Dear MSW@USC Student,

Welcome to the University of Southern California School of Social Work and the Trojan Family! We are pleased you have made the decision to attend our newest academic center, the Virtual Academic Center. We are confident you will find your educational experience to be a rewarding one. At USC you will develop your knowledge and upon graduation, you will have the skills necessary to effect positive change in communities and with individuals whose voices may not otherwise be heard.

With your first semester as a graduate student soon to begin, you should take time to better understand the various resources available to make your orientation to the program successful. This packet includes information about financial aid, materials for veterans, and a resource list of Virtual Academic Center personnel who can answer your questions.

We look forward to your first semester, and we are committed to your success! Please reach out to us if you have questions or concerns or if you simply want to share your enthusiasm about your acceptance into the MSW@USC. We're excited, too!

Sincerely,

June Wiley, PhD, MSW
Director, Virtual Academic Center
GETTING CONNECTED ON THE VIRTUAL ACADEMIC CENTER

Welcome to the MSW@USC! We encourage you to connect with the Trojan community as soon as you can. There are many places online to enhance your student experience. Whether you prefer to join any of our social networks or stay within the Virtual Academic Center, you will find options to get involved and stay informed.

Find MSW@USC students on social networks:

- **Twitter**: www.twitter.com/MSWatUSC
- **Facebook**: www.facebook.com/MSWatUSC
- **Website**: msw.usc.edu
- **Blog**: msw.usc.edu/blog
- **Google+**: bit.ly/MSWatUSCG
- **LinkedIn**: bit.ly/MSWatUSClink
- **Meetup**: www.meetup.com/msw-at-usc
- **Foursquare**: foursquare.com/mswatusc
- **Twitter**: www.twitter.com/MSWatUSC
- **Facebook**: www.facebook.com/MSWatUSC
- **Website**: msw.usc.edu
- **Blog**: msw.usc.edu/blog
- **Google+**: bit.ly/MSWatUSCG
- **LinkedIn**: bit.ly/MSWatUSClink
- **Meetup**: www.meetup.com/msw-at-usc
- **Foursquare**: foursquare.com/mswatusc

Find community and academic groups in the Community tabs in the Virtual Academic Center:

- **What’s Happening at the Virtual Academic Center**: This group is for every MSW@USC student and is full of important messages, events and updates.

- **Student Representation in the VAC**: This group connects you to the Student Org. As an MSW@USC student, you have three elected student representatives in the Student Org and four elected members of the VAC Caucus. Be sure to add the Student Org as a friend connection as well.

- **Academic groups you can join include** **VAC Tutoring, Thank You All, and Writing Support Group.**

- **Military groups include** **Brothers in Arms** and **Military Spouses.**

- **LGBT Support** and **Social Workers for Peace** are lifestyle groups.

- **You can find Virtual Academic Center events by joining** **VAC Homecoming, All School Day, and Lobby Days.**

You can also find groups specific to where you live to find classmates in your region.

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**Not sure how to start? Here are a few ideas:**

Share a photo on Facebook. Let people know what your “classroom” or workspace looks like. How do you see your local area?

On Twitter or Facebook, get a discussion started by sharing a few social issues that you hope to fight for as a social worker.

Are you currently blogging, volunteering or leading change in your community? Visit our Facebook page to let us know how you are participating in social action.

The information you share and your engagement in our social networking communities will help you connect with your MSW@USC classmates and the Trojan community.

We look forward to learning more about you. See you online!
MSW@USC NEW STUDENT CHECKLIST

In order to prepare for your web-based graduate program, please complete the following tasks:

☐ **Apply for financial aid:** Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), supplemental forms and Entrance Loan Counseling form, and sign your Master Promissory Note.

☐ **Confirm your enrollment:** Submit the Intent to Enroll in Graduate Studies form online at www.usc.edu/GradCertification. This will certify you as a USC student and allow you access to a USC computer account. You should activate your USC email account at least 48 hours after you certify your student status.

☐ **Activate your USC email address:** Once you are certified with the university, you can activate your email account at http://email.usc.edu. If you prefer more detailed instructions, please read the School of Social Work’s step-by-step guide at http://socialwork.usc.edu/it/emailinfo.

☐ **Complete field placement forms (full-time students only):** You must submit these forms within five business days of receiving them in order for the Field Development team to secure an appropriate placement agency for your field practicum.

☐ **Get your USC ID:** Submit your picture at www.usc.edu/bus-affairs/admin_serv/uscard_serv.

