Navigating the UC application
Tips for enhancing student outcomes
Special note

- This presentation is not a step-by-step walk-through of the UC application. Instead, we will focus on specific areas with tips that you can use to help your students successfully navigate the application.
Creating an Account:
Advise your student to create an account using a valid email address that they use frequently. This email address will be used throughout the UC application process. They should always keep their password secure. It must include upper and lowercase letters, a number, a special character.

- Once “Create a New Account” is complete, an e-mail confirming the start of the application will be sent.
- Campuses use e-mail to send critical, time-sensitive correspondence to applicants, so students should provide an e-mail address that is checked regularly and will be kept until enrolling at UC.
- Remind students to adjust e-mail filters to accept mail from UC addresses.
Selecting Term & Level

Students must select the appropriate level for which they are applying.

• A student who has enrolled in a regular term, whether it be in fall/winter/spring at a college or university after graduating from high school is considered a transfer student.

• Most campuses consider students at the junior level only, but certain programs and campuses may also consider sophomore and senior transfers.

**Note:** students with CCC coursework only – regardless of the number of units completed at the CCC – are not senior-level transfers and should NOT check the senior-level transfer button. Indicating senior-level transfer will significantly reduce the student's transfer options. Only UC coursework (both lower- and upper-division) and upper-division coursework from other 4-year institutions can jeopardize a student's junior standing.

• Middle college and dual enrollment students are considered freshman applicants since they have not graduated from high school with a diploma or GED.

Additional notes: Select campuses may be open for lower division transfers and/or winter/spring admission, but most campuses will primarily focus on fall transfers at the
junior level.
About You Section

- And now, we are going to dive into the UC Application, beginning with the About You section. Overall, subsections give us a glimpse of the student’s demographics, backgrounds, and household information.
- We will cover two areas in this section: Citizenship & Residency and the Statement of Legal Residence.
Citizenship and Residency
As you help your students navigate this section, we want to remind you that everything is confidential and encrypted regardless of citizenship status
Statement of Legal Residency

To determine a student's in-state or out-of-state tuition, the student must indicate whether or not they are currently living in-state for tuition purposes (read bullet points):

- California students who transfer from an out-of-state school should note that their tuition costs will be based on their permanent address.
- Out-of-state applicants will have to pay out-of-state tuition if their permanent address is out-of-state.
- Undocumented students may qualify for exemptions after submitting additional information at a later time.
Campus & Majors

Now that we have personal context of the student, up next on the application is the campuses and majors students will be applying for.

- Students will need to select which campuses they want to apply to by checking off the box on the map.
- Then they’ll need to select a primary and alternate major for each campus.
Campus & Majors continue...

However, if a student isn’t sure which College their major is in, they can opt for the Category view.

- This is the view for selecting campuses and majors by College or by Category.
- Students can select both a major and an alternate major, if available but keep in mind alternate majors are not considered at every campus.
- If a campus is unable to offer the applicant a place in the first-choice major, they may consider them for an alternate major—be sure the alternate major is in a subject area that the student really wants to study (and in some cases, it should be in a different area of study than the primary major).

Note that not all campuses will consider students for an alternate major, and that some campuses may have restrictions on changing majors once admitted to that major.

This is an example from UC Santa Barbara using the Category view for Engineering and Computer Science.
San Diego Colleges

• If a student is applying to UC San Diego, they must rank the colleges in order of preference to have the best chance of assignment to the college of their choice.
• The order of ranking of colleges does not affect the chances for admission to UC San Diego.
• Boxes to rank the colleges only appear once the student clicks the “Learn more about UCSD college system” link (opens a pop-up window). Students should carefully read the information provided to understand the “theme” of each college at UC San Diego.
Some majors may require applicants to submit a supplemental application or materials. If so, applicants will see messaging in the UC application when selecting that major. Requirements and deadlines for supplemental applications will vary by campus and program.
**Academic History**

The Academic History section of the application has multiple subsections

- We want to highlight a few of these subsections in the following slides to address common questions and issues to look out for.
- The subsections that we’re focusing on include the Transfer Admission Planner tool, Colleges, and Additional Information.
UC Transfer Admission Planner (UC TAP)

Applicants with a UC TAP account should note the following:

- Data can be exported directly from TAP to the UC application
- Applicants should verify all information is correct after exporting from UC TAP
- After the initial UC TAP export, any changes to colleges, courses, grades, etc., must be made directly in the UC application

Students that may already have a TAP account are those that have applied for the Transfer Admission Guarantee program or attended virtual transfer admission advising offered by the UC campuses.

