History
More than twenty-five years ago, the University of California, Irvine made a commitment to design and deliver a unique residential and commuter program for gifted students. The campus community especially recognized that the middle and high school years (grades 5-10) are pivotal in making students aware of the pathways for admission to highly competitive universities such as UCI.

Previously housed in University Extension as the ‘Pre-College Program’, the Gifted Students Academy, GSA, achieved notoriety and grew substantially. Since 1994, GSA has been housed in the UCI Center for Educational Partnerships, which is the coordination point for academic outreach at UCI. GSA’s evolution and growth has enabled it to maintain its focus on serving the needs of high ability students.

The program is designed to immerse high ability middle school students in a near as possible replication of university academic and residential living. In 1989, 120 students attended. Today, more than 800 students participate in the program in a given summer.

Specialized programming for gifted students in grades 1-3 is also offered.

Mission
The mission of the Gifted Students Academy is to provide gifted students grades 1-10, with an opportunity to experience a university setting by engaging them in a program specifically designed to meet the unique academic needs of the gifted.

Goals and Objectives
The Gifted Students Academy Aims to:

- Provide a well-balanced educational program that promotes self-discipline, motivation, and excellence in learning.
- Support gifted students in an atmosphere that promotes intellectual challenge, creativity, and reflective thinking.
- Foster the opportunity to learn, study, and live with other students of similar abilities on the University of California, Irvine campus in a safe and supportive environment.
- Inspire interpersonal and communication skills, and social development.
- Expose students to career paths and related courses of study.

What Students Say
“Thank you so much for giving me this wonderful experience, which helped confirm my decision of one day becoming a research scientist.”

“This program was a wonderful experience that helped me gain more knowledge in new subjects and gave me a chance to further expand my horizons. I learned to see things in a different way. One of the things I enjoyed most was the interaction with other students.”

“This experience has helped me expand my knowledge in my favorite subject, English. It has also helped boost my self-esteem and will allow me to have a better education. Now that I have a better view of college-life, I know more than even that I can do anything if I just put my mind to it.”

Discover Your Future at
GSA

University of California, Irvine
Gifted Students Academy

Innovative and Stimulating Programs for Academically Gifted Youth Grades 1-10
What is GSA?
The Gifted Students Academy, GSA, is an intensive summer program for gifted students, grades 1-10. Participants select courses in each of the major subject areas of math, science, language arts, social studies and the arts, and may attend as a commuter student or reside on-campus in one of the UCI residence halls. Courses are offered in one-week modules and span several weeks. GSA offers a strong foundation of disciplinary studies while providing students a sampling of campus life.

The Curriculum
The differentiated curriculum design is intellectually challenging. Instructors adapt pedagogy and content to student's special abilities. Many of the courses are interdisciplinary, covering more than one area of study. For example, the writing course combines critical thinking, argumentation and writing skills, adapting a teaching model used in UCI undergraduate courses.

GSA students collaborate on projects designed to maximize learning and gain exposure to a major research institution. For example, those who select a science course will be able to visit some of the university's world-class laboratories, such as those used by UCI Nobel Laureates Professor F. Sherwood Rowland, chemistry, and the late Professor Frederick Reines, physics and astronomy.

Who are the Instructors?
All of our credentialed instructors have advanced degrees and supplemental certification in gifted studies. These highly qualified teachers represent public and private schools as well as area colleges and universities. Many guest lecturers are UCI affiliated researchers.

GSA Leadership
Director Darlene Boyd, Ed.D. began her tenure at UCI in 1991 with the specific goal of revitalizing and enhancing the existing program serving gifted students. Dr. Boyd, a seasoned expert in the field of gifted studies and curriculum development, served as Director of the Gifted and Creative Studies Network at Widener University before arriving at UCI. Her vision in designing a self-sustaining program, her long term academic partnerships with local school districts and her expertise in teacher training for the gifted result in a unique, university-linked program. Dr. Boyd presents workshops on designing curriculum for gifted students, and has presented and published papers and articles on gifted studies.

