current academic plans, listen to their preferences and guide them in choosing courses and making other academic decisions, see possibilities they have not yet considered, refer them to other resources and encourage them to begin building a team of support.

THE MEIKLEJOHN PEER ADVISOR

Role: A Near-Peer Partner in First-Year Advising

Meiklejohn peer advisors are sophomores, juniors and seniors who can help you and your first-year students navigate the Brown curriculum. Meiklejohns undergo comprehensive training on advising principles, the Brown curriculum and student services on campus. They also attend group advising meetings during Orientation and throughout the year. You and your Meiklejohn peer advisor — together with your first-year students — form the foundation of the advising partnership at Brown, a collaboration of many individuals and offices aimed at building a responsive, individual curriculum for each undergraduate student.

The advantage of this approach is that advisees can ask a single question and receive an immediate answer from two experienced individuals. Such an exchange frequently leads to spirited conversation and sets the tone for a cooperative approach throughout the year. Meiklejohns provide a valuable student perspective on course selection and may have knowledge of curricular areas unfamiliar to you. You should encourage them to share their experiences. Remember, too, that you are a mentor to your Meiklejohn, who is gaining valuable leadership experience from working as a partner with you.

During the year, Meiklejohns can help connect with advisees who are struggling to make or keep an appointment with an academic advisor. Meiklejohns can also help set up social interactions with advisees, such as lunch or a study break.



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Why Meiklejohn?

Brown's academic peer advisors are named for Alexander Meiklejohn, who was professor of philosophy and dean of the College at Brown before becoming the first non-clergyman to be named president of Amherst College in 1912. His radical changes to Amherst's curriculum led to his forced resignation in 1923. He then moved to the University of Wisconsin, where he created an experimental college at which students studied only two subjects during their first two years: fifth-century Athens and modern America. Once again, conflicts with faculty led to his dismissal. He went on to become a founder of the American Civil Liberties Union, president of the American Philosophical Association and an inspiration for some of the student reform movements of the 1960s.

Meiklejohn's championing of free speech and self-government applies directly to the practice of peer advising at Brown. Meiklejohns embody Brown's commitment to student-centered and student-directed learning. As students who work to strengthen the University's collective knowledge of Brown's Open Curriculum, Meiklejohn peer advisors fulfill the primary intellectual and civic duty of Brown students.

THE ADVISEES

Role: Explorers, Becoming the Architects of Their Own Education

First-Year Advisees

As the primary architects of their education, students at Brown are expected to assume responsibility for their educational choices, but they also are expected to keep an open mind and listen to many points of view. They receive a wealth of information from the College about academic life at Brown, both before and after they arrive on campus. [Your Bruno Beginnings](#), an online welcome booklet, is shared with students upon their acceptance of admission, and communications continue over the summer to help guide students on how to plan their course of study. They also learn about Brown's philosophy of advising and the importance of sharing their academic plans with you and articulating reasons for their choices.

Another resource for students is the online workshop 1stYear@Brown. This online Canvas course serves multiple purposes:

- It introduces students to the Open Curriculum, the values and norms of a liberal education and the importance of accessing the available advising and resource opportunities at Brown.
- It gives incoming students a chance to think critically about Brown's philosophy of education while introducing them to strategies for building an advising network.
- It provides a space for reflection as incoming students prepare to begin college and join the Brown community.



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As students participate in the course and review the advising materials they receive over the summer, we suggest that they consider these questions about their academic interests, which will help them as they begin to introduce themselves to you and their other advisors:

What new areas are you hoping to try out during your first or second year, and what's drawing you to them?

What are you particularly curious about, and how do you want to build on that curiosity?

What are some of the hopes, values and goals guiding your choices for what you study during the first year and beyond?

Later in this handbook, you will see references to various online tools that will help you as an advisor, a proposed meeting schedule and suggested topics for advising in the first and sophomore years. Experienced advisors will tell you that building a rapport with your advisees takes time. As a baseline, the list of scheduled meetings will ensure that your advisees have the fundamentals they need. Providing your students with your office hours and a chance to email or meet with you to discuss impromptu questions or concerns can further enhance the relationship you develop with them.

Sophomore Advisees

Students continue with their exploratory advisor through the sophomore year so that they can benefit from the continuity of a two-year advising relationship. Sophomore advisors are augmented by deans in the College.

Sophomores are generally more experienced, so their responsibilities in an advising relationship are different. Advisors can assist first-semester sophomores by encouraging them to make connections between their first-year and second-year courses so that they can begin to develop an intellectual focus. Sophomores also are expected to maintain and build on the relationships they developed in their first year of study. As a useful exercise for the first sophomore advising meeting, you might begin by asking your advisees to write down the names of faculty members, deans or others who made a difference to them in their first year. Then encourage them to contact these people sometime during the semester. The connections they build with faculty and campus administrators will help them foster communities of support and identify unique opportunities in areas of their interests. They will also have an easier time approaching a faculty member for a letter of recommendation later in their career if they have stayed in touch along the way.



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Special Cohorts of Advisors

A number of special advising programs complement and extend the work of exploratory advisors. Some of these programs are offered exclusively to first-years or sophomores; other programs provide advising support to the entire student population. Information about these programs is provided here so that academic advisors understand the range of advising options available to first-year and sophomore students.

PEER ADVISING PROGRAMS

In addition to the Meiklejohn Peer Advising Program, Brown supports several other student-directed support systems on campus. Bruno Leaders, Community Coordinators, Minority Peer Counselors (MPCs), Gender and Sexuality Peer Counselors (GSPCs), International Mentoring Program (IMP), and Undocumented, First-Generation College and Low-Income Peer Counselors (U-FLi PCs) all serve to orient first-year students to life on campus both in and out of the residence halls. They also provide valuable leadership opportunities for sophomores, juniors and seniors.

SOPHOMORE DEANS

All academic deans are happy to work with sophomores, but several people in the College have special responsibilities in this area. They are available during open hours and by appointment (virtual or in-person). They can also serve as a useful resource to you if you have concerns about your sophomore students.

Amari Boyd <i>Assistant Dean of the College for First-Year and Sophomore Studies</i>	x3-2315
Shaunté Montgomery <i>Associate Dean of the College for Class-Year Advising</i>	x3-6443
Timothy Shiner <i>Senior Associate Dean of the College for Advising</i>	x3-2676
Peggy Chang <i>Associate Dean of the College and Director of the Curricular Resource Center</i>	x3-2324

MATCHED ADVISING PROGRAM FOR SOPHOMORES (MAPS)

Second-year students participating in this program are paired with junior and senior mentors for advising support and assistance in navigating concentration declarations, research opportunities and other sophomore concerns. The MAPS program also organizes group events, panel presentations and focus groups that are open to all sophomores.



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DEANS OF THE COLLEGE AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Academic deans are available for virtual drop-in consultations with students and advisors every weekday. Students also may make appointments with individual deans according to their interests and needs. Information regarding this can be found [on the College website](#).

If you have a question about first-year or sophomore advising, we encourage you to contact advising@brown.edu.

If you have concerns about a student's health or well-being, or if you know one of your advisees is having an issue of a non-academic nature, please contact [Student Support Services](#) (x3-3145) or [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (x3-3476).

DEPARTMENTAL UNDERGRADUATE GROUPS (DUGS)

A DUG is a group of concentrators that aim to create a sense of community within an academic department. DUGs help students make and strengthen connections with other concentrators, professors and concentrator alumni, provide a means for first- and second-year students to explore various concentrations and enable concentrators to explore potential career opportunities related to their disciplines.



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Advising Fundamentals

ADVISOR ORIENTATION SESSIONS

We will be offering both online and in-person support sessions to help orient and prepare you for your first advising meetings, including some that will be particularly designed for new advisors. In these sessions, you will be introduced to relevant staff in the College and review the main goals for advising and the resources available to you and your advisees. You will be able to ask questions, share advising tips with other advisors and consider situations that you may encounter. Remember that all of the academic deans are available for consultation as needed.

ADVISING TOOLS

Advisors are provided with a number of advising tools to help in conversations with advisees. Some of these tools will be important in every advising meeting; others are designed to enhance your ability to access other kinds of information. We encourage you to browse through these sources of information and contact any of the academic deans with questions.

ASK: Brown's Electronic Advising Tool

ASK (short for "Advising Sidekick") is a platform that allows you to access a wealth of student information. As an advisor, you can view your advisees' admission essays, high school transcripts, standardized test scores and course preferences as well as the introduction they wrote to you over the summer. As your advisees progress, you will be able to see their internal academic record. Sophomores also declare their concentrations through ASK.

Advising Sidekick | ask.brown.edu

Alternate PIN (alt-PIN)

First-year and sophomore students will need a unique alt-PIN, which is only visible to the advisor, to register for courses in their first four semesters in ASK. This exists to ensure that advisees meet with their advisors prior to course registration periods.

