

10.5 Admissions policies and practices

The institution publishes admissions policies consistent with its mission. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the practices, policies, and accreditation status of the institution. The institution also ensures that independent contractors or agents used for recruiting purposes and for admission activities are governed by the same principles and policies as institutional employees.

Compliance Judgment: In Compliance

Rationale

Admissions policies are published. The University of South Carolina Aiken's Admissions Office facilitates the recruitment and admissions process of prospective students. Admission policies are published in the [USC Aiken Academic Bulletin](#) ^[1] and on the [Admissions Office website](#) ^[2] for [incoming freshman students](#) ^[3], [transfer students](#) ^[4], [international students](#) ^[5], [online students](#) ^[6], [veteran and military students](#) ^[7], [graduate students](#) ^[8], [dual-enrolled high school students](#) ^[9], and [students who are admitted provisionally](#).^[10]

Policies are consistent with the mission. Admissions policies and practices are consistent with the [mission](#) ^[11] of USC Aiken in six respects, each of which is delineated below.

- **Admission of students who have the potential to succeed.** The [mission](#) ^[11] of USC Aiken states that the "university encourages excellence...in students...by challenging them." Consistent with its mission to "prepare students for success," USC Aiken admits students who have demonstrated the potential to succeed in a challenging academic environment.

Freshman students. Freshman students must meet minimum standards of standardized test scores, class rank, high school course completion, and high

school grade point average to be eligible for admission. Students are encouraged to take college preparatory or honors classes while in high school.

Provisional students. The University provides a provisional admission program for students who do not meet requirements for regular admission but who demonstrate academic potential. Provisionally admitted students must participate in and successfully complete USC Aiken's First Pace program which includes an English class, a First Year Seminar course, as well as specially tailored tutorials and academic success initiatives.

Transfer students. An applicant who has graduated from high school and who has attended another college may apply as a transfer student. If transfer applicants have attempted fewer than 24 semester hours of credit, they must meet both transfer and freshman entrance requirements. In keeping with the Mission Statement, transfer students must demonstrate the potential to succeed by submitting transcripts of all previous college-level course work and show a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA (on a 4.0 GPA scale). In addition, the student must be in good standing and eligible to return to the institution last attended. Students who attend a two-year regional campus of the University of South Carolina can complete their baccalaureate degrees at USC Aiken. USC Aiken also offers several completion programs on some of the two-year campuses and online. Students enter USC Aiken as "change-of-campus" transfer students.

Veterans, military, and non-traditional students. Non-traditional students must submit the same credentials as other students with the exception that if they are over the age of 21, they need not submit SAT or ACT results. However, students without SAT or ACT scores must submit other credentials such as military or vocational training documentation which provide evidence of reasonable academic potential.

International students. International applicants must meet the same requirements as freshman or transfer applicants and in addition submit certified English translations of all transcripts, and have TOEFL scores above 550 on the standard version or 80 on the internet-based version. Students who meet all

other requirements for admission but who score between 500-549 on the standard version, 173- 212 on the computer-based version, or 61-79 on the internet-based version may be admitted but must take English 111, English as a Second Language, in their first semester at the University.

Dual-enrolled high school students. The University of South Carolina Aiken provides concurrent admission to junior or senior level students in high school. This program provides an opportunity for students who are capable of meeting an increased challenge to earn college credit by taking courses offered by the university while they are still enrolled in high school. To be considered for this program students must score at least 1020 on the SAT or PSAT or 21 on the ACT, submit a high school transcript and rank in the top 25% of their high school class or show a 3.5 or above GPA, submit a letter of approval from their high school principal or guidance counselor, submit a letter of approval from their parent or guardian, avoid courses which are offered by the students' high school, and meet the prerequisites of any USC Aiken course in which they will be enrolled. Students admitted to this program will be enrolled in regular college courses in general subjects chosen in consultation with the student so as to complement their high school program. Students who are successful in their first course(s) may be able to continue their enrollment in this program during subsequent terms. Under exceptional circumstances a high school student wishing to leave high school prior to graduation and enroll full-time at USC Aiken may apply for early admission. The student must demonstrate both academic and social skills needed for college. The Scholastic Standing and Petitions Committee will consider applicants on the same basis as that required for concurrently admitted students.

Graduate students. Individuals who have official transcripts showing the award of the baccalaureate or higher degree by an accredited college or university may apply for admission to one of USC Aiken's four graduate degree programs: the Master of Business Administration, the Master of Education in

Educational Technology, the Master of Education in Educator Leadership, or the Master of Science in Applied Clinical Psychology.

