

PERSONAL STATEMENT GUIDE FOR TRANSFER APPLICANTS

UCLA Undergraduate Admission

What is the personal statement?

The personal statement is your opportunity to introduce yourself to the people reading your application. Be open, be honest, and be authentic. The personal statement should add clarity, depth, and context to the information you present in other parts of the application.

The basics

- The personal statement is made up of two required prompts.
- You have 1,000 words to answer both required prompts.
- You may allocate the word count as you wish, but each response should be a minimum of 250 words.
- Use a word processing program to write your responses—don't type them directly into the application. This way, you can keep track of the word count and print copies for review. When you're ready, copy and paste into the application.

Personal statement prompts

Prompt #1:

What is your intended major? Discuss how your interest in the subject developed and describe any experience you have had in the field — such as volunteer work, internships and employment, participation in student organizations and activities — and what you have gained from your involvement.

SUGGESTIONS If you haven't had experience in the field, consider including experience in the classroom. This may include working with faculty or doing research projects. If you are applying to multiple campuses with a different major at each campus, think about approaching the topic from a broader perspective, or find a common thread among the majors you've chosen.

Prompt #2:

Tell us about a personal quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution or experience that is important to you. What about this quality or accomplishment makes you proud and how does it relate to the person you are?

SUGGESTIONS Choose a topic that has not been addressed in detail in another section of the application. Keep the information relevant to your personal experiences.

Suggestions for writing the personal statement

Relax! This is one of many pieces of information we consider in reviewing your application. Your response can only add value to the application. An admission decision will not be based on your personal statement alone.

Start early. Give yourself plenty of time for preparation, careful composition and revisions.

Brainstorm topics. See the back for a worksheet to help get started.

Once you've narrowed down your topics, start thinking about what you learned from your experiences and how they shaped other aspects of your life.

Write persuasively. Expand on a topic by using specific, concrete examples to support the points you want to make.

Use "I" statements. Talk about yourself so that we can get to know your personality, talents, accomplishments and potential for success on a UC campus.

Proofread and edit. Make sure your writing is clear. Review content and overall message. You may not have space to tell us everything so make your words count. Have a counselor, teacher, or friend review your personal statements.

Avoid common mistakes:

- Talking about one campus: Your responses should be applicable to all UC campuses to which you are applying
- Inappropriate use of humor: What's funny to you might be offensive to others
- Creative writing (poems, clichés): We are looking for content, not style
- Quotations: We want to know your thoughts & words, not someone else's
- Generalities: Stick to facts and personal examples
- Repetition: Give us new information we can't find in other sections of the application
- Asking philosophical questions: Get to the point and tell us what you mean
- Acronyms: Spell it out for us!

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Worksheet: Get started on the personal statement

This worksheet is designed to help transfer applicants start the writing process for the personal statement. Check with your current college to see what services are available to assist with completing the UC application. Many colleges offer UC application and personal statement workshops to help you with this process.

Prompt #1

What is your intended major? Discuss how your interest in the subject developed and describe any experience you have had in the field — such as volunteer work, internships and employment, participation in student organizations and activities — and what you have gained from your involvement.

Things to consider before responding to prompt #1:

What majors are you considering?

How have classroom experiences shaped your interest in this field?

- 1.
- 2.

What experiences outside of the classroom have helped develop this interest?

- 1.
- 2.

What other influences (family, culture, community, etc.) have steered you toward this field?

- 1.
- 2.

What are your long terms goals in this field?

- 1.
- 2.

Prompt #2

Tell us about a personal quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution or experience that is important to you. What about this quality or accomplishment makes you proud and how does it relate to the person you are?

Things to consider before responding to prompt #2:

What do you consider one of your strengths?

- 1.

Provide two examples of when or how you demonstrate that strength:

- 1.
- 2.

What experiences or events have had a significant impact on you?

- 1.
- 2.

What makes you proud of those experiences or the way you handled those experiences?

- 1.
- 2.

Did anything overlap? Can you see areas where you want to share more information? If so, consider using this topic to respond to prompt #2.

Special instructions for veterans: Because the University is interested in knowing about your military service, you may wish to use one of the prompts to describe how your military service has been instrumental in developing your educational plans.

What about “Additional Comments?”

After you complete the two prompts, you will see a third section called “Additional Comments.” This is an optional section and **should not be used as a continuation of your personal statement.** Instead, you should use this section to:

- Provide additional clarification or expand on academic performance, honors, awards or activities.

- Share information regarding a nontraditional status or circumstances and life challenges that have impacted you, if you have not already addressed them in the personal statements.

- Describe anything else that you HAVE NOT had the opportunity to include elsewhere in your application.

Ready, set...apply! The UC application is available online at universityofcalifornia.edu/apply.