Concentrations

Students and advisors can use the Undergraduate Programs interactive website to explore the many intellectual paths undergraduates can take at Brown. The site helps students investigate specific concentrations and explore how their varied interests might take academic shape.

Undergraduate Programs | brown.edu/go/concentrations



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Courses @ Brown

Courses @ Brown is the best place to browse Brown’s general course offerings.

You can search by a specific term or the full year. Enter a subject or keyword and select “Find Courses” to initiate a search.

In the search results for a course, you can view details, including description, registration restrictions, links to the class syllabus and course feedback in the Critical Review, final exam date and time (and location when scheduled), meeting time and location, and instructor email address. The instructor name is linked to the course offerings; if you click it, all courses taught by that instructor will display. If a course has been canceled, the time will have a strike-through that can be seen in the search results or in the details.

If you scroll down on the details panel, you can see the book information for the offering when available through the Brown University Bookstore. Select “Reset Search” to begin again or change your search criteria.

Using the advanced search options allows a search by meeting time, department or curricular program such as Power, Privilege and Race courses; Writing-Designated; First-Year/Sophomore Seminars and more.

Courses may have different components — such as Lab, Screening, Conferences, etc. — that students need to add to their cart in order to be allowed to register.

The “Add to Cart” button allows students to build a registration cart that you can view, and that allows them to register for their courses.

Courses @ Brown | cab.brown.edu

ADVISING FOR COURSE SELECTION

As you advise your students on their course selection, keep these guidelines in mind. When designing their course load, students should do the following:

Take four courses per semester. Four courses per semester is the expected normal load, even for juniors and seniors. Students should drop a course only in unusual circumstances and after making full use of the advising network. They should be advised not to strive for five courses unless there is a good reason to do so and the courses are carefully chosen. Some students may receive approval from a dean or from Student Accessibility Services to take fewer than four courses.

Aim for balance. Advise them to seek a balance between science and non-science courses, large lecture courses and seminars, and courses that meet on Monday/Wednesday/Friday versus Tuesday/Thursday. Heavy reading courses should be balanced with other offerings.



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Seek out writing courses. Brown requires all students to work formally on their writing twice — once in their first two years of study and again in their junior or senior year. Students meet this requirement by completing any course in English, comparative literature, literary arts course, or any of the hundreds of courses across the curriculum marked as Writing-Designated. First-year students are strongly advised to enroll in one or more of these courses in their first year of study. All students must finish part one of the writing requirement no later than semester four and part two beginning in semester five, but no later than semester seven.

Look for opportunities to take small classes. It is usually advisable for students to take at least one small class in any given semester. Brown's First-Year Seminar (FYS) program was designed to meet this need for first-year students. Enrolling in an FYS is one of the best ways to get to know a Brown faculty member in a curricular setting.

Aim for breadth. Urge students to explore the various areas of the curriculum: humanities, sciences, social sciences and multidisciplinary courses. Students should be encouraged to study outside of their comfort zone, including courses that challenge traditional perspectives or approaches. They can experiment with less risk by taking courses S/NC or by auditing (taking a course without receiving credit) or vagabonding (sitting a course without officially registering as an auditor or for credit).

Identify common threads in the courses they've been taking. Students who enjoy a particular area of study should be encouraged to explore different aspects of that subject, perhaps in other disciplines. For example, a student who enjoys an 18th-century art course might benefit from continued study of the same period in music, politics or literature. It can be helpful for first-year students to have at least two of their eight courses relate to each other in some way, so that they may begin to discover which areas of the curriculum they find most attractive.

Understand the value of language study. Language proficiency is integral to the exploration of human societies and has multiple cognitive benefits. Students may wish to pursue language study in the first year to optimize their choices for study abroad opportunities. Because language courses are small and interactive, they provide an ideal choice for integrating new students in a receptive setting where their study of language also introduces them to cultural, literary and historical aspects of another community. Students who will be continuing rather than beginning language should take a placement test. Course and placement information can be found on the Center for Language Studies website.

Center for Language Studies | cls.brown.edu/languagesatbrown/placement-exams



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Explore the curriculum widely. While first-year students may be focused on how their course selection maps onto their intended concentration, they should be urged to consider courses in all divisions of the College (humanities, life sciences, physical sciences and social sciences). Many students — and their families — will have clear and set expectations for what the concentration will be, even though they may be unaware of entire segments of the Brown curriculum. As an advisor, try to strike a balance between encouraging exploration and a broad program of liberal study, and proposing courses leading to various concentrations. As your advisees approach their sophomore year, they will then need to think in more focused ways about possible concentrations and related course choices. [The Undergraduate Programs website](#) is a good tool to help students explore concentrations.



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Plan for certain pathways. A handful of concentrations do require early commitment: Sc.B. degrees in general, and engineering degrees in particular, require special planning. For this reason, students who indicated an interest in engineering have been paired with advisors in the engineering department. Students planning to pursue Sc.B. degrees should consult with an advisor in the appropriate department.

Students interested in concentrations in the sciences, including the social sciences, should consider a mathematics course. Most sciences require at least two semesters of calculus (e.g., through Math 0100, 0170 or 0190). Over the summer, incoming students will be prompted to fill out an online questionnaire about their math background.

Math Placement | math.brown.edu/calplacement

Students interested in pursuing a pre-medical sequence should consult the Health Careers Advising website, and in particular the information for first-year and sophomore students, to determine which pre-med courses they will need to take in the first and second years.

Health Careers Advising | brown.edu/academics/college/advising/health-careers

Consider grade options for each course. The founders of Brown's Open Curriculum implemented the S/NC option to encourage students to take academic risks, particularly in curricular areas they would otherwise avoid if concern about earning an "A" is paramount. Experience has shown that taking one course each semester under the S/NC option has no discernible effect on admission to graduate or professional programs.



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Check for final exam conflicts when designing a semester schedule. Students should speak to a dean immediately if they wish to take courses with exam conflicts. Students should be aware that they will not be excused from taking final exams at scheduled times because of travel plans or other commitments.

First-Year Advising

PREPARING FOR YOUR ADVISING MEETINGS

Advising meetings will take place during Orientation. To prepare, review advisee information in ASK. Look at the self-introduction each of them prepared for you and skim their admission essays to get a sense of who they are and why they wanted to come to Brown.

You may want to note the following about your individual students in preparation for meetings:

- Academic interests, strengths and possible areas of challenge
- Significant life experiences, background, circumstances
- Extra-curricular interests and involvements

Your advisees have also been asked to reflect on these elements and how they might inform their Brown experience, so any of these topics should be good starting points for discussion.

MEETING WITH YOUR MEIKLEJOHN AND FIRST-YEAR ADVISEES

Meeting with Meiklejohn Peer Advisor

WHEN: Advising Day — Friday, Aug. 30, 2024

GOAL:

- Discuss your plans and approach for working together to support your first-year advisees.

Group Meeting with Advisees and Meiklejohn

WHEN: Advising Day — Friday, August 30, 2024

GOALS:

- Help everyone in the group begin to get to know one another.
- Introduce the notion of building an advising team, starting with the “advising triad”: the exploratory advisor, the Meiklejohn peer advisor and the advisee. Explain each person’s role in the advising relationship.
- Orient students to the concept of a liberal arts education, and in particular to the values and opportunities of the Open Curriculum.



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- Introduce the notion of a growth mindset: i.e., that everyone will struggle at some point in their undergraduate career, but that struggle and failure are essential elements of progress and growth. Let your advisees know that students who access help and guidance along the way are by far the most engaged and ultimately successful.
- Tell students how they can contact you throughout the year (e.g., by email, during office hours, by appointment, etc.) and encourage them to use you and your Meiklejohn early and often.

INDIVIDUAL ADVISING APPOINTMENTS**

Make sure that you schedule individual appointments with your advisees.

Individual Meeting with Advisees and Meiklejohn (same day) Course Selection for Semester 1

WHEN: Advising Day: Friday, August 30, 2024

OBJECTIVES:

- To explain the principles of the advising triad at Brown
- To develop a community of peers
- To identify coursework that aids in the advisee's exploration of the open curriculum

SUGGESTED AGENDA:

1. Get acquainted.

Talk about students' background and interests. What are their initial feelings about coming to Brown? What hopes and expectations do they have for the first semester? The self-introduction the students provided over the summer (see ask.brown.edu) should also provide good prompts for this conversation. We hope you will feel free to share something about your own experiences and background, especially where you may have struggled or experienced difficulty or uncertainty.

2. Discuss Liberal Learning Goals and the Open Curriculum.

Use students' self-introductions and their admission essays (also in ASK) to open a discussion about their educational goals and their thoughts about first-semester courses. Most students will need some help or encouragement thinking beyond the standard structure and content of high school curricula/course offerings.