Importing data from TAP will save applicants a little time, and if they are a TAG applicant, help ensure consistency between their TAG and admission applications.

After the data has uploaded to the UC application, the applicant should compare all of the data with their unofficial transcripts to verify accuracy.

- Applicants should be cautious in case the information they last entered into TAP is no longer accurate, such as courses they planned to take but ended up withdrawing from, or courses that have since been repeated or academically
- Once the data from UC TAP has been exported to the application, any changes will need to be made directly in the application.
Entering Colleges

When adding colleges attended, the applicant will need to enter the start and end dates of their enrollment at each college.

- That includes any terms in which they have an academic record, including withdrawals, academic renewals, and repeated courses.
- If your student takes courses at multiple colleges from a district, they may think that since the colleges are part of the same district, each college is just a different campus or location of the same college entity. However, students should enter their coursework from each college accurately, according to their transcripts.
- It is important students add the correct term system:
  - For students enrolled in winter session, they should select the term type “Semester with intersession”. Otherwise if they select semester, they won’t have the option to enter any winter session coursework.
  - And if they choose “Quarter” their units will count as quarter units and may make them seem as if they don’t have enough units for junior standing.
- For students that earned college credit while in high school (dual enrollment) be sure they count and enter the courses taken and credits earned as those can be used for UC eligibility.
- After this, they will enter courses by term. They will do this for each college attended.
- Note, if a student attended a CCC, ASSIST certified courses will appear in the application. Non-UC-transferable courses will need to be manually entered.
UC-E & UC-M

If 7-course pattern is met with CCC coursework, students will not see these questions.

This page will display if student is using non-CCC courses or AP scores to meet UC-E or UC-M.

UC-E UC-M

- Applicants will need two UC transferable English composition courses and one UC transferable mathematics course to meet the minimum eligibility requirements for transfer admission.
- In addition to entering those courses into their academic history, they'll need to select the appropriate answers to these questions to confirm the status of their UC-E and UC-M courses.
Meeting UC-E with AP

● If student is using an AP score of 3 or better to meet one UC-E course, they will mark the status of the second English course as “None planned/not completed.”
  ○ This will bring up the reminder that an AP exam can be used to fulfill one of the courses and instruct students to enter their AP scores in the Test Scores section of the application.

● Once the student has entered their AP scores into the Test Score section, then can return to this minimum requirements page and see the new note indicating which exam and score is being used to fulfill one of the UC-E requirements.
Enrollment Gap & Additional Information

- Students must provide an explanation for enrollment gaps occurring during any regular college term.
- Their explanation must include their activities during the gap.
- It’s also helpful for the applicant to confirm that they were not enrolled at any college or university during the gap.
- If their enrollment gap explanation is not detailed enough, we may have to message the student for more information.

- The “additional comments” section is an opportunity for students to include information about their academic history that they weren’t able to explain elsewhere on the application.
- Not intended to be used as a space to list additional activities or awards, courses, extra or extended Personal Insight Questions, or their resume.
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# Test scores

Applicants should enter any AP or IB scores they may have.

Students whose language of instruction in 9th grade or higher was not English and who are not native speakers are required to self-report scores from an acceptable English language proficiency test (TOEFL, IELTS, or DET).

Exam scores can only help students in the application to meet eligibility and/or unit requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test scores</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>IB exams</td>
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<td>English language proficiency tests</td>
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<td>International exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review</td>
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## Test Scores

- These scores whether good or bad will not affect the admission decision.
- If a student has a mix of passing and non-passing scores, students should include both. This section needs to appear exactly as their score report, which we will ask for after an offer of admission is made.

### English proficiency exams:

- Students whose high school/secondary school and/or college/university coursework was **not** conducted in English and who are not native English-speakers are required to self-report scores from an acceptable English language proficiency test (TOEFL, IELTS, or DET) in the application. Students may use scores from specific sections of the SAT or ACT to satisfy English proficiency in lieu of TOEFL, IELTS or DET.
- Official English proficiency scores are not required unless/until a student is offered admission to UC. Students will then submit their official scores directly to the campus where they intend to enroll.
Activities and Awards

Students will be asked to briefly describe whatever activity or award they report on the application. We encourage detailed, but concise descriptions. There is nothing in this section that can directly harm a students' chances of admission, but drawn-out and flowery language is not encouraged.