☐ **Purchase your books for first semester.**

☐ **Participate in Orientation:**
   1. Schedule an Orientation call with your Student Support Advisor.
   2. Complete the Orientation course on Virtual Academic Center.
   3. Attend an Orientation live session to test your equipment.

☐ **Obtain the following equipment:**
   1. Laptop or desktop computer (Mac or PC)
   2. Internet access (Google Chrome or Firefox browser)
   3. Phone line (cell or landline)
   4. Webcam (Logitech QuickCam Pro 9000)
   5. Headphones (compatible with Mac or PC, Gigaware Earclip Mono Headset with Microphone)
Submit final transcripts (applicable to students who had not completed their bachelor’s degree when they applied): All final transcripts showing your conferred bachelor’s degree must be received by the USC School of Social Work’s Virtual Academic Center. In order for you to continue in the MSW program, you must submit transcripts as soon as possible and no later than by the end of the first semester of enrollment or as deemed appropriate by the school or the Office of Degree Progress. If you are unable to provide a final transcript by this deadline, please contact Abé Perry at abe.perry@usc.edu or 877.700.4MSW.

Contact Disability Services (if applicable): If you require accommodations for meeting your educational needs due to illness, physical limitation or learning disability, please contact Disability Services and Programs (DSP) in order to receive services. Please register via the Disability Services and Programs website at www.usc.edu/disability, or contact DSP at 213.740.0776 or ability@usc.edu. In the event a letter of accommodation is provided by DSP, you are required to submit a copy of the letter to your academic advisor, each of your course instructors and Dr. Josh Watson, the director of student affairs, at jjwatson@usc.edu. To ensure your success in the program, we encourage you to contact Dr. June Wiley, director of the Virtual Academic Center at june.wiley@usc.edu so she can provide you with your Academic Advisor’s contact information.

Contact your Academic Advisor (applicable to students who are admitted with a conditional admission status): If you have been admitted conditionally based on your undergraduate GPA being less than 3.0, you are expected to achieve and maintain a 3.0 GPA (B or better) in all of your foundation courses in order to advance into the concentration year. To ensure your success in the program, we encourage you to contact your Academic Advisor. If you are unsure of your Academic Advisor’s name, please contact Dr. June Wiley, director of the Virtual Academic Center at june.wiley@usc.edu.

Please note that the University of Southern California Graduate School requires that all graduate students maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA. Though a C is a passing grade, it is not considered an acceptable grade to maintain good academic standing in a graduate program. In the event a student’s GPA falls below a 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation and is subject to a reduction in course load until able to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress.
FINANCIAL AID

Financial Aid Application Process

If you are interested in applying for financial aid and have not already done so, please complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.FAFSA.ed.gov. USC’s school code is 001328. You must also submit the Graduate Supplemental Form, which is available at My Financial Aid and Documents at www.usc.edu/financialaid.

Once you receive your financial aid offer, you should complete the Federal Direct (Stafford) Loan request statement and the Federal Direct Graduate PLUS loan application (if so desired). You will also need to complete the Entrance Loan Counseling form and sign your Master Promissory Note, which can be accessed at www.studentloans.gov.

The financial aid process should take about three to four weeks from the time you submit the FAFSA. To check on the status of your financial aid and access supplemental forms, please visit Financial Aid Online Services at https://camel2.usc.edu/ESD/IOL/login.aspx. You must have your USC ID to log in.

Loan Disbursement and Direct Deposit

Financial aid is disbursed a week prior to the beginning of fall and spring terms and the first day of the summer term, and it is applied directly to your student account.

The USC Office of Student Financial Services handles all tuition billing, collections and refunds. If you are expecting a refund of loan proceeds that exceed your tuition and fees, you can sign up for direct deposit to ensure the fastest and most convenient access to your loan disbursement.

Sign up for direct deposit at www.usc.edu/sfs/directdeposit.

The ACH/Direct Deposit service processes eligible refunds automatically year-round. Any day that there is a qualifying credit on your account, funds will automatically transfer to your bank account. This takes up to three business days for prenoted bank accounts.

Sign up once for direct deposit and your authorization will remain in effect for the duration of your attendance at USC. To terminate the service, you must send us a written request.

If you do not sign up for the ACH/Direct Deposit service, you must manually request your refunds at www.usc.edu/dept/fbs/sfs/forms/refreq.htm.

Financial Aid FAQs

I have questions about the status of my loan application. Who can I call?

The USC Office of Student Financial Services is available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m to 5 p.m. PST at 213.740.1111 or www.usc.edu/contactfao.

What is the USC school code?

001328

How long does the financial aid process take?

