



# Preparing for USC

Often as early as the eighth grade, you will need to decide if you are going to follow a college preparatory track in high school. *Preparing for USC* will help you learn about the college application and admission process and the right subjects to take.

# PREPARING FOR USC

Plan now for a great future.



## USC Majors

List accurate at time of printing. Please refer to the *USC Catalogue* online at [catalogue.usc.edu](http://catalogue.usc.edu) for an updated list.

- Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences**
  - African American Studies
  - American Studies
  - Asian American Studies
  - Chicano/Latino Studies
  - Anthropology
  - Applied and Computational Mathematics
  - Archaeology, Interdisciplinary
  - Art History
  - Astronomy
  - Biochemistry
  - Biological Sciences
  - Biophysics
  - Chemistry
  - Classics
  - Cognitive Science
  - Comparative Literature
  - Computational Neuroscience
  - Contemporary Latino and Latin American Studies
  - Creative Writing
  - Earth Sciences
  - East Asian Area Studies
  - East Asian Languages and Cultures (Chinese, Japanese, Korean)
  - Economics
  - Economics/Mathematics
  - English
  - Environmental Studies
  - Environmental Science and Health
  - French
  - Gender Studies
  - GeoDesign
  - Geological Sciences
  - Global Studies
  - Health and Humanity
  - Human Biology
  - International Relations
  - International Relations
  - Global Business
  - International Relations and the Global Economy
  - Italian
  - Journalism
  - Judicial Studies
  - Law, History and Culture
  - Linguistics
  - Mathematics
  - Middle East Studies
  - Narrative Studies
  - Neuroscience, B.A., B.S.
  - Non-Governmental Organizations and Social Change
  - Philosophy
  - Philosophy, Politics and Law
  - Physics
  - Physics/Computer Science
  - Political Economy
  - Political Science
  - Psychology
  - Religion
  - Russian
  - Sociology
  - Spanish
- USC School of Architecture**
  - Architecture
- Roski School of Art and Design**
  - Art
  - Fine Arts, BFA
  - Iovine and Young Academy for Arts, Technology and the Business of Innovation
  - Arts, Technology and the Business of Innovation
- Marshall School of Business**
  - Accounting
  - Business Administration
  - Business Administration (World) (first-years only)
- USC School of Cinematic Arts**
  - Animation and Digital Arts
  - Cinema and Media Studies
  - Cinematic Arts Film and Television Production, BFA (first-years only)
  - Cinematic Arts Film and Television Production, B.A. (transfers only)
  - Media Arts and Practice
  - Interactive Entertainment
  - Writing for Screen and Television
- Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism**
  - Communication
  - Journalism
  - Public Relations
- Kaufman School of Dance**
  - Dance, BFA
- Ostrow School of Dentistry**
  - Dental Hygiene (Junior transfers only)
- USC School of Dramatic Arts**
  - Theatre
  - Theatre (Acting), BFA
  - Theatre (Design), BFA
  - Theatre (Sound Design), BFA
  - Theatre (Stage Management), BFA
  - Theatre (Technical Direction), BFA
- Viterbi School of Engineering**
  - \*Note: areas of emphasis are indicated in parentheses below.
  - Undeclared Engineering
  - Aerospace
  - Astronautical
  - Biomedical
  - Biomedical (Biochemical)
  - Biomedical (Electrical)
  - Biomedical (Mechanical)
  - Chemical
  - Chemical (Biochemical)
  - Chemical (Environmental)
  - Chemical (Nanotechnology)
  - Chemical (Petroleum)
  - Chemical (Polymer/Materials Science)
  - Chemical (Sustainable Energy)
  - Civil
  - Civil (Building Science)
  - Civil (Environmental)
  - Civil (Structural)
  - Computer Engineering and Computer Science
  - Computer Science
  - Computer Science (Games)
- Computer Science/ Business Administration**
  - Electrical
  - Environmental
  - Industrial and Systems
  - Industrial Systems (Information Systems)
  - Mechanical
  - Mechanical (Petroleum)
- Davis School of Gerontology**
  - Human Development & Aging
  - Lifespan Health
- Keck School of Medicine**
  - Global Health
  - Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Studies
- Thornton School of Music**
  - Bachelor of Music degrees:
  - Composition
  - Jazz Studies
  - Popular Music
  - Studio/Jazz Guitar
  - Classical Performance
  - Bassoon
  - Cello
  - Clarinet
  - Double Bass
  - Flute
  - French Horn
  - Guitar, Classical
  - Harp
  - Oboe
  - Organ
  - Percussion
  - Piano
  - Saxophone
  - Trombone
  - Trumpet
  - Tuba
  - Viola
  - Violin
  - Vocal Arts
- Bachelor of Arts degrees:**
  - Choral Music option
  - Classical Performance option (instrumental or vocal)
  - Jazz Performance option (instrumental or vocal)
- Bachelor of Science degree:**
  - Music Industry
- Mrs. T.H. Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy**
  - Occupational Therapy (first-years only)
- 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

## College Entrance Exams

College entrance exams, such as the SAT and ACT, are just one part of the college admission process, but it is important to prepare for them.