Individual Follow-Up Meetings with Advisees Early Semester 1 Check-In

WHEN: First two weeks of classes

OBJECTIVES:

- To co-create shared strategies for communication and mentorship
- To discuss changes in course selections



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It's important to reach out to your advisees early in the semester to reinforce that you and your Meiklejohn are there to help them with their transition to Brown and address specific issues with their classes, academic and personal support resources, etc.

The second individual advising meeting should take place during this time, but we also encourage you to check in with your advisees by email and to maintain contact with your Meiklejohn, who may be communicating with your advisees more frequently and informally.

If an advisee does not respond to you or your Meiklejohn when you reach out, the student could be insufficiently engaged with coursework or struggling in other ways. Homesickness, too much social or extracurricular involvement, or difficulties adjusting to college-level work are common problems at this time, and early intervention is crucial. If you have concerns about an advisee, please contact a dean in the College by writing to advising@brown.edu; they will follow up with the student and connect them with appropriate sources of academic and personal support.

SUGGESTED AGENDA:

1. **Discuss courses and encourage contact with faculty.** Make sure that each student is enrolled in four courses, unless the student is on an approved course load reduction. You can see your advisees' internal academic record in ASK. For the rare student who is enrolled in five courses, ask about the progress in each and about balancing academic work with overall adjustment and engagement in extracurricular activities. Note: If a student passes only three courses in the fall and is not on a reduced course load, the student must pass four in the spring to remain in Good Standing.
2. **Ask your advisees how their courses are going.** Do they measure up to their expectations? How is the level of rigor and workload (i.e. Does the student feel under- or over-challenged)? Suggest enrollment changes as necessary and/or consult with the College. If an advisee is having trouble coping with the volume or level of work, with their amount of free time or with a particular issue such as note-taking or reading speed, you might also suggest the following: academic coaching, group tutoring, a conversation with someone at Student Accessibility Services or other forms of academic support. Contact information for these programs is provided later in this handbook.
3. **Ask your advisees about how they are acclimating to life at Brown outside the classroom.** How is their living environment? Are they finding community at Brown? Are they sleeping and eating well? These factors play a big role in students' academic success and if students are struggling in these ways, you can help refer them to appropriate resources.

New students are often reluctant to talk with their instructors. Encourage them to use professors' office hours and give them suggestions about how to engage in those conversations.



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4. **Discuss grade options** (ABC/No Credit or Satisfactory/No Credit) and remind students that changes to grade options may be made through the fourth week of classes.
5. **Explain the purpose of Course Performance Reports** and the desirability of requesting them before the end of the semester.
6. **Review registration deadlines and policies related to late adds/drops.** For all advising-related deadlines, consult the Academic Calendar on the Registrar’s website.

Academic Calendar | brown.edu/about/administration/registrar/academic-calendar

Students may add courses online in weeks three and four of the semester for a fee of \$15 for each change. Grade option changes may be made online through the fourth week of classes. No fee is charged for grade option changes.

Individual Follow-Up Meetings with Advisees Course Registration for Semester 2

WHEN: Late October to early November

OBJECTIVES:

- To establish a foundation of communication and mentorship
- To identify coursework that aids in the advisee’s exploration of the Open Curriculum
- To review and compare pre-term interests with those that are emerging

Advising tip: Schedule a few extra office hours during the Semester 1 “advising period” so you can meet with each of your advisees. Remember that your Meiklejohn partner can help schedule meetings by calling or emailing your advisees and arranging times for them to see you. Keep notes on your students so you can follow up on topics that were raised in earlier meetings and review your notes before students come in to discuss their Semester 2 course selection.

SUGGESTED AGENDA:

1. **Review current courses and midterm work.** Check in with your advisees about how their courses are going, including midterm exams and coursework. Students who are running into unexpected difficulty should do one or several of the following:
 - a. Consult their professors
 - b. Attend group tutoring or group study sessions
 - c. Request an academic coach



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If a student is struggling to stay afloat in one or several courses, you might discuss the possibility of dropping down to three courses — bearing in mind that the consequences of completing only three courses in a semester can be significant. If a first-year student completes only three courses in the first term, they must pass four courses in the second term to remain in Good Standing. Overall, a student has one chance in the first four semesters of study to pass three courses without being placed on Academic Warning.

If you think an advisee may have special medical, personal or learning circumstances that affect the student's ability to succeed in full-time coursework, please refer the student to the College, Student Accessibility Services or Student Support Services. If the circumstances warrant doing so, a course load reduction for one or more semesters may be approved.

Students having the most academic difficulties are sometimes the least willing to discuss them. Often coming from the top of their secondary school classes and communities, many first-year students at Brown have never had academic problems and find the experience unsettling and even shameful. Remind your advisees that difficulty and even failure are common in college, and that many students experience early roadblocks and go on to very successful careers at Brown and beyond.

- 2. Discuss course selection for Semester 2 and provide students with alt-PINS to register.** Help your students think about how the current semester might inform their thinking about the next. Which courses are working well and which aren't?

How do the student's mid- or long-range goals factor into their second semester choices? While many students feel pressured to enter into concentration- or career-oriented course choices, Semester 2 is still early in the academic career, so encourage a balance between pursuing a focal area and continuing to explore.

Suggest a visit to the dean's virtual drop-in hours or the Curricular Resource Center (peer advisors) to get a different point of view on course selection and curricular options.

Make sure to give your advisee their alt-PIN. This indicates that you have discussed their course selection and are satisfied that they have followed a thoughtful process in choosing courses.

Individual Follow-Up Meetings with Advisees Early Semester 2 Check-In

WHEN: First two weeks of the term

OBJECTIVES:

- To review shared strategies for communication and mentorship
- To discuss changes in course selections



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SUGGESTED AGENDA:

- 1. Review progress in Semester 1.** Before meeting with your advisees, take a look at how they did during the first term. You will be able to review your advisees' grades online in ASK as soon as they are available. At the start of the semester, you will receive communications about any of your advisees who are experiencing academic difficulties.

Students who have passed four or three courses in their first semester remain in Good Standing. However, it's still important to talk with each student about what did or didn't go well in the first semester, so that they can make adjustments for the second. First-year students must pass seven courses in their first two semesters to remain in Good Standing.

Students who pass only two courses in the first semester are placed on Academic Warning. Students who pass one course are placed on Serious Warning, as are any returning first-year students who passed no courses in their first semester. Advisees on Warning or Serious Warning will be paired with an academic dean for additional support; these students will need your help to set a realistic plan for returning to Good Standing, including taking four well-balanced courses in the second semester.

Please consult "Advisees on Warning and Serious Warning" in the Progress Toward Graduation section of this handbook for suggestions on how to approach conversations with students in academic difficulty. The Academic Rules and Regulations summarize the options students have for restoring themselves to Good Standing. Please refer students to campus resources for help in dealing with problems that impede academic success; information about academic and personal support services on campus is available later in this book.

Note: It is important to know, and to tell your students, that academic standing notations are internal only.

- 2. Discuss Semester 2 courses.** Compare preregistration choices with courses in which the student has actually enrolled; discuss changes and the reasons for them.

Consider their course schedule in light of balance, breadth and class size. Students should have at least one course that is a small-class meeting (First-Year Seminars are ideal), so that they feel someone knows them. Encourage students who have yet to take a course that requires a paper to enroll in a writing course. Remember that in qualifying circumstances (medical, personal or learning-related), administrators in the College, Student Support Services or Student Accessibility Services can approve a reduced course load. Otherwise the normal course load is four credits.



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3. **Discuss grade options** (ABC/NC or S/NC) and the possibility of requesting Course Performance Reports, especially for courses taken S/NC.
4. **Remind students of registration deadlines.** For all advising-related deadlines, consult the Academic Calendar.

Individual Follow-Up Meetings with Advisees Review of Year, Registration for Semester 3

WHEN: Early April

OBJECTIVES:

- To apply communication and mentorship strategies
- To identify coursework that aids in the advisee's exploration of the open curriculum
- To review and compare pre-matriculation interests with those that are emerging

Advising tip: Remember that your Meiklejohn partner can help schedule meetings by calling or emailing your advisees and arranging times for them to meet with you. Keep notes on your students so you can follow up on topics that were raised in earlier meetings and review your notes before students meet with you to discuss their fall course selection.

