

YEAR 1 OVERVIEW

Review the [Handbook](#) for detailed information and regulations.

YEAR 1	Fall (1st semester)	Spring (2nd semester)	Summer (3rd semester)
Milestones	Lab rotations, contracts, and summary forms	Lab rotations, contracts, and summary forms Confirm Mentor Match	Begin Research Project IDP for Year 2
Courses	NSCI 524 (4 units) NSCI 539 (1 unit) NSCI 790 (7 units)	NSCI 525 (4 units) NSCI 539 (1 unit) NSCI 790 (7 units)	NSCI 790 (3 units) INTD 500 (1 unit) Course Requirement (4 units)

YOUR ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED AT:

Coding Bootcamp - August 18-22, 2025

Annual Retreat - Date TBD

Annual NGP Symposium - March 3-4, 2026

COURSE REGISTRATION

Access Web Registration through myUSC. Detailed [registration instructions](#) are available on the Office of Academic Records and Registrar website.

We will automatically grant you D-Clearance for Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 NSCI courses. You will need to request d-clearance for all future semesters.

Be sure to waive Tuition Refund Insurance. Otherwise, you will be responsible for covering the cost of the insurance.

NSCI 524/525: Advanced Neurosciences

An advanced overview of brain research, from molecular biology to cognitive neuroscience. The courses are purposefully broad, intending to provide students from different disciplines the basic language to approach all of brain research.

Please note...

All students will take the same required courses in the fall semester. See the Handbook for information about summer courses and additional course requirements.

NSCI 539: Neuroscience Communication

Each student organizes and give presentations to peers, receive constructive feedback to improve presentation skills, and to provide constructive feedback to their NGP student peers. Skills in science communication to non-scientists also are developed.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Students must maintain a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. A minimum grade of "C" (2.0) is required for courses to count for graduate credit. Students must earn a minimum cumulative 3.0 in NSCI 524 and NSCI 525.

LABORATORY ROTATIONS

Students will rotate through three labs during the fall and spring semesters. Students should schedule meetings with several faculty to discuss research projects, funding, and lab availability. You should discuss lab schedules and expectations, including holidays, preplanned personal conflicts, and how to navigate unexpected health or personal issues that may arise.

If the answer to any of the following questions is no, you cannot rotate with that lab:

1. Is the faculty member accepting rotation students?
2. Does the faculty member have funding to support a student from year 2 forward?
3. Do the lab research projects align with personal research interests and goals?

Rotation #	Dates	Contract Due	Summary Due
1	Sept. 8 – Nov. 7	Sept. 2	Nov. 14
2	Nov. 17 – Feb. 6	Nov. 10	Feb. 13
3	Feb. 16 – Apr. 17	Feb. 9	Apr. 24
4	May 4 – July 2	May 1	July 10

You will submit a **rotation contract** before the start of each rotation and a **rotation summary** at the end of each rotation. You will also discuss your rotation performance with the laboratory PI and if the laboratory is a good fit for your dissertation research.

Final lab selection and mentor confirmation will occur in May. You may only do a fourth rotation if you haven't been able to identify a mentor.

ADVISEMENT

NGP Leadership: At the beginning of each semester, you will meet with Ruth Wood (NGP Director) and John Monterosso (Associate Director) for advice on rotations and course enrollment. They're always available to consult on grades, course selection, rotation selection, program milestones and expectations, as well as any challenges or problems that may arise.

NGP Admin: NGP Admin is here to advise you throughout your time in NGP.

- Dawn Burke (Director of Student Services) oversees progress to degree, student exceptions, student funding, and large-scale program operation.
- Charly Viola (Graduate Program Manager) advises students on meeting yearly milestones, fulfilling program requirements, and completing course electives.

PROGRAM FORMS

Access all program forms on the NGP website under [Current Students > NGP Forms](#).

