

**FAQ for High School Students not Admitted to Engineering Majors at  
Jacobs School of Engineering, UC San Diego  
(Updated July 31, 2019)**

**1. I hear all Engineering majors at UC San Diego are "capped," what does that mean?**

A: This means that the number of spots for incoming first year students is limited, because the demand for Engineering majors is greater than the capacity. Not all students who are admitted as undergraduates are offered a spot in an Engineering major. The academic performance required for admission into Engineering majors is above the UC San Diego minimums.

**2. I applied to Engineering and I was admitted Undeclared. What does this mean?**

A: This means you were accepted to UC San Diego but you were not selected for your first- or second-choice Engineering majors. Instead, you have been offered admission as Undeclared. Once you have enrolled in courses at the end of August, you can change to a non-capped major. Later, you can apply for consideration to be admitted to an Engineering major through the Engineering Major Change process.

**3. I was not admitted to the Jacobs School of Engineering, but I was admitted to UC San Diego as Undeclared. Is there a way of getting into Engineering later on?**

A: Yes, but the process is highly competitive, and you cannot count on getting in. Each department in the Jacobs School of Engineering has a process for admitting UC San Diego continuing students. Please check the websites at the bottom of this document and look at the process for the specific major(s) you are interested in. Each department has unique courses and eligibility criteria for applying to their majors, and each department has different quarters when students may apply to their majors. It is very important that you learn about the courses, criteria, and application deadlines for the majors that interest you, plan what courses you will take in your first year, and perform well in those courses. Submit an application once you have met the criteria courses and/or other eligibility criteria. The departments will accept students based on their performance (GPA) in the listed courses. Please refer to the [My Jacobs School of Engineering Major Change Application](#) website for further information on the application process. It is also important to research other major options at UC San Diego to be sure there is a major you are interested in studying in case you are not eventually admitted to an Engineering major.

**4. Right now during the admissions season, if the capped majors do not reach their caps, is there a way to get in through a waitlist?**

A: No, the departments do not keep waitlists. If a department does not reach its desired number of students, then it will just take more students through the continuing student admissions process.

**5. What are my odds of getting into Engineering through the major change process described above?**

A: Historically, about 60% overall of students who have applied through the Engineering Major Change process have been accepted into a major in the Jacobs School of Engineering. But these numbers differ substantially from one major to another, and even within one major, they fluctuate substantially from one year to another. The percentage has ranged from about 20% to about 95% depending on major and year. The process is highly competitive, and you cannot count on getting in.

**6. What GPA do I need to get in?**

A: There is no GPA cutoff that is established in advance. Rather, the GPA that is needed will depend on the number of students who apply to a given major in a given quarter, and the target number of students that the department is able to add at that time. If the department has space available for 10 students and only 12 apply, then the GPA cutoff might turn out to be 3.0, whereas if the department has space for 10 students and 40 apply, then the GPA might turn out to be 3.9. So it is not the GPA that is determined in advance of the application process. Instead, it's based on the number of spots available and the GPAs of the applicant pool. Historically, the minimum GPA has ranged from about 3.0 to about 3.9, depending on major and year.

**7. Can I apply through the Engineering Major Change process to more than one Engineering major?**

A: Effective Fall 2017, you can only apply to one engineering major from among those accepting applications for a given quarter. However, if a non-engineering major is currently open for applications, you may submit a separate application directly to that department. Please check with the specific department for more information.

**8. Who reviews these applications?**

A: Each department reviews all applications from students who wish to transfer to their Engineering majors on a student-by-student basis.

## **9. What should I do to prepare for switching into the major?**

A: Learn about the courses, criteria, and application deadlines for the majors that interest you and do the best you can in all your courses.

- If you are Undeclared, you should take courses that fulfill College requirements and/or requirements for your "back up" major. If you have room in your course schedule, complete courses required for the Engineering major that you wish to apply to.
- If you are in a major (not Undeclared), take coursework to make progress in that major. You should also take courses that fulfill College requirements. If you have room in your course schedule, complete courses required for the Engineering major that you wish to apply to.

If you are not accepted into an Engineering major, you will still have made progress towards your degree. Your College advisor is the best person to help you with this type of course planning.

## **10. Can I still apply to Engineering through the Engineering Major Change process, if I already declared a non-Engineering major, or if I stay Undeclared during my first year?**

A: Yes, you can apply if you have a declared major or if you are Undeclared.

## **11. If I apply and don't get in to Engineering through the Engineering Major Change process, can I try again?**

A: Since each department in the Jacobs School of Engineering has a process for admitting UC San Diego continuing students, you will need to check individual departmental websites to verify how many times you can apply to change your major to Engineering. However, it is also important to make progress towards graduation in a major in which you can be admitted. If by the middle/end of your sophomore year you have not been admitted to an Engineering major, you should pick another major at UC San Diego.

## **12. If I don't get in to Engineering through the Engineering Major Change process, what should I major in at that point?**

A: We recommend that you work with your College academic advisor regarding the selection/choice of a suitable academic major and exploring your options. You must declare a major by the time you reach 90 units of credit.

**13. What criteria were used to determine which incoming students get admitted into Engineering majors? Was it just GPA? Or?**

A: Incoming freshmen to Engineering are evaluated, as with all UC eligible applicants, on a combination of factors, including:

- Uncapped grade-point average (maximum of eight semesters of approved honors, AP/IB HL, or UC-transferable college-level courses)
- Scores of all required examinations
- Number of “a-g” courses beyond the minimum specified for UC eligibility
- Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC)
- Educational environment
- Low family income
- First-generation college attendance
- Demonstrated leadership
- Special talents, achievements, and awards
- Volunteer/community service
- Sustained participation in pre-collegiate/academic development and enrichment programs
- Special circumstances and/or personal challenges

**14. If I am an Undeclared or non-Engineering major, how soon can I apply to transfer into an Engineering major?**

A: Students need to complete the screening courses before applying. Some departments allow applications only once per year, and others do it more often, as often as once per quarter. Check the departmental web sites. It is a good idea to apply as soon as the departmental deadlines and screening course completion allow you to apply. You may apply during the quarter in which you are completing the eligibility course requirements, however your application will not be considered until grades are posted on TritonLink.

**15. How can I get more information about the Engineering Major Change process?**

First read the information on the departmental web site.

- For BE, go to: <http://be.ucsd.edu/undergrad-majors>
- For CSE, go to: <http://cse.ucsd.edu/undergraduate/admissions/capped-major-status>
- For ECE, go to: <http://ece.ucsd.edu/undergraduate/capped-major-status>
- For MAE, go to: <http://mae.ucsd.edu/undergrad/ugadmissions>

- Additional FAQ for MAE specifically:  
<http://mae.ucsd.edu/sites/maeweb.ucsd.edu/files/MAE%20Capped%20FAQ.pdf>
- For NE, go to: <http://ne.ucsd.edu/undergrad-programs/admissions>
- For SE, go to: <http://se.ucsd.edu/academics/undergraduate-program/undergraduate-admission>

If you have additional questions, contact the department academic advising office directly.