Dr. Boyd is Past President of the American Creativity Association and serves as a board member for several educational associations. She is the 2004 recipient of the California Association for the Gifted Distinguished Service Award for the Orange County Region. Her strong educational background in administration, educational policy studies and gifted studies, her participation as a past board member of the California Association for the Gifted, and her national leadership roles contribute to the success of the Gifted Students Academy.

GSA’s Relationship with the National Association for Gifted Children:
“The data supporting the need for gifted and talented youth to work alongside peers of similar abilities and who have similar interests and motivation is unequivocal. High quality summer programs for these youth, such as that traditionally offered by the University of California Irvine, have a track record of heightening opportunities these young people have during the school year. As school budgets tighten and school-year opportunities erode, summer programs like that developed and offered by UCI become even more pivotal. GSA has a 25-year track record of successful outcomes and represents an important component in the lives of California’s gifted and talented student population.”

—F. Richard Olenchak, Ph.D., Past President, National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)

The GSA Residential Option
Residential students are housed in UCI's residential halls, which are divided into suites of four or five double rooms. Each residence hall contains a lounge, recreation and study rooms. Residential students are supervised throughout their stay on campus by Gifted Students Academy staff. UCI graduate and undergraduate students serve as Resident Advisors. They receive special training in working with gifted youth and oversee socialization activities outside the classroom. The after-class agenda includes daily physical activities and evening programs which enhance and supplement the GSA experience.

What Parents Have to Say
“...had a terrific time with the program this summer. We really appreciated the approach and enthusiasm of your instructors, and especially of the staff ratio. They experienced weeks filled with excitement and well-balanced mind and body work. We look forward to next year.”

“The law class is simply phenomenal! My daughter learned many interesting legal facts, gained good self-esteem speaking in front of her class, and enjoyed great team work collaborating with her peers, most of which were a few years older.”

“My son has had fun every summer attending GSA at UCI. He became very enthusiastic about going to college after his first summer. He has expressed the desire to be able to attend every single session. I can’t thank you enough for how this experience has influenced him. We look forward to being there next summer.”
FAQs

• Who is eligible for this program?
Students who are presently in grades 1-10 who have satisfied one of the following requirements:
  • Identified by a local educational agency as a gifted (GATE) student.
  • Demonstrated high performance achievement on any subtest in math or verbal reasoning of a recent standardized achievement test.
  • Recommended by a school professional as being capable of functioning in the gifted range of ability.

• What are the registration fees?
Fees vary for commuter and residential options. Please visit our website at www.giftedstudents.uci.edu for fees and course descriptions.

• How is the program structured?
Courses are offered in one-week modules and span over a several-week period during the summer, beginning the last week in June and ending in August.

• Is financial aid available?
A limited number of scholarships may be available for applicants who are in need of financial aid. A committee of UCI instructors, UCI financial aid officers, and UCI's designees select financial aid scholarship recipients.

• What is the typical class size?
Every effort is made to limit class size to a maximum of 20.

• Is the program limited to California residents only?
No, students from all over the world may attend.

“Thank you for developing a quality program that allows students to pick their classes from so many choices, that has a conductive student-teacher ratio, and the wonderful daily lunch experience! My son looked forward to each day. Also, thank you for the supervision during drop-off/pick-up and for the written communication regarding program logistics. We look forward to participating again next summer.”
—GSA Parent

For full course descriptions and fees, visit: www.giftedstudents.uci.edu

GSA Call (949) 824-5069 or email giftedstudents@uci.edu

GSA is one of several programs offered through the CFEP Gifted Students Network GSN. GSN also offers testing and test prep workshops throughout the year. *See website for details.*

Nondiscrimination Statement: UC provides equal access to equal opportunity in its admissions, employment, programs and services in compliance with applicable federal and state laws.
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Gifted Students Academy is a program of the UCI Center For Educational Partnerships
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