SUGGESTED AGENDA:

1. **Assess academic progress thus far.** Ask about students' experience thus far in Semester 2. How did midterms go? Are they on track to complete at least seven courses in the first two semesters (unless they have an approved course load reduction)?
2. **Review rules for academic progress.** If a student in academic difficulty is not on an approved course load reduction, discuss the implications of not passing four courses in the second term or seven courses in the first year (Warning, Serious Warning, Suspension).
3. **Refer students to the College if they are in danger of being placed on Warning or suspended after Semester 2.** We will identify sources of support and help students develop a plan for making satisfactory academic progress.
4. **Refer to academic resources on campus.** Academic coaching and group tutoring in all major areas of the curriculum are available to students. Focused support for math and writing is available at the Math Resource Center and Writing Center, respectively.
5. **Look to the future.** Discuss sophomore course selection, especially the fall term, in relation to potential concentrations and other areas of interest. Consider options beyond traditional classroom courses — Group Independent Study Projects, internships, independent study and study abroad — and refer students to the appropriate offices for more information about these opportunities. If students are beginning to think about career prospects, talk with them about



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the ways in which a Brown education can open up a broad range of career opportunities. The Undergraduate Programs page is a great online resource for this conversation.

Begin to discuss and make explicit the “core competencies” that students are developing as they study broadly across the disciplines and deeply within a selected concentration: reading, public speaking, critical reading, data analysis, problem solving and research. These are skills students are acquiring as part of their coursework, research and other cocurricular opportunities, and they will become the transferable skills students need for pursuing career pathways and connecting their Brown education to life outside the classroom. The Sheridan Center provides students with a variety of programs and opportunities to practice these skills and resources to support the development of them via the Learning Collaborative.

When you feel confident that your advisees have a solid plan for the fall semester, give them their alt-PIN for registration.

- 6. Discuss advising for next year.** Students may indicate that they would prefer to be paired with an advisor in a field more closely related to their emerging academic interests. Remind your advisees that you are there to guide them no matter what their interests are, that they will be paired with a concentration advisor once they declare, and that there are many people available to advise on their academic trajectory. Faculty in their courses, concentration advisors and DUGs are good places to start these conversations even before they declare their concentration in the second semester of the sophomore year.

***Please be advised that these are the suggested minimum number of advising meetings for exploratory advisors and their first-year advisees. If you would like to increase the number of times you meet with your advisees, please feel encouraged to do so.*

Sophomore Advising

Advising second-year students mirrors the work of advising first-year students in many ways. Sophomores should remain attentive to breadth and balance in their studies, explore beyond their comfort zones, improve their writing, consider studying a language or other symbolic system and continually evaluate their own curricular choices and decisions.

At the same time, sophomore students have a set of experiences that are different from students in their first year. While some sophomores are eager to focus on their intended concentration, others may have difficulty identifying an academic focus and feel anxious about their future. This wide range of experiences makes sophomore advising a delicate balance between when to be intrusive and when to give your sophomore advisees space to figure things out for themselves.



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Your role as an advisor is to guide students along their path. Think of yourself as a coach on the sidelines, giving instructive support and allowing space and opportunity for your advisees to demonstrate how they wish to explore the myriad of opportunities available to enhance their education.

SOPHOMORE PRIORITIES

Because the sophomore year is a pivotal one, sophomores are also required to meet with an advisor during pre-registration period for their fourth semester of study.

One aspect of this continuity has to do with a student's general education at Brown. The beginning of the sophomore year is a good time to take stock and look back over the courses taken in the first year to see emerging interests. Encourage your students to reflect on the Liberal Learning Goals, to discover which capacities they have begun to develop through their course choices so far and which they should continue to develop. Students should continue exploring the curriculum during their third and fourth semesters.

Students are required to complete the concentration declaration process electronically in ASK in their fourth term, before pre registration opens for the fifth term. As a sophomore advisor, you can encourage students to begin the process early in the fourth semester, rather than waiting until the deadline. You might want to peruse the Undergraduate Programs website with your advisees or offer to read a draft of their essays.

Once a sophomore declares, the concentration advisor becomes the advisor of record, although many students choose to stay in touch with their exploratory advisors.

Deans in the College complement the efforts of sophomore advisors, and students can access them during advising hours. Students also can opt in to the Matched Advising Program for Students (MAPS), which pairs second-year students with junior and senior mentors for one-on-one and group advising support related to concentration declaration, research opportunities, internships, academics and other sophomore concerns.

CHOOSING A CONCENTRATION

Students are required to choose a concentration toward the end of their sophomore year. Although the choice of concentration is by no means the sole issue of significance in the second year, it is a defining one, and it may be a factor in other decisions that students make throughout the year.

Many students face the task of choosing a concentration with some trepidation, and they may feel like they are making an irrevocable life decision. As an advisor, you can remind your students that their concentration choice does not determine the rest of their lives. For instance, majoring in biology now does not eliminate the option of law school or social work at some point in the future.



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Exploring Different Concentrations

Encourage your sophomores to research potential concentrations. Students can learn about concentrations through careful course selection, conversations with juniors and seniors in those fields and discussions with course instructors and concentration advisors. Students may also connect with members of a concentration's DUG (Departmental Undergraduate Group) to explore different concentrations. Finally, the Undergraduate Programs website allows students to learn about Brown's various concentration offerings in one central location.

After students have explored the concentrations they are interested in, you may want to offer to look at the concentration declaration form with them, available in ASK. The declaration consists of three parts. The first is an essay representing the intellectual rationale for the concentration. It should articulate the student's goals in the concentration in relation to the broader learning objectives of a Brown education, including the goal of improved writing skills. The second part is a list of courses already taken and those that will be taken in the future, to realize these learning goals. The list should be realistic: Although students are not obligated to take every course on the list, they do need to have a reasonable plan for completing all required courses by the end of the eighth semester. The final section allows students to discuss additional academic goals outside the concentration and projects or research they hope to accomplish.



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One Concentration or Two?

Many students believe that two concentrations are better than one. An advisor can correct this misperception. Ask questions to determine why a student wants to double concentrate. Often, students want to complete two concentrations to impress potential employers and graduate school admission committees. In such cases, tell advisees that most employers and graduate schools pay more attention to the actual courses they take than to the concentrations listed at the top of their transcripts. Students can complete one concentration and take courses in a second area of the curriculum without actually completing a second concentration. If the transcript demonstrates sustained interest in a second academic discipline, well-written application letters and statements of purpose can help students shape how employers and admission committees view their academic records.

If students' intellectual interests justify the possibility of double concentrating, declaring two concentrations may be appropriate. Still, double concentrating restricts students' freedom to explore the curriculum and thus may diminish the "liberal" part of a Brown education. Students should also be aware that they cannot have a second concentration and declare an undergraduate certificate. Certificate programs are described below. Often, the best course of action for such students is to take courses that meet requirements for a second concentration while delaying an actual declaration. Students often find that their desire to explore the curriculum in their final year outweighs their interest in a second concentration. If a student remains interested in declaring a second concentration, they can do so after a primary concentration has been approved. The deadline for having a second concentration approved in ASK is the end of a student's seventh semester.

CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

Sophomore year is the time when students can begin to take full advantage of Brown's many opportunities for innovative and independent learning experiences. Sophomores should be prompted to consider how they might incorporate independent study, international study, research or fellowship opportunities into their educational plans. At the same time, sophomores should be looking ahead to the summer, to junior year and even to senior year and life beyond Brown. The most common time for students to complete internships is in the summer after their sophomore year, and approximately one-third of the junior class studies abroad for one or two semesters. Sophomore students are eligible to apply for Undergraduate Teaching and Research Awards (UTRAs) and for special fellowships, such as the Mellon Mays Fellowship. They might even begin to think about the possibilities of a future Fulbright, a Rhodes or a Marshall. As an advisor, you can plant this seed.

You can direct your advisees to the wealth of information on the website for the College.

Learn Beyond the Classroom | college.brown.edu/learn-beyond-classroom



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Independent Concentrations

Although Brown offers more than 80 undergraduate concentrations, students have the option of creating and designing their own. Independent concentrations — interdisciplinary fields usually focused on a broad problem, theme or question, rather than a discipline — must be sponsored by at least one faculty member. Proposals must be reviewed and approved by the College Curriculum Council. Students wishing to complete an independent concentration should attend an information session at the Curricular Resource Center or speak with one of the center’s independent concentration student coordinators, and consult the dean for the independent concentration program.

Independent Concentrations | go.brown.edu/independent-concentration

Independent Studies

Brown places a high value on independent learning experiences for undergraduates. Brown alumni report that one-on-one work with faculty was the most satisfying experience of their college careers. Students’ educational plans might incorporate at least one independent learning experience, whether it be research with a faculty member, a directed reading course or an individual or group independent study course. Suggest that your advisees visit the Curricular Resource Center to learn how to propose a Group Independent Study Project (GISP) through the College, a student-designed independent study, or a student-designed internship for credit. Many departments also offer independent studies (“Departmental Independent Studies” or courses); students should consult a department’s website or drop in to chat with the department manager about how to go about arranging an independent study experience.

Research and Fellowships

Sophomore year is an important time for students to explore opportunities to pursue their intellectual passions beyond the classroom. Brown offers many funded research and/or internships awards and supports students who seek funding through external awards as well. The process of applying for such opportunities teaches sophomores to begin to identify and articulate their values, commitments and future direction.

