

Writing the UC Personal Statement

Following are some suggestions to transfer students for writing the personal statement. Everybody wonders....

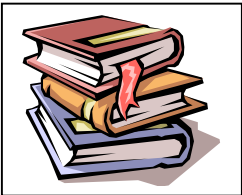
What does the University of California look for in applicants?

Admission to the University of California requires strong grades and activities....and the essay now plays a more critical role than ever!

The Personal Statement consists of three questions, two must contain 200 words and one must contain 600 words. Students may decide which questions will have more or fewer words, as long as one essay contains approximately 600 words.

Following are some ways for students to begin formulating ideas for their personal statement:

1. Students should begin by imagining that they have an interview with an admissions officer. Consider these questions:
 - A. What do students want the reader to remember most about them??
 - B. What can students tell the reader that is not a repeat of what was described already in the UC Application?
 - C. Do students have any new or compelling information about themselves that the reader should know (changes occurred since submitting the application)?
2. Students might pretend that they are writing a letter of recommendation for themselves. Consider: what would the people who know them best say about them?
3. Students should help the UC reader to understand why they are the ideal candidates for the institution.



The Personal Statement should be driven by the content, instead of by the numbers of words required. Regarding the three required questions:

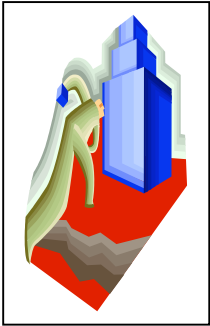
1) Academic Preparation

The UC rationale for this question: The University of California seeks to enroll students who take initiative in pursuing their education (for example, developing a special interest in science, language or the performing arts; or becoming involved in educational preparation programs, including summer enrichment program, research or academic development programs such as EOPS, HONORS, MESA, Puente, or other similar programs). The purpose of this question is to help the reader understand a student's motivation and dedication to learning.

B.Day 11/04 (Some of this information was adapted from notes taken by Elaine Piparo, Foothill Counselor, during a workshop conducted by Keith Schoon, Transfer Center Director at U. C. Berkeley). For more information, reference the UC Undergraduate Application.

Transfer applicants should describe the following:

- What is the intended major? Students should discuss how their interest in the field developed and describe any experience they have had in the field – such as volunteer work, internships and employment, participation in student organizations and activities. It is important for students to describe what they gained from their involvement in such activities.
- Students should explain why they chose this major. Their reasons should demonstrate their passion, motivation, and dedication to the chosen field.
- Students should share how they became interested in the intended major. For example, they might describe an inspirational class, or instructor, a meaningful internship, a personal hobby, influential book or writer, or related work experience,
- Students should also describe any personal or academic activities that demonstrate their interest in their major or their professional goals. Students should include a description of such activities (e.g. club memberships, lectures, travel experiences, work).
- Students should outline their motivation for participating in these experiences. In addition, they should explain what they learned from the experience and describe the personal impact. Students should seek to help the reader understand their personal character.
- Students should show a connection between the major and their professional goals. For example, students might discuss their choice of an English major and their goal to teach writing at the secondary level; or, they might describe their choice of a biology major and their decision to pursue a career in biomedical research.
- Students who are applying to different, but related majors at separate UC campuses should identify a common thread amongst them.



2) Potential to Contribute

The UC rationale for this question: The UC welcomes the contributions all students bring to the campus learning community. This question seeks to determine an applicant's academic or creative interest and potential to contribute to the vitality of the University.

Transfer applicants should describe the following:

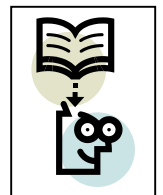
- Students should describe a talent, experience, previous contribution or personal quality they will bring to the University of California.

B.Day 11/04 (Some of this information was adapted from notes taken by Elaine Piparo, Foothill Counselor, during a workshop conducted by Keith Schoon, Transfer Center Director at U. C. Berkeley). For more information, reference the UC Undergraduate Application.

- Students are required to describe any special talents, skills, experiences, and personal qualities they possess. This is an appropriate place for students to identify awards or honors they have received.
- The reader should be able to see a trend in the students' lives in this essay, demonstrating that the students are tenacious, hard-working, quick learners and self-motivated. More than merely listing personal qualities, students should describe the personal results of possessing these qualities. Students might consider looking to close family members or friends for help in identifying these qualities.
- Students should be introspective, examining who they are as well as their capabilities and their capacity to contribute to the University.
- Students who are recent immigrants might consider describing their capacity for bringing a new culture, a different perspective, or diverse values to the University.
- Re-entry students (aged 25+) should describe the scope/breadth of maturity and experience they will contribute to the University.
- The length of this question does not have as much weight as the value of the content.

