

PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

USC

Plan now for a great future.





Starting on the path to college success

The University of Southern California has prepared this brochure to help you learn about the college application and admission process and determine the best subjects to take in a college-preparatory track. This information will prepare you for application and admission not only to USC, but to any other colleges or universities you may be considering.

Here are some things you can start doing now to prepare for college:

- Build your support team. School counselors and teachers can make sure you're taking the classes you need and help keep you on track.
- Strive to earn A's in all your courses.
- Use this brochure to make sure you're completing the steps necessary to maximize your chances of getting into the college of your dreams, including USC.
- Create and maintain a résumé file that includes:
 - Report cards, diplomas and certificates.
 - Awards and honors you receive.
 - Your school and community activities and any offices you hold in those organizations.
 - A list of any volunteer or paid jobs you hold.

Be sure to update this file every semester.

USC.EDU

Four Facts

ABOUT APPLYING TO COLLEGE



You don't have to be rich to attend a private university.

Students eligible for need-based financial aid may find that college is more affordable than they think. A variety of programs are available to assist with covering the cost of a USC education, from merit scholarships and grants to college savings plans and low-interest loans.



There's not one 'perfect' college for you.

There are many colleges right for you. Research your options and you will find that more than one college can meet all your criteria. Visit the College Board's Big Future website for free and accurate information about thousands of colleges and universities. bigfuture.collegeboard.org



Applying for financial aid will not necessarily affect your admission to college.

Many colleges, including USC, do not consider a family's ability to pay when making admission decisions. This is called "need-blind" admission.



Admission counselors consider more than grades and test scores when evaluating an applicant.

USC takes a holistic approach to admission decisions. In addition to your academic record, we weigh qualities such as leadership potential, talent and personal character. We want to see how you might fit into, and contribute to, the USC community.



Financial Aid at USC

The cost of college can be offset with financial aid, which can come from your home state, the federal government, and even your college. USC administers one of the largest financial aid programs in the U.S.

Approximately two-thirds of students at USC receive financial aid.

Need-based financial aid is offered according to the demonstrated need of the student and family. Financial aid includes need-based grants, merit scholarships, loans and Federal Work-Study.

Merit scholarships are awarded based on a student's academic and extracurricular achievement. For more information about USC merit and other scholarships, please visit admission.usc.edu/scholarships.

For general information, please visit financialaid.usc.edu.



Financial Aid Calculators

To find out your potential eligibility for need-based financial aid, please visit our Financial Aid Calculators.

financialaid.usc.edu/calculators.



Standardized Testing



To learn about how tests, such as the SAT or ACT factor into your application review at USC, please visit admission.usc.edu/test-optional-faq.

8th Grade

Although colleges won't generally look at the grades you earned before high school, creating good study habits early will help you in the years to come.

Now is an ideal time to start following the steps outlined for ninth grade so that you are well prepared for success in high school.

What is a “college preparatory track”?

A college prep schedule requires you to take at least four college preparatory classes every year of high school.

We recommend you take:

- Courses that will challenge you. Take the most difficult courses you think you can handle. These will prepare you for universities with selective admission (those that receive more applications than they can accommodate). Push yourself, but be careful not to become overwhelmed.
- Extra classes in the subjects you excel in. Your school counselor will help you plan your schedule according to your strengths and interests.
- Classes that can help you earn college credit, such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses (if you are prepared and if your high school offers them).

English and Literature: 4 years



Math: 3–4 years



Foreign Language: 2–4 years



Laboratory/Natural/Physical Science: 2–4 years



History and Social Science: 2 years



Academic Electives: 3 years



USC applicants are expected to have earned a grade of C or better in at least three years of high school mathematics, including Advanced Algebra (Algebra II). However, we recommend that students continue taking math courses beyond Advanced Algebra when possible.

9th Grade

Now that you're in high school, preparing for college begins in earnest. Colleges will consider everything you do for the next four years, so this is your opportunity to impress.

- ☐ If you fall behind or have trouble in a course, ask for help. Look for a tutor, friend, counselor or parent who can help.
- ☐ Join clubs and organizations at your school or in your community to explore your interests and learn leadership skills.
- ☐ Form study groups with friends who also plan to go to college, and study together as often as possible.

11th Grade

This is the year you will begin exploring what various colleges have to offer and making important choices. Make sure your grades remain strong, because this is the year colleges will examine most closely.

- ☐ Continue your extracurricular activities, and take the initiative to lead programs or plan activities.
- ☐ Attend any in-person or virtual college fairs and presentations by college representatives.
- ☐ Make a list of colleges you would like to apply to.
- ☐ Meet with the colleges that interest you the most. In-person or virtual visits will give you a firsthand look at student life and give you the chance to meet with admission staff. Visit admission.usc.edu/meet-us to see your options for learning more about USC.
- ☐ Stay up to date by signing up for the mailing lists of your favorite colleges.
- ☐ Begin looking for various scholarship opportunities offered through the colleges you're interested in, or through outside agencies.

10th Grade

It's a busy year. You may be learning to drive or working at your first real job. It's also the year you start exploring your collegiate interests and step up your academic efforts.

