

# Maximizing Resources for Undergraduate Students Considering Graduate School

Jen O'Connor

Dornsife Career Pathways

[Pre-Law and Graduate School Advising](#)



**USC**Dornsife

Dana and David Dornsife  
College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

# We empower students to:

- Maintain great grades
- Stay involved in clubs/orgs
- Assess career goals and interests
- Engage in research opportunities
- Explore graduate school options
- Network
- Develop high quality application materials

# Planned happenstance theory -

## Create unexpected career opportunities

- **Planned:** having arranged the parts
- **Happen:** to occur by chance
- **Stance:** a view or attitude
- **Clarify Ideas**  
Follow your curiosity and identify your interests.
- **Remove The Blocks**  
Wonder “how I can” rather than “I can’t because...”
- **Expect The Unexpected**  
Be prepared for chance opportunities, such as unexpected phone calls, chance encounters, impromptu conversations and new experiences.
- **Take Action**  
Learn, develop skills, remain open and follow-up on chance events.

**Mitchell, Levin & Krumboltz**

# Maintaining great grades



# Maintaining great grades


USC Dornsife

## Chemistry SI Session Schedules

CHEM 102 – Jacob Liskh (17204)

**MWF 9-9:50am**  
**SI Leader:** Jacob Liskh

**Major/Minor:** Human Biology/Spanish, Health Care Studies  
**Hometown:** New Lenox, IL  
**Campus Involvement:** USC Norris Research Assistant, USC HEAL Research Assistant, Trojan Health Volunteers.  
**Favorite thing(s) to do in LA:** Go to Manhattan Beach, Try to find the best tacos in LA, Drive around and see what I can find!  
**Fun Fact:** My comfort food is chips and guacamole.



**Weekly SI Sessions**

- Monday: 6:00-6:50PM (DMC 111)
- Tuesday: 4:00-4:50PM (THH 205)
- Wednesday: 7:00-7:50PM ([Zoom](#))

CHEM 105a – Matthew Rodriguez (17218)

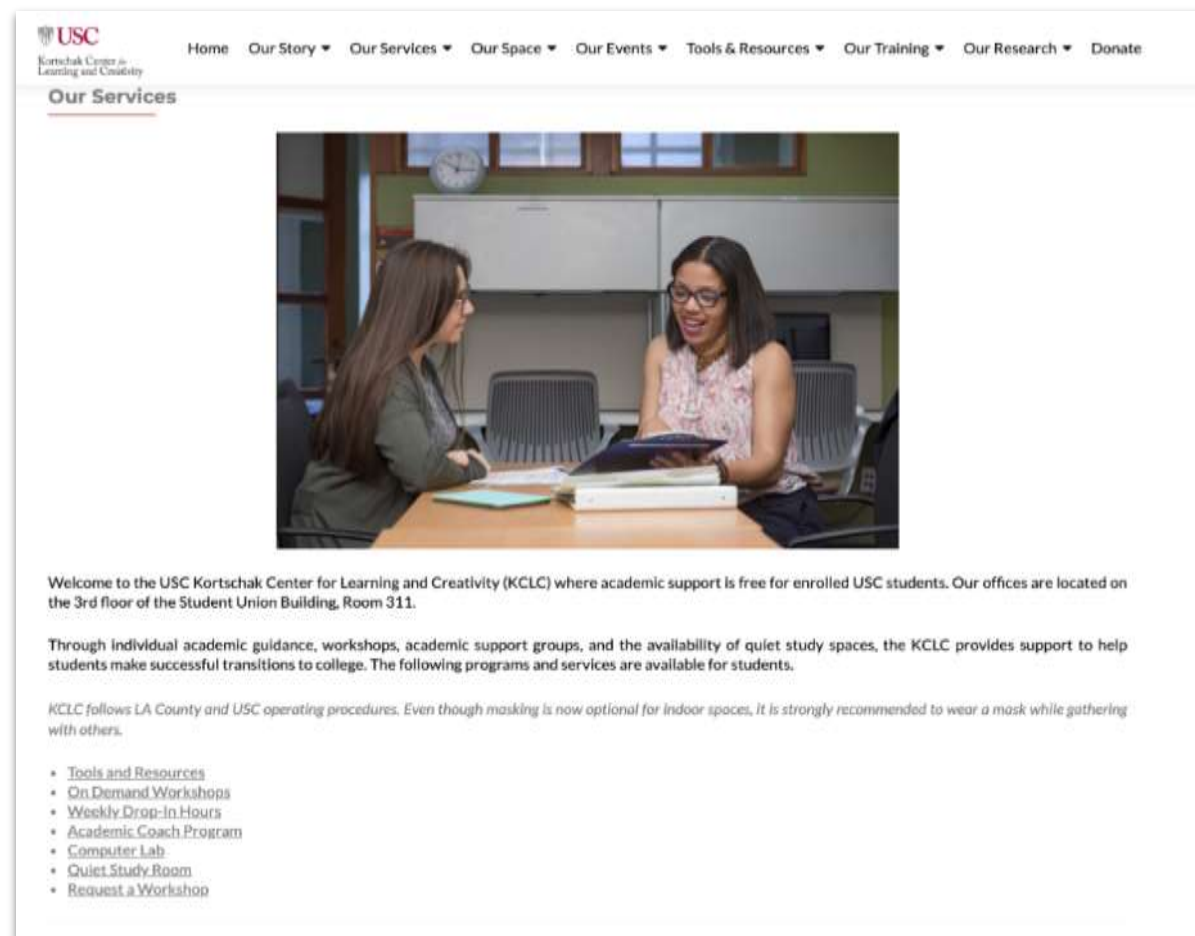
CHEM 105a – Emma D'Addezio (17220)

- Professor's office hours
- Teaching Assistants
- Group sessions
- [Supplemental Instruction](#)



# Maintaining great grades


## Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity (KCLC)



USC  
Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity

Home Our Story Our Services Our Space Our Events Tools & Resources Our Training Our Research Donate

