



Focus on The University of Southern California

The University of Southern California (popularly known as U.S.C.), draws top students from all over the country and the world. In fact, it has more international students than any other college in the nation. With a truly international focus, it ranks sixth in the U.S. in the number of students who study abroad, and one of its more unusual programs is a new undergraduate major in World Business. The students in this major spend their sophomore year in Shanghai and their junior year in Milan, while having all their classes are taught in English.

U.S.C.'s 226-acre main campus just 3 miles from downtown Los Angeles, provides easy access to abundant internship and recreational opportunities. In fact, most students do an internship by sophomore year, and some as early as freshman year. To ensure public safety, the campus is closed nightly from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. to anyone without a student or guest I.D., and all the intersections are patrolled by campus security.

The 17,500 undergraduates are spread among the schools of Arts, Sciences and Letters, Architecture, Business, Cinematic Arts, Communications and Journalism, Dramatic Arts, Engineering, Fine Arts, Gerontology, Health Professions, Music, and Public Policy. The Health Sciences campus has new programs for undergraduates in Global Health and Health Promotion/Disease Prevention, and a School of Dance is slated to open soon.

The School of Cinematic Arts, regularly ranked the #1 film school in the country, is perhaps the most selective division. As is the case for all the university's arts programs, admission is heavily dependent on a portfolio. Students in this program have access to top practitioners in the field and lots of early experience behind the camera.

Interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary study is another hallmark of U.S.C, where a streamlined core curriculum enables students to combine interests across the schools and still graduate in four years. Exemplifying this goal, a Center for Innovation will open soon. Although it will be housed in the School of Music, it is designed to draw students from all different majors to work together on entrepreneurship. In a similar vein, a new Academy of Arts, Technology, and the Business of Innovation was recently initiated to help artists expand their knowledge and skills into the world of technology.

Because U.S.C. is a major research university, undergraduates have abundant opportunities for mentored research projects. Additionally, U.S.C. undergraduates are admitted in large numbers

to the university's graduate and professional schools. A number of "progressive degrees" even make it possible for them to start graduate level courses by second semester of their junior year.

For all the emphasis on academics, U.S.C. students enjoy a spirited extra-curricular life with a high-profile football team and 750 clubs and organizations. Approximately 20% of the students participate in Greek life.

The admissions office seeks individuals who demonstrate in their "Why U.S.C.?" essay that they have a good understanding of the school and embrace its core values of ambitious scholarship, innovation, and service to the community. They say their aim is to produce leaders and agents of change in all spheres.

All applications are read fully, and applicants' GPA's are recalculated, eliminating the "fluff" courses and giving extra weight to A.P. and I.B. but not Honors courses. Test scores are considered in the context of the candidates' access to test preparation, and evaluative interviews are available although optional, but they run out early. Visiting the campus does not confer any advantage in the admissions process so long as students demonstrate in other ways their understanding of the school's uniqueness.

Admitted students have an average unweighted GPA of 3.8, median SAT of 2040-2250, or median ACT of 30-34. Admissions are need-blind, and the school is quite generous with both need-based aid and merit scholarships designed to attract top students.