

# Tips for Surviving (and Sometimes Thriving) in Grad School

(Brandeis History Edition)

## Stay Organized

- Graduate school is all about independence, and no one will know more about your progress than you
- Use a digital/physical planner to track deadlines & requirements.
- **Save emails as PDFs**—policies change, but your paper trail won't.
- Keep department forms & policies handy (many only live online).

## Advocate for Yourself

- Track coursework & requirements yourself.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions or seek clarification.

## Know Your Support Network

- **Advisor** → your most important advocate. Check in often!
- **Admin staff** (miracle workers!):
  - Lauren Jordahl and Melissa McKenna
- When teaching → **the Union**
- **Fellow grad students** → join the WhatsApp!

## Research Logistics

- Start a citation manager early (Zotero, EndNote). The library has trainings
- Always back up your work (cloud + hard drive).
- Get a flash drive if you don't have one.

## Funding: Every Bit Helps

- **Brandeis Awards:** Conference & Research ([MA/PhD](#)).
- **External Tools:** [Pivot](#) (personalized recs), [Foundation Directory Online](#) (grant database).
- Tip: Ask your advisor & department about funding!

## Take Advantage of Boston

- **Boston-Area Consortium** → cross-register for courses at BC, BU, Tufts, Wellesley.
- **Harvard Library Access** → \$25/year for borrowing privileges.
  - [Visitor Access Info](#)
- Events at other schools → join talks, reading groups, and faculty events, people are welcoming!

## Find Your Flock

- Join your subfield professional association (funding, networks, conferences).
- Student memberships (like AHA) = reduced fees + conference grants.

## Don't Fear Technology

- Digital tools can expand your work (and funding): GIS, digital archives, oral histories, etc.
- Resources: [Research Guides](#), [Data Services Workshops](#), Brandeis IT [Software](#) and [Services](#), [Programming Historian](#).

## Languages Skills

- Stay on top of language requirements early.
- Translation is a great way to stay fresh!

## Learn to Present Your Research

- Present your work! Even low stakes is good practice. See [Brandeis 3MT](#)
- A presentation is not just reading aloud
- Helps with teaching as well

## Take Care of Your Health

- **Mental health:** [Brandeis Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy Counseling Center](#), Brandeis Student insurance is also good!
- **Remember to eat:** [Grad Student Food Resources](#), [Free Food Listserv](#)
- **Your happiness matters** → have a hobby, passion, or social group **outside** of grad school!

## Enjoy It

- Grad school is a lot, but it's also a chance to dive into your niche interests for a living.
- If you can find fun in the research, everything else becomes easier.

## Helpful Links

- **Brandeis Requirements**
  - [Requirements for History MA](#)
  - [Requirements for History PhD](#)
  - [Checklist of PhD Requirements](#) (as of 2024)
  - [History Grad Student Handbook](#)
  - Old [History Grad Student Google Site](#)
- **Library Guides**
  - [Brandeis DS Hub Blog](#)
  - [Research Guides](#)
- **Discounts**
  - [Spotify Premium for Students](#)
  - [YouTube Premium Student Plan](#)
  - [UniDAYS Student Discounts](#)
  - [Amtrak \(15% off\)](#)
  - [Coolidge Corner Theater Student Discount](#)
  - 10% off at **Goodwill** on Thursdays w/ a Student ID
  - [ZipCar](#)
  - [Apple Store Education Pricing](#)
  - [Recycling and Surplus Center | Harvard Energy & Facilities](#)



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