### Our Services

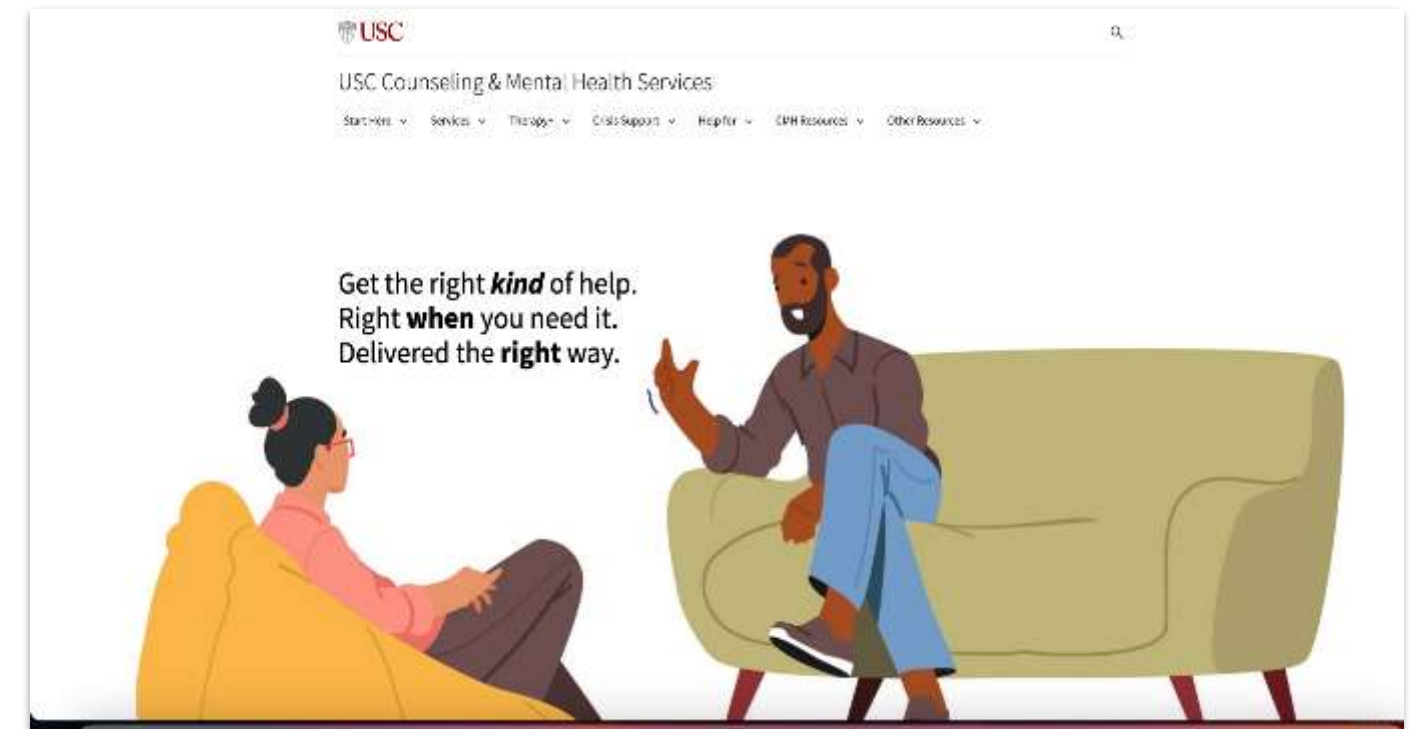


Welcome to the USC Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity (KCLC) where academic support is free for enrolled USC students. Our offices are located on the 3rd floor of the Student Union Building, Room 311.

Through individual academic guidance, workshops, academic support groups, and the availability of quiet study spaces, the KCLC provides support to help students make successful transitions to college. The following programs and services are available for students.

KCLC follows LA County and USC operating procedures. Even though masking is now optional for indoor spaces, it is strongly recommended to wear a mask while gathering with others.

- Tools and Resources
- On Demand Workshops
- Weekly Drop-In Hours
- Academic Coach Program
- Computer Lab
- Quiet Study Room
- Request a Workshop




USC

### USC Counseling & Mental Health Services

Start Here Services Therapy Crisis Support Help for CPH Resources Other Resources

Get the right *kind* of help.  
Right *when* you need it.  
Delivered the *right* way.



## Engemann Student Health Center

# Staying involved in clubs/orgs



# Staying involved in clubs/orgs

The screenshot shows a webpage with a dark header containing the USC Dornsife logo, a 'Menu' link, a 'Search' field, and a small crest icon. The main content area is white and features the title 'Related extracurricular activities' in a serif font. Below the title is a section titled 'Get involved!' with a sub-header 'Getting involved as a college student offers a multitude of benefits that can shape your academic and professional journey including:'. This section lists five categories: 'Skill Development', 'Networking Opportunities', 'Personal Growth', 'Resume Building', and 'Making a Difference', each with a short paragraph of text. To the right of this text is a grid of ten light gray rectangular buttons, each containing text for a different type of activity or organization. The buttons are arranged in two columns and five rows.

**USC Dornsife** Menu Search

## Related extracurricular activities

### Get involved!

Getting involved as a college student offers a multitude of benefits that can shape your academic and professional journey including:

**Skill Development**

By joining clubs and activities, you'll cultivate essential skills including leadership, teamwork, communication, and time management, which are invaluable in both your personal and professional life.

**Networking Opportunities**

Engaging in extracurriculars introduces you to a diverse group of peers, faculty, and professionals. These connections may lead to exciting internships, career opportunities, and lifelong friendships.

**Personal Growth**

Stepping outside your comfort zone and taking on new challenges fosters self-confidence and self-discovery.

**Resume Building**

Employers and graduate schools seek well-rounded candidates with diverse experiences. Involvement can help you build experience which will set you apart from the competition.

**Making a Difference**

- Campus-wide student organizations
- Campus-wide volunteer service opportunities
- Professional associations (look for student-based orgs and memberships!)
- Study Abroad
- Dornsife Office of Experiential and Applied Learning
- Annenberg student organizations
- Marshall student organizations
- Viterbi Hands-On Experiences
- Cinematic Arts student-led organizations
- Price registered student organizations

