

Application Tips for the UC Online Application for AHS Class of 2017

General

1. To access the online application, go to www.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply beginning August 1. Filing period is November 1 - 30th. Check your email frequently for communication, and be careful of spam guards blocking important emails. It is important to check your “portal” regularly for communications.
2. Each campus costs \$70
3. You need your transcript (including summer courses), which you received during counselor presentations in Government class, and your school’s “a-g” course list, available on the AHS web site under “Counseling”—“Preparing for College Applications.” You may need a copy of transcripts from community colleges or other institutions where you have taken courses so you can account for classes that do not appear on the AHS transcript.
4. Your first step should be to view the Virtual Tour of the application. You will avoid errors if you start with the tour.
5. For assistance in calculating your UC GPA, follow this link: http://www.csumentor.edu/planning/high_school/gpa_calculator.asp. Though this comes from the CSU website, the method for calculating your UC GPA is the same.
6. DO NOT USE YOUR SCHOOL EMAIL. Check your e-mail often, as campuses will contact you via e-mail. You will be given a UC email address that you will use for correspondence regarding your application. Record your user name and password in a safe place.
7. As you complete your application, hit the “save” button frequently.
8. When completed have someone proofread. Plan to send your application in by November 19. You may experience long delays if you apply near November 30th.
9. ***UC Berkeley as of Fall of 2015:*** some applicants to UC Berkeley will be invited to submit two letters of recommendation. This will be optional and not required. DO NOT ASK FOR A LETTER UNLESS YOU ARE SELECTED. Note: Teacher recommendations preferred. UCB will request letters by January 15th.
10. Waitlist – UC does not anticipate taking many students off of the waitlist this year. Recommendation from UC is to take any offer you get. Note: you must “opt in” to waitlist, you are not automatically put on waitlist.
11. UC’s anticipate more applications but are not admitting more students. Example: In recent years UCLA received 90,000 applications and only enrolled 16,000 freshman. UC Santa Cruz received 45,000 applications and only enrolled 18,000 freshman.
12. APPLY BROADLY! UC’s are extremely competitive and there is no guaranteed admission:

UC Berkeley: Admit rate 17.5%, GPA range: 4.12-4.30

UC Davis: Admit rate 42.3%, GPA range: 3.95 - 4.25

UC Irvine: Admit rate 40.7%, GPA range: 3.93 - 4.22

UCLA: Admit rate 18% GPA range: 4.12 - 4.30

UC Merced: Admit rate 73.7%, GPA range: 3.37 - 3.88

UC Riverside: Admit rate 66.2%, GPA range: 3.52-4.00

UC San Diego: Admit rate 35.9%, GPA range: 4.00-4.27

UC Santa Barbara: Admit rate 35.9%, GPA range: 3.92 - 4.23

UC Santa Cruz: Admit rate 58.4%, GPA range: 3.65-4.09

Step 1 – Personal Information

1. Make sure the name you use is your legal name and is consistent with the name you use on your high school transcript, SAT/ACT test scores and your social security number.

2. Undocumented students should not enter a social security number, and should mark “Other” for citizenship status. This information is secure and confidential to the University. Talk with your counselor for more information.

Step 2 - Campus Choices (Major & Scholarships)

1. Because each campus is different, it is okay to apply to different UC’s with different majors.
2. Berkeley does not allow for an alternate major. This is very significant for the highly competitive College of Engineering. You may have to decide which is more important to you - Berkeley or an engineering major. Please keep in mind that applying to a less impacted major with the intention of changing majors later on is strongly discouraged.
3. Identify as many scholarships within the application as you can that fit for you.
4. If you apply to UCSD, you must rank the colleges before you can move on in the application

Step 3 - Family Data

1. Family Data items are supplemental to your application. These questions are optional, except when noted for EOP or fee waiver applicants. It may be to your advantage to answer these questions if you have financial need, if you come from a large family, if your parents did not graduate from college, or if your parents are unemployed. If you leave this section blank, there is no disadvantage.
2. Do not use abbreviations for Street, Boulevard, Court, etc. Include a comma after cities and, if listed first, after last names.

Step 4 – Academic History

1. List all schools (including colleges and schools outside the country) attended in reverse chronological order, with the current school listed first.
2. Do not include plus (+) or minus (-) marks with your grades.
3. Include and properly mark honors and AP courses in progress and/or planned in the 12th grade.
4. Only identify honors courses that are identified as honors by a yellow star on the *a-g* list or a (+) on your transcript.
5. If in 9th grade you were in geometry or higher, or level two or higher in a language, you may list math/language taken in middle school as 1 year of credit. Please report the grades that you earned in these subjects from 8th grade.
6. UC’s require that students take Geometry. If Geometry taken in middle school, you will want to note this on your application in the section designated for math and foreign language classes taken in 7th and 8th grade.
7. Be sure to list ACCURATELY all courses and grades that appear on your AHS transcript. If you have repeated a class in which you originally had a D or F grade, the UC’s will calculate a GPA using the new or higher grade, but they still expect you to record ALL grades on the application. Repeated course must be equivalent.
8. For self-entered college courses use “CL” and only enter one grade per course. In the section for “schools attended,” be sure to list the college where the course was taken. Do not list college courses under Albany High School. You must list all community college courses you have taken, even if you were not pleased with the grade.
9. For senior grades, enter “In Progress”, “Planned” or “No Course” for each term. For example: U.S. Government: 1st semester – “In Progress”, 2nd semester – “None”. Economics: 1st semester – “None”, 2nd semester – “Planned”
10. You may use UC Doorways to find your school’s A-G course listing. <https://doorways.ucop.edu/list/>

Step 5 – Test Scores

1. When submitting your SAT or ACT scores, you only need to submit to one UC campus. All campuses will then have access to your official score report.
2. If you are not sure whether your SAT score or ACT score is higher, you may list them both.
3. The UC’s will use the highest combined score for the SAT from a single testing date or the highest composite score for the ACT plus Writing. List “Planned” SAT & ACT test dates for November and December.