Internal research and internship funding opportunities include the Royce Fellowship, the Social Innovation Fellowship, BrownConnect SPRINT Awards, the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship and others. While all of these programs are great for sophomores, there are a few that we especially encourage second-year students to consider. For example, students apply in the sophomore year to be considered for the Mellon Mays Fellowship, which aims to increase the number of underrepresented minorities, and those with a demonstrated commitment to eradicating racial disparities, who pursue a Ph.D. in key fields. The UTRA program, as one of the SPRINT Awards, provides a compelling opportunity because it supports various types of research and course revision work, and Brown offers well over 200 awards each year.



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External awards for sophomores include the National Science Foundation undergraduate awards, the Udall Scholarship for students who have demonstrated a commitment to the environment and the Barry Goldwater Scholarship, which recognizes young scholars committed to research careers.

National and International Fellowships at Brown | brown.edu/academics/college/fellowships

Study Abroad and Home Country Study Away

Most students who study away from Brown for a term or a year do so during their junior year. Students should plan for that time away during their sophomore year.

To explore study abroad options, students can start with the Study Abroad Advising website and can plan to meet with a study abroad advisor or speak with students who have returned from studying in another country.

Undergraduate Study Abroad | studyabroad.brown.edu

Study Away from Brown | brown.edu/go/study-away

U.S. students have the option to study away for one semester at another U.S. college or university. International students may apply to study at a university in their home country. The rules governing transfer credit for Home Country Study Away are fairly complicated so students considering this option must consult with the College and the appropriate academic departments to obtain pre-approval for their study away plans.

Certificate Programs

Brown offers a handful of undergraduate certificates that allow students to pursue an integrated combination of coursework, co-curricular and experiential learning in a focus area. Students can utilize these same resources to explore corresponding curricular options. Programs are offered in Data Fluency, Engaged Scholarship, Entrepreneurship, Intercultural Competence, and Migration Studies. Together, these experiences contribute to their academic and personal development, deepening students' understanding of an area of interest while allowing them to acquire skills that prepare them for life after Brown.

Certificate Programs | go.brown.edu/undergraduate-certificates

CAREER EXPLORATION, INTERNSHIPS AND BROWNCONNECT

Brown's Center for Career Exploration supports students and recent graduates as they chart a path toward rewarding, meaningful careers. By facilitating personal reflection, connections within and beyond the Brown community, and exploration of many professional pathways, the center helps students and recent graduates achieve their career ambitions.



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For students just beginning to think about career exploration (or not sure why or even how to get started), meeting with a peer career advisor is a great first step that doesn't require any preparation in advance and will provide an orientation to all of the center's resources and services. Students looking for funded internships or faculty research collaborations should learn about eligibility requirements and deadlines for the College's SPRINT program, and can use tools like BrownConnect and Handshake to access thousands of additional experiential learning opportunities and networking connections.

The center hosts dozens of year-round skills-based workshops, employer programs and alumni-led discussions. Students can find information about all of the center's upcoming events and programs on the University event calendar, in Today@Brown emails, on the center's website and through the center's social media channels.

Brown Center for Career Exploration | career-center.brown.edu

BrownConnect | brownconnect.brown.edu

Brown Semester Internship Programs | go.brown.edu/semester-internship

OTHER CONCERNS

Lapses in Communication

Some students in their first and second year may begin to develop communities and create bonds with mentors outside of the exploratory advising dynamic. This is a common occurrence, as many students start to develop their sense of belonging at Brown. We encourage these bonds, and see value in their being strengthened. However, some students' disengagement may be related to challenges they are facing. If you are ever concerned about lapses in communication with your advisees, please know that you are likely not alone. If you are ever concerned about the wellbeing of one or more of your advisees, please email advising@brown.edu, and we can help problem-solve or connect to other resources if a more serious intervention is indicated.

Leaves of Absence

Sophomores who lack direction may benefit from taking time off. A break from full-time studies can help students gain perspective and renewed energy for the rest of their undergraduate education. Approximately 15% of Brown students take a leave of absence that does not involve study elsewhere. The most common time for students to take such leaves is in the middle or at the end of the sophomore year.

Advisors can help students determine whether or not a leave of absence is warranted, but it is critical that students consult with an academic dean before making a decision. The deans can explain all of the ramifications of leave-taking to students, including how a leave will affect the date of degree completion.



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SCHEDULED MEETINGS WITH SOPHOMORES

As an advisor, you should meet at least three times with your sophomore advisees. The following schedule is intended to serve as a general guide.

First Meeting with Sophomore Advisees

WHEN: First two weeks of fall term classes*

OBJECTIVES:

- To apply communication and mentorship strategies
- To discuss changes in course selections
- To review and compare pre-matriculation interests with those that are emerging

Advising tip: Remember that your advisee has likely begun to make connections adjacent to your advising relationship. Be sure to encourage these connections, while sharing the value of maintaining an open line of communication with you. You may also consider opting to meet outside of your office or typical meeting location. A walking meeting or chat on the green helps to break away from the ordinary, and may provide an opportunity for a deeper mentorship experience.

SUGGESTED AGENDA:

- 1. Review the first year and discuss advising for the year ahead.** Get reacquainted, review how the first year went and identify central issues/concerns/goals for the coming year. Self-assessment questions can be a good place to start in this advising conversation: What did you learn about yourself during your first year and how does that shape what you want for your second year? What primary interests and goals have emerged? Who has been most helpful to you in an advising or mentoring capacity? Encourage students to reestablish contact with any faculty members and administrators who made a difference to them in their first year.
- 2. Discuss course selection and academic plans.** Review the student's first-year courses and help them assess how they're doing with the balance between breadth and focus. Which areas of the curriculum have they explored or avoided exploring? What are their primary areas of interest and potential concentration directions, and how do those relate to their tentative course selections? If important to the student, you could also discuss how course and concentration decisions relate to aspirations for life after Brown.
- 3. Remind advisees of the Writing Requirement.** Any sophomores who did not take an approved writing course in their first year must take one in their first or second term this year. Students may choose from courses in English, comparative literature, literary arts, or one of the hundreds of Writing-Designated Courses. Students who have not met this requirement by the end of their fourth term will receive a writing check.



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If one of your advisees has received a writing support flag (a check beside a course in which the instructor has found the student's writing to be insufficient), the Writing Center will reach out to that student to explain the resources available to them. If a student receives more than one flag, they will need to create a plan with a staff member in the Writing Center to work on improving their writing. This could entail taking an English course, enrolling in a course with a writing fellow attached to it or working with a writing associate at the Writing Center. If you have concerns about any of your students' written communication skills, please reach out to the director of the Writing Center.

4. **Consider co-curricular possibilities.** Is your advisee interested in studying abroad? Undergraduate research or fellowships? An internship? Leave-taking? If students express interest in one or more of these options, refer them to the appropriate office or dean.
5. **Discuss Academic Standing (Good Standing, Warning and Serious Warning), if needed.** If you have an advisee who was placed on Academic Warning (one course down) or Serious Warning (two courses down) for the fall semester, it is important to discuss the circumstances that led to that status and help set a realistic plan for returning to Good Standing. Note that academic standing notations are internal only. Consult Advisees on Warning and Serious Warning in the Progress Toward Graduation section of this handbook for suggestions on how to have this conversation. The Academic Rules and Regulations section provides detailed information about academic progress rules, but feel free to consult with an academic dean if you would like to discuss any aspect of the rules.

**Be aware that students may contact you for their alt-PIN before classes begin, if they didn't hold onto it following April preregistration. It is OK to provide the alt-PIN via email since they have discussed their choices with you during preregistration.*

Second Meeting with Sophomore Advisees

WHEN: Early November

WHERE: Advisor's office

OBJECTIVES:

- To apply communication and mentorship strategies
- To identify coursework that aids in the advisee's exploration of the open curriculum
- To review and compare pre-term interests with those that are emerging

SUGGESTED AGENDA:

1. **Review the current semester.** How are your classes going? Do you find them engaging/interesting? How is the workload? Help your student determine if their courses are moving them in the right direction and troubleshoot specific issues that might require additional support or resources.



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- 2. Discuss course selection for the upcoming semester and concentration possibilities.** As students register for Semester 4 courses, they should be focusing on potential concentrations and planning to take two to three courses in areas of interest. Recommend that they utilize the Undergraduate Programs website, meet with concentration advisors and/or contact DUG leaders to help them clarify their direction.

Students who have already chosen a concentration should be encouraged to check in with the concentration advisor(s) in their area(s) to make sure they're on the right track.