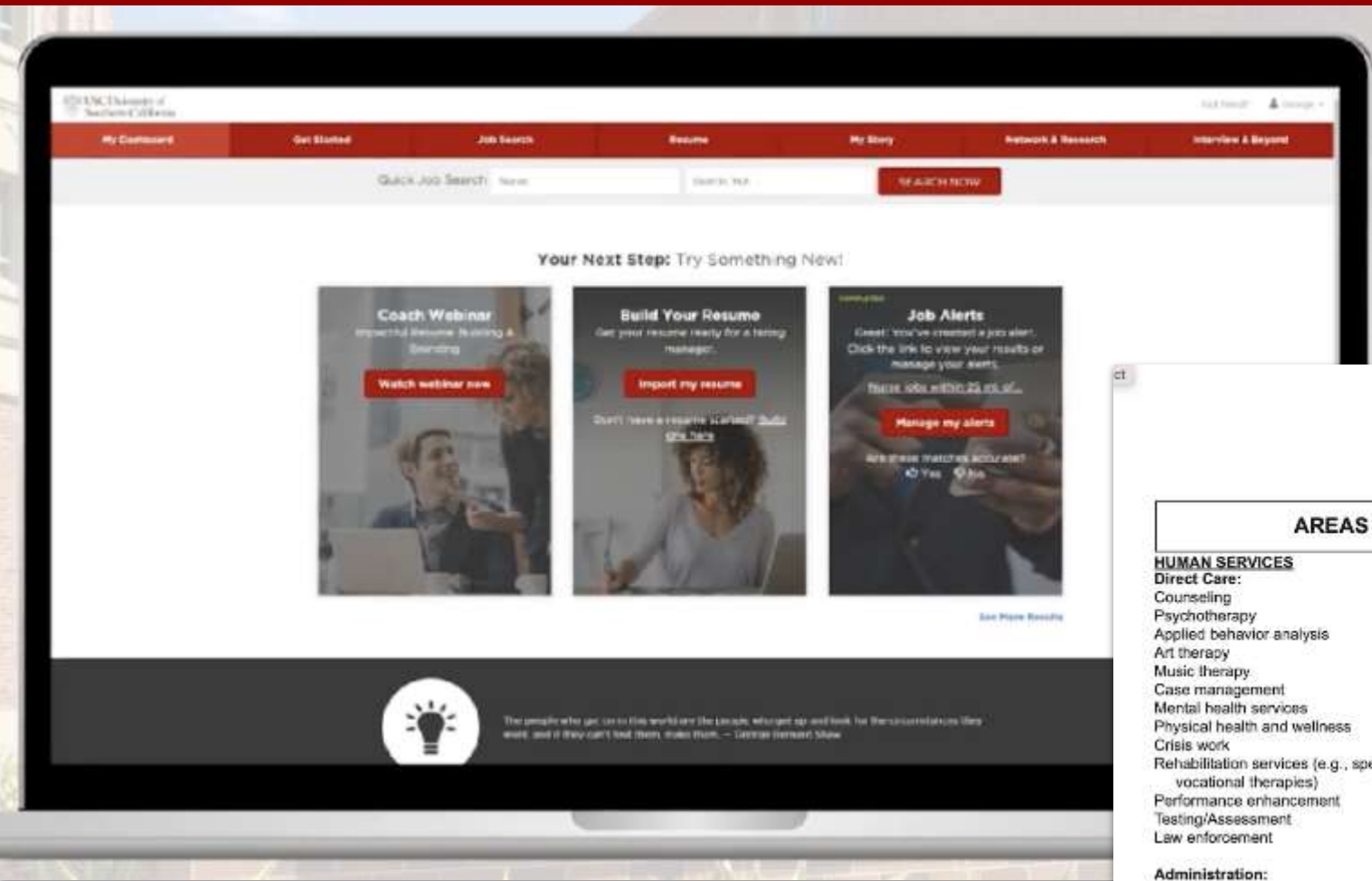
[Link!](#)