### Preparing for exams:

#### 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grades:

Prepare to take any SAT Subject tests for your best subjects. Visit [sat.collegeboard.org](http://sat.collegeboard.org) to take practice tests, check test dates or to register for a test. Fee waivers are available for those who qualify.

#### 11<sup>th</sup> Grade:

Take the PSAT in October. This is the preliminary exam for the SAT and is required for several national scholarship programs, including the National Merit Scholarship. You can prepare for it by visiting [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

Start thinking about when and how often you will take the SAT or ACT. Plan to register for the tests at least one to two months in advance of the test date.

#### 12<sup>th</sup> Grade:

Register for the SAT or the ACT. Your counselor can provide registration forms or you can register online. Plan to register for these exams a month or two before the test date.

## 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.

**More than 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](http://admission.usc.edu/scholarships).

For more information, please visit [financialaid.usc.edu](http://financialaid.usc.edu).

To find out your potential eligibility for need-based financial aid, please visit our Net Price Calculator at [financialaid.usc.edu/npcc](http://financialaid.usc.edu/npcc).

# Four Facts ABOUT APPLYING TO COLLEGE

**Did You Know: You don't have to be rich to attend a private university.** Students eligible for need-based financial aid may find the actual costs for a private university comparable to - or less than - a state institution. In fact, two-thirds of our undergraduate students receive financial assistance. And we enroll 4,300 low-income undergraduate students (as defined by Pell Grant eligibility) — more than most other private, highly selective universities.

**Did You Know: 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. The College Board's Big Future website provides free and accurate information about thousands of colleges and universities, and can help you prepare for your college search or explore potential majors and careers. Visit [bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org) for more information.

**Did You Know: 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. A variety of need-based aid programs and scholarships may be available to you, so you should apply for financial aid soon after you apply for admission.

**Did You Know: Admission officers consider more than grades and test scores when evaluating an applicant.** In addition to grades and test scores, selective colleges are interested in the rigor of the subjects taken, the competitiveness of the school, and upward or downward trends in your grades. The essay, as well as your extracurricular and leadership activities, talent and personal character are also very important. You should be aware, though, that accomplishments in extracurricular activities and leadership activities cannot make up for a poor academic record.

## START EARLY

For more information about USC: [www.usc.edu](http://www.usc.edu)

Attending college is more important than ever. This brochure will help you learn about the college application process and the classes you should take in middle school and high school to prepare. We encourage you to share this with your family so they can help you reach your goal. Remember, college admission and financial aid requirements can change from year to year, so stay in close contact with your school counselor for advice and for the most current college information.

To help you meet the basic entrance requirements of many colleges and universities, a college-prep schedule requires you to take at least four college preparatory classes every year of high school.

A college preparatory track should include:

- English And Literature: 4 Years**
- Math: 3-4 years** Recommended track includes algebra through trigonometry or calculus.
- Foreign Language: 2-4 years**
- Laboratory/Natural/Physical Science: 2-4 years**
- History and Social Science: 2 years**
- Academic Electives: 3 years**

## 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.
- Challenging classes such as advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses (if you are prepared and if your high school offers them).

If you haven't done so yet, get to know your school counselor. Tell him or her that you want to attend USC and that you need to enroll in college preparatory courses.

Join clubs and organizations at your school or in your community to explore your interests and learn leadership skills. Aim for leadership roles by junior or senior year.

Try to earn As in all your classes.

Form study groups with friends who also plan to go to college, and study together as often as possible.

Update your resume file, saving items such as report cards, diplomas and certificates; a list of awards and honors you receive; a list of all school and community activities you participate in; a list of offices you hold in these organizations; and a list of honors or paid jobs you hold. Update this file the every semester.

Become involved in at least one extracurricular activity and participate as much as possible.

Check with your counselor to make sure you are taking the college preparatory subjects you need to attend at USC. Take AP and IB classes if they are offered at your school. Otherwise, consider taking classes at your local community college to further challenge yourself.

Attend college fairs and presentations by college representatives who visit your school.

Make a list of colleges you would like to apply to, through outside agencies.

Be sure to update your resume file with any new accomplishments, experiences, awards or service.

Update your resume file. Record your accomplishments, experiences, awards and service.

