Courses Required for Admission

Writing and math are required for all transfer students. Students intending to study science, business, engineering or architecture are required to complete additional courses before transferring. Refer to pages 12-15 for details.

Strong transfer candidates will enroll full time and complete 14-16 units, typically comprising four transferable courses, per term.

Writing/Composition

Strong writing skills are essential to success at USC. All undergraduates are required to take two writing courses: one lower-division and one upper-division course.

The upper-division course must be taken at USC. However, successful transfer applicants will complete a course equivalent to the lower-division requirement, WRIT 130, before applying to USC. Typically the second course in a college composition sequence satisfies this requirement. If your school does not offer a course equivalent to WRIT 130, you should take the strongest composition course available. This course may NOT be taken on a Pass/No Pass basis.

Professional, technical, creative and remedial writing courses will not satisfy this requirement. If you are unsure whether your writing course is equivalent to WRIT 130 and it does not appear in our articulation agreements or histories, please keep the syllabus and papers for later review by USC.

General Education

USC’s General Education program is designed to introduce you to a wide breadth of knowledge that will help you succeed in the 21st century. With careful choice of classes, students can complete the 10 requirements with eight courses. Keep in mind:

- We require eight courses within the six Core Literacies: one course each in The Arts, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Quantitative Reasoning; and two courses each in Humanistic Inquiry and Social Analysis.
- We require two courses in Global Perspectives: one in Citizenship in a Diverse World and one in Traditions and Historical Foundations.
- Some Global Perspectives courses will satisfy requirements in the Core Literacies as well. A single course can satisfy one Global Perspectives and one Core Literacy requirement at most.
- Transfer students must complete at least two GE courses at USC Dornsife College from among the six Core Literacy categories.
- Once enrolled at USC, students must complete all remaining GE Core Literacy requirements at USC.
- Transfer students are not required to complete the General Education Seminar (GESM) required of first-year students.
- A course taken at another institution must be at least three semester units or four quarter units to be eligible for GE credit.

Minimum Math

You are expected to have earned strong grades in at least three years of high school mathematics, including Advanced Algebra (Algebra II) or Intermediate Algebra at the college level with a grade of C or better. Majors in the social sciences, business and architecture at USC require specific mathematics courses and achievement beyond this level. Science and engineering majors can become stronger candidates for admission by completing the additional coursework that can be found on pages 12-15 of this brochure or on the respective departmental websites. If lower-division mathematics courses are required by your major, we advise you to complete them early in your college studies, prior to applying to USC.

Please refer to “Additional Coursework by Major” on pages 12-15 to find out if your intended program of study requires additional coursework.

Additional information about the 2015 General Education Program is available at dornsife.usc.edu/2015ge.
Not acceptable: Studio, performance, theory or pre-professional courses

Course or Exam
- Completed
- In progress
- At USC
- Non-USC

Course or Exam
- Completed
- In progress
- At USC
- Non-USC

Course or Exam
- Completed
- In progress
- At USC
- Non-USC

Course or Exam
- Completed
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Course or Exam
- Completed
- In progress
- At USC
- Non-USC

Course or Exam
- Completed
- In progress
- At USC
- Non-USC

Courses that meet this requirement cultivate a critical appreciation for various forms of human expression by teaching students to evaluate works of literature, philosophy and the arts, to think critically and formulate informed opinions about ideas and values.

Examples of acceptable courses:
- Western Civilization, World Civilization, Intro to Philosophy, American Literature or English Literature, U.S. History, Intro to Religions, Eastern Religion, Western Religion, World Religions, Old Testament, New Testament, Mythology (Greek/Roman/World)

Examples of acceptable courses:
- Cultural Anthropology, Intro to Environmental Studies (people and policy focused), Intro to Sociology, Intro to Political Science, Intro to Gender Studies, Intro to Women’s Studies, Intro to LGBT Studies, Intro to International Relations, Intro to Peace and Conflict Studies, Language and Society, Ethnic-American Histories

Example of acceptable courses:
- General Biology, Physical Anthropology, Historical Geology, Physical Geography, Elementary Astronomy, Physical Geography

Example of acceptable courses:
- Intro to Sociology, Intro to Political Science, Intro to Women’s Studies, Intro to LGBT Studies, Intro to International Relations, Intro to Peace and Conflict Studies, Language and Society, Ethnic-American Histories

Example of acceptable courses:
- General Biology

Not acceptable: Botany, Zoology, Intro to Psychology

Not acceptable: Preparatory Chemistry

Many degree programs require the third-level course of a foreign language. See the "Foreign Lang." column next to your intended major on pages 12-15. Students are encouraged to begin, if not finish, this requirement before transferring. Once at USC, transferring additional studies in foreign language must complete a placement exam before being allowed to register for courses.

Students attending schools on the quarter system must complete the fifth-level course of a foreign language to satisfy this requirement. At some semester schools, a fourth-level course is equivalent to the third level at USC.

A score of 4 or higher on an AP foreign language exam (other than Latin) can fulfill this requirement.

Language courses taken fully or partially online do not satisfy this requirement.

Exceptions MAY be made for courses taken in 2020 if they were intended to be completed in person but moved online due to COVID-19.

Use this space to record courses listed on pages 12-15 for your intended major.

Courses that meet this requirement teach students to use a set of formal tools, such as logical or statistical inference, probability, or mathematical analysis to pose and evaluate hypotheses, claims, questions, or problems within a formal mode of thought.

Examples of acceptable courses:
- Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Pre-Calculus, College Algebra, Statistics, Finite Math, Calculus, Math for Liberal Arts, Calculus for Business

Meeting this requirement with math placement test scores: Students may meet this requirement by earning a score of 22 on the USC Mathematics Placement Exam under certain conditions. Visit dornsife.usc.edu/2015ge/2015ge-requirements for more information.

Courses that meet this requirement enhance understanding of citizenship and moral agency in today’s increasingly global society by teaching students to identify social, political, economic and cultural forces that bear on human experience in the U.S. and around the world.

Examples of acceptable courses: Intro to International Relations, Intro to Peace and Conflict Studies, Contemporary Moral Issues

Not acceptable: Courses that consider these issues in the context of a single country, such as the U.S.