

UCSB Office of Admissions

UC Application & Personal Insight Questions

Fall 2021

UC SANTA BARBARA



Agenda

- UC Overview & Updates
- UC Application Overview
- Personal Insight Questions
- Senior Year Reminders



UC Overview



UC campuses are unique:

- Location
- Size
- Majors

*Explore the nine campuses,
find your right fit!*

UC Updates

Pass/No Pass Grades or Credit/No Credit Grades

- Acceptable for winter, spring & summer 2020 ONLY
- Temporary suspension of the letter grade requirement for “a-g” courses
- P/NP or Credit/No Credit not calculated in UC GPA
- GPA will be calculated from 10th & 11th grade where letter grades exist

AP Exams

- 2020 online AP exams accepted
- Same credit – score of 3, 4, or 5

SAT/ACT Exams

- Test-optional for Fall 2021 & Fall 2022
- Test-blind for Fall 2023 & Fall 2024

UC Application

- One application for the undergraduate UC system
- No interviews, early decision, or early action
- **By invitation only:** letters of recommendation, portfolios, auditions



UC Application

Every campus:

- Receives the same copy of the application
- Will review the application individually
- Places a different value on each section of the application
- Won't review external (unsolicited) material

**Campuses do not
collaborate on
admission decisions!**

What is important in the application?

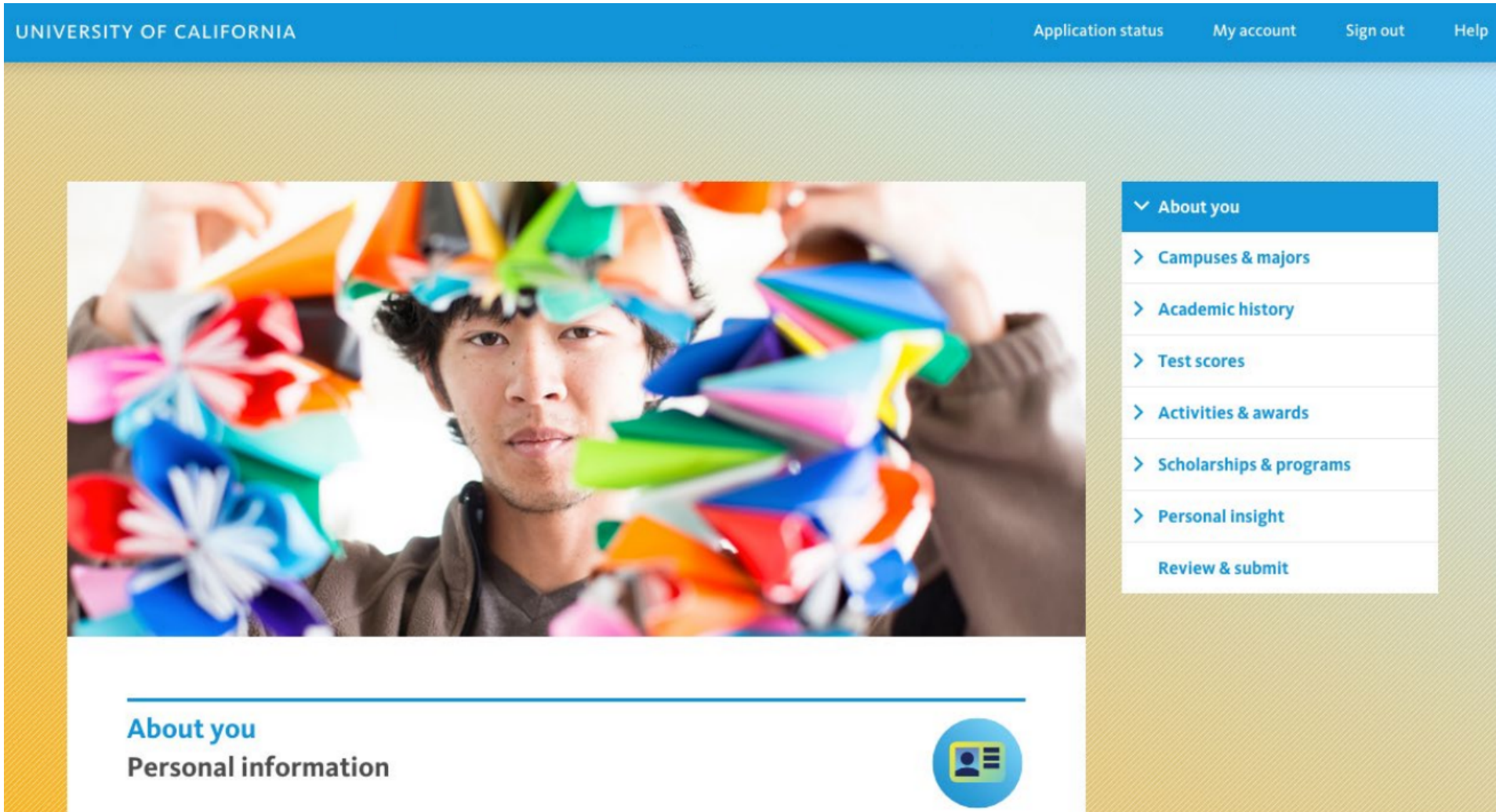
We use:

