

UC Personal Insight Questions



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Tips & strategies

OVERVIEW

- Mechanics of the Personal Insight Questions
- The purpose of the Personal Insight Questions
- How can you start
- Transfer Students Questions
- Tips and Strategies
- Common Mistakes
- Links to help you get started



MECHANICS



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- Transfer students must answer **one required** question then choose 3 additional questions out of 7.
 - Maximum of 350 words for each response; words above maximum will be truncated in the application.
 - Students cannot answer additional questions.
 - All questions have equal value; there is no advantage or disadvantage to choosing certain questions over others.

MECHANICS ...continued



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- Do not compose your responses in the application; use another text editing program (MS Word, GoogleDocs, etc.) then copy and paste into the application.
 - Make sure it pastes correctly; Proofread
 - If your word count differs, edit to meet the word limit in the UC application
 - Be wary of relying on Spellcheck!



The Personal Insight Questions help...

- Applicants fill in the gaps to explain unusual circumstances and provide a more complete picture of themselves.
- Admission personnel get to know the student as an individual.
- The reader will understand the student's interests, achievement, opportunities and challenges faced while achieving academic and personal success.

Consider working on this sheet before beginning your PIQs

Activities and Awards Worksheet

In addition to your courses and grades, we want to know about any honors you've received and how you spend your time outside of school. Use this worksheet to prepare concise descriptions of your most significant awards and activities. You may list up to five entries in each category, so think carefully about what you want to highlight. Also make sure to fully describe each item (up to 160 characters) for admissions offices to best understand your involvement.

Coursework Other Than A-G List the courses you took during high school, other than those approved for UC admission, that demonstrate a particular focus or interest (e.g., language immersion courses or nontransferable college courses).		Year(s) of involvement					Hours per week	Weeks per year
		9th	10 th	11th	12th	After 12th		
Course name	Description of course							
Health	Increases social competence through empathy training, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills (resolution and meditation), and anger management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	36
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Educational Preparation Programs List your participation in educational or academic preparation programs that are designed to help students prepare for university study. These programs may include academic enrichment programs sponsored by colleges/universities, research programs and study-abroad programs.		Year(s) of involvement					Hours per week	Weeks per year
		9th	10 th	11th	12th	After 12th		

Mandatory Question



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.

- Things to consider: 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.
- If you're applying to multiple campuses with a different major at each campus, think about approaching the topic from a broader perspective, or find a common thread among the majors you've chosen.

Question 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.

- *Things to consider:* A leadership role can mean more than just a title. It can mean being a mentor to others, acting as the person in charge of a specific task, or taking lead role in organizing an event or project. Think about your accomplishments and what you learned from the experience. What were your responsibilities?
- Did you lead a team? How did your experience change your perspective on leading others? Did you help to resolve an important dispute at your school, church in your community or an organization? And your leadership role doesn't necessarily have to be limited to school activities. For example, do you help out or take care of your family?

Question 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.

- *Things to consider:* What does creativity mean to you? Do you have a creative skill that is important to you? What have you been able to do with that skill? If you used creativity to solve a problem, what was your solution? What are the steps you took to solve the problem?
- How does your creativity influence your decisions inside or outside the classroom? Does your creativity relate to your major or a future career?

Question 3



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

- *Things to consider:* If there's a talent or skill that you're proud of, this is the time to share it. You don't necessarily have to be recognized or have received awards for your talent (although if you did and you want to talk about, feel free to do so). Why is this talent or skill meaningful to you?
- Does the talent come naturally or have you worked hard to develop this skill or talent? Does your talent or skill allow you opportunities in or outside the classroom? If so, what are they and how do they fit into your schedule?



Question 4

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

- *Things to consider:* An educational opportunity can be anything that has added value to your educational experience and better prepared you for college. For example, participation in an honors or academic enrichment program, or enrollment in an academy that's geared toward an occupation or a major, or taking advanced courses that interest you — just to name a few.
- If you choose to write about educational barriers you've faced, how did you overcome or strived to overcome them? What personal characteristics or skills did you call on to overcome this challenge? How did overcoming this barrier help shape who you are today?

Question 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?

- *Things to consider:* A challenge could be personal, or something you have faced in your community or school. Why was the challenge significant to you? This is a good opportunity to talk about any obstacles you've faced and what you've learned from the experience. Did you have support from someone else or did you handle it alone?
- 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?"

Question 6



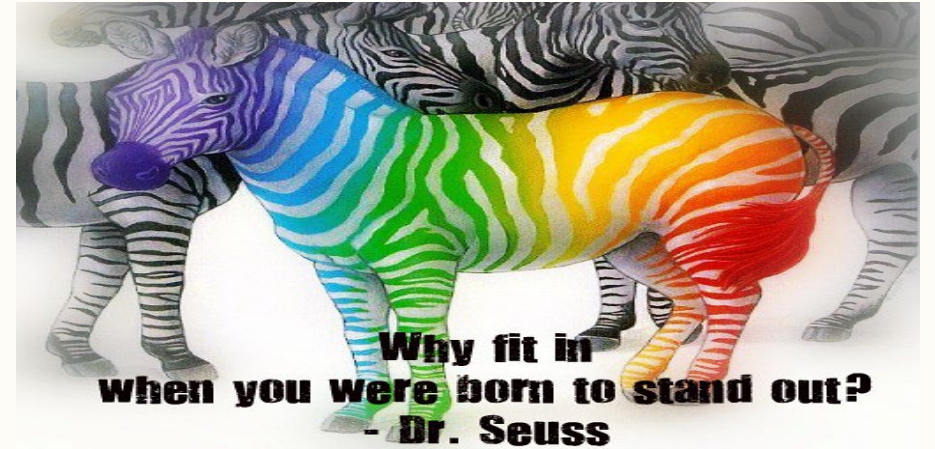
Community Service



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

- *Things to consider:* What is community to you? Is it a group, team or a place – like your high school, hometown, or home. You can define community as you see fit, just make sure you talk about your role in that community. Was there a problem that you wanted to fix in your community?
- Why were you inspired to act? What did you learn from your effort? How did your actions benefit others, the wider community or both? Did you work alone or with others to initiate change in your community?

Question 7



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?

- *Things to consider:* If there's anything you want us to know about you, but didn't find a question or place in the application to tell us, now's your chance. What have you not shared with us that will highlight a skill, talent, challenge or opportunity that you think will help us know you better?
- From your point of view, what do you feel makes you an excellent choice for UC? Don't be afraid to brag a little.

Tips & Strategies



- Start Early
- Select questions that are most relevant to your experiences and best reflect your individual preference/circumstances.
- Write in a natural style; avoid being overly humorous, self-deprecating or glorifying
- Use "I" Statements
- Proofread and Edit
- Avoid Clichés and Trite statements
- Solicit feedback
- **Do not** use the "Additional Comments" section for another response

Avoid Common Mistakes..

- Do not speak to only one UC campus
- Avoid Quotations
- Avoid generalities
- Repetition – Do not repeat what is already in the application
- Avoid acronyms
- Do not ask philosophical questions
- Be sure to answer the question being asked
- Rambling unfocused thoughts
- Writing more about an inspirational person than yourself (e.g. mother, favorite teacher, etc.)



Let's get to writing...

Join
SMC's Transfer Services
Canvas Shell

- **FAQs about the personal insight questions**

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-transfer/personal-insight-questions.html>

- **Guide for Transfer Applicants (brainstorming worksheet)**

<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/files/uc-personal-questions-guide-transfer.pdf>

- **YouTube**

<https://youtu.be/7xi4O0jBntw>

