

# UC PERSONAL INSIGHT QUESTIONS

**Did you know that the UC system no longer requires a Personal Statement, but rather the answers to four Personal Insight Questions?** Your responses to these questions are an important component of your application for admission and scholarships. Your test scores and grades shows what you have achieved academically; your responses to the prompts allow the UC system get to know you as an individual through your experiences and accomplishments. They ask questions about your talents, aspirations, and experiences. Combined with the rest of our application, they help the college admissions officer to picture who you really are and how you will add to the culture of their campus.

## Why the change?

The UC system wanted to make the process easier by providing more direct questions, while gaining in-depth knowledge by allowing you to choose questions relevant to your own life experiences. The answers provide information that may not be evident in other parts of the application and they align with one or more of the [comprehensive admissions review criteria](#).

## What does UC expect to learn from the answers?

- The new format gives applicants a greater say in the kind of information they want to share
- Students can express who they are and what matters to them not only in how they respond to the questions, but also through the questions they choose to answer
- Option over which questions to answer gives students greater flexibility and control
- Allows students to select questions that are most relevant to them

## What are the new Personal Insight Questions?

Instead of the traditional Personal Statement, students will be asked to choose from eight questions that will help the student best describe their life experiences, personal qualities, passions or interests and educational background. They cover:

- Initiative, motivation, persistence
- Interests, passions, goals
- Service to others
- Special skills or potential
- Creativity
- Experience with other cultures
- Leadership
- Achievements in light of the opportunities available
- Any unusual circumstances or hardships faced and the ways in which they were overcome or responded to; what was learned or achieved in spite of the circumstances.

**Four prompts must be completed with no more the 350 words for each prompt.** Prospective student are able to choose from eight questions. All questions are weighed equally. There is no advantage or disadvantage regarding which questions are chosen. Your best option is to choose questions that will enable the UC admissions officers to see your unique, best self and to choose questions most relevant to your experience and that best reflect your individual circumstances. Look at it like a college interview with an admissions officer. Give details. Connect to your major, goals, interests and community.

**All students must answer the Transfer Applicant Prompt -**

*“Please describe how you have prepared for your intended major, including your readiness to succeed in your upper-division courses once you enroll at the university.”*

What is your intended major? Discuss how your interest in the subject developed and describe any experience you have had in the field – such as volunteer work, internships and employment, participation in student organizations and activities – and what you have gained from your involvement.

**Select 3 other questions from remaining [Personal Insight 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.
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. What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?
7. What is the one thing that you think sets you apart from other candidates applying to the University of California?

## Do's and Don'ts

### Do...

- Start early
- Review the [UC Writing Tips and Techniques and Worksheet For Transfer Applicants](#). This webpage gives insight into how to answer each question and a worksheet to help you organize and brainstorm.
- Go to the website of the specific UC's where you are applying and review their Personal Insight Questions webpage to find what they are specifically looking for.
- Carefully choose your questions to enhance your academic record and college resume.
- Go to the Writing Center so they can review your answers. They are a great source to find out if someone who doesn't know you will understand you and the context of your situation from your answers.
- Relax! Remember, you're answering questions, not doing a research paper or a creative writing assignment.

### Don't...

- Procrastinate- you can't do your best work if it's rushed.
- Choose entertainment over substance. Stick to facts and rich content that will assist the UC admissions to know you personally.
- Fail to have someone other than yourself read your final draft.