Admission to the [Master of Business Administration](#) ^[12] requires the submission of a resume and meeting one of four possible entrance criteria: an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher and an acceptable admission index value; an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher and three or more years of professional or managerial work experience; an overall undergraduate GPA of 2.5 or higher and a GPA of 2.75 or higher in all 300 and 400 level courses taken during the last 60 hours, an acceptable admission index value, and three or more years of professional work experience; or an overall undergraduate GPA of 2.5 or higher and a GPA of 2.75 or higher in all 300 and 400 level courses taken during the last 60 hours and seven or more years of professional or managerial work experience. Acceptable admission index values are 1000 or greater when the undergraduate GPA is multiplied by 200 and combined with the GMAT score or 1050 or greater when the upper level GPA is multiplied by 200 and combined with the GMAT score.

Admission to the [Master of Education in Educational Technology program](#) ^[13] requires that the applicant have an undergraduate grade point average of at least 3.0; a score of 396 on the Miller Analogies Test or scores of 450 on both the verbal and quantitative portions of the Graduate Record Exam; a well-written letter of intent that matches the objectives of the program; positive letters of recommendation from individuals who know the professional characteristics of the applicant; and a written statement of philosophy of education.

Admission to the [Master of Educator Leadership program](#) ^[14] requires that the applicant have an undergraduate grade point average of at least 3.0; a well-written letter of intent that matches the objectives of the program; and a copy of teacher license or certification.

Admission to the [Master of Science in Applied Clinical Psychology program](#) ^[15] requires a completed application to the Graduate Office; a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with at least 15 hours in psychology; transcripts of

all undergraduate and graduate work with a 3.0 overall undergraduate grade point average preferred; three letters of recommendation, with at least two from faculty at academic institutions; a written personal statement of intent describing professional goals; and satisfactory performance on the Graduate Record Examination (153 verbal score and 144 quantitative preferred).

- ***Geographical origins of admitted students.*** The [mission](#) ^[11] of USC Aiken states that “USC Aiken attracts students from South Carolina, the United States, and the world.” The geographic origin of USC Aiken’s student body is in keeping with the mission statement and recruitment practices; in Fall 2019, 85.5% of the student body originated from the state of South Carolina, 12.2% from other states, and 2.3% from other countries. In Spring 2020, 84.7% of the student body came from the state of South Carolina, 12.6% from other states, and 2.7% from other countries.
- ***Baccalaureate and master’s level admissions.*** The [mission](#) ^[11] states that the “University of South Carolina Aiken is a comprehensive institution that offers undergraduate and graduate degrees.” In keeping with this aspect of the mission statement, USC Aiken admits undergraduate and graduate students as discussed above.
- ***Types of programs.*** The [mission](#) ^[11] of the University of South Carolina Aiken states that “the university offers “degrees in the arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and professional disciplines. All programs of study are grounded in a strong liberal arts and science curriculum.” USC Aiken also encourages interdisciplinary studies and collaborative endeavors.” In keeping with the mission statement, USC Aiken admits students in four graduate programs and 21 undergraduate programs of study [8] including a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies and a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies. All baccalaureate degrees share a common general education core [9] grounded in a liberal arts and science curriculum.

- A diverse community.** The [mission](#) ^[11] of the University of South Carolina Aiken states that the university consists of a “diverse community of individuals.” Table 10.5-1 shows some of the demographics of the student population in Fall 2017 through Fall 2019. The demographic data in the table illustrate that the university admits a highly diverse student body. Over the past three years, the University’s student population has included approximately 40% racial-ethnic minorities, 42% first-generation students, 14% veteran and military students, and 23% non-traditional (age 25 and older).

Table 10.5-1. Student Body Demographics

Demographic	Semester		
	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
Gender			
Male	1,228	1,273	1,277
Female	2,278	2,426	2,443
Race & Ethnicity			
Nonresident alien	108	105	84
Hispanic/Latino	156	177	201
American Indian or Alaska Native	10	11	10
Asian	40	34	38
Black or African American	920	923	894
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	6	6	4
White	2,070	2,209	2,253
Two or more races	135	155	171
Race and ethnicity unknown	61	79	65
Age			
<= 21	2,090	1,977	1,877
22 - 64	1,412	1,717	1,835
>= 65	5	5	8

- Educational outreach.** The [mission](#) ^[11] of the University of South Carolina Aiken states that the university enriches the region’s quality of life through distance education and educational outreach. Table 10.5-2 shows the number of non-degree seeking and distance education students for each of the past three academic years. In support of USC Aiken’s mission of serving the public, non-degree students who wish to take a course for personal enrichment or professional enhancement are generally not required to complete entrance exams or to submit transcripts or recommendations. Students admitted in this

