Step-By-Step Master’s Application Instructions

Pre-Application

**General**
- Prepare for and schedule to take the [GRE](#) (We recommend scheduling to take the GRE about one month before your first application deadline)
- Identify recommenders (for USC, Letters of Recommendation are submitted by the recommenders through the online application instead of physically mailing letters)
- Prepare your résumé
- Prepare your Statement of Purpose

**USC Specific**
- Join our [Mailing List](#) for updates on events and deadlines
- Participate in an [Online or In Person Information Session](#)
- Participate in USC Viterbi’s [Preview Day](#) to tour the campus and meet faculty, advisors and current students
- Explore funding opportunities ([USC Financial Aid](#), [FAFSA](#), [USC Viterbi Scholarships](#), other funding opportunities)

**International Only**
- Prepare for and schedule to take the [TOEFL](#) or [IELTS](#) (We recommend scheduling to take these exams a minimum of one month before your first application deadline.) You should be aware that how often the exams are offered varies widely from country to country.
- Prepare your [Proof of Financial Support Documentation](#)

Ready to Apply

**Step 1**

- Complete and submit the [USC Graduate Admission Application](#) ($90 application fee)

**Application Deadlines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Scholarship Consideration</td>
<td>December 15*</td>
<td>Online application &amp; transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall Final Deadline</td>
<td>January 17*</td>
<td>All materials including test scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Scholarship Consideration</td>
<td>August 31*</td>
<td>Online application &amp; transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Final Deadline</td>
<td>September 15*</td>
<td>All materials including test scores</td>
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* 11:59 PM (23:59), Eastern Time
• **Uploading Scanned Transcripts**
  We urge all applicants to submit scanned official transcripts through the online graduate application.
  - Unofficial transcripts from university student portals are not acceptable
  - If the transcript is issued in another language, upload both the original language transcript and an English translation
  - If the transcript includes a separate grading scale, make sure it is also uploaded
  - For upload purposes, all transcript related documents for a single school must be submitted as one document

• **Self-Reported Test Scores**
  We ask that all applicants include self-reported test scores (GRE, TOEFL, IELTS, etc.) in the online graduate application.

   **Application Tip:** Test scores (and additional test scores) may be added after the application has been submitted. Do not hold off on submitting the application because you are waiting for test scores.

• **CV/Résumé, Statement of Purpose, Letters of Recommendation**
  Instructions for the submission of these materials can be found in the online graduate application.

  Note: Go to our Program pages to check the application requirements to see which materials are required for admission to the program in which you are interested.

  **Application Tip:** Letters of Recommendation may be sent in by recommenders after the application has been submitted. Do not wait for letters to be received before submitting the application.

• **USC ID Number**
  After you submit the USC Graduate Admission application you will receive a USC ID by email typically within 2-3 days of submitting the online application. You will need to include this USC ID with all submitted materials by mail and with all correspondence with USC. It is important to note that your USC ID is different from the USC CAS ID you will receive when you begin your application. The CAS ID is only required for technical support during the application process and is not issued by the university.

• **Scholarship Consideration**
  If your application is received and transcripts are received or postmarked by the scholarship consideration deadline date and all other required materials are received no later than the final deadline date, you will be considered for merit-based scholarships.

  If you include scanned transcripts with the online graduate application, the official, sealed transcript copy just needs to arrive by the final deadline date for scholarship consideration.

  **NOTE:** If selected as a finalist, you may be requested to submit additional information.
• **Submitting Multiple Applications**
  Instructions can be found on our [FAQ page (Can I apply to more than one program?)](#) located in the second tab—“Application”, question 03.

**Step 2**

• **Submit official transcripts**
  Full instructions on how to submit both hard copy and electronic official transcripts can be found on the USC Graduate Admission [Transcript Requirements](#) page.

  **Application Tip 1:** Do **not** mail transcripts to the Viterbi School or individual academic departments.

  **Application Tip 2:** If you attended a non-U.S. school and are not sure what needs to be submitted, visit the USC Graduate Admission [Country Requirements](#) page.

**Step 3**

• **Submit official, valid GRE scores**
  Official GRE scores must be sent electronically by ETS to "U Southern Cal," *(ETS school code 4852).* A department code is **not** required as all GRE scores automatically go to USC’s Office of Graduate & International Admission.

  Valid GRE scores must be dated within five years of the *start of the intended application semester.* (This is August for the Fall semester and January for the Spring semester.)

  **IMPORTANT:** Only scores received electronically from the testing service are considered official. USC does not accept self-reported test scores or paper scores sent via postal mail for final admit decision purposes.

**Step 4 (International students only)**

• **Submit Official TOEFL/IELTS Test Scores**
  Official TOEFL/IELTS scores must be sent electronically to USC by the testing service (ETS or IELTS). Full information on USC’s English proficiency requirement and test score submission instructions can be found on the USC Graduate Admission [English Proficiency](#) page.

  Valid TOEFL/IELTS scores must be dated within two years of the *start of the intended application semester.* (This is August for the Fall semester and January for the Spring semester.)

  **IMPORTANT:** Only scores received electronically from the testing service are considered official. USC does not accept self-reported test scores or paper scores sent via postal mail for final admit decision purposes.
**Step 5** (International students only)

- **Submit Proof of Financial Support documentation and passport copy**
  For information on what constitutes acceptable Proof of Financial Support and find the appropriate program costs, go to the USC Graduate Admission [Financial Documentation](https://www.usc.edu/graduate-admissions/financial-aid/) page.

  **Application Tip:** To avoid unnecessary I-20/DS-2019 processing delays, we recommend submitting the financial documentation and copy of the first two pages of the passport either as part of online graduate application or at least before an admit decision is received. However, because these documents are not required for an application review, they can be submitted after an admit decision has been received.

**Post-Application**

- **Decision Notification**
  The length of time it takes for an application to be reviewed varies by department and degree program. After your application package is complete, it is sent to a graduate committee for review. Once a decision is made, an official decision letter will be sent to you. If you have questions about application status, please contact [Viterbi Graduate Admission](https://www.usc.edu/graduate-admissions/).  
  
  Note: All required application materials must be received by the respective application deadline to guarantee review for the intended semester.

- **Admitted**
  Visit our [FAQ page](https://www.usc.edu/graduate-admissions/) for answers to common questions asked by newly admitted students including those about: statement of intent, commitment deposit, and deferring admission to another semester.

**QUESTIONS?**

For questions on application requirements or additional assistance completing your application you may contact the Viterbi Graduate Admission Office at viterbi.gradadmission@usc.edu or at 213-740-7755. If you need technical support with your application, click on the Contact Us link in the lower left of the online graduate application.