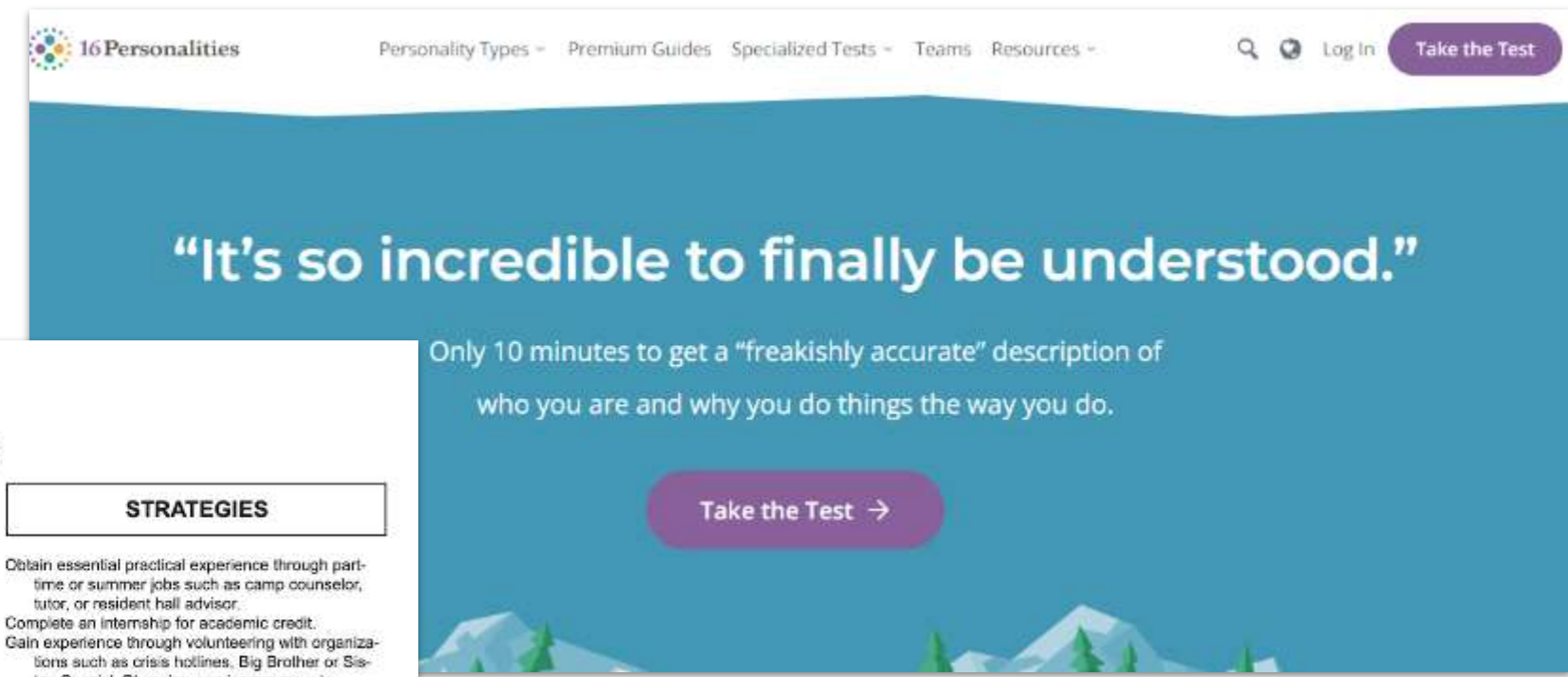
# Assessing goals and interests



# Assessing goals and interests



Your Next Step



16 Personalities

**PSYCHOLOGY**  
What can I do with this major?

AREAS	EMPLOYERS	STRATEGIES
<p><b>HUMAN SERVICES</b></p> <p><b>Direct Care:</b> Counseling Psychotherapy Applied behavior analysis Art therapy Music therapy Case management Mental health services Physical health and wellness Crisis work Rehabilitation services (e.g., speech, physical, vocational therapies) Performance enhancement Testing/Assessment Law enforcement</p> <p><b>Administration:</b> Advocacy Programming Community relations Management Development/Fundraising Grant writing</p>	<p>Federal government including Departments of: Health and Human Services Justice Veterans Affairs</p> <p>State government including: Departments of Human Services Departments of Mental Health Departments of Justice Community mental health centers State psychiatric hospitals Facilities for individuals with intellectual impairments Boards of probation and parole</p> <p>Local government: Senior citizens' centers Nursing homes Social service/Nonprofit organizations Religiously-affiliated service organizations Hospitals/Healthcare providers Private psychiatric facilities Outpatient clinics Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) College and university counseling centers and career centers Pain clinics Rehabilitation facilities Testing centers Private practice</p>	<p>Obtain essential practical experience through part-time or summer jobs such as camp counselor, tutor, or resident hall advisor.</p> <p>Complete an internship for academic credit.</p> <p>Gain experience through volunteering with organizations such as crisis hotlines, Big Brother or Sister, Special Olympics, service groups, etc.</p> <p>Many entry-level helping positions require one year of related experience. Volunteer experience and internships can typically fulfill this requirement.</p> <p>Learn to work well with different types of people.</p> <p>Develop strong communication skills.</p> <p>Cultivate the desire to help others.</p> <p>Earn a minor in a specialized field of interest (e.g., child &amp; family studies, sociology, or political science).</p> <p>Take courses to build valuable counseling-related skills (e.g., techniques of counseling).</p> <p>Become fluent in a foreign language to serve clients who may not speak English.</p> <p>Acquire knowledge of government and community resources available for those in need.</p> <p>Earn a graduate degree in psychology, counseling, or social work for positions involving substantive counseling or psychotherapy or for advancement into administrative/supervisory positions. See General Information for more details.</p> <p>Pursue graduate degrees to enter rehabilitation fields such as speech-language pathology, physical therapy, and vocational rehabilitation. See What Can I Do With This Major Audiology and Speech Pathology? and What Can I Do With This Major Healthcare Sciences? for additional details.</p> <p>Pursue graduate training or certification programs to establish test administration and interpretation qualification.</p> <p>Maintain an excellent academic record.</p>

What Can I Do With A Major In...handouts



# Assessing goals and interests

careershift  
a division of Student Playbook

HOME ABOUT TESTIMONIALS FAQ MEMBER LOGIN SIGN UP NOW

**THE CAREERSHIFT ADVANTAGE**

- ✓ Dynamic job, contact and employer search
- ✓ Targeted results
- ✓ Organizational Tools

Pro-active career manager

Sign Up for CareerShift Now

[Career Shift](#)

U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

HOME SUBJECTS DATA TOOLS PUBLICATIONS ECONOMIC RELEASES CLASSROOM BETA

Bureau of Labor Statistics > Publications > Occupational Outlook Handbook

OOH HOME | OCCUPATION FINDER | OOH FAQ | OOH GLOSSARY | A-Z INDEX | OOH SITE MAP

**OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK**

Home

Get the CareerInfo app for the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH).

The app is available for [iOS](#) and [Android](#) devices.

**OCCUPATION GROUPS**

- Architecture and Engineering
- Arts and Design
- Building and Grounds Cleaning
- Business and Financial
- Community and Social Service
- Computer and Information Technology
- Construction and Extraction
- Education, Training, and Library

**SELECT OCCUPATIONS BY**

2021 Median Pay Early-Level Education On-the-job Training

Number of New Jobs (Projected) Growth Rate (Projected) GO

**FEATURED OCCUPATION**

Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Midwives, and Nurse Practitioners

[Occupational Handbook Outlook](#)

MY NEXT MOVE

What do you want to do for a living?

"I want to be a ..."

Search careers with key words.

"I'll know it when I see it."

Browse careers by industry.

"I'm not really sure."

Tell us what you like to do.

Are you a veteran looking for work?

[O\\*Net Online](#)



# Engaging in research opportunities

# Engaging in research opportunities

**Dornsife Career Pathways**

Home Career Advising Pre-Law & Graduate School Advising Programs & Events Internships & Gaining Experience Compass: Jobs & Career Tools Alumni Mentorship Program Ask John

## Research opportunities

Gaining hands-on experience is an important part of any well-designed career development strategy whether you wind up applying to graduate school or not. Now is the time to explore options to determine if certain career paths are right for you. We highly suggest engaging in internships and other experiential opportunities to help you make an informed decision regarding your future career path.

You should focus on internships that will help you explore your areas of interest and broaden your experiences as a whole. Remember- graduate schools are looking for well-rounded candidates- every candidate should bring their unique qualifications when applying. Use internships and other experiential opportunities as tools to explore your interests while demonstrating your focus and determination.

**Explore research opportunities on and off campus!**

**USC Research Gateway Scholars Program**

**USC Dornsife Office of Experiential and Applied Learning**

**USC Academic Honors & Fellowships**

## Basic process for finding research opportunities

Research is an amazing way to gain relevant experience that will help you explore your potential career of interest while building experience.

Please use these links as a starting point to start looking for opportunities that will help you explore your interests while gaining hands-on experience.

Once you find an opportunity of interest, tailor a resume and cover letter that explain your interests and skills related to the opportunity. Mentioning coursework and academic projects that have helped you gain experience in your application materials is a great to demonstrate your abilities to support the research efforts.

If a specific position is not posted, feel free to email the contact person or researcher directly expressing interest in a research position. Share your resume, cover letter, class schedule, as well as the number of hours weekly you may be able to commit to research. While many research opportunities are unpaid, we suggest mentioning if you have been granted federal work study funds. In your email, we also suggest asking what the appropriate next steps might be in the process of securing a research role with them.

