FAQs for the First Year Student

Do I have to go to class?
… yes, classroom attendance is very important. The university honors a “10% Rule”. This rule states that no more than 10% of the total class sessions in the semester can be missed (usually this is 3 classes). These absences include both excused and unexcused absences. The instructor of each class may choose to exact a grade penalty for absences so be sure to check the syllabus for the instructor’s individual policy. If you have medical or personal problems that affect your school work, talk to your professors & advisor as soon as possible.

Are you going to tell my parents my grades if they call and ask?
… no, due to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), education institutions are not allowed to release student information to third parties. This includes your parents.

Do I have to take a foreign language class?
… it depends on your foreign language placement test score. If your score was a 2 or higher you are not required to take a foreign language class. If your score was a 1, you must take two semesters of a foreign language of your choice (FL 109 & 110). You can, however, continue with a language if you wish to become more proficient.

What is this Carolina Core thing I keep hearing about?
… it is the new competency-based general education program at the university. It is designed to ensure that all USC students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, an appreciation of other perspectives and the ability to communicate effectively.

Which U101 section do I need to take?
… by default, students in the ASPH take either an EXSC- or PH-specific section. However, if you are a Premed or Capstone student you will need to enroll in a section specific to that.

Do my AP &/or IB credits count?
… high scores on these tests may result in college credit at USC. Students taking AP exams must earn a score of "3" or above in order to receive credit, while students enrolled in higher-level IB courses must score a minimum of "4" on IB examinations. Information regarding specific AP & IB exam areas can be found at http://sc.edu/admissions/apply/first_year_students/apandibcredit.html.

Can I take summer school classes at home?
… most major core courses cannot be taken elsewhere. If you are considering taking a class elsewhere, you must meet with an advisor first. Also, note that your last 30 credit hours must be completed at the USC Columbia campus.

My financial aid check hasn’t shown up. Who do I call?
… when concerning any financial aid question the best place to call is the Financial Aid office. They can be contacted by phone at (803)777-8134 or by email at USCFAID@sc.edu.

I have a question about a class, who is my advisor?
… if you are a PH student, you may see Christine Raper or Drs. Kara Montgomery, Charlotte Galloway, or Sara Corwin for advisement. If you are a Freshman EXSC student, your advisor is Joyce Gossard. EXSC students who have completed their first year will then see their track specific advisor.

I haven’t heard anything about advisement. Where do I get that information?
… all advisement information is sent to your student email through the listserv so check your student email frequently! If you don’t sign up for an advising appointment you will not be advised until “make-up advisement” which is at the end of the advisement period when classes may be full.

I want to study abroad. Can I do that with this major?
… yes, students who are able to do the study abroad program are encouraged to do so. However, due to the sequencing of the science classes required by the BS degrees, early planning with your advisor will ensure the best chance of success.