Three to four weeks from the time you submit the FAFSA.

How do I get my refund if my financial aid exceeds my tuition and fees?

You can sign up to receive your payment via direct deposit at www.usc.edu/sfs/directdeposit, or you can request your refunds manually at www.usc.edu/dept/fbs/sfs/forms/refreq.htm.
GI BILL BENEFITS

Information and application instructions for GI Bill benefits are available at www.usc.edu/va. On this site you can read about GI Bill benefits, review your benefit options, submit your application, and confirm your enrollment certification. If you are a retiree or the dependent of a retiree, you can locate your regional benefits office on an interactive map. If you are active duty, you can find benefits information at www.gibill.va.gov. Most military servicemembers use the Post 9/11 GI Bill and the Yellow Ribbon Award.

GI Bill

As of August 1, 2011, the Post 9/11 GI Bill tuition benefit for students enrolled in a private college or university is $17,500 per academic year (July 1–June 30).

As of October 1, 2011, a housing allowance will be payable to students (other than those on active duty) enrolled solely in distance learning. The monthly housing allowance is equal to the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents. The full-time rate for an individual eligible at the 100 percent eligibility tier is $673.50 for 2011. Students on active duty can also receive a stipend for books and supplies.

Break or interval pay is no longer payable under any VA education benefit program unless under an Executive Order of the President or due to an emergency, such as a natural disaster or strike. Entitlement that previously would have been used for break pay will be available for use during a future enrollment.

Yellow Ribbon Award

Yellow Ribbon program funds are limited and are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Under the Yellow Ribbon program, the School of Social Work will contribute up to $10,000 per academic year (two semesters), and the VA will match this figure. For questions on eligibility for the Yellow Ribbon Award or how to apply, please contact the USC Office of Veteran Affairs at 213.740.4619 or vets@usc.edu.

Financial Aid

If necessary, you can apply for federal financial aid by filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.FAFSA.ed.gov. USC’s school code is 001328.
VIRTUAL ACADEMIC CENTER
STUDENT RESOURCES

MyUSC

As a member of the Trojan Family, you can now set up your MyUSC account. MyUSC is the university’s student portal, and it is designed to provide you with personalized access to a wide range of valuable resources.

USCe.pay

Through USCe.pay, you can view tuition statements and past transactions, pay your bill, and view financial aid and scholarship funds as they are applied to your account.

OASIS

OASIS allows you access to transcripts, enrollment verification, grade reports and other academic resources.

USC Webmail

This is your USC email account. Please remember to check this account regularly as the university and Student Support team will be using this email address to contact you.

To get started, visit https://my.usc.edu/portal and log in using your USC email username and password. Please contact the ITS Customer Support Center at 213.740.5555 or consult@usc.edu if you experience any difficulty accessing your account.
## VIRTUAL ACADEMIC CENTER PERSONNEL LIST

### Virtual Academic Center

**June Wiley,** Director  
City Center, Suite 300  
213.821.0901  
june.wiley@usc.edu

**Lois Rosby,** Administrative Services Coordinator  
City Center, Suite 300  
213.821.0900  
rosby@usc.edu

### Field Education and Placement

**Marleen Wong,** Clinical Professor and Associate Dean, Field Education  
University Park  
213.740.0840  
marleenw@usc.edu

**Elizabeth Pringle-Hornsby,** Clinical Associate Professor, Field Education and Associate Director, Virtual Academic Center  
City Center, Suite 300  
213.821.0902  
pringleh@usc.edu

**J. P. Alferos,** VAC Project Specialist  
City Center, Suite 300  
213.821.0914  
alferos@usc.edu

### Registration

**Maricel Veluz,**  
VAC Student Services  
Advisor City Center, Suite 300  
213.821.0907  
mveluz@usc.edu

### Admissions and Financial Aid

**G. Christopher Richmond,**  
VAC Admissions and Financial Aid Manager  
City Center, Suite 300  
213.821.0913  
gcrichmo@usc.edu

**Brandi Alexis,**  
VAC Admissions Coordinator  
City Center, Suite 300  
213.821.0912  
alexis@usc.edu

**Lisa Gonzalez,** VAC Student Services (processes leaves of absence, monitors grade reports and changes) and Financial Aid  
City Center, Suite 300  
213.821.0908  
lmgonzal@usc.edu

### Student Org Affairs

**Joshua Watson,** Director of Student Services  
University Park Campus  
jjwatson@usc.edu

**O. Yvonette Powell,** Student Services Adviser II, VAC  
858.675.0167 (Mon., Tues., Wed. & Fri), 949.437.0000 (Thurs. & second and fourth Sat.)  
opowell@usc.edu