- 3. Remind advisee of the Writing Requirement.** If your advisees have not already done so, they must take an approved course in their fourth term. Students may choose from courses in English, comparative literature, literary arts, or one of the hundreds of courses across the curriculum marked Writing-Designated. Students who have not met this requirement by the end of their fourth term will have a hold on their registration.
- 4. Provide the alt-PIN.** Because your advisees are registering for a new semester, they will need a new alt-PIN. Alt-PINs and transcripts are available on your advising page in ASK. Additional information regarding alt-PINs for the spring and summer terms will be sent via email.

Third Meeting with Sophomore Advisees

WHEN: First and second weeks of spring term classes

WHERE: Advisor's office

OBJECTIVES:

- To apply communication and mentorship strategies
- To discuss changes in course selections
- To understand concentration declaration process
- To discuss concentration interest(s) and its application to the advisee's current academic plan

SUGGESTED AGENDA:

- 1. Take stock and review course selection.** Review how the student did in the first semester and consider their patterns of course selection over the first three semesters. You may be able to see an area of interest emerging that the student does not, or you may notice that the student has struggled with a particular set of courses. In the latter case, probe gently to determine the student's willingness to modify the intended academic path and help make adjustments as needed.



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2. **Discuss Academic Warning or Serious Warning, if needed.** If an advisee has been placed on Academic Warning or Serious Warning, it is imperative to discuss why the student is struggling and help set a realistic plan for returning to Good Standing. A focused intervention from an advisor can give students the support they need to make changes that will help them succeed.
3. **Remind advisee of The Writing Requirement.** Remind any advisees who have not yet taken an approved writing course that they must do so this term. Students may choose from courses in English, comparative literature, literary arts, or one of the hundreds of courses across the curriculum marked “WRIT.” Students who have not met this requirement by the end of their fourth term will have a hold on their registration.
4. **Discuss concentration choice and deadline.** Encourage your advisees to look at the concentration declaration interface in ASK and to meet with concentration advisors before drafting their declarations. Advisors’ names can be found on the Undergraduate Programs website or individual concentration pages. Offer to read a draft of the concentration essay before the student meets with their future concentration advisor.

Concentration declarations are due in ASK by mid-March. The exact date can be found on the academic calendar. For some of the larger concentrations, such as biology, computer science, history, international and public affairs, economics, and political science, it is important that students consult with concentration advisors early to ensure that they will be able to file on time.

5. **Encourage relationships with faculty.** If students are unable to identify a single faculty member they know well enough to request a letter of recommendation, consider this an opportunity to advise them on how to build relationships with faculty. You may also refer students to an academic dean, who can have a more extended conversation about how to take charge of this aspect of their academic experience at Brown.
6. **Discuss other questions.** Other than declaring a concentration, are there decisions your advisees need to make before the end of this semester? What are their plans for the coming summer and/or for the next academic year? Help them think about concrete steps they should take, including connecting with colleagues in other offices on campus.



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Additional Meetings

You may wish to meet with your advisees at other times, such as during the advising period leading up to Semester 4 preregistration. Students should also consult with concentration advisors in their intended fields of concentration. After they have filed a declaration of concentration, students' primary advisor will shift from you (their exploratory advisor) to their concentration advisor. If you are willing, you can encourage your advisees to stay in touch with you as well. Such check-ins provide important continuity for students; you may also find it gratifying to watch your advisees grow and develop in their final two years at Brown.

Academic Rules and Regulations

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

At Brown, two baccalaureate degrees are awarded — the bachelor of arts (A.B.) and the bachelor of science (Sc.B.). The degree awarded is determined by a student's chosen concentration program.



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In order to graduate with a Brown baccalaureate degree, a student must meet the following requirements:

- Be in residence at Brown for four semesters of full-time study
- Successfully complete a concentration (major)
- Successfully complete at least 30 courses
- Meet Brown's writing requirement
- Meet Brown's 32-unit enrollment requirement

The Writing Requirement

To earn the baccalaureate degree, all Brown students must demonstrate an ability to write well. All students are required to formally work on their writing at least once during semesters one to four, and again at least once in semesters five to seven. Brown students can meet this requirement by taking courses in English, comparative literature, literary arts, or one of the hundreds of courses across the curriculum marked Writing-Designated in the bulletin. Sophomore advisors are asked to discuss the requirement, and writing more generally, with advisees as they complete phase one.



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COURSE LOAD POLICIES

Brown students may enroll in three, four, or five courses per semester. The normal expectation of enrollment is four. Registration for fewer than three courses requires special permission through consultation with an academic or student support dean. Banner now prevents students from dropping below three courses until they consult with an academic dean. No student may take more than five credits in a semester, including audited courses, which do not count toward the 30-course requirement for graduation.

AUDITING COURSES

Auditing allows students to take a course without any grade notation on the transcript. An audit is a course registration at Brown, which means that it appears on the transcript and counts as one of the courses on record in any given semester. Regular tuition fees and enrollment policies apply. Students may switch a course from audit to credit up until the grade option deadline four weeks into the semester. They may change from credit to audit until mid-semester. Audits are at the discretion of the instructor, and instructors also have the authority to require students to complete assignments for audited courses. Students are advised to consult with an academic dean about the desirability of auditing a course.

VAGABONDING

Vagabonding a course involves attending a class without enrolling in the course. Unlike audited courses, which count toward the maximum five courses for which students enroll, vagabonded courses are “off the books”; there is no official record of enrollment and therefore no transcript notation. With the instructor’s permission, students may vagabond any course. Sometimes, when students say they want to “audit” a course, they mean “vagabond.”

GRADE OPTIONS

When registering for courses, Brown students must indicate whether they are taking a course for ABC/No Credit or Satisfactory/No Credit (S/NC). A small number of courses are designated by their instructors as mandatory S/NC.

Students may change their grade option for a course online during the first four weeks of the semester. No grade option changes are allowed after the first four weeks of any semester.

The founders of Brown’s Open Curriculum implemented the S/NC option to encourage students to sample all areas of the curriculum. Students use the S/NC option for a variety of reasons, some pedagogical or philosophical, some by the instructor’s request. Most students agree that S/NC allows for exploration of a particular topic without the stress and pressure that a graded evaluation may impart.

The guidelines below may help students decide whether or not to take a course S/NC.

Taking one course per semester with the S/NC option will have little or no effect on post-graduation plans. Students will still have at least 22 courses taken for a grade.



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Concentration courses and pre-med requirements should generally be taken for a letter grade, particularly if a student intends to pursue graduate or professional school.

No single course, whether taken for a grade or S/NC, will determine a student’s admission to a particular profession or graduate program. It is the overall academic record that matters.

Students interested in earning academic honors such as magna cum laude should be aware that these honors are awarded on the basis of the number of grades of “A” or “S with distinction” in a student’s record.

COURSE PERFORMANCE REPORTS

In addition to the two grade options at Brown, students may request a narrative evaluation of their performance from their course instructors. These Course Performance Reports (CPRs) provide valuable information to students about their success in meeting course learning objectives, especially for courses graded S/NC.

Any student regularly enrolled in a course may request a CPR and, at the instructor’s discretion, receive one. Instructors of mandatory S/NC courses are obliged to honor such requests. For all other courses, instructors may decline to submit such a form if they believe they have inadequate information to do so. Students should try to submit CPR requests to their course instructors before the end of the semester.

CPRs are not part of a student’s official academic record or transcript, but a student may request that the University send one or more CPRs with their official transcripts.

PROGRESS TOWARD GRADUATION

Brown’s rules regarding academic progress are the most critical piece of policy information we ask you to discuss with your advisees. Failure to make adequate progress usually results in an internal notation on a student’s transcript. Students may fall below Brown’s progress requirements for a variety of reasons. Our job is to make sure that, for every student, a lack of understanding about the expectations does not lead to them falling behind.

Courses Required for Good Academic Standing

Years and Semesters of Study		Good Standing	Warning	Serious Warning	Suspension
First Year at Brown	I	3	2	1	0
	II	7	6	5	4
Second Year at Brown	III	11	10	9	8
	IV	15	14	13	12
Third Year at Brown	V	18	17	16	15
	VI	22	21	20	19
Fourth Year at Brown	VII	26	25	24	23
	VIII	30	---	---	---

The chart shows the number of courses students must pass each semester.



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As a general rule, Brown students are expected to complete four courses each semester. Enrollment in three, four or five courses in a semester is considered full-time. Academic progress rules do allow students to pass three courses in a semester once every two years. Exceptions to the academic progress requirement are recommended by academic deans, Student Support Services deans or Student Accessibility Services when a student's individual circumstances, either academic or personal, warrant special consideration.

Academic standing is determined by courses completed at Brown and transfer credit from qualifying institutions, whether in the summer or during the school year.

When a student falls below progress requirements, they may be placed on Warning or Serious Warning, which includes an internal notation on the student's transcript. It is important to know that students can become so deficient in their coursework that they may be suspended from the College for a specified time.