- Almost everything!
We don't ask a question we don't want the answer to
- Context clues!
- Academic & non-academic achievements

We'll ask for but we can't admit students based on:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Sexual orientation or gender
- Religion
- Legacy
- Demonstrated interest
- The entire scholarship section of the application

Navigation



Menu Bar

- App status
- My account
- Sign Out
- Help

Tabs/Pages

- Seven sections

About You



▼ About you

- Personal information ✓
- Contact information ✓
- Citizenship & residency**
- Demographics
- Your background
- Your household
- Parent information
- Review

Setting the **CONTEXT** of your accomplishments

- First language spoken, military status, contact information
- Parent information (e.g., education and occupation)
- For consideration for a fee waiver, must enter family income and family size
- Admissions selection is an additive process, nothing shared will harm you, it can only help you

Campuses and Majors



- Select as many campuses as you would like for the application
- This is where you will find a fee waiver if you qualify

\$70 per campus
\$80 per campus for
international applicants

Campuses and Majors

Pick a major:

- Select an alternate major (except for UCB)
- Browse majors based on **college** or **category** of study
- “Undeclared” is an option at all nine UC campuses

Browse by: **Category** | **College** ☐ show closed majors

› Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Studies

› Art - Applied, Fine, Performing and Art History

▼ **Biological and Life Sciences**

Aquatic Biology, B.S. College of Letters and Science	Major	Alternate major
<hr/>		
Biochemistry, B.S. College of Letters and Science	Major	Alternate major
<hr/>		
Undeclared (Letters and Science) College of Letters and Science	Major	Alternate major

Academic History

Self-Reporting 'a-g' Coursework

- Students need to self-report all 'a-g' coursework, starting with high school coursework followed by college/university coursework
- Math or Language Other than English could have been started in 7th or 8th grade as part of the 'a-g' requirements
- Don't forget summer coursework!

The image shows a screenshot of a web form titled "Academic history" with a dropdown arrow. The form contains several sections, each with a title and a checkmark icon in a circle to its right. The sections are: "Introduction", "7th & 8th grade" (highlighted in grey), "High schools", "9th grade", "10th grade", "11th grade", "12th grade", "Colleges attended in high school", "College courses taken in high school", and "Additional information".

Academic history	
Introduction	✓
7th & 8th grade	✓
High schools	✓
9th grade	
10th grade	
11th grade	
12th grade	
Colleges attended in high school	
College courses taken in high school	
Additional information	

Academic History

Academic history

Colleges attended while in high school



* required

If you took any college or university-level courses in high school, you'll need to enter them in this section.

