After accepting the UC Santa Cruz offer of admission, all undergraduate students become affiliated with one of our 10 colleges. During the admissions acceptance process you will have an opportunity to indicate your college preferences. The colleges differ in academic focus, environment, location, architecture, and programs offered. However, all 10 colleges are dynamic, engaging learning communities that offer opportunities for students to help build and shape their experiences.

“Students can feel lost at a large university. The colleges at UCSC give students a sense of community.”

Tyler K., Film and Digital Media major
Each college’s core course is a unique class that emphasizes the theme of the college and helps students develop critical thinking and writing skills.

Common to All Colleges
- A small community within the larger university
- Required core course for freshmen
- Integration of student, academic, and residential life
- Commitment to diversity
- Student activities and events

Things to Consider
- College theme
- Focus of core course for freshmen
- Housing and theme options
- Special activities or programs
- Geographic location on campus

Each residential community offers a variety of theme housing options. Based on academic pursuits, hobbies, individual backgrounds, and lifestyle preferences, these options complement a student’s experience in residence. If you want to live in a specific residential theme, be sure to consider this when indicating your college preferences.

Housing and theme options

Requesting College Affiliation

Students accepting the offer of admission to UC Santa Cruz are asked to indicate five UCSC college preferences during the online acceptance process at my.ucsc.edu. You may also choose to indicate “no preference,” as many students do, meaning you will be fine with any of our 10 colleges.

Review the information in this guide and on the UCSC website to learn about each of our colleges, including themes, programs, and college courses.

After the acceptance deadline (May 1 for freshmen; June 1 for transfers), the Office of Admissions will affiliate you with a college. The college assignment takes into account available space at each college and the preferences you have indicated.

Next, the Campus Housing Office will send you information about the housing options available to you and instructions for completing the online housing application. The housing application periods open in mid-May for new freshmen and mid-June for new transfers entering in the fall; students admitted for the winter quarter apply for housing in late November.

Students interested in finding their own accommodations in the off-campus community are encouraged to use the UCSC Community Rentals Office. Community Rentals maintains online rental listings to assist students in locating rental housing and serves as an information and advising resource.

For more information about the colleges visit housing.ucsc.edu/colleges