

FAQ for prospective students

Which program should I apply to?

You may apply to either the psychology (brain and cognitive science area) or neuroscience programs at USC. I'll accept students from both programs, although there are some differences between the two, especially in the first year. In short, admission to the neuroscience program is to the program as a whole, not specific labs. Students spend the first year doing coursework and rotations in three different labs. They will select their lab by the end of the first year. In psychology, however, students begin working in the lab that accepted them right away. In general, I have more control over psychology admissions.

What kind of background should I have to work in your lab?

The focus of the lab is computational and cognitive neuroscience. Therefore, our graduate students are expected to have relatively strong quantitative and programming skills. This does not mean that you must have a degree in engineering, math, or computer science. There are psychology and neuroscience students with strong quantitative skills. You can assess yourself if you are a good fit by looking at our recent papers.

I come from a less privileged background. Do you consider that when evaluating my application?

Absolutely. We are committed to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion for students of all races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations, among others. We are also committed to equity principles for prospective students with lower socioeconomic status. Please let me know if you believe that you are coming from an undeserved background.

Can you tell me what are my chances to be accepted?

It is difficult to make an assessment without reviewing all applications, but I understand that the application fee may be a burden for some applicants. Therefore, if you are considering applying, you can send me an email with all application materials no later than two weeks before the deadline, and I will let you know if your application is NOT competitive enough for joining my lab.

How can I show that I am really interested in your research?

I strongly encourage prospective students to read the two papers mentioned [here](#) and give me their thoughts in 1-2 paragraphs on one of them. This could include expanding the theory, proposing an experiment to test the model, or posing a question that you believe is relevant and can be addressed by the model. Please have them sent to me no later than two weeks before the deadline.