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The NEW Personal Insight Questions

UC Counselor Conference
September 2016

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Overview

- Why did we change to the new questions?
- Who did we consult?
- What are the questions?
- What does UC expect from the responses?
- What resources are available to assist counselors and students?

Why are we changing the questions?

- The prompts were last changed in 2008.
- Admission Directors were concerned about the existing prompts.
- Move to more direct questions – less guessing about what we want.
- Give students the choice to select questions which are most relevant to them.
- Each question aligns to one or more of the comprehensive review criteria.

What are the parameters for responding to the questions?



- The questions are active now in the fall 2017 application.
- Freshmen must select 4 questions to respond to from the 8 options.
- Each response has a limit of 350 words.
- All questions have equal value; there is no advantage or disadvantage to choosing certain questions over others.
- Students **cannot** respond to more than 4 questions in total; **cannot** use additional comment box to respond to more questions.

Who did we consult?

- High School Counselors
- UC Admissions Officers
- UC Faculty/Other Faculty
- Students



What are the freshmen 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.

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.

3. What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time?

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

What are the freshmen questions?

(cont'd)

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?

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

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

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

Keep in Mind ...

- All questions have equal value
- 350 word maximum for each response
- This is NOT an essay
- Writing style & grammar are not part of our review
- Admission review is an additive process

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**What does UC expect
from the responses?**

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- Greater authenticity
- Maximize the student voice
- No more guessing about what we want from students
- More information about the student – who they are and the context of their accomplishments
- More relevant information that best reflects individual circumstances

How can you help your students?

- Suggest they not *overly* focus on style or structure.
Admissions does not grade on style – creativity, entertainment, or uniqueness – we place value on content.
- Does the student make his/herself the focal point?
Are they using “I” and “my” statements?
- Is the student providing new information in a response?
Are they repeating themselves or adding depth or clarity to their application?

How can you help your students?

- Remind students that the personal insight responses are NOT reviewed in a vacuum.

All freshman review process is comprehensive.

- UC uses the responses to support and/or explain other information in the application.

Resources

- **Freshman questions & directions**

<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/personal-questions/freshman/index.html>

- **Guide for freshman applicants (brainstorming worksheet)**

<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/files/uc-personal-questions-guide-freshman.pdf>

- **Writing tips**

<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/personal-questions/writing-tips/index.html>

- **Video**

<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/personal-questions/index.html>

- **FAQs about the personal insight questions**

<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/q-and-a/personal-questions/index.html>

- **Download only the list of questions**

<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/personal-questions/freshman/index.html>

-- see the blue box on the right side of the screen

Your feedback

We would appreciate hearing from you if you have suggestions about additional types of guidance materials we *might* be able to provide to you, students and/or parents.

EMAIL Suggestions to: AskUC@ucop.edu



SUBJECT LINE:

Personal Insight Questions - Feedback

Recap ... Because it's worth saying again!

- Students must provide responses to 4 questions
- 350 word maximum for each response
- All questions have equal value
- Students should select questions that are most relevant to them
- Greater student voice/less coaching and strategizing
- UC does not require an essay with the application

“Tell me which question to answer?”



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Questions?

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