

Dual Enrollment FAQ

GENERAL QUESTIONS

What is dual enrollment?

Dual enrollment (DE) is an acceleration program that allows high school juniors and seniors to pursue an advanced curriculum and simultaneously earn credit toward HS graduation requirements. Our goal is to help students enhance their HS experience while experiencing the challenges of a collegiate classroom setting. Typically, USCA welcomes approximately 125 high-achieving local public, private and home-school students as dual enrollees each fall and spring semester to get a head start on college.

How does dual enrollment differ from AP courses?

Advanced Placement (AP) students prepare for college by experiencing college-level coursework taught by high school faculty. Students may receive college credit for the course if they meet qualifying score requirements on the AP exam. Dual-enrolled high school students are taught by university professors and earn college credits the same way a college student would, by taking and passing a college course with a "C" or better.

How long are dual enrollment courses?

USC Aiken's semesters are approximately 15 weeks long. The fall semester runs from late August to early December. The spring semester runs from mid-January to early May.

<https://www.usca.edu/registrar/calendars/academic-calendars>

Will USC Aiken's holidays and days out of class match up with my high school's calendar?

No they will not. Students should be aware that there is no collaboration between the university and high school calendars. There will be days when you are out of class at the university but required to be at your high school – and vice versa. This is particularly true given Aiken County Public School District's modified academic calendar which began in 2023-24. ACPSD classes typically begin several weeks before USC Aiken's. Fall break dates will be different. Spring break will be very different – USCA's is not tied to Masters Week but rather is typically the first week of March. Be sure to consult both your high school calendar as well as USCA's and consider your options carefully.

May I take dual enrollment courses during summer?

Typically, no. Given the rigor of our courses and the shorter timeline of the summer schedule, USC Aiken **strongly** recommends taking courses only during the fall and/or spring semesters. Also, the considerable DE tuition discount is **not** available during summer terms.

May I dual enroll if I am home schooled?

Absolutely. Approximately 20% of our DE students are home schooled. USC Aiken welcomes you and encourages you to participate if you and your parent/lead instructor feel our coursework may be a good fit for your curriculum.

Are DE students successful in their courses?

Usually. The vast majority of our dual enrollees over the last 15 years have earned grades of "A" or "B" in their USCA courses. Some earn "C"s. It is rare for a student to post a grade of "D" or "F", but it's not unheard of. Students should be prepared to step up to the challenge and work hard, communicate with their faculty members, and make the most of their first college experience. Students who are willing to invest the necessary time and effort are almost always successful, and there are many support services to help you if you are struggling in a class.

Is there a new student orientation for dual enrollees?

Yes. DE orientation will be held in early August for the fall semester and in mid-December for the spring semester. Invitations and instructions typically go out to all admitted students a month or so before the events. Students **must** attend an orientation session in order to participate in fall classes. Fall 2026 dates will be Aug 4 at 6 pm, Aug 6 at 3 pm, and Aug 10 at 6 pm. If you are not available for one of the sessions, you must contact the DE coordinator to discuss other possibilities.

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

What do I need to qualify for admission to dual enrollment?

Students should

- Be in the top 25% of your class and/or have a 3.5+ GPA on the SC UGP
- Have a score of 1020+ on the SAT or PSAT and/or 21+ on ACT/Pre-ACT
- Be enrolled in a College Prep or higher curriculum in high school.

If I do not meet the requirements, can I get an exception?

USC Aiken wants to admit students who are ready to be successful in college courses immediately. Exceptions on the GPA/class rank requirements are not typically granted, but we do retain some flexibility on the standardized test scores. Exceptions may be considered on an individual basis if requested by the student or their high school counselor.

How do I apply?

Go to usca.edu/DE and follow the instructions you find there. There are several steps – and incomplete applications will not be reviewed – so be sure to read carefully, follow the steps, and submit all necessary documents. Submission of the DE Application Supplement Form to the high school counselor is a key step.

What is the application deadline?

While late applications will be processed as quickly as possible, priority deadlines are March 1 for the fall semester and October 1 for the spring. Students are strongly encouraged to apply by the priority deadline.

COSTS

How much does Dual Enrollment at USC Aiken cost?

Dual enrollees pay a greatly discounted tuition rate (approved by the USC Board of Trustees) for courses. Rates are set by the Board of Trustees each June. The current rate for 2026-27 is \$66/credit hour (as compared to \$433.25/credit hour part-time SC resident tuition rate). There are also minor fees for public safety (\$25 per semester which includes parking permit) and technology support (\$13/credit hour). Textbook rentals are \$25/credit hour under the Off the Shelf program.

Is there financial aid available?

The deeply discounted tuition rate serves as the sole financial aid for the dual enrollment program. Students and/or their families must be prepared to pay their tuition, minor fees, and textbook costs.

When are tuition/fees due?

