University of California
Personal Insight Questions

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Agenda

- Holistic Review
- Sections of the UC Application
- Activities and Awards
- Personal Insight Questions
- Q&A
Holistic Review

Assess Students Within Context

• Location
• AP/IB/HL offered
• Resources available
• Special Circumstances

The Full Application

• No one factor guarantees admission
• Not just quantitative measures; also qualitative
• Include *everything*
Sections of the UC Application
9 sections of UC Application

1. Start
2. Campuses & Major
   a. All campuses but Berkeley allow for alternate major
   b. new majors at Berkeley MET
3. Scholarships
4. About You
5. Academic History*
6. Activities & Awards
7. Test Scores
8. Personal Insight Questions*
9. Submit

* Has an Additional Comments box
Selecting a Major

Admit to College

College of Letters & Science
College of Environmental Design
College of Natural Resources
College of Engineering

Admit to Major

College of Chemistry
Haas School of Business

Jr/Sr standing*
Academic History

Additional Comments Logistics

- One of two additional comments boxes.
- In the ACADEMIC HISTORY section the limit is 550 characters

Additional Comments should:

- Explain bad grades, grade changes, repeating a course
- Define Magnets, Academies, Special Programs require application/audition
- Elaborate on the school resources (Ex. Removal of AP curriculum)
- Describe any structural changes (Ex. Trimester to Semester)
- Highlight grade trends (Ex. C’s to A’s over a period of time)
At the beginning of my sophomore year, I was in a serious car accident and spent an extended time in the hospital and in physical therapy. For two months, my school district provided in-home teachers for me. I was able to maintain progress in all subjects except math: I fell behind in Trigonometry and earned a "C" in my first semester, the first time ever! Over the holiday break in December, I started studying math independently through Kahn Academy's free online program. I was able to catch up, and I received an "A" at the end of the year.
Academic History

Academic – setting the context of the school, academic program.

The Engineering Academy is limited to 25 students/grade level. I was selected out of 170 applicants. We are required to complete Calculus BC by senior yr so I took 2 math classes every year. Our engineering lab work happens zero period (7-7:50 a.m.) Monday - Thursday. We are also required to sit in on seminars Wednesday after school (4-6 p.m.).
Activities & Awards
Activities and Awards

**Time Frame**
- High School
- Does not have to be School-related

**Commitment**
- Local, state, national
- Positions held
- Years, weeks, hours
- What they did as part of...
Activities & Awards

Descriptions Matter

• Write out full name then use abbreviations
• Write about your role, what you did
• Was it selective, give quantitative measures
Activities & Awards

Add an Award/Honor

What was the award/honor name?
Soaring Eagle

What was the type of award/honor?
Academic

When was it received?
Month: May  Year: 2015

Briefly describe the award/honor.
Given to one student every year for academic performance.

Add
Cancel
Activities & Awards

- Description not definition
- Students need to capture their accomplishments in each activity
- Abbreviations are allowed
- Full sentences are not required
- Best estimate of time commitment
- Consider non-traditional activities (caring for siblings, working unpaid for family business)

Add an Activity

What was the activity name?
Volleyball (HS & Club)

During which high school years were you involved?
- 9th
- 10th
- 11th
- 12th
- After 12th

How much time did you devote to the activity?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours per Week</th>
<th>Weeks per Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Briefly describe the activity.

Personal Insight
Questions
Why did you change the Personal Statement?

- Students were not utilizing PS to describe their context
- Some were copy/pasting their Common App responses
- We want to ask more guided questions that are direct
- Looking for a more direct answer.
Personal Insight Questions

Instructions

- You will have 8 questions to choose from
- You must respond to only 4
- Each response is limited to a maximum of 350 words
- Which questions you choose to answer is entirely up to you. But you should select questions that are most relevant to your experience

Note: Transfer students are required to answer a mandatory question and will be able to then pick 3 out of 7 questions
Personal Insight Questions

Essay vs Personal Insight Questions
- It’s not an essay!
- This is the student’s interview with UC
- It’s never read alone

Misconceptions
- Responses are not “graded”
- Grammar/spelling mistakes will not hurt a student’s admission
- Hardships do not guarantee admission
- “I” and “my” statements are encouraged
- One response is read by all UC campuses the student applies to
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.

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. Describe your favorite academic subject and explain how it has influenced you.

7. What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?

8. What is the one thing that you think sets you apart from other candidates applying to the University of California?
PIQ Topics

• Leadership
• Creativity
• Talent/Skill
• Educational Opportunity/Barrier

• Challenge
• Favorite Academic Subj
• Helping your community
• What sets you apart?
Things to Consider

• **Timeframe**
  Dates/timeframe are important for context.

• **Explain any unusual circumstances**
  This can be at home, school or otherwise. It should always be tied to how it impacted a student’s academic achievement or interests.

• **Focus on yourself**
  Students should avoid writing more about others than themselves (family, mentees, friends, etc...)

• **Think outside the box**
  Non-traditional forms of leadership & creativity.

• **Speak Your Truth**
  Don’t feel like you have to fit a particular mold in your response.
Things to Avoid...

- **Acronyms. Be sure to spell it out first.**
  Example: Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP)

- **Quotes/Scene Setting**
  This should only be included if it is necessary and immediately relevant

- **Creative Writing.**
  Have students stick to factual information focusing on time frame

- **Repetition**
  We read the Activity/Awards section before the responses and do not need another list of activities

- **Asking too many people for feedback**
  Consider asking friends to help brainstorm, but limit feedback on the actual responses
Resources

UC Personal Insight Questions Resources
http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/personal-questions/freshman/index.html

UC Comprehensive Review
http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/freshman/comprehensive-review/index.html

UCOP Presentations, Guides, Handouts
http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/downloadable-guides/index.html
UC Berkeley is coming to the Central Valley

June 25, 2017

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions at UC Berkeley is hosting our annual Berkeley Summer Experience program in Fresno, CA.

Berkeley Summer Experience is an intensive application workshop and information session. Students can take advantage of admissions workshops, meet admission officers, and learn about majors, activities and services available on campus.

This is a great opportunity to learn more about UC Berkeley.

Applications are open now. Deadline is April 30
For more information, please visit our website:

http://admissions.berkeley.edu/bse
Questions?

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