

UC Personal Insight Questions

When you're applying to Universities of California, you will have a chance to tell admissions a bit more about yourself through Personal Insight Questions!



What are Personal Insight Questions?

Personal Insight questions are questions that will help admissions to get to know you better. College admissions want to know more about your life experience, interests, ambitions, and inspirations. Be open and reflective. Find your individual voice and express it!

Choosing Personal Insight Questions

- ★ The UC system will have 8 questions that you can choose from. You must respond to 4 of the 8 questions.
 - You should select questions that are most relevant to your experience and that best reflect your individual circumstances.
- ★ There is no advantage or disadvantage to choosing certain questions over others because all questions will be reviewed equally.
- ★ For each response, there is a limit of 350 words maximum.

Writing tips

- ★ Start Early
 - Give yourself plenty of time to plan, organize, edit, and review your answers.
- ★ Use “I” Statements
 - Your answers should focus on yourself! So it is important to use plenty of “I” and “my” statements in order to give a better understanding of yourself.
- ★ Proofread, edit, and ask for feedback
 - Make sure that your answers have been proofread and edited more than once! After you have review your answers, ask for feedback and advice from a friend, family member, teacher, or counselor.
- ★ When you are happy with your answers, it is best to copy and paste them into the UC application.
 - Make sure to proofread the answer once it is pasted to avoid any odd characters and line breaks.

Common Mistakes

- ★ Repeating information that can be found in other sections of the application
- ★ Using quotations, generalities, acronyms, philosophical questions, inappropriate humor, and creative writing

Crafting a Personal Insight Statement

A personal insight statement is a chance for you to show a college what you're all about, outside the basic application questions that everyone answers. While the topic of your essay is important, the voice or personality of your writing is also important. Your personal insight statements should use correct grammar, punctuation, and proper writing conventions, but it should still sound like you.

Here are some questions to help prompt ideas for your personal insight statements:

→ How would you define a leader? Is there a time in your life when you were a leader?

→ How would you describe your creative side? Creativity can be expressed through art, dance, theater, problem solving, innovative thinking and much more.

→ What is your greatest talent or skill?

→ Have you taken advantage of an educational opportunity or overcome an educational barrier?

→ What has been the most significant challenge you have overcome?

→ How have you furthered your interest, in an academic subject, inside/outside of class?

→ What makes you stand out from other applicants?



PERSONAL INSIGHT QUESTIONS: GUIDE FOR FRESHMAN APPLICANTS

UNIVERSITY
OF
CALIFORNIA

Getting started

This worksheet is designed to help freshman applicants start the writing process for the personal insight questions in the undergraduate admissions application. Additional hints and suggestions can be found on UC's admissions website at ucal.us/personalquestions.

What are the personal insight questions?

These questions are about getting to know you better — your life experience, interests, ambitions and inspirations. Think of it as your interview 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

- You will have 8 questions to choose from. You must respond to any 4 of the 8 questions.
- 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 and that best reflect your individual circumstances.
- All questions are equal: All questions are given equal consideration in the application review process, which means there is no advantage or disadvantage to choosing certain questions over others.

Freshman questions & brainstorm exercise

The following exercises are suggestions to help you get started. Remember, you don't have to answer all eight questions – you only need to answer four. So if some questions aren't the right fit for you, that's OK. The important thing is expressing who are you, what matters to you and what you want to share with UC.

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.

How do you define "leader"? List three words that you think describe what a leader is:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Do any of these words apply to you? How? Is there a time in your life when you displayed any of these traits?

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.

Can you think of a time your viewpoint was unique compared to others? What was the issue or problem from your perspective? Now think of the same situation from the perspective of another person who was there with you. How was your approach different from that other person's?

Was there ever a problem where your imagination and intuition guided you to the solution?

Do you have a passion for music, theater, visual art, dance, etc.? What have you gained from it that has affected other parts of your life?

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

List three of your talents or skills:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Were these talents or skills the same a few years ago? What changed? What improved?

Which one of the three talents or skills you listed is the most meaningful or important to you and why? Does the talent come naturally or have you worked hard to develop this skill or talent?

PERSONAL INSIGHT QUESTIONS: GUIDE FOR FRESHMAN APPLICANTS

UNIVERSITY
OF
CALIFORNIA

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 either an opportunity or a barrier. It's OK if you've experienced one and not the other.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

List any programs or additional classes that have better prepared you for college:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How did you find out about these programs or classes? How did you take what you learned and apply it to your schoolwork or other aspects of your life?

EDUCATIONAL BARRIERS:

Have you faced any barriers or challenges related to school and/or your schoolwork? How did you overcome or strive to overcome them? List three personal characteristics or skills you had to call on to overcome this challenge:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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? What did you learn going through this experience? If you're currently working your way through a challenge, what are you doing now and does that affect different aspects of your life? For example, ask yourself, "How has my life changed at home, at my school, with my friends, or with my family?"

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

Think about all of the classes you've taken at school. Now fill in the blank: I would go to [class name] even if I didn't have to.

It doesn't have to be a class in which you've earned good grades – the important thing is you enjoyed the subject and it impacted you in some way.

(#6 continued)

Maybe there's a course you *haven't* taken at school that you wish you did take or are looking forward to taking in college. How have you pursued your interest in that subject outside of school?

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

Did you contribute to a positive change at your school or in your community? What steps have you taken to accomplish this? Remember, even small changes can have a big impact. Why were you inspired to act? What did you learn from your effort?

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

From your point of view, what do you feel makes you an excellent choice for UC? Don't be afraid to brag a little. Here are a few lists to help you get started.

What do you value in your life? What's important to you? List three of them here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are you passionate about?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

When you attend UC, what three things are you most looking forward to?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Does anything overlap? Is there anything from the lists that you want to expand on?

Next steps

As you filled out the worksheet, were there any topics that seemed particularly interesting? You might consider answering those questions as part of your application. But the choice is yours! Take your time in selecting which questions to answer and how to answer them. For more information, visit our website at ucal.us/personalquestions.