Academic charges are due in mid-August for Fall semester and early January for Spring semester.

TEXTBOOKS

How do I get my textbooks?

All USCA students are automatically enrolled in our “Off the Shelf” book rental program. Students are billed \$23 per credit hour for the program, and textbooks are pulled and packaged for you based on your course registration. If you do not wish to participate, there is an ability to opt out by a designated date prior to the start of the fall semester.

What if I wish to purchase my textbooks?

For more information about the Off the Shelf program, visit <https://usca.bncollege.com/>. While there, you can click on “Course Materials & Textbooks” on the horizontal menu at the top of the page to search for your course(s) using the term, department, course, and section info. You can then use that information to conduct a third-party search if you wish.

Is it better to rent or purchase textbooks?

Renting college textbooks can be more affordable and convenient than purchasing texts and later trying to sell them back to the vendor for a partial amount of what you paid. Some students prefer to purchase their books. All USCA students are auto-enrolled in our Off the Shelf rental program, with an opt-out option available if you prefer. Consult our bookstore staff if you have questions.

REGISTRATION

What courses are available to take?

USC Aiken offers a wide variety of courses for dual enrollees, typically freshman/sophomore level work in general education areas such as the humanities (English, visual/performing arts, history, philosophy, etc), the social sciences (sociology, psychology), and the STEM areas (math, lab sciences, etc). Other areas such as business are available but much less common.

Please visit usca.edu/selfservice and click on the “Class Schedule” tab to search the detailed list of course options for the current term (you do not need to be able to log in to search the database). Course listings typically appear in early March for the fall semester and in early October for the spring semester.

Which courses are most popular among dual enrollees?

ENGL 101 and ENGL 102 are our most requested courses. Two notes: 1. You must have already completed four high school-level English courses before taking ENGL 101/102 (they are not “substitutes” for HS courses), and 2. ENGL 101 is offered to dual enrollees only in the fall semester and ENGL 102 is offered to dual enrollees only in the spring. Other frequently requested courses include Intro to Sociology, Applied College Algebra, Intro to Psychology, University Pre-calculus, Intro to Theatre, Elementary Statistics, US History, and World Civilization. Currently, USCA is unable to offer any computer science coursework to dual enrollees.

May I take online courses?

USC Aiken strongly discourages dual enrollment students from taking online courses but will entertain requests from students if they have a valid reason. One of the key goals of the dual enrollment program is to provide students with a glimpse at college life via face-to-face coursework led by a USCA faculty member. Dual enrollees can request a seat in one of USC Aiken’s limited number of “mixed mode” or “hybrid” courses which combine both online and face-to-face content.

How long are courses? How often do they meet?

Most DE courses are three “semester hours” of credit. This means they meet for approximately three hours per week. Most often, courses are held twice a week (75 minutes per meeting on Mondays/Wednesdays or Tuesdays/Thursdays) or three times a week (50 minutes per meeting on Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays). Laboratory sciences, foreign language and a few other courses may count for four semester hours’ worth of credit and meet for longer times each week.

How many classes/credits may I take?

You may register for up to two courses (max eight semester credit hours) each Fall and Spring term. Due to space limitations and priority which must be given to USC Aiken degree-seeking students, this limit will be strictly enforced.

Which university courses should I take?

The purpose of dual enrollment is to prioritize meeting high school requirements while simultaneously gaining college credits. Courses offered at USC Aiken will meet many of the requirements for SC high school graduation. Please discuss questions with your school counselor, principal, or headmaster.

When and where are USC Aiken courses offered?

Courses are offered before, during, and after typical high school hours – all on the USC Aiken campus. Please visit usca.edu/selfservice and click on the “Class Schedule” tab to search the detailed list of course options, sections, days of week, times of day, etc. Keep in mind that college courses usually meet two or three days per week, not five as in high school. Also, please note that some courses (particularly lab sciences and foreign languages) have an extra lab meeting day...you must attend **both** the lecture and lab meetings.

How can I prepare for registration?

Review the detailed course list and pick a course or two that interest you. Be sure to note the five-digit CRN of the section(s) of course(s) you feel would be right for you. As you determine preferences, carefully consider the amount of time it will take for you to safely drive to/from USC Aiken from your high school and any after-school activities. Do not cut it close on drive times – we want you to obey all SC traffic laws and arrive safely!

How do I inform USC Aiken of which classes I wish to take?

After you receive your acceptance letter, please go to https://uscaiken.formstack.com/forms/de_course_request to complete the simple DE Course Request Form and submit it to our Registrar’s Office so they may register you. While you are limited to a maximum of two courses per semester, there is space on the form to request up to five in rank order so our staff can get you into your top one or two preferences possible. The form should be submitted by late March for fall semester courses and late October for spring semester courses to have the best possibility of getting a seat in the courses/sections you request. If you or your parents have questions or need assistance, you may e-mail or call the Dual Enrollment coordinator.