Begin visiting and exploring college campuses that interest you. Visit [bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org) for more information.

Review your 10<sup>th</sup>-grade schedule with your counselor to make sure you are taking the college prep courses you need for USC.

Try to take a leadership role in an extracurricular activity and participate in other activities that may interest you.

Start your college search. Research colleges online.

Take AP or IB courses if offered at your school. A fourth year of math and a laboratory science are strongly recommended for your senior year.

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](http://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 recommendations.

Review your recent and current class schedule with your college counselor to make sure you are taking the college preparatory classes you need for more information.

Register for ACT and/or SAT exams. See the "College Entrance Exams" section for more information.

Pay special attention to college application deadlines and requirements.

Complete and submit applications. Submit a portfolio or register for an audition if you are applying to an arts program.

Complete your college essay.

Register for ACT and/or SAT exams. See the "College Entrance Exams" section for more information.

Complete your college essay.

Review your recent and current class schedule with your college counselor to make sure you are taking the college prep courses you need for USC.



- Tell your parents you want to attend a selective college.
- Take a course in algebra and a foreign language this year, if possible.
- Study and strive for As. Though colleges won't generally consider grades you earned before high school, studying hard now will prepare you for the years to come.
- Develop skills that are valuable in high school and essential in college, such as basic computer skills, online research, note-taking and time management.

## 9<sup>th</sup> GRADE and beyond

- If you fall behind or have trouble in a course, ask for help. Look for a tutor, a friend, counselor or parent who can help.
- Create a resume file, saving items such as report cards, diplomas and certificates; a list of awards and honors you receive; a list of all school and community activities you participate in; a list of offices you hold in these organizations; and a list of honors or paid jobs you hold. Update this file the every semester.
- Become involved in at least one extracurricular activity and participate as much as possible.
- Join clubs and organizations at your school or in your community to explore your interests and learn leadership skills. Aim for leadership roles by junior or senior year.
- Try to earn As in all your classes.
- Form study groups with friends who also plan to go to college, and study together as often as possible.

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.

## 11<sup>th</sup> GRADE

- Review your 10<sup>th</sup>-grade schedule with your counselor to make sure you are taking the college prep courses you need for USC.
- Try to take a leadership role in an extracurricular activity and participate in other activities that may interest you.
- Update your resume file. Record your accomplishments, experiences, awards and service.
- Start your college search. Research colleges online.
- Begin visiting and exploring college campuses that interest you. Visit [bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org) for more information.

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.

This is the year you take standardized tests, tour college campuses, and make important choices. Make sure your grades remain strong, because this is the year colleges will examine most closely.

## 10<sup>th</sup> GRADE

- Register for ACT and/or SAT exams. See the "College Entrance Exams" section for more information.
- Pay special attention to college application deadlines and requirements.
- Complete and submit applications. Submit a portfolio or register for an audition if you are applying to an arts program.
- Learn more about financial aid and how to apply at [financialaid.usc.edu](http://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 recommendations.

## 12<sup>th</sup> GRADE

- Prepare for the SAT or ACT by using test prep resources found in workshops or camps subjects that interest you. Many of these are held on college campuses.
- Relax and take time off before the next academic year. Consider retaining a class in which you received a grade you weren't satisfied with, or take a new class in summer school.
- Work as a volunteer in an area where your community needs help, gain valuable experience and save money for college by working a part-time job or pursuing an internship in an area that interests you.
- Be sure to update your resume file with any new accomplishments, experiences, awards or service.
- Continue your extracurricular activities, and take the initiative to lead programs or plan activities.
- Update your resume and activities file.

## Ideas for Making the Most of Your Summers Throughout High School

- Take part in academic enrichment programs and special summer workshops or camps subjects that interest you. Many of these are held on college campuses.
- Brainstorm, online or in bookstores. Workshops such as the Access Initiative, online or in bookstores. Workshops such as the Access Initiative, online or in bookstores.
- Actively engage the new incoming students in Los Angeles can help you prepare for college entrance exams. Check with your counselor for more information.
- Complete any audition tapes, art portfolios or special materials required for admissions to programs in the fine and performing arts.
- Start working on your college essays. This will give you enough time to write it before submitting it with your college applications.

### THE SUMMER BEFORE YOUR SENIOR YEAR



- Review your recent and current class schedule with your college counselor to make sure you are taking the college preparatory classes you need for more information.
- Register for ACT and/or SAT exams. See the "College Entrance Exams" section for more information.
- Pay special attention to college application deadlines and requirements.
- Complete and submit applications. Submit a portfolio or register for an audition if you are applying to an arts program.
- 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](http://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 recommendations.

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