Advisees on Warning and Serious Warning

If an advisee has been placed on Warning or Serious Warning, it is imperative that you discuss with them why they have been placed on warning and help them set realistic plans for returning to Good Standing. This section provides guidance to advisors on how to structure this conversation. Students who are placed on Warning or Serious Warning are also assigned an academic dean in the College to support their return to Good Standing.

How should a student respond to being on Warning or Serious Warning?

The most useful response to being placed on Warning or Serious Warning is a close examination of the reasons for the student's academic difficulties. Issues can arise for many reasons: poor preparation in a subject area, lack of interest in a particular course, illness, problems with social adjustment, etc. Some students who begin an intensive, highly focused program may discover that they lack the background and/or motivation to cope with the level and volume of work. Encourage these students to think about alternative educational goals. If health or personal circumstances are the primary underlying reasons, encourage these students to connect to appropriate resources.

Incompletes

If the warning results from an authorized Incomplete in one or more courses, remind the student that it is best to try to finish the work before the start of the next term. If they cannot, encourage them to create a realistic plan and continue to communicate with the relevant faculty member.



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Should a student on Warning take five courses to “catch up” in Semester 2?

A student on Warning should choose four courses, not five, for the next semester and should strive to find courses that are both interesting and manageable. While it is true that a student on Warning can return to Good Standing after one semester by completing five courses, it is difficult to do one’s best work in five courses. It is more prudent to take four courses and do well in those. Students who complete four courses in two consecutive semesters will return to Good Standing even if their cumulative count would otherwise place them on Warning or Serious Warning. Academic deans will connect with any student below academic progress.

What about students who remain in Good Standing but feel they performed poorly in the first semester?

These students should go through the same process described above: Examine the reasons for the difficulties, plan ways to address these difficulties, reconsider educational goals and choose four courses carefully for the next semester. You can be immensely helpful in this process.

Should a student drop a course to avoid a “C” or a “B”?

No. Dropping a class to avoid earning a certain letter grade is never to be encouraged. This is true for philosophical as well as practical reasons. Students can become so focused on grades as a measure of performance that they overlook Brown’s academic progress expectations and find themselves on Warning. If an advisee mentions that they may drop a class to avoid earning a particular grade, you should probe for reasons why the grade is so important to the student.

Often it is because the student has plans for the future (e.g., law school or medical school) that they believe will be affected by their performance in the course. Advisors can work to dispel the notion that a “B” or a “C” in one course will determine the student’s future. A referral to an academic dean may also be in order. Deans are accustomed to handling such misperceptions and can help students adjust their approach to their studies.

Dropping a course while on Warning or Serious Warning

All students on Warning or Serious Warning will be blocked from dropping any courses in the last three weeks of the term. To remove this block, students will be required to meet with an academic dean.

RISD CROSS-REGISTRATION

As a result of a cooperative arrangement, all Brown students have the option of taking certain courses at the renowned Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), adjacent to Brown on College Hill. Up to four RISD credits may count toward a student’s graduation requirement at Brown. During the fall and spring semesters and during RISD’s winter session, Brown students enroll at RISD under a cross-registration



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agreement that is part of their Brown tuition. Students may take courses at RISD during the summer session but will pay RISD directly upon registration. Once approved, each RISD course (three to six credits) is regarded as the full equivalent of a Brown course and, upon satisfactory completion, is recorded on the student's Brown transcript.

Students must petition the Committee on Academic Standing for approval to study at RISD when they wish to enroll in certain non-studio courses, including those that fall within RISD's liberal arts division, or when they wish to register for more than four RISD credits over the course of their academic career. Students who wish to register for a RISD course should visit the Office of the Registrar's website for instructions on how to register.

RISD Dual Degree Program | college.brown.edu/learn-beyond-classroom/us-study/risd-cross-registration

TRANSFER CREDIT POLICIES

College courses completed before a student matriculated to Brown fall under one set of requirements. Transfer credits for courses taken after a student has matriculated to Brown are governed by a different set of rules. With the appropriate approvals, transfer credits may count toward degree requirements.

Pre-Matriculation Transfer Credit | admission.brown.edu/transfer/transfer-credit

Post-Matriculation Transfer Credit | college.brown.edu/design-your-education/review-academic-policies/transfer-credit-guidelines

PRE-COLLEGE PROGRAMS AND COURSE PLACEMENT

Many students complete courses and programs during their high school years that may place them out of introductory courses at Brown. These include:

- Advanced Placement (AP) exams (AP credits do not increase course count)
- International Baccalaureate (IB) exams
- British A-Level exams (but not AS or O-level exams)
- Other national "13th-year" programs
- Courses taken at another college during the summer or school year while the student was still in high school
- Courses taken in the Brown Summer Session before entering Brown as a first-year student



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Any of these experiences may be used to satisfy prerequisites for more advanced courses at Brown, whether or not the student formally receives transfer credit on their Brown transcript. Students who wish to use these credits as course prerequisites should consult with the instructor of the Brown course they wish to take. Instructors may issue a course override in these cases.

Not all of these experiences may qualify for course credit and/or reduce the number of semesters of enrollment required for graduation.

AP exam results must be on file at Brown before they can be used for placement or as course prerequisites. In the summer, students will get more detailed, personalized information about their own scores, as well as the opportunity to accept or decline the transcript notations of AP credit. A full list of AP exams recognized by Brown may be found on the College website.

AP Exam Policies | brown.edu/go/ap

INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMAS

International diplomas and certificates most commonly earned by Brown University students are International Baccalaureate or A-Levels. Qualifying exam results in certain subjects may be eligible for both course credit and enrollment credit; these also may be used to petition for a semester of advanced standing during the sophomore or junior year. Brown will not process transfer credits or advanced standing for these exams prior to sophomore year. Brown does not grant course credit for AS-Levels or O-Levels, or AO-Levels.

International Exam Policies | brown.edu/go/international-exam

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENT

A Brown education implies eight full semesters of college experience. For this reason, Brown students must complete an equivalent of eight semesters of academic study as measured in 32 enrollment units in order to graduate. Students may earn credit toward this requirement by completing a full semester of study at Brown or at an approved college or university in the U.S. or abroad. Various international certification programs may also be applied to the enrollment requirement. For students who enroll as first-year students at Brown and who complete 30 or more credits in eight semesters at Brown, fulfilling the enrollment requirement is straightforward. Students earn one semester of enrollment credit for each full-time semester they are at Brown. If students do anything other than take eight sequential full-time semesters at Brown, fulfilling the enrollment requirement can get complicated and should be discussed with an academic dean.



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Academic Skills Development and Support Services

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

Academic Support Services supplements the resources provided by course instructors and teaching assistants. Peer academic coaches conduct workshops and meet individually with students to help them develop successful study habits and learning strategies. Topics include time management, note-taking, exam preparation and other study skills.

Academic Support Services | brown.edu/go/academic-support

ACADEMIC TUTORING PROGRAM

The Academic Tutoring Program provides no-cost, small group tutoring support for select introductory STEM and language courses. Tutors meet with students weekly to review concepts taught in class and share tips and learning strategies that promote deeper learning. A complete list of supported classes is available on the tutoring website.

Academic Tutoring | sheridan.brown.edu/services/tutoring



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CURRICULAR RESOURCE CENTER

The Curricular Resource Center helps students engage with Brown's Open Curriculum and utilize its academic resources. The center's staff and student coordinators and volunteers sponsor information sessions, community-building events and individual meetings with students. Advising topics include independent studies and concentrations, applying for fellowship opportunities, issues related to the sophomore year and more.

Curricular Resource Center | brown.edu/go/crc

MATH RESOURCE CENTER

Brown's Math Resource Center offers assistance to students in introductory mathematics courses (MATH 0050, 0060, 0070, 0090, 0100, 0170, 0180, 0190, 0200, 0520 and APMA 0330 and 0340). Staffed by graduate and undergraduate math students, the center is open Monday through Thursday from 8 to 10 p.m.

Math Resource Center | brown.edu/academics/math/math-resource-center

THE WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center provides individual and group writing support free of charge to all members of the Brown community. Writing associates assist students at any stage of the writing process, from finding a topic through drafting, revising and final editing. Typical assignments include academic essays, lab reports and research projects, as well as professional materials for fellowships, internships and the job market. Writing Center appointments are scheduled for one hour and should be requested at least five days in advance.

The Writing Center | brown.edu/go/thewritingcenter

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Brown welcomes students from around the U.S. and the world, and their diverse perspectives enrich our community. English Language Support offers individual and group language support, for students whose primary language is not English, on a wide range of topics, including writing, listening, speaking and U.S. academic culture.