I’m registered for classes. How do I find a copy of my schedule?

Following orientation in August, you’ll be able to access your schedule and other tools for yourself online in the Self Service Aiken (SSA) student portal. The Registrar’s Office staff will provide it to you shortly after registration in early April for the fall semester before you are instructed how to access your SSA portal account.

What if I decide I would like to change a class?

Contact the DE registration coordinator as soon as you think a change may be needed. Change requests can usually be accommodated, but earlier requests have a better chance of happening.

What is the difference between “Drop” and “Withdrawal?”

Drop allows students to remove courses from their schedule without penalty if they do so prior to the drop deadline. Withdrawals remain on the student’s college transcript. The “drop date” is typically the end of the first week of classes each semester. The “withdrawal deadline” is typically Oct. 31 for Fall semester and March 31 for Spring semester.

Can I drop or withdraw from classes on my own?

No! You must contact the DE coordinator to request changes to your schedule. (S)he will need to coordinate with your school counselor to ensure that a change to your USC Aiken schedule will not cause problems for you at the high school. Collaboration and clear communication between the dual enrollee, the high school, and the university are key to your success.

PARKING PERMITS AND STUDENT ID**Where can I get my student ID and parking pass?**

Instructions for student IDs and parking permits will be provided during the DE orientation in August (or December for students starting in the spring semester). The USCA Police Department handles both.

How much do parking permits and student IDs cost?

The student parking permit is included in the \$25 per semester public safety fee which all students pay (no extra charge). Your first student ID is free. If you need a replacement, the cost will be \$25.

HIGH SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS**May I take dual enrollment courses while also enrolled in AP or Cambridge courses at my high school?**

Certainly! Many students combine AP, Cambridge and/or DE courses during their junior and/or senior year of high school. It requires dedication, solid time management and focus, but we encourage high achievers to pursue a rigorous curriculum all the way to high school graduation.

Are dual enrollment courses weighted on my high school transcript?

Yes. DE courses carry the same weighting as AP courses in the South Carolina UGP GPA system. For more information about the impact on your high school transcript, please consult with your school counselor.

Do all USC Aiken courses count for dual credit on my high school transcript?

While a large majority of the courses listed on our DE course list will be recorded on your high school transcript, there are some that may not be. Please consult with your school counselor, principal, or headmaster to determine how your school will handle your courses and high school transcript.

DUAL ENROLLMENT IMPACTS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**If I want to continue at USC Aiken after graduating from high school, do I need to re-apply?**

Yes, you will need to apply for freshman admission for your intended term. We'd love to keep you here at USC Aiken!

May I take dual enrollment courses after my high school graduation date?

No. Your eligibility to participate in the dual enrollment program ends after the final semester of your HS senior year.

Will credits earned in the Dual Enrollment program transfer to other colleges and universities?

Dual enrollment credits may be used toward a USCA degree. Because most courses taken by dual enrollees are freshman-level "general education" courses, the vast majority will also be transferrable to any college or university. If a student plans to attend an institution other than USCA, it is the student's responsibility to contact the institution of interest to ask about their dual enrollment course transfer policies. Such information can typically be found on an institution's transfer admissions webpages. The SC Commission on Higher Education also provides transfer articulation information at sctrac.org. USCA staff cannot give advice on behalf of other colleges/universities.

How will another college know of my work at USCA?

If you are choosing to enroll somewhere other than USC Aiken, then it is your responsibility to request (and pay) for an official USC transcript be sent to the college you've decided to attend. Do this after all of your USCA coursework has been completed.

How do I order a transcript to be sent to other colleges/universities to which I am applying?

Log in to your SSA account, and under the "Student" tab look for the "Request Your Official Transcript" link. Find more information at <https://www.usca.edu/departments/registrar/transcript-request/>.

Will my collegiate athletic eligibility be impacted?

No, participation in dual enrollment courses does not impact future collegiate athletic eligibility.

Can dual enrollment limit my access to future financial aid? Should I have any concerns?

Dual enrollment courses are college courses will become part of your official college transcript and be part of your permanent collegiate grade point average, no matter the college you choose to attend. Therefore, they should be taken very seriously, and if things are not going as planned or if you have concerns about possibly earning a final grade below an "A", "B", or "C", it is important to contact the DE coordinator as soon as possible for a conversation regarding the drop and withdrawal dates.

For South Carolinians planning to use the LIFE Scholarship as part of their college funding, **the semester hours and GPA earned in dual enrollment will count towards the LIFE renewal requirements at the end of your sophomore year of college.** For most students, this is a positive result of dual enrollment, but if you post low grades then you will have a GPA hole to dig yourself out of during your freshman year.

If you have specific concerns about financial aid, please contact the USC Aiken Financial Aid Office at stuaid@usca.edu or the Dual Enrollment coordinator.

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