4. SAT Subject Tests are not required for admission to the UC's. However, please read the information on this link for more detailed information about the use of subject tests:
www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/freshman/requirements/examination-requirement/SAT-subject-tests/index.html
5. If you are taking an AP exam this year, you will want to list the college you will be attending on your exam booklet so that all AP scores will be sent to that college.

Step 6 – Activities & Awards

1. Take your time and be patient when completing this section. Your parents may be able to help you remember. Fill out as much of this section as possible. Be creative, and do not be afraid to boast. Don't assume the reader is familiar with your particular club. Please spell out club/activity names. Do *not* use acronyms.
2. List awards, activities, work and service in descending order of importance, starting with those that are most academic. Prioritize your list of activities and awards by preceding each entry with numbers, e.g. "1", "2", "3". That way they'll be rank ordered.
3. Be accurate and consistent with your responses to the terms of "honor/award", "activity", "organization", "program", and "position".
4. Do *not* include a listing in *Who's Who*, or other similar private pay-for-recognition programs. List the positions of leadership as the first words on appropriate lines. Cap all the letters in positions of leadership titles, i.e. SECRETARY, COUNSELOR, CAPTAIN, TUTOR, etc.
5. Do *not* restrict yourself to *school related* awards, activities, work and service.
6. Unless you want to emphasize your identity, generally do not include the specific name of your religion, church, synagogue, or temple.
7. Include recognitions such as honor roll, National Merit, AP Scholar, etc. For "Honor Roll" or "Principal's List," you may use a description such as "Principal's List, 3 semesters"
8. Be brief. Too much wording in the descriptions of your honors, awards, activities or employment will distract the reader.
9. Average your hours per week and weeks per year and round up. There are about 20 weeks in a semester for a two-term school, 40 weeks in the school year, 12 weeks in the summer, and approximately 13 weeks in an athletic season.

Step 7- Additional Comments Boxes

- There will be Additional Comments Boxes after certain portions of the applications. Use these areas to describe anything else that you have not had the opportunity to include elsewhere in your application
- Do not write an additional essay or include a resume. You may use bullets and address more than one topic. Watch word limits.
- Use these spaces for a brief clarification and expansion on important details such as additional names, visa issues, problems with scheduling classes you requested, an explanation of inconsistencies in your academic record, or why you didn't take certain courses. This is also the place where you can account for how you have met the Language Other Than English requirement if you did not meet the requirement through coursework.
- We encourage you to explain if your course schedule was restricted in any way due to limitations with the master schedule (course conflicts, 6 vs 7 classes, etc)
- Explanation of Venture and EDSET, refer to AHS Course Catalog on AHS website
- Explain prerequisites for advanced math and science if you repeated a course after earning a C (requirements are higher than for UC). This can limit science options, too.

Step 8 – Personal Insight Questions

1. Type in a word processing program, double-space, spell check, and use 12-point type with a common font such as Times New Roman. Save as a “Word Document,” then copy and paste into the application.
2. A highly recommended resource for students is “UC Personal Inquiry Question Tips”, written by the UC staff. Go to the Albany High web site at <http://ahs.ausdk12.org/> click on “Counseling”, then “Preparing for College Applications.”
3. Note the word “or” in each of the questions. Be sure to address just one topic for each response.
4. If possible, use one of your responses for the Common Application Essay. The main purpose of the Personal Insight Questions is to gather as much information as possible about you, the prospective student, so remember as you write, the importance of “information, information, information.” Your writing skill isn’t as important as telling the reader something essential and in depth about you.
5. These are personal insight questions, not a formal essay.
6. Give specific supporting examples in your statements such as; personal characteristics and intellectual traits.
7. ***Avoid*** writing about someone else, something that happened before high school, a minor challenge or obstacle, or your psychological or sociological journey. Avoid teenage humor.
8. Start early, make revisions and have 2 or 3 people read it, including an English teacher.
9. You will have 8 questions to choose from, you must respond to 4 of the 8 questions
10. You may choose any of 8 questions, however you should select questions that are most relevant to your experience and that best reflect your individual circumstances
11. Each response is limited to a maximum of 350 words
12. Below are the UC Personal Insight Questions, please read through the UC Guidelines or Things to Consider when answering

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?

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?

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?

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 strive to overcome them? What personal characteristics or skills did you call on to overcome this challenge? How did overcoming this barrier help shape who are you today?

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?"

6. Describe your favorite academic subject and explain how it has influenced you.

Things to consider: Discuss how your interest in the subject developed and describe any experience you have had inside and outside the classroom — such as volunteer work, summer programs, participation in student organizations and/or activities — and what you have gained from your involvement.

Has your interest in the subject influenced you in choosing a major and/or career? Have you been able to pursue coursework at a higher level in this subject (honors, AP, IB, college or university work)?

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

Things to consider: Think of community as a term that can encompass 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?

8. What is the one thing that you think sets you apart from other candidates applying to the University of California?

Things to consider: 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. From your point of view, what do you feel makes you belong on one of UC's campuses? When looking at your life, what does a stranger need to understand in order to know you? 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? We're not necessarily looking for what makes you unique compared to others, but what makes you, YOU.