You must enter all colleges you've attended while in high school—regardless of how long you attended, whether courses were completed or whether you believe your record will affect your chances for admission.

Providing incomplete or incorrect information may jeopardize your UC admission or enrollment.

Add college

I don't have any colleges to add

▼ Academic history

Introduction



7th & 8th grade



High schools



9th grade



10th grade



11th grade



12th grade



Colleges attended in high school

College courses taken in high school

Additional information

Review

P/No Pass & Credit/No Credit

- Winter, Spring, and Summer 2020

2020 Academic year

> **Subject** **Language Arts/Social Science**

✓ **Grade** **11**

	Honors Type
<input type="checkbox"/> A	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B	
<input type="checkbox"/> C	
<input type="checkbox"/> D	
<input type="checkbox"/> F	
<input type="checkbox"/> IP	
<input type="checkbox"/> PL	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO	

Grade 2

☐ English 11 P ☐ PS

☐ English 11 P ☐ PS

2019 - 2020 academic year

> 12th History

✓ 12th English

Course Name

Honors Type

☐ AP English Language and Composition (AP)

AP

☐ AP English Literature and Composition (AP)

AP

☐ English 10 Honors

NH

☒ English 10 P

NH

Grade 1

IP

▼

C

D

F

PS

NP

CR

NC

IP

PL

NO

PS

Test Scores

Test scores ACT & SAT



* required

Here are a few things to remember:

- Enter your scores exactly as they were reported by the testing agency.
- If you've taken a test more than once, report only your highest overall score from a single test date (Do not mix scores from different dates).
- If you're still planning on taking this test, try to take it by December of this year.
- If you're planning on retaking this test, select "Completed" and answer the follow-up questions.

Is this test completed or planned? *

☐ Completed ☒ Planned

When do you plan to take this test?

> About you

> Campuses & majors

> Academic history



▼ Test scores

ACT & SAT



SAT Subjects Tests

AP exams

IB exams

TOEFL or IELTS

International exams

Review

“Activities and Awards” Section

- Selection for admission includes activities outside the classroom
- UC does NOT have a preference between extracurricular activities
- Students can enter up to 20 activities!

✓ -- select --

Award or honor
Educational preparation program
Extracurricular activity
Other coursework
Volunteer / Community service
Work experience

Add activities & awards



You've told us what you did inside the classroom, and now you'll have the opportunity to tell us about what you're most proud of outside the classroom. We're looking for quality, not quantity - which means that even though you'll have room to tell us about 20 activities and awards, make sure to focus on the ones that are most important to you. Choose experiences that demonstrate commitment, responsibility, leadership, and most of all, genuine interest.

> 1. Educational preparation program

Cal-SOAP

Delete

Edit

> 2. Extracurricular activity

Track & field varsity team

Delete

Edit

Add another activity or award

I've finished adding activities

“Activities and Awards” Section

When did you participate in this activity? *

If you participated during the summer, select the grade you were in before that summer.

- ☒ 9th grade
- ☒ 10th grade
- ☒ 11th grade
- ☐ 12th grade
- ☐ After 12th grade

How much time did you spend on this activity? *

It's ok to estimate, but try to be as accurate as possible.

Hours spent per week:

Weeks spent per year:

- Enter your activities from 9th - 12th grade
- *Don't forget spring semester of senior year!*
- “After 12th” is meant for students who completed a GAP year, leave blank if you are a high school senior
- Average the hours of your activities if they vary during the year