ONBOARDING CHECKLIST

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DEADLINES:

Aug. 22	Deadline to register for Fall classes without a fee
Aug. 25	Deadline to complete Prevention Education Modules (PEMs)
Aug. 29	Deadline to submit Lab Safety Training certificate
Sept. 2	Rotation 1 contract due
Sept. 8	Rotation 1 begins

☐ IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Immunization requirements must be satisfied **prior to registering for classes**. Review additional requirements and information from [USC Student Health](#) under the “Start Here” tab.

☐ REGISTER FOR CLASSES

Access [Web Registration](#) and enter the following information:

Student ID: 10-digit ID# - *Contact NGP admin if you haven't received your ID#.*

PIN: 6-digit Birth date (mm/dd/yy)

Remember to waive Tuition Refund Insurance!

☐ REQUEST USC STUDENT ID CARD (USCard)

All requests must be submitted online through [USCard Services](#). Complete your application, submit your photo, and select “Graduate School”, “Provost”, or “Other” when asked about your school.

****International students must complete Immigration Status Verification with the Office of International Services (OIS) before obtaining their USCard - see below.**

☐ UPDATE OASIS INFORMATION

Your information must be current at all times to ensure that you receive important documents, such as the health benefits card and paychecks. Log in to [OASIS](#) to update the following information:

- Current address (Your first check will be mailed to this address)
- Local phone number
- USC email information
- Verify enrollment history and access your STARS report

☐ COMPLETE LAB SAFETY TRAINING

All students must complete the [General Lab Safety Training](#) before the first rotation begins. Log in to [USC Trojan Learn](#) using your USC NetID, search for “General Lab Safety Training Online” using the search box, and launch the training. You may need to complete additional onboarding or safety trainings depending on your lab site, or if you plan to work in a lab with animals, biohazard reagents, or radioactive materials. Talk to the lab PI about any other required trainings.

☐ USC COMPUTER ACCOUNT ACTIVATION

If you haven't already, [activate your USC NetID](#).

ONBOARDING CHECKLIST

☐ COMPLETE PREVENTION EDUCATION MODULES (PEMS)

Check my.usc.edu to see if any of your assigned modules are incomplete. The modules are accessed through [Trojan Learn](#), and you can view completed modules in the “My Transcript” area.

☐ DEGREE VERIFICATION

Required by the end of your first year, if USC has not received final transcripts (undergraduate or graduate) from the last institution attended. Submit an official copy of your final transcript(s) to the [Office of Academic Records and Registrar](#).

☐ CONDITIONAL ADMISSION

If you received a letter from the Graduate School indicating that you have “conditions on your admission,” these must be cleared by the end of the first semester.

☐ SET UP PAYROLL

All students need to [sign up for direct deposit](#) via Workday to receive stipend payments. You should receive your first stipend payment in early August if you’re registered for classes by August 8.

You should also set up direct deposit for ad-hoc payments in order to receive any refunds or reimbursements. Log in to your [USC e-pay account](#) and sign up for Stipends/Ad Hoc Payments for Domestic Students (found under My Account).

☐ PARKING PERMITS AND TRANSPORTATION

If you plan on driving to campus, we recommend [purchasing a parking permit](#) for the campus where you anticipate spending the most time between rotations and classes.

- UPC and HSC parking permits generally provide some flexibility for parking on the other campus – review [parking resources](#) like “Where Can I Park?” and their Top 10 FAQs. USC also offers [Bus Routes](#) between UPC, HSC, and the Marina Del Rey locations.
- Parking permits are expensive, so you may also want to look into [public transportation](#) options, including the free [Student U-Pass Program](#) and a map of USC-specific Metro connections.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

☐ INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENGLISH (ISE) EXAM

Students who do not meet USC’s English language proficiency requirement will be required to take the ISE Exam. If you are required to take the ISE Exam, it may be stated in your USC admission letter, and/or you will have an ALI hold on your registration portal. [Register for the ISE Exam](#) on the American Language Institute (ALI) website.

☐ IMMIGRATION STATUS VERIFICATION (ISV)

Upon entry to the United States, all international students must immediately complete ISV so the Office of International Services (OIS) can properly activate their SEVIS record. Review the [ISV website](#) for steps and detailed information.