The month before each new semester starts is a great time to approach researchers for potential research opportunities. After you reach out, we suggest waiting a full week and then following up. Please be patient in this process- some researchers will be in the field or lab and/or unable to answer emails on a regular basis.

**USC undergraduate research opportunities (start here first!)**

**Research Opportunities through Dornsife**

These opportunities are not only for Dornsife majors! Scroll toward bottom of page.

**Trojan Research Association (student run organization)**

**USC Clinical Trials**

**USC Expert Directory (find faculty who share your interests!)**

**USA and internationally-based research positions**

**Research-related positions at universities (includes undergraduate positions)**

**Education and career training opportunities in STEM**

**Professional associations**

[Link](#)







# Exploring graduate school options



# Points to consider when exploring graduate school options

- Degree programs/specialties
- Ranking
- Type of institution
- Program size
- Teaching philosophy
- Location
- Diversity
- Admission requirements/dates
- Experiential learning opportunities
- Tuition/Funding
- Post-graduation employment

# Exploring graduate school options

## Researching graduate programs

Start researching graduate programs with the following resources. After you find programs you like, start digging deeper by going directly to specific websites of the programs of interest.

We encourage you to bookmark all websites for efficient searching and that you create a spreadsheet to help document all your findings.

<a href="#">Peterson's Guide</a>	→	<a href="#">Go Grad grad school study abroad options</a>	→
<a href="#">U.S. News &amp; World Report</a>	→	<a href="#">College Express (type country into large white search field)</a>	→
<a href="#">The Princeton Review</a>	→	<a href="#">USC graduate degrees</a>	→
<a href="#">GradSchools.com</a>	→	<a href="#">USC progressive degrees (undergrad coursework toward completion of a USC master's degree)</a>	→
<a href="#">CollegeSource Online</a>	→	<a href="#">Graduate teaching programs</a>	→
<a href="#">Grad school search by location (including international)</a>	→	<a href="#">Acceditd school listings</a>	→
<a href="#">Niche.com</a>	→		

[Link](#)

# Exploring graduate school options

Peterson's website banner for test prep courses. The banner features the Peterson's logo at the top left and navigation links for College Prep, Grad School Prep, and Career Prep. The main text reads "LEVEL UP YOUR TEST PREP" and "Test Prep Courses and Practice Tests Make It Easy". Below this, it states "Raise your scores and increase your chances of admission with all-inclusive test prep for over 185 exams, including SAT, ACT, and AP tests." There are two buttons: "Try it Free" and "Our Test Library".

[Petersons.com](https://www.petersons.com)

GradSchools.com search interface. The header includes the logo and navigation links: "Browse by Major", "Masters", "PhDs", "Online", "Browse Colleges", "Browse By Location", "Degree Guide", and "Get Informed". The main heading is "Your Search for Graduate School Starts Here". Below this is a search form with "I WANT TO" (Major) and "FOCUSING ON" (This Subject) dropdowns, and a "Find Grad Schools" button. A section titled "What Is Grad School?" provides introductory text. Below that is "Our Ultimate Graduate School Guide" with two articles: "Is graduate school the same as college?" and "What are the 4 types of degrees?".

[GradSchools.com](https://www.gradschools.com)

GraduateGuide.com search interface. The header includes the logo and navigation links: "Graduate Schools", "Graduate Majors", "Information & Resources", and "Helpful Articles & Advice". The main heading is "Find a Graduate Program/School". Below this is a search form with "Keyword, name", "Major", "State", "Show All", and "Search" fields. A section titled "Helpful Articles & Advice" features four article cards: "How to kick start a career in foreign affairs and...", "All about a master's degree in cybersecurity", "All about an advanced degree in Classics", and "Career spotlight: Petroleum engineer".

[Graduate Guide](https://www.graduateguide.com)

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Career Pathways Pre-Law and  
Graduate School Advising



# Exploring INTERNATIONAL graduate school options

**GoGrad**  
Your guide to online graduate programs

HOME ONLINE MASTER'S DEGREE ONLINE PHD RESOURCES ABOUT US

Resources > Studying Abroad for Graduate School

## THE EXPERT GUIDE TO GRADUATE SCHOOL ABROAD

Explore International Programs, Find Funding Options and Key Insight for Studying Abroad

Graduate school abroad doesn't have to be a dream scenario – it can be easily within reach. Utilizing this guide's insider perspective and experience, prospective graduate students can find programs that match their passion, learn what to expect and anticipate when living abroad, and find scholarship resources to help fund their studies.

**MEET THE EXPERTS**

- RAMON CARLOS URENIA**  
Read More
- BRIDGET AUSMAN**  
Read More

**TURN YOUR STUDY ABROAD DREAM INTO A REALITY**

**“** In the end the allure of experiencing a part of the world one might not otherwise explore is a powerful draw — studying abroad will provide students an unforgettable experience. **”**

Ramon Carlos Urenia

**10 EXPERT TIPS FOR SELECTING A GRADUATE SCHOOL ABROAD**

- Turn Your Study Abroad Dream Into A Reality
- 10 Expert Tips for Selecting a Graduate School Abroad
- Insiders' Share 10 Ways Studying Abroad Will Change

[GoGrad.org](http://GoGrad.org)

**GRADSCHOOLS.COM**  
The #1 Graduate School Directory in the Nation

Browse by Major Masters PhDs Online Browse Colleges Browse By Location Degree Guide Get Informed

Home > Graduate Schools Abroad > International Graduate Programs by Country

## Graduate Schools Abroad

Browse International Graduate Programs by Country

The World is Yours

With the growing appeal of working towards a graduate degree and gaining international experience, students have many options to find graduate schools abroad. Recent studies by the Institute of International Education show that “77% of international institutions are promoting opportunities and scholarships for U.S. students”, which may be available to qualified students. In some cases, this trend is filtering through to a simplified application process, guidance for navigating financial aid, and streamlining of course and credit transfer databases. If you are excited to combine a global perspective, exposure to a foreign language and or culture, with a graduate degree, browse international graduate programs by country on our program directory.

Select a Country to View International Graduate Programs

- Canada
- Finland
- Hungary
- Italy
- Spain
- United Kingdom
- France
- Germany
- Ireland
- Netherlands
- Sweden
- United States

**What Makes International Graduate Programs So Appealing?**

- Wide variety of academic fields of study available
- Range of universities in other countries
- Cross-cultural experience and possibility to learn a new language
- You might research topics endemic to a specific country
- Potential boost to resume and expanded perspective

“Study abroad enables today's students—future leaders from all backgrounds and experiences that will better prepare them for the world they will enter after graduation from other countries and cultures is essential for all careers, whether in business, academia or not-for-profit.”