### Learning Management System/Technical

**Student Support**  
877.455.4679  
mswhelp@usc.edu

### Library Services

**Jade Winn,** Head, Education & Social Work Library Services  
MRF 104  
213.740.1777  
jadewinn@usc.edu  
sowkweb.usc.edu/library

**Melanee Vicedo,** Librarian  
MRF 104A  
213.740.0545  
vicedo@usc.edu
SOCIAL WORK VAC LIBRARY SERVICES

Library Access

Library accounts are automatically created for all enrolled students. Accounts for new borrowers will be activated within one business day after the creation of your USC ID, which serves as the library access and borrowing card.

Remote Access

You can log in to http://www.usc.edu/libraries to connect to the USC Libraries’ page from off campus. You may be prompted to log in to the Remote Access Portal with your USC email ID and password.

Reference

Reference librarians are available via email or 24/7 live chat. You can also speak with a subject specialist by appointment. Reference services are located in Doheny Memorial Library, and they can be reached at 213.740.4039 or at www.usc.edu/libraries/services/ask_a_librarian.

ARES Service

The University of Southern California Libraries’ Automated Reserves System (ARES) allows you to access course reserves. To log in, visit https://usc.ares.atlas-sys.com. Your username is your USC email (without the @usc.edu) and your password is your USC email password.

ILLiad Service

ILLiad is USC’s system for requesting materials owned by other libraries through the global interlibrary loan network. This system also manages our document delivery service, which delivers electronic copies of articles and other documents to faculty and distance users materials. Visit http://usc.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/logon.html.

HOMER


The USC Libraries provide a suite of distance learning services, including:

Remote access to USC Libraries’ collection of online article databases, e-journals and e-books.

Ask-a-Librarian services for research help including email, instant messaging and 24/7 chat.

Subject-based multimedia research guides available at libguides.usc.edu.

Electronic course reserves via ARES.

ILLiad document delivery, which provides email delivery of articles and book chapters.

Interlibrary loan to access items not owned by USC.

Home delivery of up to 10 volumes per semester of USC Libraries-owned books requested through ILLiad.
APA style help


Recommended research strategy for articles: USC has access to more than 1,000 databases.

• Step 1. Identify articles using Google Scholar or reference pages.

• Step 2. Access articles at USC links in Google Scholar, or use e-journal finder and search by journal title. If USC does not have full-text access, use ILLiad.

• Step 3. Use articles efficiently. Find new articles and use the references to find more on your topic. Use the “cited by” feature in Google Scholar to find newer articles.

Google Scholar: Google Scholar enables you to search specifically for scholarly literature, including peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, preprints, abstracts and technical reports. Once you set your institutional preferences to USC, links to full text access should appear.

To set preferences, click on “Scholar Preferences” and scroll to the “Library Links” section. Next, enter USC, and click “Find Library.” Select the boxes for USC and click “Save Preferences.”

Library Resources

Head, Education & Social Work Library Services:
Dr. Jade G. Winn:
jadewinn@usc.edu

Libraries4me@USC
Welcome and Distance Students Services video:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPA4THgJIsU

Social Work LibGuide:
libguides.usc.edu/socialwork (Bookmark this)

NOTE: Most library services require your USC email username and password. A few services require a pin number. Your pin number is a 14-digit number and consists of the 10-digit barcode and a 4-digit security code that is printed on the back of your USC ID card.
COMMUNITY IMMERSION AND MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING INFORMATION

When you begin the MSW@USC, you will be required to participate in a Community Immersion experience and Motivational Interviewing workshops. Please check your email for detailed information about scheduling and preparation for these activities.

COMMUNITY IMMERSION: first week of class

The Community Immersion experience is a mandatory assignment for your SOWK 534 course. The experience has four sessions: two sessions of live online workshops and two sessions of self-guided community visits. You will learn to view communities from a professional social work perspective, which includes aspects such as diversity, social networks, social capital, homelessness and the vulnerability of community residents.

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING: fourth through sixth week of class (subject to change)

You are required to attend three Motivational Interviewing (MI) workshops to equip you for your field placement. Upon completion of the sessions, you will receive eight hours toward your first semester field placement and a certificate of completion.

MI is a form of collaborative conversation for strengthening your own motivation and commitment to change. It is a person-centered counseling style for addressing the common problem of ambivalence about change by paying particular attention to the language of change. MI has been established as an evidence-based practice model and USC School of Social Work has incorporated this model in our curriculum.