

UC and CSU Admissions

**Navigating California's
Public University Systems**

UC vs. CSU: System Overview

UC System

- 9 undergraduate campuses (Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, UCLA, Merced, Riverside, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz)

CSU System

- 22 campuses (Cal Maritime
Has been absorbed by
Cal Poly Slo)



Academic Differences

Academic Focus

UC Focus

Research, theory, and preparation for graduate or professional school.

CSU Focus

Practical, hands-on learning and direct career or workforce preparation.

System Structure

Quarter System

Most UCs are on the quarter system (fall/winter/spring), except Berkeley and Merced.

Semester System

Most CSUs are on the semester system (fall/spring), except Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

Admissions Standards: GPA & Testing

GPA Thresholds

- **UC minimum:** 3.0 (for CA residents)
- **CSU minimum:** 2.5 (for CA residents)
- For CSU: 2.0 GPA may be evaluated for admission using supplemental criteria

Course Requirements

- Must complete the **15 required A–G courses**.
- Must earn a **grade of C- or better** for eligibility.
- In DE classes, cannot earn a C-, must be “C” or better

Test-Blind Policy

SAT and ACT scores are not required, considered, or accepted by either system.

Evaluating Applicants: CSU vs. UC

CSU Criteria

- Objective admission criteria
- Based primarily on A-G GPA
- Considers local admission area status.
- No essay questions required!

UC Criteria

13 Factors Include:

- GPA & course rigor
- Special talents, achievements, and awards
- Academic accomplishment in light of life experiences
- Extracurriculars

CSU Direct Admission Program

Official Mailer & Student Eligibility Overview (via CCGI Data)

Must Still Apply

Critical Step

A mailer confirms eligibility, but students must still log in officially submit their Cal State Apply application to secure formal placement.

Campus & Major Eligibility

- **17 Participating Campuses:** Covers automatic direct admission to the vast majority of CSU institutions.
- **Impaction Exclusions:** Highly competitive campuses (Fullerton, Long Beach, San Diego, San José and San Luis Obispo) or impacted majors (e.g., Nursing) require standard application screening.

UC Personal Insight Questions (PIQs)

Guidelines

- **Format:** Choose 4 out of 8 potential prompts.
- **Requirement:** Each response is limited to 350 words maximum.
- You have started these, right? :)
Workshop on 10/26
Sign up with Career Center

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Freshman applicants: Personal insight questions

Answer any 4 of the following 8 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. 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?

Submission Timelines

SUBMISSION WINDOW

Oct 1 – Nov 30

Submit your completed applications within this autumn window. Aim to submit early to avoid deadline-day system traffic.

Application Systems

The UC and CSU systems each have a separate application. Within each system, one application allows you to apply to multiple campuses.

Fee Waivers

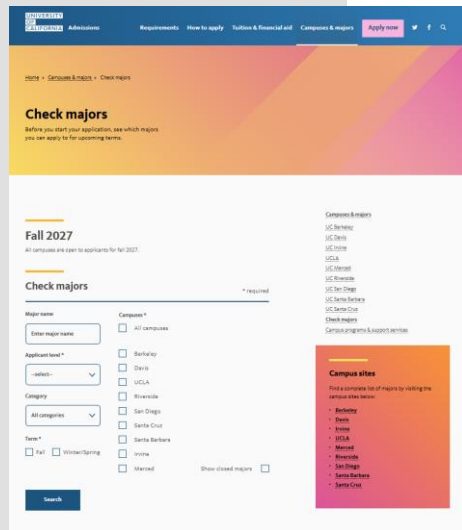
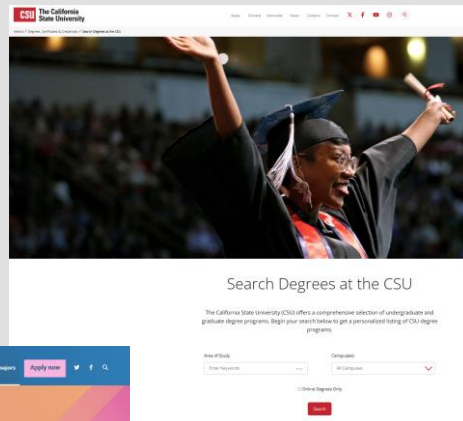
Both systems have a built-in fee waiver. If you qualify, you can apply to up to 4 campuses per system at no extra cost.

Next Steps (SIR)

Review admissions decisions & financial aid packages. Submit Statement of Intent to Register (SIR) by May 1.

College Majors

- Applications will ask you to declare one (or choose “undecided”) so be ready!
- Best to be honest with what you really want to study
- EXPLORE ALLLLLLL the possibilities!!!
- [UC Majors](#)
- [CSU Majors](#)
- [CaliforniaColleges.edu](#) also has great interest/career quizzes



Resources and Q&A

- YouTube via UC Santa Barbara has step by step tutorial



- CSU has a step by step manual



SCAN ME

Websites:

UC:

<https://apply.universityofcalifornia.edu>

CSU:

<https://www.calstate.edu/apply>

Questions?

IMPORTANT DATES & WORKSHOPS

- <https://antelope.rjuhsd.us/services/counseling>

Date	Time	Event	Who Should Attend?
10/14/26	6-7:30pm	CSU Application Workshop	Students applying to a CSU *meet a-g, with a minimum 2.0 academic GPA
10/21/26	6-7:30pm	UC Application Workshop	Students applying to a UC *meet a-g, with a minimum 3.0 academic GPA
11/18/26	6-7:30pm	FAFSA/Dream Act Workshop	Everyone!