[GradSchools.com](http://GradSchools.com) by country

**USC Dornsife**  
Career Pathways Pre-Law and Graduate School Advising



# Networking



# Networking

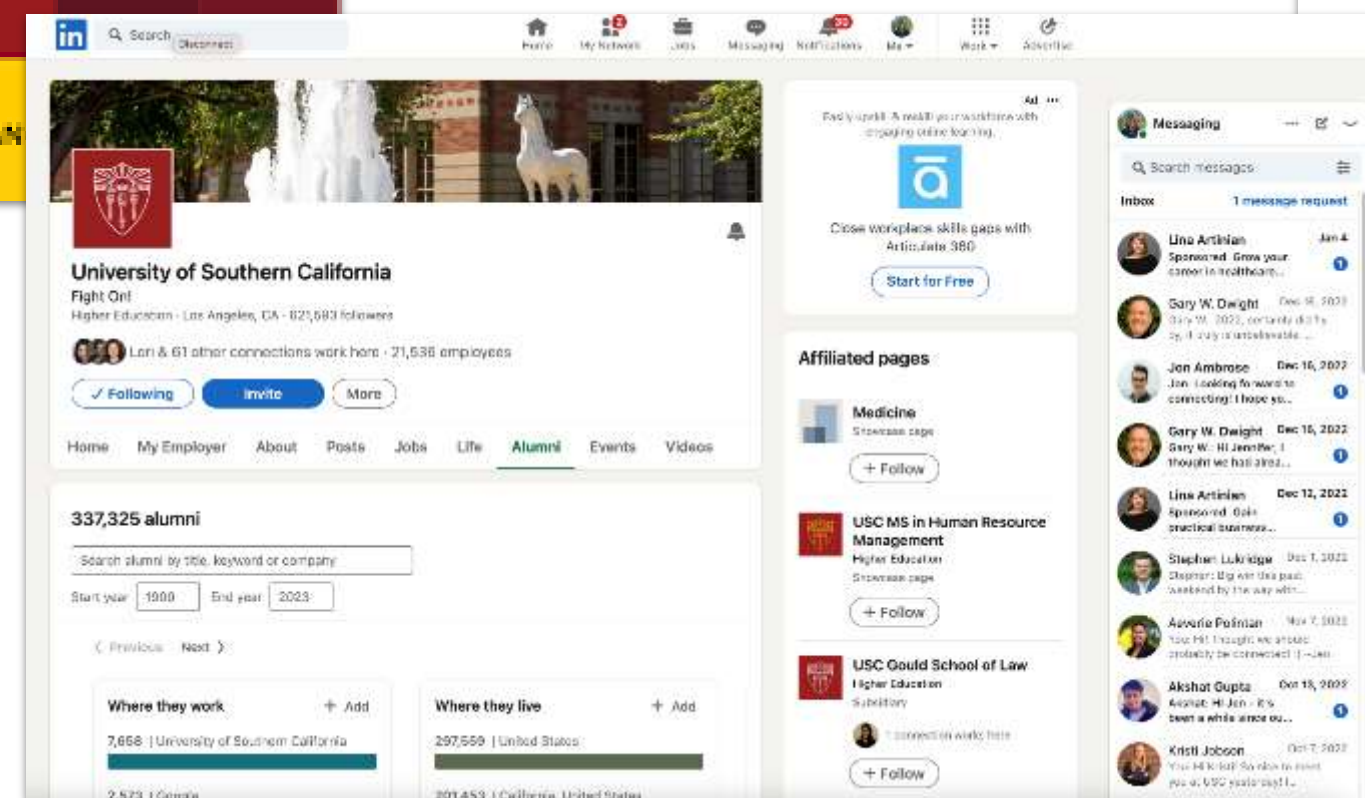


**The Trojan Network**

CONNECT WITH TROJANS WHO SHARE YOUR INTERESTS.  
BUILD YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK.  
FIND TROJANS AROUND THE WORLD.  
JOIN THE TROJAN NETWORK TODAY!

CAREERS.USC.EDU/TROJAN

Trojan Network



University of Southern California

337,325 alumni

Where they work: 7,668 | University of Southern California

Where they live: 297,559 | United States



USC Libraries

### Research Guides

USC Libraries / Research Guides / Careers / Find an Association

Careers: Find an Association

A library research resource for the USC Career Center

Home Research a Place to Work Company Research Research an Industry Find Organizations

**Find an Association** Other Research Guides Alumni

Gale Directory Library

To locate professional associations and other types of organizations, you can also search the [Gale Directory Library](#) available through the USC Libraries E-Resources. This database contains the Encyclopedias of Associations (under "Organizations") as well as other reference works.