“Activities and Awards” Section

What's the name of the activity? *

Volleyball Club/HS

What did you do? *

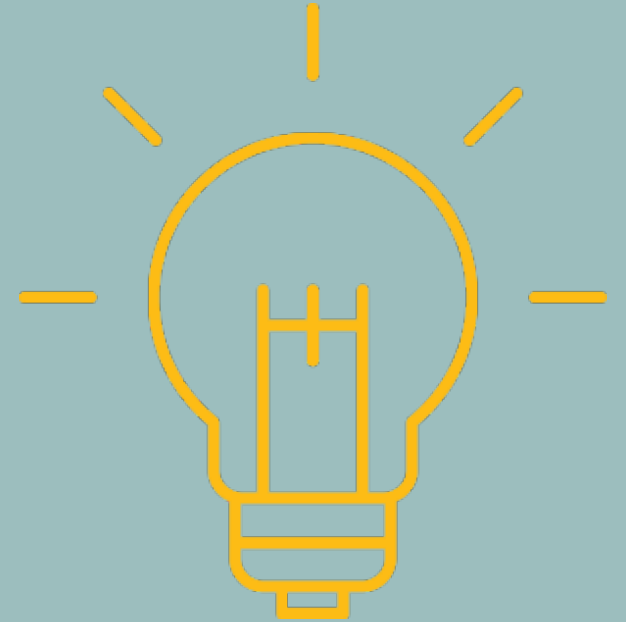
Think about your experience, and what you accomplished and learned. We'd also like to know if you've held a leadership role, which can mean more than just a title - it can mean being a mentor to others, acting as a point-person in charge of a specific task, or taking a lead role in organizing an event or project.

- You have 350 characters to describe each activity. Make your words count!
- We do not need full sentences in your description box
- Within the organization, what was your role, responsibility, etc.?

“Activities and Awards” Section:

A note on COVID-19

- Students are always evaluated within their context
- Students will not be penalized for lack of activities at this time – we do not expect them to be involved with activities right now
- If you were able to continue with some activities (i.e. online), how did it change for you?



Scholarships & Programs

- Depending on the UC campus selected, scholarship categories will appear
- EOP requires a brief description, rational behind why you wish to participate in the program.

If you're interested in EOP, check the box below and answer the follow-up questions.

☒ Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)

EOP and similar campus programs provide assistance through mentorship, academic programs, financial assistance, counseling/advising, and other campus support services to those who are first-generation college students, and/or from low-income and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. EOP serves students from all ethnic backgrounds, and is open only to California residents and to American Indians from any state.

Why are you interested in EOP? *

240 characters remaining

Office of Admissions

Scholarships & programs

Apply for scholarships



* required

[Expand All](#)

> Academic major or interest

> Affiliation with group, program or organization

> Ancestry and descendants

> Career plans

> Ethnicity, national origin or religion

> Extracurricular activities & work experience

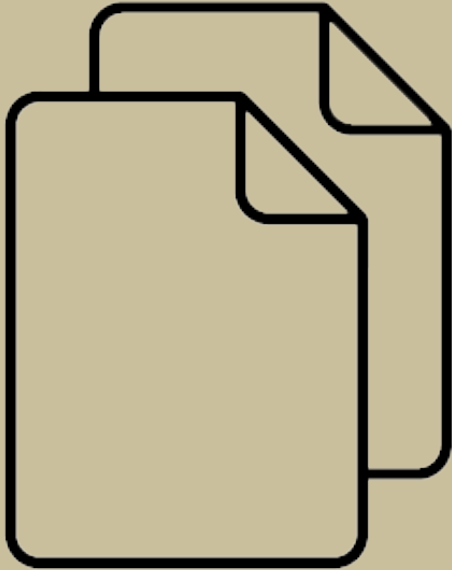
> Family circumstances and relationships

> Health / disabilities

> School or geographic affiliation

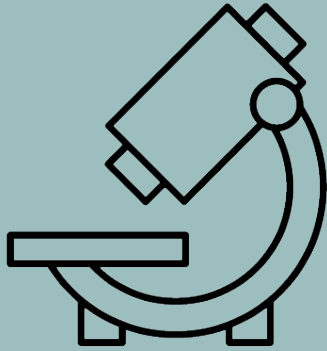
> Transfer students

Personal Insight Questions



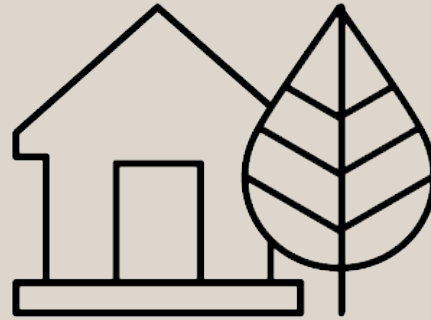
- **8** questions – respond to **4**
You cannot respond to more than 4!
- **350** words per response
- All questions have equal value
There is no advantage to answering one question over another
- View as your personal interview on paper

