
All in the details:

Maximizing the activities & awards section

Agenda

- How activities & awards fit within comprehensive review
- Activities & awards overview
- Case studies
- Final tips and insight

Comprehensive review

- Grade-point average (GPA)
- Courses completed/planned
- AP, IB, UC-honors, transferable college courses
- Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC)
- Quality of senior-year
- Academic opportunities in school
- **Achievements in special projects**
- Geographic location
- **Performance in academic subject areas**
- Improvements in academic performance
- **Special talents, achievements, and awards**
- **Participation in educational preparation programs**
- **Academic accomplishments within context of life experiences**

What is UC looking for?



Commitment

How long has the student been doing that activity?
How much time has been committed to it?



Progression

Has the student worked on a particular skill or activity?
Can they demonstrate growth over time?



Leadership

How has the student demonstrated leadership?
What roles have they held?


Activities & awards logistics

Quality over quantity

- Students can enter up to **20 activities & awards** across 6 different categories
- UC campuses have **no preference** for specific types of involvement

Activities & awards

Add activities & awards



* required

You can enter your activities and awards one at a time. First, select a category from the dropdown menu below. Once you've selected a category, you'll be able to tell us more about the activity or award in the follow-up questions.

Description of categories

Award or honor: We want to know about the awards and honors you've received that mean the most to you.

Educational preparation programs: Any programs or activities that have enriched your academic experiences or helped you prepare for college. ⓘ

Extracurricular activity: These could include hobbies, clubs, sports or anything else you haven't had the chance to tell us about.

Other coursework: These are courses other than those required for UC admission (courses that do not fit in UC's A-G subject areas). ⓘ

Volunteering / Community service: These are activities you've donated time and effort to without getting paid.

Work experience: This is for telling us about any paid jobs or paid internships you've had. ⓘ

Activity/Award [1]

Category*

-- select --

Save & continue Cancel

Consistency and commitment

- Don't forget about senior year
- "After 12th grade" is meant for students who completed a gap year and for transfer students
- Use an average of hours spent on an activity if hours vary during the year

When did you participate in this activity? *

If you participated during the summer, select the grade you were in before that summer.

- 9th grade
- 10th grade
- 11th grade
- 12th grade
- After 12th grade

How much time did you spend on this activity? *

It's ok to estimate, but try to be as accurate as possible.

Hours spent per week:

Weeks spent per year:

Save & continue

Cancel

Details and content

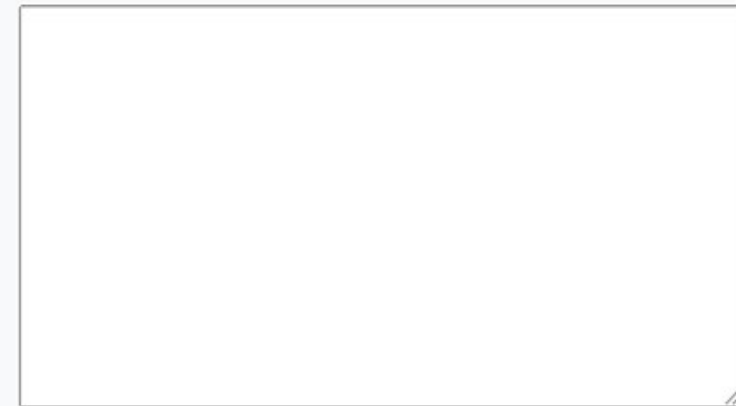
- Students will have **60 characters** to name the activity
- **350 characters** to describe the activity
- Students should focus on **their** experience within the activity - what was their role, responsibility, etc.?
- Content > Formatting

What's the name of the activity? *

60 characters

What did you do? *

Think about your experience, and what you accomplished and learned. We'd also like to know if you've held a leadership role, which can mean more than just a title — it can mean being a mentor to others, acting as a point-person in charge of a specific task, or taking a lead role in organizing an event or project.



350 characters remaining

Context matters

- Level of recognition
- **250 characters** for students to describe the organization or eligibility requirements for an award
- Use of earnings

Level of recognition *

School

City / Community

State

Regional

National

International

Type of award or honor *

Academic (for example: Honor societies, academic competitions & programs, grade-based & department awards)

Non-academic (for example: Athletics, leadership, volunteering/community service)

Please tell us how you've used your earnings from all of the jobs you've listed. This information will NOT be used to determine financial aid — rather, it gives us more context about you and your experiences.

How have you used or will you use your earnings?

250 characters remaining

[Save & continue](#) [Cancel](#)



Traditional vs non-traditional activities

Traditional versus non-traditional activities

- How does your student spend their time **outside of the classroom**?
- All activities are valued equally
- Activities do not need to be formal, nor do they have to be sponsored by a school



How to address a lack of involvement

- **Context** is essential and can be found throughout the application
 - Activities and awards
 - Use of earnings
 - Additional comments
 - Personal insight questions





Case studies

Example 1: Honor or award

Honor/Award

AP Scholar with Distinction

Years Awarded

11th Grade

Level of Recognition

Statewide

Description

I took seven AP tests, 5 were offered as school classes and 2 were self-studied. I self-studied AP Environmental Science (9th) and Biology (10th).