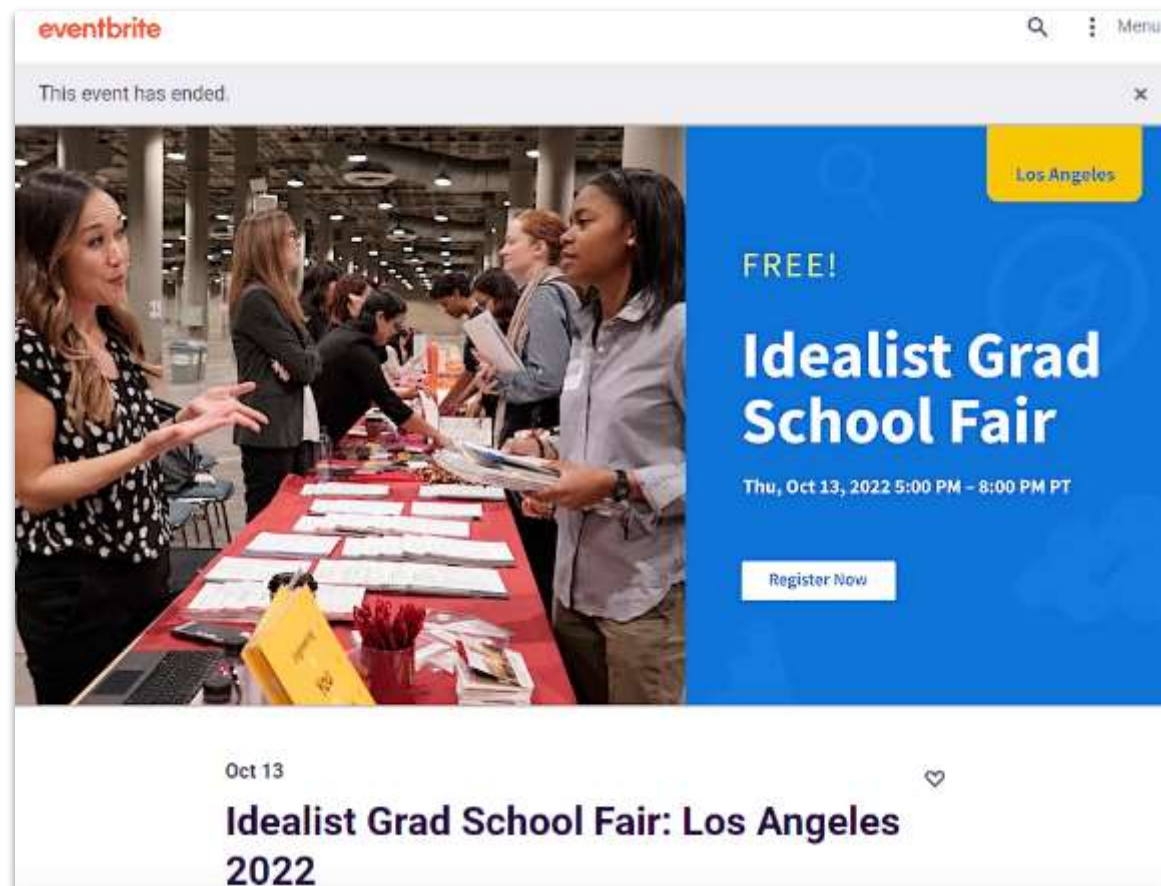
Professional Associations  
(through USC Lib Guide)

LinkedIn  
(through Alumni Group section)

