

# UC Personal Insight Questions



What are the Personal Insight Questions? The Personal Insight Questions are similar to an interview with the UC admissions office. Answering the questions will allow them to get to know you better. They will learn about your life experiences, interests, ambitions and inspirations. This is your opportunity to be open, reflective and express your individual voice.

## The Basics

- There is one required question you must answer.
- You will need to answer 3 out of 7 additional questions.
- Each response is limited to a maximum of 350 words.
- All questions are considered equal. So answer the three that are most relevant and reflective of you.
- Feedback and suggestions from others are useful, but you are responsible for answering the Personal Insight Questions.

## Transfer Questions & Brainstorm Exercises

### Required 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.**

#### *Suggestions for the Required Question:*

- How have classroom experiences shaped your interest in your major? What experiences outside of the classroom have helped develop this interest? What other influences (culture, community, family, etc.) have guided you toward this major? How is your intended major tied to your long-term goals?

**Additional Questions:** *You will need to answer any three of the following seven 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.**

#### *Suggestions for Question # 1:*

- How do you define leader? List three words that you think describe what a leader is:
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
- Do any of the 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.**

#### *Suggestions for Question #2:*

- 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?**

#### *Suggestions for Question #3:*

- 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?

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

#### *Suggestions for Question #4:*

Feel Free to speak about either an opportunity or a barrier. It does not have to be both.

- **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:

## Suggestions for Answering the Personal Insight Questions

- 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?**

*Suggestions for Question #5:*

- Have you had 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 was my life changed at home, at my school, with my friends, or with my family?"

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

*Suggestions for Question #6:*

- Did you contribute to a positive change in 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?

**7) What is the one thing that you think sets you apart from other candidates applying to the University of California?**

*Suggestions for Question #7:*

- Don't be afraid to brag a little. Even if you don't think you're unique, you are — remember, there's only one of you in the world. Lots of things can influence who you are, such as your experiences, family, interests and values.
- List three of your personality traits (if you need help, ask your friends or family how they would describe you):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- 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.

- What items or possessions do you cherish? List them here and think about why they're meaningful to you:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- Does anything overlap? Is there one thing that stands out? Are there any that you would want to share more information about?

**Answer the question.** Take time and think about each suggestion before you start writing. Use details and examples to make your point. Use your words strategically; is there a reason behind your example? Write to add context and depth, not to fill space.

**Give yourself time to edit.** Start writing then go back and review the word count, content, and overall message. You may not have space to tell us everything so make your words count.

**Be you.** Remember to talk about yourself so that we can get to know your personality, talents, accomplishments and potential to succeed at the UC campus. Use plenty of "I" statements.

**Stick to one topic per response.** Making a list of accomplishments, activities, awards, or work will lessen the impact of your words. Expand on a topic by using examples and facts for maximum impact to an Admissions reader.

**Brainstorm Topics.** When you are answering the Personal Insight Questions consider including:

- Personal triumphs or challenges—If you decide to talk about a challenge or triumph, do not forget to explain what you learned from the experience.
- Leadership opportunities—We value leadership at many levels (e.g. family, school, or community).
- Experiences outside the classroom—Consider experiences that have made an impact on your life (e.g., travels, church/temple, work, youth groups, or your family).
- Disabilities—If you are living with a disability, feel free to talk about it in the context of your ability to succeed.
- Culture—If your culture has influenced who you are, talk about it. Let it add to the picture we form of you.

**Stay focused.** Avoid common mistakes such as:

- Inappropriate use of humor.
- Creative writing (poems, scene setting, or clichés).
- Quotations—We want to know your thoughts and words, not someone else's.
- Generalities—Stick to facts and specifics you want us to know about yourself.
- Repetition—Do not talk about the same topic in each response. Give us new information we cannot find in other sections of the application.
- Lists of accomplishments or activities.
- Philosophy—Do describe your world in facts and examples. Don't ask questions without answers.
- Don't be campus specific. You're talking to all the UC campuses in your response.

### Need More Information?

Please visit the following UC website:  
[ucal.us/personalquestions](http://ucal.us/personalquestions)