

# Preparing Your University of California Application

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Undergraduate Admissions

UC Davis



For almost 150 years, UC has expanded the horizons of what we know about ourselves and our world. Our campuses are routinely ranked among the best in the world, but our reach extends beyond campus borders.

Our students, faculty, staff and alumni exchange ideas, make advancements and unlock the secrets and mysteries of the universe every day. They engage with their local governments, serve California schools, protect the environment and push the boundaries of space.

## ***UC at a glance***

- 10 campuses
- 5 medical centers
- 3 national laboratories
- 150 academic disciplines
- 600 graduate degree programs
- 238,700 students
- 198,300 employees
- 1.7 million living alumni
- 61 Nobel laureates
- 20,000 UC extension courses
- 430,000 jobs supported
- \$46.3 billion contributed to California economy
- Secures \$7 in federal and private dollars for every \$1 in research funding provided by the state of California



## **Who is a freshman applicant?**

A freshman applicant is currently in high school or has graduated from high school but has not enrolled in a regular session at a college or university. If a student has completed college courses during high school (through summer after graduation), the student is still considered a freshman applicant

# UC Personal Insight Questions (PIQs)



## 14 Selection Criteria

- **Grade-point average (GPA)**  
Academic grade-point average in all completed "a-g" courses, including additional grade points for completed UC-certified honors courses.
- **Test scores**  
Scores on the ACT Plus Writing or SAT with Essay.
- **Courses completed/planned**  
Number of, content of and performance in academic courses beyond the minimum "a-g" requirements.
- **Honors courses**  
Number of and performance in UC-approved honors. Courses approved for UC honors include Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, UC-transferable college courses, and UC-approved honors courses (California high schools only).
- **Eligibility in the Local Context**  
Identification by UC as being ranked in the top 9 percent of your high school class at the end of your junior year (Eligible in the Local Context, or ELC).
- **Quality of senior-year program of study**  
Quality of your senior-year program as measured by the type and number of academic courses in progress or planned.

- **Educational opportunities in high schools**  
Quality of your academic performance relative to the educational opportunities available in your high school.
- **Performance in academic subject areas**  
Outstanding performance in one or more academic subject areas.
- **Achievements in special projects**  
Outstanding work in one or more special projects in any academic field of study.
- **Improvement in academic performance**  
Recent, marked improvement in academic performance as demonstrated by academic GPA and the quality of coursework completed or in progress.
- **Special talents, achievements, and awards**  
Special talents, achievements and awards in a particular field, such as visual and performing arts, communication or athletic endeavors; special skills, such as promise for contributing to the intellectual vitality of a campus.
- **Participation in educational preparation programs**  
Participation and persistence in academic enrichment programs, including but not limited to those sponsored by the University of California.
- **Academic accomplishment within life experiences**  
Demonstrated academic achievement in light of significant life issues. Life experiences include but are not limited to disability, low family income, first generation to attend college, need to work, and other special circumstances.
- **Geographic location**  
Geographic diversity as defined by the location of your secondary school and/or residence.

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**B**

Each question aligns to one or more of the 14 comprehensive review factors for freshman admission

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**a**

Freshman applicants must respond to 4 of the 8 questions

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**s**

Maximum of 350 words for each response

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**i**

Students should select questions that are most relevant to their experiences and that best reflect their individual circumstances

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**C**

All questions have equal value; there is no advantage or disadvantage to choosing certain questions over others

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**S**



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# The Questions

1. Describe an example of **your** leadership experience in which **you** have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time.
2. Every person has a **creative side**, and it can be expressed in many ways: problem solving, original and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how **you** express **your** creative side.
3. What would **you** say is **your** greatest talent or skill? How have **you** developed and demonstrated that talent over time?
4. Describe how **you** have **taken advantage** of a significant educational opportunity or worked to **overcome** an educational barrier **you** have faced.

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## The Questions

5. Describe the most **significant challenge** you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome **this** challenge. How has this challenge affected your academic achievement?
6. Think about an **academic subject that inspires you**. Describe how you have furthered this inside and/or outside of the classroom.
7. What have you done to make your school or your community a **better place**?
8. Beyond what has already been shared in your application, what do you believe **makes you stand out as a** strong candidate for admission to **the** University of California ?

Students who address one specific experience or example across all four questions may not be providing thorough context. We would encourage you to address separate experiences/examples in each response, if possible.

Use one or two concrete, specific examples in the response to show us what you are trying to convey. You should avoid descriptive, general language in favor of speaking in detail about your experiences.

You should discuss recent events, or events that may have happened in your past that continue to impact them in your daily academic or home life. You should only discuss past events as they are relevant to their current situation. Understanding who you are now and what you are doing now will help us better understand the kinds of contributions, talents, interests, and abilities that you might bring to the campus.



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# Missed Opportunities

- Acronyms
- Quotations or Dialogue
- Philosophical questions
- Creative Writing
- Titles
- Flowery Language
- Story Telling/Scene Setting
- Jokes and Sarcasm

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# Additional Comments Section

- Information not found anywhere else on the application
- Gaps or deficiencies in the application
- Additional Honors/Awards, Extracurricular Activities
- NOT space for 5th PIQ response
- Open Format