English Language Support | brown.edu/go/english-support



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LIBRARIES AND CONTENT LIBRARIANS

The Brown University Library is a central hub for scholarly research and production at Brown. Collections consist of 7 million volumes (including over 2 million e-books), over 70,000 online journals, more than 300 databases, and nearly 15,000 linear feet of manuscripts and archives. Brown faculty and students may borrow from the collections of RISD, other Ivy libraries (some 90 million titles), and materials from libraries around the globe through interlibrary loan.

The John Carter Brown Library, an independently administered and funded center for advanced research in history and the humanities, is located on the Brown campus and is home to one of the world's most outstanding collections of printed books and other materials concerning the European discovery, exploration and settlement of the New World to 1825. The library's collection of 50,000 rare books, maps and manuscripts encompasses more than two hundred languages and spans over three centuries of early American history.

Brown University Library | library.brown.edu

Support for Wellness and Supporting Students in Distress

In addition to asking for academic guidance, students may talk about dealing with parental expectations and demands, homesickness, feeling overwhelmed, or needing to take time off from Brown. Some advisors choose to address these issues directly. Others prefer to restrict advising discussions to academic matters.

Whatever your preference, we encourage you to refer students to appropriate campus resources. Advisors most commonly refer students to the College, Student Support Services, Student Accessibility Services, and Counseling and Psychological Services. Information about the kinds of support offered by each of the offices is provided below.

If you are unsure which office might be appropriate to support a student, feel free to call one of the deans, who will be happy to assist you in finding the most appropriate support for the student.



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CENTERS OF COMMUNITY AND SUPPORT

Student Support Services

The Student Support Services staff is available to assist students with a wide range of issues and concerns (personal, health, family). Deans are available to consult with individual students about their personal questions/concerns, provide a sounding board to explore options and help connect students to the right set of resources, allowing students to succeed and thrive in their academic pursuits. A 24-hour administrator-on-call is also available for students with personal or family emergencies.

Student Support Services | brown.edu/student-support

401-863-3145

Student Accessibility Services

Student Accessibility Services coordinates and facilitates services and accommodations for students with medical, physical, and psychological disabilities or concerns, as well as students with learning conditions such as attention deficit disorder, dyslexia, or other specific learning disabilities. Students with disabilities who believe they may need services or accommodations are encouraged to contact the office to discuss their needs and begin the registration process.

Student Accessibility Services | studentaccessibility.brown.edu

401-863-9588

Office of the Chaplains and Religious Life

The Office of the Chaplains and Religious Life leads Brown's work in religious diversity and strives to enhance religious literacy within the University community. The office supports more than 18 traditions, including the Brown-RISD Catholic Community, Brown RISD Hillel, Brown Muslim Students Association, Protestant groups (i.e., ecumenical, multiple evangelical, Pentecostal, African American and Episcopal), Quaker, Christian Scientist, Orthodox Christian, Unitarian, Baha'i, Hindu, Buddhist, yoga and mindfulness, queer faith, and contemplative practices.

Religious Life | brown.edu/ocrl

401-863-2344



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Brown Center for Students of Color

The Brown Center for Students of Color (BCSC) serves as a gathering place for communities of color. Students are encouraged to build meaningful relationships across differences, develop racial and ethnic consciousness and enact change at Brown and beyond. The center advances the University's mission of educating and preparing students to discharge the offices of life with usefulness and reputation by empowering students of color, cultivating leadership, facilitating critical reflection, fostering informed action and promoting social justice.

Brown Center for Students of Color | brown.edu/bcsc

401-863-2120

Undocumented, First-Generation College and Low-Income Student Center

The Undocumented, First-Generation College and Low-Income Student Center (U-FLi Center), is a communal support space for undocumented, low-income and/or first-generation college students at Brown. The center offers programming for community building, individual and group advising, and opportunities to engage in advocacy. There is no specific level of family income that determines whether or not a student may take advantage of the community and programs of the U-FLi Center.

U-FLi Center | brown.edu/uflib

Global Brown Center for International Students

Support for international students is available through Global Brown, a network of several offices that works to coordinate the broad range of community and support services. Students studying on a visa will work with the Office of International Student and Scholar Services, which handles all matters related to immigration and student visa concerns. The Global Brown Center provides support for students who self-identify as international students regardless of visa status, through ongoing programmatic efforts including the International Mentoring Program and International Orientation, trips and community-building initiatives.

Global Brown | brown.edu/globalbrowncenter

401-863-6397



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LGBTQ Center

Brown's LGBTQ Center provides a comprehensive range of education, information and advocacy services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and questioning students. The LGBTQ Center works closely with other identity-based centers on campus to counsel individual students about their aspirations and concerns, advise student leaders, and help organize programming. The LGBTQ Center staff also advises various LGBTQ+ student groups including the Queer Alliance, an undergraduate group of LGBTQ+ students and allies that serves as a hub of LGBTQ+ organizing on campus.

LGBTQ Center | brown.edu/lgbtq

401-863-3062

Sarah Doyle Center for Women and Gender

The Sarah Doyle Center for Women and Gender provides a dynamic environment for exploring issues of gender, including the intersections of gender with race, ethnicity, economic class, sexuality, gender identity, dis/ability, age and geography. Center staff members work closely with the LGBTQ Center. All members of the Brown community are welcome to visit the center and to make use of its resources. The center provides meeting spaces, an art gallery and a library, and also maintains contact information for the gender and sexuality organizations at Brown and in the Providence area.

Sarah Doyle Center | brown.edu/sdwc

401-863-2189

Office of Military-Affiliated Students

The Office of Military-Affiliated Students provides advice, advocacy, information and support for students who have served, are serving or are interested in serving in the U.S. military, as well as offering support to students that are children of military service members and student veterans of other nations. Brown students may participate in ROTC for the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force. Programs are offered through partnerships with nearby host universities; transportation is provided.

Office of Military-Affiliated Students | brown.edu/veterans

401-863-ROTC



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Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards

The Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards investigates and adjudicates alleged violations of the Code of Student Conduct. Students who have been harmed or who have witnessed harm are encouraged to report these incidents and speak with deans.

Student Conduct and Community Standards | brown.edu/go/student-conduct
401-863-2653

STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Health Services

Health Services provides wellness services and medical care to Brown students. Students may make appointments with staff physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nutritionists and nurses; same-day appointments are available if students call ahead. Students should contact Health Services for advice on what to do if they are ill or have medical questions.

Health Services | healthservices.brown.edu
401-863-3953

BWell Health Promotion

BWell offers a wide variety of educational services for topics such as alcohol/drug use, nutrition/eating concerns, personal health, and sexual health, and maintains an extensive resource center and website on a variety of topics.

BWell Health Promotion | brown.edu/bwell

Counseling and Psychological Services

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides a range of mental health services, including individual counseling, referral services, crisis stabilization, after-hours care, outreach programming, and support groups. CAPS is available 24/7 for urgent needs.

CAPS | brown.edu/caps
401-863-3476



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Student Safety or Conduct Concerns

NATURE OF CONCERN	CONTACT OFFICE	PHONE
Potential or immediate danger	Department of Public Safety	x3-4111
General concerns about Brown community member	Student Support Services	x3-3145
Psychological support needed	Counseling and Psychological Services	x3-3476
Non-emergency medical care	Health Services	x3-3953
Sexual assault, harassment or relationship abuse	On-call Counselor Sexual Harassment and Assault Resources and Education (SHARE) Advocate	x3-3476 x3-6000

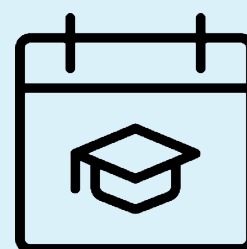
After-Hours Contact Information

Department of Public Safety	
Emergency	x3-4111
Non-emergency	x3-3322
Administrator On Call (Nights, weekends, holidays)	x3-3322
Counseling and Psychological Services	x3-3476



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Calendar of Advising Meetings and Deadlines for Incoming First-Year and Sophomore Students



August 30, 2024

Advising Day for incoming students — group and individual meetings

September 4, 2024

Classes begin for the fall term

September 4-17, 2024

Individual meetings with advisees

September 17, 2024

Last day to add a course without a fee

October 1, 2024

Last day to add a course (late fee included), change from audit to credit or change a grade option

October 18, 2024

Concentration declaration due for Semester 4 students

October 22, 2024

Concentration declaration due for Semester 4 students

October 21 to November 14, 2024

Individual meeting with advisees for Spring 2024 preregistration

January 22, 2025

Classes begin for the spring term

January 22 to February 4, 2025

Fourth individual meeting with first-year and sophomore advisees

February 4, 2025

Last day to add a course without a fee

February 19, 2025

Last day to add a course (late fee included), change from audit to credit or change a grade option

March 7, 2025

Last day to change from credit to audit in a course

March 17, 2025

Concentration declaration due for Semester 4 students

March 31 to April 16, 2025

Individual meeting with first-year advisees for Fall 2024 preregistration



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Exploratory Academic Advisor Handbook