Eligibility Requirements

This award is given to students who meet two criteria with their AP exams. They need to score a 3 or higher on at least 5 exams, and their overall AP score average has to be 3.5 or higher.

Example 2: Extracurricular activity

Activity	Years Participated	Hours Per Week Weeks Per Year
OverWatch Tournament Finalist Winner	9 th , 10 th , 11 th , 12 th Grade	22 hours per week, 52 weeks per year

Description

Out of 100 gamers, I placed 1st overall in my local single-elimination E-Sports tournament winning a \$500 cash prize. The tournament requires a preliminary qualifier of over 300 players to play.

Example 3: Extracurricular activity

Activity	Years Participated	Hours Per Week Weeks Per Year
Soccer (School & Club)	9 th , 10 th , 11 th , 12 th Grade	30 hours per week, 48 weeks per year

Description

Playing soccer competitively since elementary school. Play for school and club outside of school. Captain of both teams for the last two years. Organize practices with coaches. Lead drills. Work with members of the team. Host team bonding events for new and veteran members.

Example 4: Educational preparation program

Activity	Years Participated	Hours Per Week Weeks Per Year
Destination College Advising Corps	12 th Grade	1 hour per week, 32 weeks per year
Description		

DCAC works to increase the opportunities and resources provided to first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students who enter and complete college. They help students apply to colleges and financial aid, and also take us on college tours.

Example 5: Educational preparation program

Activity	Years Participated	Hours Per Week Weeks Per Year
Destination College Advising Corps	12 th Grade	1 hour per week, 32 weeks per year
Description		

DCAC helps motivated high school students get a jump start on their college plans. It helped me know exactly what I had to do to get ready for college, helped me prepare for the application process, helped me find scholarships, understand what FAFSA is & how it could help me, and it taught me that I don't know everything, it's okay to ask for help.

Examples 6: Other coursework

Course	Years Participated	Hours Per Week Weeks Per Year
UCLA Summer Session: Design & Media Arts	11 th Grade	32 hour per week, 2 weeks per year
Description		

The classes explored a variety of media examining different practices and design methods applied to the domains of print, net, worlds, and video. All work focused on a common theme and all four classes contributed to the creation of an integrated, multimedia exhibition at the end of the session. I learned typography, “Worldbuilding” as a for

Example 7: Volunteer/community service

Activity	Years Participated	Hours Per Week Weeks Per Year
Second Harvest Food Bank	10 th , 11 th Grade	12 hours per week, 30 weeks per year

Description

As a lead volunteer, I would delegate my peers to take bulk items, like rice and beans, and disperse them into smaller portions to prepare them for distribution which involves weighing and some math. On other occasions, I package and hand out food drives.

Organization Description

The food bank currently serves over 400,000 people a year throughout 7 counties. Second Harvest distributes over 12 million pounds of supplemental groceries to families and individuals suffering from food insecurity.

Example 8: Employment

Where did you work?

[Redacted] Landscaping

When did you work?

9th, 10th, 11th, 12th Grade

Hours Per Week (include summer, if applicable)

~8 hours per week
~12 hour per week (summer)

What were your job responsibilities?

Helped my father mow lawns, trim flowers, set up dripping and sprinkler systems, check for problems with sprinklers and dripping, blow leaves, cut leaves/branches, rake leaves, and other general landscaping.

Describe the company or organization you worked for?

[Redacted] Landscaping Services has over 20 employees providing its services to surrounding cities.

Example 9: Employment

Job Title

Business Owner (Shopify)

When did you work?

9th, 10th, 11th, 12th Grade

Hours Per Week (include summer, if applicable)

~ 30 hours per week including summer

What were your job responsibilities?

I started a business selling custom clay earrings during the pandemic using Shopify. I sell market and manage all of my product to customers from all over the world. This business has supported me and my family.

Describe the company or organization you worked for?



Last insights and tips

Common missed opportunities

Leaving this section blank

Assuming we know the activity or acronym

No clarity on roles and responsibilities

Unaware of the importance of the section

Talk more about the activity than themselves

Common myths & misconceptions

- **Twenty (20) entries are mandatory.**
 - We do not have a set number of activities that are required. We will look for commitment, progression, and leadership. Quantity is not valued more than quality.
- **Each entry must be 350 characters long.**
 - Being clear and concise is an important part of this section. We aren't necessarily looking for complete sentences.



Common myths & misconceptions

- **Readers only want to see school activities.**
 - Students should consider school, community, county, state, national, and international involvements.
- **The {insert category} section is the most important.**
 - No specific category in the activities and awards section is more important than the others.
- **They don't read it anyway!**
 - This section of the application is one of two ways to get to know the student outside of the classroom. They should consider the activities and awards section their unofficial resume.

Last-minute reminders

- UC values academic and non-academic achievements
- **Commitment, Leadership, Progression**
- **Context and clarity** are important
- Encourage students to think beyond school-based activities and awards



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

COUNSELOR

CONFERENCE

THANK YOU