- ☐ Take on a leadership role in an extracurricular activity and participate in other activities that may interest you.
- ☐ Begin learning about colleges that interest you. Visit bigfuture.collegeboard.org for more information.

12th Grade

The final year of high school is when you prepare for your college experience, from application to acceptance to enrollment.

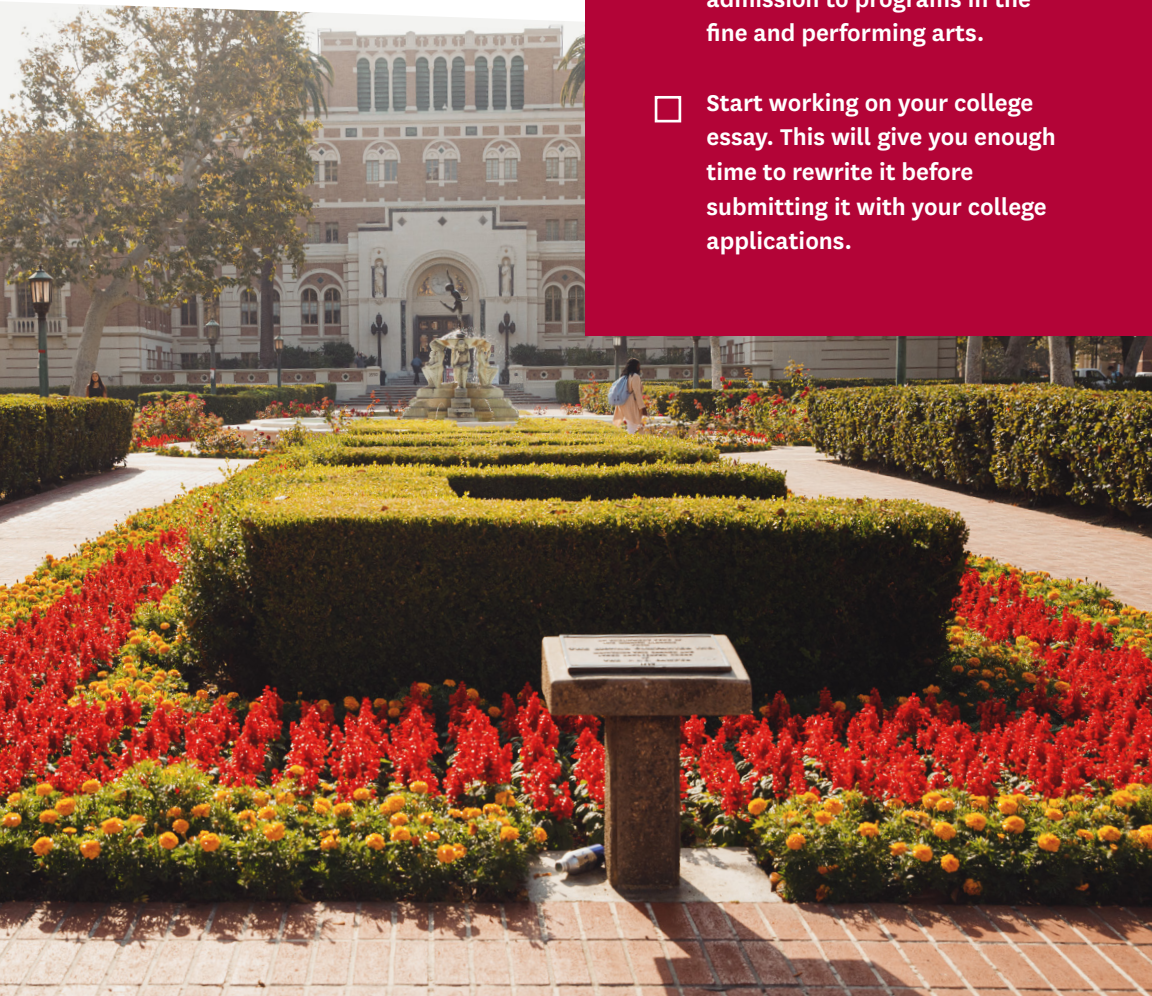
- ☐ A fourth year of math and a laboratory science are strongly recommended for your senior year.
- ☐ If your school does not offer an AP or IB curriculum, consider enrolling in a course at a local community college or university.
- ☐ Finalize your list of colleges that you would like to apply to.
- ☐ Learn more about financial aid and how to apply at financialaid.usc.edu.
- ☐ Continue your extracurricular activities. Find new ways to demonstrate leadership, persistence, thoughtfulness, creativity or some other special trait through your activities.
- ☐ Ask your teachers and counselors for recommendation letters.
- ☐ Complete your college essay.
- ☐ Meet all college application deadlines and requirements.
- ☐ Complete and submit applications. Submit a portfolio and/or register for an audition if you are applying to an arts program.

What should I do in the summer?

- Work as a volunteer in an area where your community needs help.
- Relax and take time off before the next academic year.
- Consider retaking a class in which you received a grade you weren't satisfied with, or take a new class in summer school.
- Gain valuable experience and save money for college by working a part-time job or pursuing an internship in an area that interests you.
- Take part in academic enrichment programs and special summer workshops or camps in subjects that interest you. Many of these are held on college campuses. Learn more about USC's summer programs at summer.usc.edu.