classification may not earn more than 30 semester hours of credit and must be admitted as regular, degree-seeking students before credits may be validated and applied toward any USC degree. Applicants who have been officially denied admission as degree seeking students are not eligible to take courses as non-degree students. Students may also be admitted as transient students to undergraduate courses for one semester or two summer terms. This non-degree status is granted to students from other colleges and universities who are certified to be in good academic standing and whose study at USC Aiken has been approved by their academic dean or registrar. Students who hold a baccalaureate degree may be admitted to undergraduate credit courses upon submission of an application and transcript showing graduation with a bachelor's degree from a college or university, or a copy of their diploma. This category of unclassified non-degree seeking status is designed for those students not desiring to attend graduate school but who are instead seeking credits for teacher certification and similar purposes. Finally, [South Carolina State Code of Laws 59-111-320](#) ^[16] authorizes legal residents of South Carolina at least sixty years of age to attend classes without payment of tuition, on a space available basis, provided that such persons meet admissions and other standards deemed appropriate by the university.

Table 10.5-2. Enrollment by Distance Education Status

Semester & Class Type	Student Type		
	Undergraduate	Non-degree	Graduate
Fall 2017			
Distance education classes only	189	7	108
Some distance education classes	763	4	0
No distance education classes	2,077	314	44
Fall 2018			
Distance education classes only	282	15	326
Some distance education classes	730	0	1
No distance education classes	2,007	310	28
Fall 2019			
Distance education classes only	336	9	443
Some distance education classes	786	1	0
No distance education classes	1,838	282	25

Accuracy of Recruitment Material and Presentations. Recruitment materials for prospective students accurately represent the official policies and practices of the University of South Carolina Aiken. Recruitment materials are developed through the joint efforts of personnel in University Advancement and the Office of Admissions to ensure both accuracy of publications and adherence to established marketing themes and messages. To further ensure accurate recruitment materials, marketing staff solicit updated information on a regular basis from appropriate administrative offices such as Financial Aid, Housing, and Admissions, and academic departments.

Published materials are reviewed annually. A representative sample of recruitment documents includes the [University of South Carolina Aiken View Book](#) ^[17] and the [road piece pennant](#).^[18] Information available online is reviewed frequently and changes are made on an "as-needed" basis. The University of South Carolina Aiken webmaster is assigned to the University Advancement Division and works closely with individuals in administrative offices and academic departments to ensure the accuracy of key content on the institution's web pages. Recruitment presentations to prospective students are made by well-qualified and trained admissions officers, staff members, and volunteers. Upon hiring, admissions staff members are trained on application processes, admission requirements, and scholarship details. Among other things, they learn how to communicate information to applicants and how scholarship decisions are made. Any time changes to admissions standards and procedures are made, that information is communicated to those involved in student recruitment by the Director of Admissions.

The University of South Carolina Aiken also recruits students through its participation in the [Student Achievement Measure Initiative](#) ^[19] and almost a dozen external publishers' surveys, such as [Peterson's](#) ^[20], the [College Board](#) ^[21], and [U.S. News and World Report](#).^[22] To ensure accurate and consistent information across publications, all external surveys are submitted by a single office - the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Compliance - using official data that are reported to the National Center for Educational Statistics through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Independent Contractor for Recruitment. USC Aiken contracts with Academic Partners for recruiting activities of its BSN completion and MBA programs. All recruitment activities undertaken by employees of Academic Partners are governed by the same principles and policies as recruiters who are institutional employees. The [contract with Academic Partners](#) ^[23] clearly stipulates that recruiting will occur “in compliance with the academic standards of the University and regulatory requirements” and that “marketing and promotional materials...[will be] provided by or approved by the University.”

Supporting Documentation

1. [USC Aiken Academic Bulletin: Undergraduate Admissions](#)
2. [USC Aiken Admissions Office Website](#)
3. [Admissions Website for Incoming Freshman students](#)
4. [Admissions Website: Transfer students](#)
5. [Admissions Website: International students](#)
6. [Admissions Website: Online students](#)
7. [Admissions Website: Veteran and military students](#)
8. [Admissions Website: Graduate students](#)
9. [Admissions Website: Dual-enrolled high school students](#)
10. [Admissions Website: Provisionally admitted students](#)
11. [University of South Carolina Aiken Mission statement](#)
12. [USC Aiken Academic Bulletin: Master of Business Administration Admissions](#)
13. [USC Aiken Academic Bulletin: Master of Education in Educational Technology Admissions](#)
14. [USC Aiken Academic Bulletin: Master of Educator Leadership Admissions](#)
15. [USC Aiken Academic Bulletin: Master of Science in Applied Clinical Psychology Admissions](#)
16. [South Carolina State Code of Laws 59-111-320](#)
17. [University of South Carolina Aiken View Book](#)
18. [University of South Carolina Aiken Road piece pennant](#)

19. [Student Achievement Measure Initiative website](#)
20. [Peterson's website](#)
21. [College Board website](#)
22. [U.S. News and World Report website](#)
23. [Contract with Academic Partners](#)