Quality vs quantity: students do not need to fill in all 20 spaces. Campuses look for what the student has achieved (quality) rather than how many activities the student has been involved in (quantity). Transfer applicants are not expected to have the same level of extracurricular involvement as freshman applicants because, as adults, they have additional responsibilities.
For campuses that do use this information in the evaluation process, it should also be noted that there is not one type of activity or experience that stands out more than others. When working with students, it is best to remind them that the UC campuses do take context into account. For example, if a student is required to help with their siblings after school, they should include that in their application. Not only would childcare count as an activity, but it would also provide context for fewer awards and activities. The transfer student community is very diverse, so we expect to encounter a wide range of experiences from all of our students coming from different backgrounds. There is nothing that can harm a student on the UC application, so students should be as thoroughly honest about their circumstances as they feel comfortable being.
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sections</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Creative Tips</th>
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| Volunteering/Community Service    | • Community service organizations  
• Tutoring and mentoring programs  
• Family responsibilities / Childcare | Have your student think about things they have done that they were not paid for. Do they help their parents on weekends with childcare? Do they assist elderly family or community members? |
| Work Experience                   | • Research assistantships  
• Part-time or full-time jobs (employee of the month, etc.)  
• Internships | This section helps us understand students’ responsibilities professionally through work or academically through internships. |
Scholarships

Applicants should select all categories that apply to them.

This section does not affect an applicant’s chances of admission.

Not all scholarships listed are offered at every campus.

Scholarships

• All UC campuses offer scholarships for students who meet specific criteria. There is a category specifically for Transfer students, but transfer applicants are not limited to this category.
• The applicant should review each scholarship choice and select all those that match their characteristics, interests, and background. There is no limit to the amount of scholarships students can select.
• Research other campus-based scholarships in the link provided at the bottom of the screen.
• Note: Not all scholarships listed are available at every campus. But, scholarships will only display if they are offered at one or more campuses the student has selected.
Personal Insight Questions (PIQs)

PIQ responses provide the opportunity for students to advocate for themselves in the UC application. Each question is relevant to the selection criteria of each UC campus.

Please note the following:

- There is one required question all transfer students must answer.
- Transfer students will then choose 3 more questions to answer from the remaining 7.
- All questions have equal value.
- There is no wrong way to answer a PIQ.

Another opportunity for us to learn more about you is within the Personal Insight Questions (PIQs). This is the written section of the UC application. Think of this as your opportunity to share additional and more detailed information that cannot be found elsewhere in the UC app, including what circumstances/experiences have shaped your academic/personal experiences.

- Applicants must respond to three (3) of the seven (7) prompts, plus the mandatory prompt (for a total of four responses). All questions have equal value, so respond to the three additional questions that are most relevant to you and your experiences!

- Keep in mind, these are not essays. With only 350 words allowed per response, your PIQ responses should be direct and literal. Focus on what information you are sharing in your responses, not the style of your writing. Readers will not be evaluating these like a writing sample. This is an important part of the UC application and the campus review, so be sure that you are taking your time and using the available resources to maximize this section.
We know that our students are already using or experimenting with ChatGPT and other AI tools. Here are some initial thoughts about this from our Directors.

- First off, we believe that this may be a useful tool in planning and drafting a response to the PIQ’s. It could be helpful in brainstorming and refining ideas. Some Directors noted that the tool could be a helpful collaborator and may even level the playing field for those students who cannot afford the paid consultants that some students use.

- However, the Statement of Application Integrity reads that “all information must be complete, accurate and reflect their independent thinking and writing.” One danger of submitting an unedited AI response is that this might be flagged for plagiarism. https://apply.universityofcalifornia.edu/docs/StatementOfIntegrity.pdf

- Another concern is that AI tools are unable to provide the things that add the most value to the UC application: a student’s own voice and a student’s own experiences. How much value will we find in 350 words on leadership or resiliency or creativity that don’t directly address a student’s own experiences?

- Finally, we ask students to write in clear, simple, direct prose—-as they would in an interview or conversation. This should ease a student's concern about needing to use some sort of AI tool to help write their response. It may take more time to build a good ChatGPT prompt than to write a clear PIQ response.

**Note:** In compliance with prop 209, UC does not use race, ethnicity, and gender in the admissions review. In light of the Supreme Court decision regarding affirmative action, we wish to remind everyone that each PIQ answer will continue to be reviewed in the same manner as before. Students should continue to share their experiences, set context to their accomplishments and provide insight into their individual circumstances. Writing in their own voice about their cultural identity, values, and/or beliefs continues to be encouraged in the PIQs.
Additional Comments

There is also an “Additional Comments” field in the UC application. That can be used if there is important information that you didn’t get to share elsewhere in the application that you want the campuses to know. This is also not an essay, so you can be direct. Do not use this section to answer an additional PIQ question!