**USC Dornsife**  
Career Pathways Pre-Law and  
Graduate School Advising

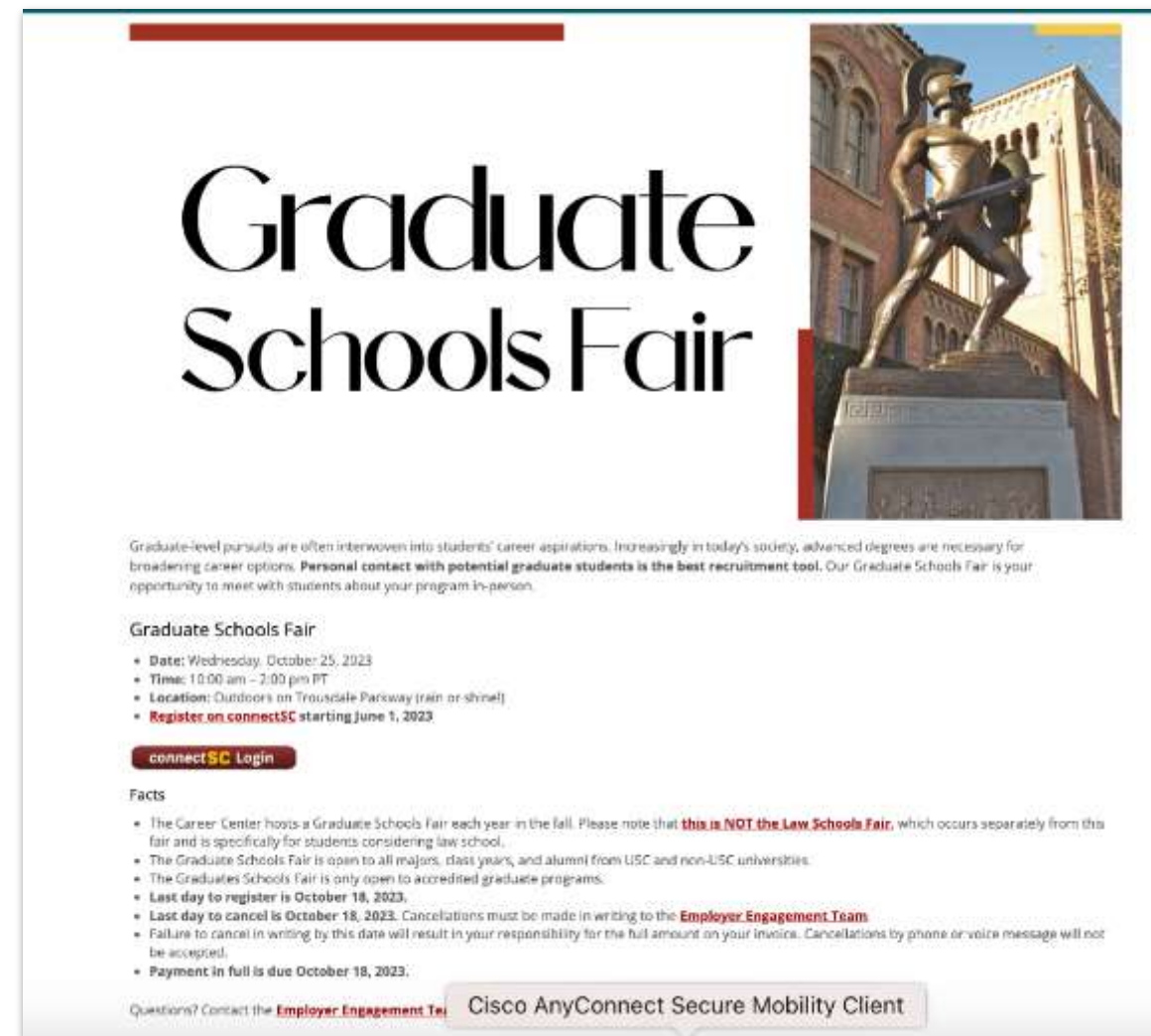


# Networking

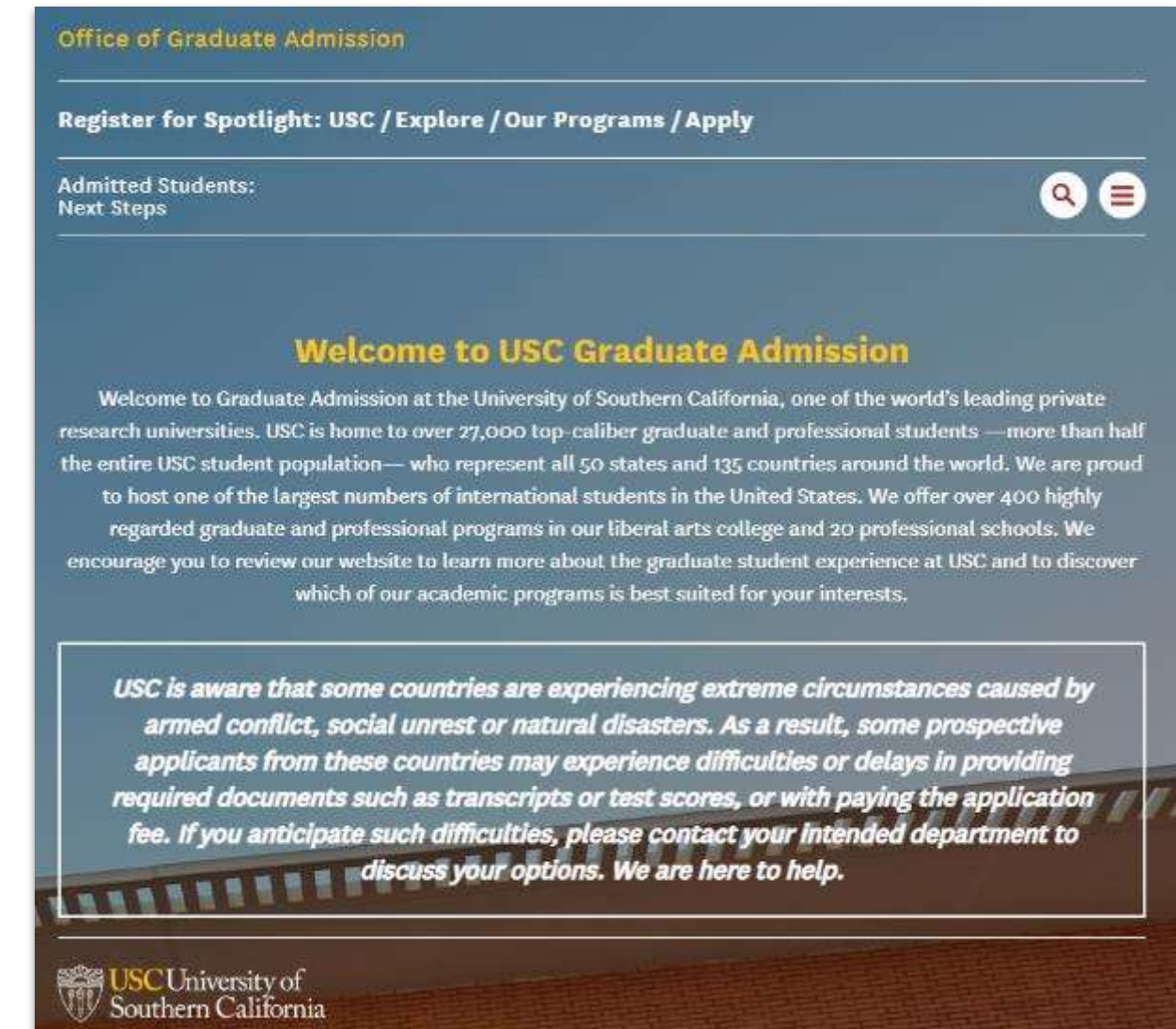


Community Graduate School Fairs

[MBA programs](#)



Annual USC Graduate Schools Fair



Individual graduate school events

**USC** Dornsife

Career Pathways Pre-Law and Graduate School Advising



# Developing application materials



# Developing application materials

Unlike the undergraduate college application process, there is no common application for graduate study (except for professional programs like Law, Medical, Dental, and various Allied Health programs). Candidates apply to each graduate program of interest via an online program/school application.

No two graduate programs and graduate schools are exactly the same! As such, each program will have unique application requirements. Please ensure you fully understand what each program is requiring and follow their directions exactly as requested. If you have questions about their requirements, please contact each program or school's admissions team for clarification.

**Please use the following resources as general guidelines while tailoring toward the specific requirements each school/program is looking for.**

## Entrance exam testing

## Statement of Purpose/Personal Statement

## Letters of recommendation

## Transcripts

## Resume/curriculum vitae (CV)

## Addenda

## Interviews

Many schools do not require interviews. If they say they are optional, treat as required and start stretching your interview muscles just in case! Some schools interview for scholarships or if they want to further evaluate you as a candidate. Practice interviews using a tool such as Big Interview (complimentary to USC students and alumni). Log-in and look for the "Practice" tab on the top of the page. Enjoy!

## Application fees

Application fees vary by school. Expect to pay anywhere from \$70 - \$140 per application fee. Some schools will offer application fee waivers- review their admissions page for potential fee waiver opportunities.

[Link](#)

**USC**Dornsife

Career Pathways Pre-Law and  
Graduate School Advising

# Connecting with advising resources


Connecting with Graduate School Advising Resources

## Statement of Purpose/Personal Statement Review

For tips on what makes a great Statement of Purpose, please review this [guide](#).

After personally proofreading your Statement of Purpose for grammar and content using the handout as a guide, feel free to submit the final draft for review. The graduate school advising team will return the draft to you within 5 business days with constructive feedback.


[Statement of purpose/personal statement review request](#) →



## Resume review

Receive a resume review through WMock Smart Resume- AI software tailored specifically for USC students. Enjoy targeted, personalized guidance designed to help you improve your resume.

[24/7 resume review](#) →



## Advising for Dornsife students & alumni

Please use Compass to review Jen O'Connor's availability and schedule an appointment. Select the Counseling tab after sign-in. Click the icon below to get started. →

## Advising for students or alumni from all majors

[Schedule with Jen O'Connor here](#) →

**Overflow advising scheduling options**

Dornsife students and alumni: If Jen O'Connor's schedule is full, USC Dornsife students and alumni can schedule appointments with Career Pathways team members Kristina Arassian or Octavia Ayla for advisement appointments via [Compass](#).

Non-Dornsife students and alumni: Please e-mail either [Kristina Arassian](#) or [Octavia Ayla](#) to schedule an appointment.

[Link](#)

# Summary of discussion points

- Maintaining great grades
- Staying involved in clubs/orgs
- Assessing career goals and interests
- Engaging in research opportunities
- **ASSESSING AND SYNTHESIZING!**
- Exploring graduate school options
- Networking
- Developing high quality application materials



[Graduate school  
advising website](#)