3) Open-Ended Question

The UC rationale for this question: This question seeks to give students the opportunity to share important aspects of their schooling or their lives – such as their personal circumstances, family experiences and opportunities that were not available at their school or college as well as any other factors that may not have been sufficiently addressed elsewhere in the application.



Transfer applicants should address the following:

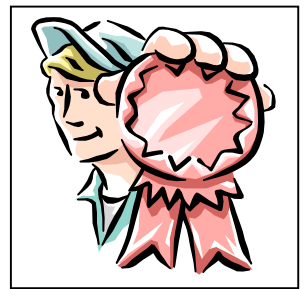
- Is there anything else students would like the reader to know about themselves or their academic record that were not described elsewhere in this application (e.g. a term with numerous withdrawals, a substandard grade, a disability, family factors that influenced their progress).
- This is an opportunity for students to discuss anything not covered in Questions 1 or 2. Students may choose to include information regarding a “mixed record” (a combination of weak, excellent, repeated, or incomplete grades, etc). This is an opportunity for students to explain initial struggles with multiple responsibilities (balancing work/job/family), acknowledge lack of responsibility in understanding college regulations (e.g. course withdrawal deadlines) or difficulties due to a previously undiagnosed learning disability.

B.Day 11/04 (Some of this information was adapted from notes taken by Elaine Piparo, Foothill Counselor, during a workshop conducted by Keith Schoon, Transfer Center Director at U. C. Berkeley). For more information, reference the UC Undergraduate Application.

- It would be appropriate for students to describe special programs in which they participate that have helped them to achieve academically. Students should explain why they are in the program, what they learned from this involvement, and how they have benefited academically from it.
- Students should describe significant challenges they have experienced. If appropriate, students who are also recent immigrants might choose to describe new cultural behaviors, and educational challenges, others might describe issues related to being the first in the family to attend college, some students might discuss extreme financial challenges, and others might explain their experiences working while going to school. Note: students who worked full-time should describe how their situation will change in order for them to attend class full-time after transfer.
- Students should describe each special circumstance in detail and share its impact on their academic progress or achievement. Students should explain how they overcame this challenge. For example, one student with a learning disability described how utilizing resources at her school helped her to ultimately achieve her academic goals.

Other Tips for Writing the Personal Statement

- Don't be subtle.
- Be direct. Don't expect the reader to read between the lines.
- Be authentic: try to help the reader to get to know the real you.
- Be honest. Students should never exaggerate their strengths or misrepresent their cultural heritage.
- Ask a trusted friend or instructor to read your essay and provide honest feedback. Remember that the statement must reflect your own writing!
- Proofread your statement several times. You don't get a second chance to make a first impression!



Interesting Facts about UC Berkeley

- 30% of transfer students who apply are accepted; moreover, 90% of those students come from California Community Colleges!
- Inter-campus UC and CSU-UC transfers are afforded lowest priority.

B.Day 11/04 (Some of this information was adapted from notes taken by Elaine Piparo, Foothill Counselor, during a workshop conducted by Keith Schoon, Transfer Center Director at U. C. Berkeley). For more information, reference the UC Undergraduate Application.

- International (F-1) students do not receive admission priority because they have not contributed to the tax base, according to California's Master Plan for Education.
- Students admitted to the Haas School of Business must begin classes during the summer before the fall semester for which they are accepted. There are no exceptions to this requirement.
- Inter-campus transfers (UC-UC) may not complete IGETC for their general education. These students may either complete campus-specific G.E. Breadth Requirements or may have access to intercampus G.E. Reciprocity Agreements.

To Which Public Universities do Foothill College Transfers Go?

To see the latest figures for Foothill College transfers to the University of California, access:

<http://www.cpec.ca.gov/OnLineData/TransferPathwayChart.asp?435227>



Good luck!

B.Day 11/04 (Some of this information was adapted from notes taken by Elaine Piparo, Foothill Counselor, during a workshop conducted by Keith Schoon, Transfer Center Director at U. C. Berkeley). For more information, reference the UC Undergraduate Application.