The summer before your senior year:

- ☐ Complete any audition tapes, art portfolios or special materials required for admission to programs in the fine and performing arts.
- ☐ Start working on your college essay. This will give you enough time to rewrite it before submitting it with your college applications.



Majors

USC offers undergraduates a wide array of majors, minors and interdisciplinary programs.

Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

American Popular Culture
American Studies and Ethnicity
African American Studies
American Studies
Asian American Studies
Chicano/Latino Studies

Anthropology
Applied and Computational Mathematics
Archaeology
Art History
Astronomy
Biochemistry
Biological Sciences
Biophysics
Central European Studies
Chemistry
Classics
Cognitive Science
Comparative Literature
Computational Neuroscience
Contemporary Latino & Latin American Studies
Creative Writing
Earth Sciences
East Asian Area Studies
East Asian Languages & Cultures (Chinese, Japanese, Korean)
Economics
Economics/Mathematics
English
Environmental Science & Health
Environmental Studies
French
Gender and Sexuality Studies
GeoDesign
Geological Sciences
Global Geodesign
Global Studies
Health and Human Sciences
History
Human Biology
Human Security and Geospatial Intelligence
Intelligence & Cyber Operations
International Relations
International Relations (Global Business)
International Relations and the Global Economy
Italian
Jewish Studies
Latin American and Iberian Cultures, Media and Politics
Law, History and Culture
Linguistics
Mathematics
Middle East Studies
Narrative Studies
Neuroscience
Non-Governmental Organizations and Social Change
Philosophy
Philosophy, Politics & Economics
Philosophy, Politics & Law
Physics
Physics/Computer Science
Political Economy
Political Science
Psychology

Quantitative Biology
Religion
Russian
Sociology
Spanish

USC School of Architecture

Architecture, B.ARCH
Architecture and Inventive Technologies, B.S. *

Iovine and Young Academy

Arts, Technology and the Business of Innovation

Roski School of Art and Design

Art, B.A.
Design, BFA
Fine Arts, BFA

Marshall School of Business

Accounting
Artificial Intelligence for Business *
Business Administration
Business Administration/ Cinematic Arts *
Real Estate Development and Finance *
World Bachelor in Business *

USC School of Cinematic Arts

Animation + Digital Arts, BFA
Cinema and Media Studies, B.A.
Film and Television Production, BFA *
Film and Television Production, B.A. (transfers only)
Game Art, BFA
Game Development and Interactive Design, BFA
Media Arts + Practice, B.A.
Themed Entertainment, BFA
Writing for Screen & Television, BFA

Annenberg School for

Communication and Journalism

Communication
Journalism
Public Relations and Advertising

Kaufman School of Dance

Dance, BFA

USC School of Dramatic Arts

Theatre, B.A.
Theatre (Acting for Stage and Screen), BFA
Theatre (Musical Theatre), BFA
Theatre (Sound Design), BFA
Theatre (Stage Management), BFA
Theatre (Technical Direction), BFA
Theatre (Theatrical Design), BFA

Viterbi School of Engineering

Undeclared Engineering *
Aerospace Engineering
Astronautical Engineering
Biomedical Engineering
Biomedical (Electrical)
Biomedical (Mechanical)
Biomedical (Molecular-Cellular)
Chemical Engineering
Chemical (Biological & Pharmaceutical)
Chemical (Energy & Sustainability)
Chemical (Materials)
Chemical (Petroleum & Subsurface)
Civil Engineering
Civil (Building Science)
Civil (Construction Engineering & Management)
Civil (Environmental)

Civil (Structural)
Civil (Water Resources)
Computer Engineering & Computer Science
Computer Science
Computer Science Games
Computer Science/Business Administration
Electrical & Computer Engineering
Environmental Engineering
Industrial & Systems Engineering
Mechanical Engineering
Mechanical (Petroleum)

Davis School of Gerontology

Human Development & Aging
Lifespan Health

Gould School of Law

Legal Studies, B.S.

Keck School of Medicine

Global Health
Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Studies

Thornton School of Music

Bachelor of Music degrees:

Choral Music
Composition, Classical
Jazz Studies
(Instrumental and vocal)
Music Production
Popular Music Performance
Classical Performance
(Instrumental and vocal)

Bassoon	Organ
Cello	Percussion
Clarinet	Piano
Classical	Saxophone
Guitar	Trombone
Double Bass	Trumpet
Flute	Tuba
French Horn	Viola
Harp	Violin
Oboe	Vocal Arts

Bachelor of Science degree:

Music Industry

Occupational Science

and Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy *

Mann School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Biopharmaceutical Sciences
Pharmacology & Drug Development

Price School of Public Policy

Public Policy
Real Estate Development
Urban Studies and Planning

Pre-Professional Emphases

Pre-Dentistry
Pre-Law
Pre-Medicine
Pre-Occupational Therapy
Pre-Pharmacy
Pre-Physical Therapy
Pre-Physician Assistant Practice
Pre-Teaching

* Available to first-year applicants only.