Your students can use this section to share anything such as… (read slide)

Please note that this section is not intended to be an opportunity to expand upon, or write a new, PIQ response. Not all 550 words need to utilized.
Friendly reminders

• Validate students’ experiences.
• There is no perfect formula for a “strong” PIQ response.
• Encourage students to make use of all narrative components of the UC application.
• There is a misconception that students are not allowed to write about their identities, ideals, values, or beliefs.
  • While not true, it is more important to focus on how these have impacted, or why they are important to, the student.

• Validate students’ experiences
• There is no perfect formula for a “strong” PIQ response. Rather, have students focus on providing information and context about themselves
• We are interested in the student’s experiences in and out of the classroom. We want to see demonstrated interest, initiative, and active participation
• In compliance with prop 209, UC does not use race, ethnicity, and gender in the admissions review. In light of the Supreme Court decision regarding affirmative action, we wish to remind everyone that each PIQ answer will continue to be reviewed in the same manner as before. Students should continue to share their experiences, set context to their accomplishments and provide insight into their individual circumstances. Writing in their own voice about their cultural identity, values, and/or beliefs continues to be encouraged in the PIQs.
Review & submit

Submit between October 1 and November 30

Fee waiver is calculated automatically

Applicants will know they submitted successfully when they:

- Pay $80 per campus ($95 for international students) unless they qualify for fee waiver (4 free applications)
- Receive a UC application ID number and email confirmation

Review & Submit

- The review and submit page serves as a final checklist for students to view what sections have been completed and what they are missing.
- The application will not be available for submission until all sections have been completed--check mark indicates completion
- Once the student has successfully completed every section of the UC application, they will be directed to fill out the release authorizations and statement of integrity, and pay the nonrefundable application fee.
- $80 nonrefundable application fee entitles student to apply to one UC. If student applies to more than one campus, they must pay an additional $80 for each campus selected. For international and non-immigrant applicants, it’s a nonrefundable fee of $95 per campus
- Payments can be made by either credit card, or by mail.
- The online application automatically determines application fees and fee waivers. If applicable, UC will cover up to four UC campus application fees as determined by the UC application. The fee waiver is for US citizens, permanent residents, and applicants eligible for AB 540.
- Once submitted, students will receive a confirmation email with their UC application ID. Please also note that official transcripts are NOT needed at this time. If admitted to UC, then students must submit final transcripts to their respective UC campus admissions office

Additional important tips

- Letters of recommendation are not required (nor read) unless a campus has specifically asked for them or unless the student has applied to a program/major that requires them
- Students should keep handy their application ID number in case they need to contact an Admissions Counselor/UCOP Help Desk regarding their application.
UC Application Timeline

The UC application is available for students to start filling out in early August. There is no priority considered for students who start early or submit their application during the early part of the submission period. All students who meet UC junior transfer eligibility requirements and apply within the submission window will have their application thoroughly reviewed.

Students interested in TAG should apply to one UC campus of their interest during the month of September. That same campus should also receive a UC application from students during the UC application submission period. Students may apply to as many campuses as they would like, but only one UC can receive a TAG application per student.

Students will have the opportunity to update their application with those grades and courses via the Transfer Academic Update (TAU). The TAU will open on December 15, 2023. The priority deadline for a students’ first TAU is January 31. Students will indicate their fall 2023 courses as “In Progress” and their spring 2024 courses as “Planned” on the application since their fall 2023 grades and spring 2024 courses will not be finalized until after submitting the UC application. In most cases, students can submit as many TAUs as they would like after January 31 through March 31, but they should check in with each of their applied-to UC campuses to verify what their preferences are for the TAU. Once a student has completed a TAU, the campuses will begin their evaluation process.

The campuses typically notify students between March and April. Please have students let us know whether or not they plan to attend the campuses they were accepted to via the Statement of Intent to Register (SIR) by June 1. If a student is waitlisted at a campus and they’re interested in attending, they must first opt-in to the waitlist. Campuses release waitlist decisions between June and July. Please have students reach out to their campus of interest if they have questions regarding the waitlist process of that campus.
Need additional support?

If students have questions, they can contact the application help desk:

Email

cinfo@applyucsupport.net

Phone within the U.S.

(800) 207-1710

Phone outside the U.S.

(925) 298-6856
Counselor resources

- **Counselor resource library**
  - Personal Insight Questions guides (*English & Spanish versions available*)
  - Presenting yourself on the UC application guide

- **UCOP community college webinar series**
  - PIQ workshop: Wednesday, October 11 at noon

Counselor resource library:
https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/connect-to-resources/resource-library.html

UCOP community college webinar series:
https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/events/ccc-webinars.html
Thank you