

UC Application Personal Insight Questions

A guide for applicants



What are the Personal Insight Questions?

These questions are about getting to know you – your life experience, interests and accomplishments. Think of your responses as a conversation with the admissions office. Be open. Be reflective. Find your individual voice and express it.

While this section of the application is just one part we consider when making our admission decision, it helps provide context for the rest of your application.

The basics

- For first year applicants, you will have 8 questions to choose from. You must respond to only 4 of the 8 questions.
- For transfer applicants, there is one required question you must answer. You must also answer 3 out of 7 additional questions.
- Each response is limited to a maximum of 350 words.
- Aside from the one required question for transfers, the questions you answer are up to you. However, you should select questions that are most relevant to your experience and that best reflect your individual circumstances.

Required question for transfers

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.

How did your interest in your major develop? Do you have any experience related to your major outside the classroom, such as volunteer work, internships and employment, or participation in student organizations and activities? If you haven't had experience in the field, consider including experience in the classroom. This may include working with faculty or doing research projects.

Additional 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.

- Was there a time when you stepped up and took the role of leader in a group, team, family and/or work setting? Briefly describe the experience, then explore what that experience meant to you.
- How did you grow from that leadership experience? What, if any, impact did that have in other places in your life? Remember, we do not need a definition of leadership. We are not asking if you have a leadership role or title.

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.

- Give an example of your creativity (do not limit yourself by conventional definitions).
- Was there ever a problem where your imagination and intuition guided you to the solution? What was the problem, how did you arrive at a solution, what was the outcome?
- Do you have a creative passion? What have you gained from this passion that has affected other parts of your life or the life of those around you?



Remember, we do not have a definition of creativity nor do we need you to limit your own idea of creativity.

3. What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time?

- List what you consider your talents or skills.
- Which one of these talents or skills is the most meaningful or important to you and why? Does the talent come naturally or have you worked hard to develop this talent or skill?

Remember, you may have always had this talent or skill but we hope you will focus your answer on the present or recent past when it relates to this talent or skill.



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4. Describe how you have taken advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier you have faced.

- Feel free to speak about an opportunity and/or a barrier. An opportunity could have come due to a barrier. Also, it is okay if you experience one and not the other.
- Are you engaged in educational or mentorship programs or community-based organizations? Do you consider these opportunities? If so, what have you gained from the experience?
- Have you had to supplement your coursework online, at a community college/university, or through another school?
- Are you in a magnet, academy, or special curriculum at your school? Did you apply or were you pre-enrolled in the special curriculum?

 **Remember**, we do not compare students to one another. Your response could set context for the reader who is looking at the academic history section of your application.



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?

- Have you had a difficult experience in your life? How did you get through it? Who are you today because of that time in your life? What did you learn from the experience?
- If you're currently working your way through the challenge, what are you doing now and does that affect different aspects of your life?
- Ask yourself, "how did this challenge impact my ability to be a good student?"

 **Remember**, while your challenge can be personal we are asking how it impacted your academic achievement.

6. Think about an academic subject that inspires you. Describe how you have furthered this interest inside and/or outside of the classroom.

**not included in the transfer application*

- Does this academic interest relate to activities or interests outside the classroom?
- Might the academic area tie in some way to your major or career path? If so, how and why is that important to you?
- What sparks your desire to learn?

 **Remember**, we are not limiting you to traditional academic subjects or those in core academic areas.

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

- You saw a problem. What motivated you to act? What did you learn from your effort?
- Did you contribute to a positive change at your school or in your community? What steps have you taken to accomplish this?
- If you worked in a group you need to focus on your tasks, your role, and/or your responsibilities.

 **Remember**, even small changes can have a big impact. Admissions readers cannot click on links or search for your accomplishment online. You need to explain your accomplishment without external factors.



8. Beyond what has already been shared in your application, what do you believe makes you a strong candidate for admission to the University of California?

- Look at your transcript, resume and daily routine. Is there anything that you need to clarify, explain, or elaborate on which we won't find in another PIQ?
- What did we not ask in the application that reflects on who you are as a student inside and/or outside of the classroom?

 **Remember**, UC does not review unsolicited supplemental information (transcripts, letters of recommendation or resumes). Think of this question as a chance to add context or clarification about what we will find in your application.