



Applying and Getting Funding for a PhD at the USC Viterbi School of Engineering





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Today's Agenda

- Viterbi Doctoral Degree Program Summary
- Viterbi's 8 Different Academic Departments and Majors
- Application Deadline
- Doctoral Program Application Materials Requirement
- Doctoral Program Application Steps
- Application best practices
- PhD Funding Types
- FAQs
- Q/A



Viterbi Doctoral Program Summary

- Faculty advisor(s) and guidance committee formation
- Typical timeline to complete a PhD program is 5-6 years, but dependent on your field and specific research work
- 60 units program typically with half of those units or less for course work requirements
- Typical funding package includes stipend, tuition (36 units per year), health and fees
- Ability to work on a MS degree along the way
- Interdisciplinary work encouraged
- A dissertation involving original research completes the requirements for a PhD degree



Viterbi Academic Departments



Aerospace & Mechanical Engineering



Astronautical Engineering



Biomedical Engineering



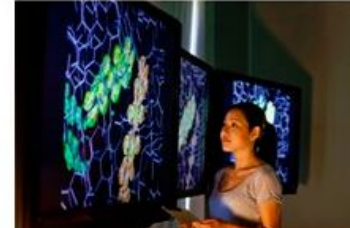
Chemical & Petroleum Engineering and Materials Science



Civil & Environmental Engineering



Computer Science



Electrical & Computer Engineering



Industrial & Systems Engineering



Viterbi Majors

Aerospace Engineering
Astronautical Engineering
Biomedical Engineering
Chemical Engineering
Civil Engineering
Computer Engineering
Computer Science

Electrical engineering
Environmental Engineering
Industrial & Systems Engineering
Materials Science
Mechanical engineering
Petroleum Engineering





Application Deadline

December 15, 2023 at 11:59PM, Pacific Time

Application link can be found here:

<https://usc.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login>



Doctoral Program Application Material Requirements

- Bachelor's degree of equivalent in engineering, math or hard science
- Official Academic Transcripts from every prior institution
- Personal Statement
- Resume/ CV
- 3 Letters of Recommendation
- Demonstrated Research Ability & Experience
- [English Proficiency scores](#) (International Applicants only)*

NOTE: The GRE is not required for 2024 applicants.

**If you earned a previous degree from the University of Southern California, you do not need to take the TOEFL or IELTS.*



Doctoral Program Application Steps

Step 1

- Start the Application for Graduate Admission (\$90 application fee)

Step 2

- TRANSCRIPTS: Upload Electronic Transcripts from all colleges and universities attended. A mailed hard copy or official e-transcript is not required for admission to our programs. These instructions apply only to applicants to the master's and Ph.D. programs of the Viterbi School of Engineering
- Submit an electronic copy of official transcripts (.pdf recommended) and other degree related documents through the online graduate application (International applicants, visit USC Graduate Admission's Country Requirements page for details on required documents)
 - Unofficial transcripts from university student portals are not acceptable
 - 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
- If you are admitted, you will be given specific instructions on submitting your hard copy transcripts

Step 3

- Submit the following materials through the online application system:
- PERSONAL STATEMENT
- LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION (3 required) from faculty members with direct knowledge of your research abilities. Recommenders included in the online application will be contacted by email. Your application may be submitted before letters of recommendation are received. The recommender module is separate.
- RESUME/CV



Doctoral Program Application: Additional Steps for International Applicants

- International Students should also submit the following:
- A Photocopy of the first two pages of your passport
- A report of your scores on the TOEFL/IELTS sent electronically by the testing agency to USC. Please review USC's English Proficiency Criteria
- Applicants that have earned a previous degree at USC are exempt from the English Proficiency Requirement and do not need to submit TOEFL/IELTS scores and watch the English Proficiency Requirement for International Students video
- Required official copies of materials from non-U.S. schools vary from country to country. Please see Admission Requirement by Country.



Application Best Practices

- Identify your reasons on why you want to apply to a PhD program
- Apply widely
- Get completed applications in early
- Get connected to faculty
- Do your research on potential faculty advisors and consider research fit and alignment
- CV and personal statement should highlight your research



PhD Funding Types

- Typically 4 years are fully funded at USC Viterbi
- Fellowships
 - Internal Graduate School Fellowships
 - Viterbi Fellowships
 - Departmental Fellowships
 - External Fellowships
- Research Assistantship
 - Deliverables tied to funding source- check in with faculty advisor(s)
- Teaching Assistantship
 - Opportunity to work with faculty members outside of your advisor and other students and mentor other students
- Other External funding
 - <https://research.usc.edu/funding/>



FAQs

1. How do I fund my doctoral program?

Your doctoral program is funded. Your tuition and health benefits are covered, and you will receive a stipend on top of it.

2. The application system ask me to select faculty members I am interested in working with. What should I do?

You are encouraged to select two or three faculty members who you may be interested in working with. You are also encouraged to reach out directly to those faculty members by email.



FAQs

3. Do you need to know the faculty members or have been in contact with them to select them as potential advisors?

This is not required. Many applicants may not have a prior relationship or have even reached out to our faculty members quite yet. We do encourage reaching out to our faculty members by email.

4. What should this email say?

You can introduce yourself and your research interests, your major, your GPA, and attach your CV (resume). Your undergraduate advisor can assist you in drafting this email. If you don't get a response, don't take it personally as faculty may be on sabbatical, have family commitments, or other reasons.



FAQs

5. How do I learn more about Viterbi Faculty Members?

Reviewing faculty websites, LinkedIn profiles, magazine articles, and other communications is a great way to learn about faculty members.

6. Do I need a M.S. degree to get into the Ph.D program?

No, only a bachelor's degree is required. Many of our doctoral students come to us directly after completing their undergraduate degree.



FAQs

7. Where can I learn more about various jobs that may be available to graduates with a Ph.D.?

Many companies hire at all levels (BS, MS and PhD). Most universities, including USC, have multiple job fairs each year. Attending them is a great way to learn more about industry needs.

8. Do I need a Ph.D. to become a professor?

Yes, this is typically the case. There are many types of faculty members ranging from tenured/tenure-track professors, research professors, teaching professors and others. Some K-12 educators also have their doctorate degrees.



FAQs

9. What are things I should look for in a graduate school ?

Research fit is extremely important. Viterbi is a very collaborative environment, and the majority of our work is interdisciplinary. Follow your research interest. We recommend talking to current students during this process. Ranking alone only tells part of the story.

10. Do I need prior research experience in order to apply?

Prior research experience is not required, but is helpful so that you know if research is the right fit for you.



FAQs

11. How can I learn whether a Ph.D. is right for me?

Getting plugged into a research group is a good way to get a feel for the doctoral experience. We encourage students to get involved in summer research programs such as our own SURE program <https://viterbischool.usc.edu/sure/>

12. Are there application fee waivers available for applicants?

Yes, information on application fee waivers can be found here <https://gradadm.usc.edu/lightboxes/us-students-fee-waivers/>.



FAQs

13. My major and background is not in engineering. Should I still apply to Viterbi?

Yes! We have had many engineering doctoral students with bachelor's degrees in the STEM fields, but not specifically in engineering. For instance, we recruit chemistry students in chemical engineering, biology students in biomedical engineering, or physics students in almost any of our disciplines.





Send additional questions to
viterbi.gradadmission@usc.edu