Personal Insight Questions



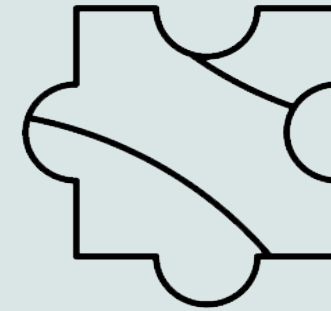
Clarity

Richer perspective of
your life, experiences
and/or
accomplishments



Context

Sharing details on your
home, school or
community



Depth

Details into your
application
(academics or
extracurricular
activities)

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.

Personal Insight 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?

Picking Your Topics

- Do not write what you think UC's want to hear. Just tell us about yourself.
- Keep it focused on YOU.
- Each campus receives the same copy of your responses
 - *Do not be campus specific!*
- Don't stretch the truth, just be honest.
- What did we not ask you? What information do you need/want to share with admissions?



Stay focused! Try to avoid:

Acronyms

We won't look it up, spell it out

Quotations or Dialogue

We want to know your thoughts and words, not someone else's

Philosophy

Don't ask questions, just tell us what you mean

Creative Writing

No poems, clichés or haikus

Titles

No need to re-state the prompts

Flowery Language

Keep it specific and use your regular vocabulary

Story Telling / Scene Setting

We don't need to be in the moment with you

Keep it Professional

No slang, abbreviations

Jokes or Sarcasm

Inappropriate use of humor is not helpful

A Note on the Writing Process

- Always tie it back to yourself
- Use “I” or “my” statements
- It’s not an essay, structure is not graded
- Make the examples relevant to yourself today, bring the reader forward to explain who you are in high school
- Must be your own words



PIQs and COVID-19

- You should not assume that we know your particular circumstances
- Help us understand your CONTEXT
- Questions for you to consider:
 - How did your learning change?
 - How did your home life change?
 - How did your activities and involvement change and how did you adjust?

Additional Comments

Student can use this space to tell us anything else they want us to know about them

- Academic or Non-Academic
- Do not continue one of the PIQ responses!

Examples:

“Due to COVID-19 and the stay at home orders, I could not participate in activities during the second part of my junior year.”

“I had the choice of P/NP or letter grades during spring 2020, I chose _____ option because...”

“My school limits AP coursework, I had to wait until my junior year to take AP courses.”

Reminders

- Communication between the Office of Admissions and applicants will occur primarily through email
 - Reply to requests in a timely manner
- Admissions decisions are posted on the UC campus portal
 - Keep track of username and passwords!
- We do not need transcripts with the UC Application
- Coursework updates: only after you are admitted & choose to enroll
- Do not forget about dates and deadlines

Reminders

Date	Task
August 1	Access UC application
November 1-30	Submit UC application
December	Last exam which can be used
March 2	Submit FAFSA or California Dream Act application
Mid-March	Freshman decisions posted
May 1	Freshman SIR due
Summer after graduation	Submit official transcripts & test scores

Resources

- UC Application
apply.universityofcalifornia.edu
- UC Application Support:
ucinfo@applyUCsupport.net
- Personal Insight Questions Worksheet
admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/personal-questions/index.html
- COVID-19 Updates
admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/response-covid-19.html

Follow Us:

 @UCSBAdmissions

 @UCSBLife



Questions?

Sebastian.franco@sa.ucsb.edu

