

# THE UC PERSONAL STATEMENT

**WHAT IS THE PERSONAL STATEMENT?** The Personal Statement is an integral part of the UC application. The content of the Personal Statement should add clarity, richness, and meaning to the information you present in other parts of your UC application, enabling the Office of Admissions to form the best impression of you.

## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

- You have 1,000 words to answer both prompts.
- Your shortest response should be at least 250 words.
- Avoid the use of special characters.
- Feedback and suggestions from others are useful, but you are responsible for writing the Personal Statement.

## PERSONAL STATEMENT PROMPTS

### Prompt #1 (Freshman):

Describe the world you come from – for example, your family, community or school – and tell us how your world has shaped your dreams and aspirations.

#### *Suggestions for Prompt #1 (Freshman)*

- You don't need to talk about family *and* community *and* school. Pick one and be descriptive.
- Keep your response relevant; focus on events that happened in the four years of high school.

### Prompt #1 (Transfer):

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 for Prompt #1 (Transfer)*

- Consider including course work experience. This may include working with faculty or doing research projects.

### Prompt #2 (All Applicants):

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 for Prompt #2*

- Think about answering this prompt first, as it may help set the context you want to describe in Prompt #1.
- 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

**Answer the question.** Take time and think about each prompt before you start writing. Use details and examples to make your point. Use your words strategically. Write to add context and depth, not to fill space.

**Give yourself time to edit.** Start writing to answer each prompt, then go back and review the word count, content, and overall message. You may not have space to tell us everything so make your words count.

**Stick to one topic per response.** Making a list of accomplishments, activities, awards, or work will lessen the impact of your words. Expand on a topic by using examples and facts for maximum impact to an Admissions reader.

**Brainstorm Topics.** When you are composing your Personal Statement, **consider** including:

- Personal triumphs or challenges – If you decide to talk about a challenge or triumph, do not forget to explain what you learned from the experience.
- Leadership opportunities – Define your leadership role, your accomplishments and what you learned from the experience.
- Experiences outside the classroom – Consider experiences that have made an impact on your life (e.g., travels, church/temple, work, youth groups, or your family).
- Disabilities – If you are living with a disability, talk about it! What does it mean to live with your disability?
- Culture – Describe the influence culture has had on you. Don't define the culture; instead explain what you have learned because of that culture.

**Stay focused. Avoid** common mistakes:

- Don't be campus specific. You're talking to all the UC campuses in your response.
- Inappropriate use of humor.
- Creative writing (poems, scene-setting, or clichés).
- Scene-setting – We don't need to be in the moment with you.
- Quotations – We want to know your thoughts and words, not someone else's.
- Generalities – Stick to facts and personal examples.
- Repetition – Give us new information we cannot find in other sections of the application.
- Philosophy – Don't ask questions. Get to the point and tell us what you mean.
- Acronyms – We won't look it up, so spell it out.

# THE UC PERSONAL STATEMENT

The following worksheet is geared to help you start the writing process for your Personal Statement on the freshman application. **There is no 'correct' answer to the Personal Statement**, so just start writing. The UC application is available online at [www.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply](http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply). Additional hints and suggestions can be found on the University of California web site. Good Luck!

## Prompt #1:

*Describe the world you come from – for example, your family, community or school – and tell us how your world has shaped your dreams and aspirations.*

**Ask yourself these questions. What answer do you want to share with us that we have not seen elsewhere in your application?**

- What are the challenges or opportunities you find in your community?
- What role do you play in your family and how has that influenced your decisions in and out of school?
- Do you identify with one or more cultures; can you speak more than one language? What has that allowed you to do in life?
- What is a typical day or week in your life, and how do you manage to accomplish everything?
- What is your school like? Are you in a magnet/academy? Describe the program and why you enrolled.
- How are you challenging yourself in school to prepare for college? Is attending college common for graduating seniors?
- If you hold a leadership role: did you apply or were you nominated? What does that role mean at your school or in your community? How did you grow in this role?
- Do you have a major or career in mind? What is it and why did you choose it? Are there any courses and/or extra-curricular activities you have completed to get you started in this area?



## 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 answering Prompt #2:

- Make a list of four things that describe you (e.g., athletic, a leader, first in my family to go to college, started a club, own my own business, etc.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Now ask a friend or family member to do the same thing:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

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.

- What do you consider one of your strengths?
- What activities, awards, or honors do you wish to elaborate on?

### Final Hints:

*The Personal Statement is your interview with the University of California.*

*We don't look at writing style; we look for content. Your response should add clarity, depth, and/or context to the application as a whole.*

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