

Quick Guide for Undocumented Students Applying to the UC as Transfer Students

Application opens August 1. Submit between October 1 and November 30, 2023 at apply.universityofcalifornia.edu

Using This Guide



This quick guide is intended to support undocumented transfer students applying to the University of California campuses in the fall. Please use this guide alongside the [UC Undergraduate Admissions Application Guide for Transfer Applicants](#).

Getting Started



Visit the UC Application page (apply.universityofcalifornia.edu). You will be asked to create an account in order to fill out the application.

Once you've made an account, select "Fall Quarter/Semester 2024" as the term when you will start college, and choose "Transfer" as your application level. You will also need to indicate what type of transfer applicant you are based on the number of units you've completed at your community college(s) or previous institution.

REMEMBER: You do not need to complete your online application all at once. You can save your work and return to it during the application filing period. You can also choose to have the questions emailed to you by clicking on "Email me the questions" at the bottom of the Welcome page.

UC Application Notes for Undocumented Students



The UC application consists of several sections, each of which gives undocumented students the chance to share their academic history and life experiences. The application is composed of the following sections:

 About You	 Campuses & Majors	 Academic History	 Test Scores
 Activities & Awards	 Scholarships & Programs	 Personal Insight Questions	

In this section, you will be asked to provide some information about you and your family. Here are some key points:

Citizenship & Residency

- **Country of citizenship:** Choose “no selection.” This will allow you to skip questions regarding residency and visa status that are not applicable for undocumented students, including those with DACA.
- **Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN):**
 - If you have DACA, enter the Social Security number assigned to you.
 - If you have an ITIN, you may enter this number instead of a Social Security number.
 - If you have neither an SSN nor an ITIN, you may answer “no.” A “no” response will not affect your admission chances, nor will it affect your eligibility for state financial aid through the [CA Dream Act \(CADA\)](#).
- **California residency for admissions purposes:** Undocumented students who meet specific requirements can claim CA residency for admissions purposes regardless of their legal residency status. There are different admissions criteria for students residing in CA or out-of-state. These questions will help determine how your residency will be assessed.
 - **Graduation from a CA high school:** Indicate if you have or will graduate from a CA high school.
 - If yes, indicate if you have attended a CA school for three or more years during grades K-12.
 - If no,
 - » Indicate if you have attended a combination of CA high school, adult school, and/or community college for the equivalent of at least three years
 - » OR Indicate if you currently live in CA and if you’ve resided there your whole life. If you choose no, provide dates on how long you’ve lived in the state.

IMPORTANT: Make sure to use the same SSN or ITIN you provided in your CADA application. This number is used to match your UC and CADA applications.

Your Household

If you indicated that you’re over 24 years old, are married, have children or are a U.S. military veteran, in the “Your Background” section, you will be asked if you live by yourself or with family members.

- Enter your total income and how many people (including any parents, children or other relatives) who are financially supported by your income.

If none of the above apply to you, indicate who lives with you at your permanent address, such as parents, stepparents or legal guardians.

- Enter the income earned by your parent(s)/legal guardian(s). For the number of people supported by your family’s income:
 - If you live with one or more parents AND they file U.S. taxes, this number will be the number of people claimed as “dependents” on U.S. tax returns.
 - If you live with one or more parents AND they do not file U.S. taxes, this number will be the number of people (including you) who receive more than half of their financial support. This may include siblings or other relatives who receive financial support but do not live with you.

Even though these questions are optional, **make sure to complete them in order to be considered for an application fee waiver and other campus programs you may be eligible for.** Eligible students can receive a fee waiver that covers up to four (4) UC campuses.

Income reported in the UC application will not impact the financial aid you may receive from the CA Dream Act.

Statement of Legal Residence

This section is used to determine your Residency Classification for UC tuition purposes. Undocumented students (including those with DACA) can be classified as California residents for tuition purposes under the AB 540/SB 68 exemption, allowing them to pay resident fees. It is important to answer this section accurately to be assessed properly by the campuses you're applying to. To see if you qualify, check the [AB 540/SB 68 eligibility requirements](#).

NOTE: AB 540/SB 68 requirements now also include attendance and degree(s) earned from CA adult schools and community colleges. To learn more, check the [AB 540/SB 68 eligibility requirements](#). Those who meet AB 540/SB 68 requirements are also eligible to receive state financial aid through the CA Dream Act. [Read more here.](#)

- Evaluation for California residency for tuition purposes: Choose “yes.”
- If you believe you meet eligibility for AB 540/SB 68, select the following answers to the questions below:
 - Physical presence in CA for the last 3 years: Choose “yes.”
 - Attendance & graduation from CA High School: Choose “yes” if applicable.
 - Current or planned immigration status in the U.S.: This section will be filled in as “Other” since you answered “No selection” as your country of citizenship in the previous section.
 - Establishment of permanent home in CA for past 366 days or more: Select “yes.”
- Students born after 12/31/2000 will also be asked questions about their parents. Choose the following for the questions below:
 - Parents’ physical presence in CA for past 3 years: Select “yes.”
 - Parents’ citizenship status: Select “unknown.”
- Read and acknowledge the statements verifying the accuracy of your statements and recognizing that you may be asked to submit additional documents to the UC Residency office.
- For Special Circumstances, Nonresident Supplemental Tuition Exemptions, and Tuition Waivers question, check “I believe that I qualify for an [AB 540 nonresident supplemental tuition exemption](#) based on the number of years I have attended school in California.”

CAMPUSES & MAJORS

In this section, you will choose your UC campuses and majors. Here are some key points:

Choosing Campuses

Indicate which campuses you'd like to apply to.

- If you entered your family size and income in the “About You” section, then this question will show you if you have qualified for fee waivers. Undocumented students who are eligible for AB 540/SB 68 can receive up to four (4) application [fee waivers](#). If you apply to more than four (4) campuses, each additional one will cost \$80.

Choosing Majors

Indicate which major you'd like to apply to. As you choose, consider the following:

- All UC campuses allow you to select an alternate major. If a campus is not able to offer you a place in your primary major, they may consider you for your alternate major.
 - While UCLA does let you list an alternate major, only [Transfer Alliance Program \(TAP\)](#) students applying to the College of Letters & Science will be considered for one.
 - The alternate major cannot be [impacted](#) or one in a specialty school (e.g. a major in the School of Film, etc).
 - Students must complete all required lower-division major preparation courses for alternate majors as well.
- Transfer students cannot apply as undeclared or undecided. Explore different major options by talking to your school counselor or using tools like the [UC-recommended Transfer Major Explorer](#).

- Some majors will ask for supplemental materials. These are common for those part of “specialty schools” within the UC (such as UCLA’s School of Theater, Film, and Television and School of Arts & Architecture). This will be indicated on the application itself, and you’ll be provided with instructions on how to submit them.



ACADEMIC HISTORY

In this section, you will enter information about your (a) last high school attended and the diploma or certificate earned, if applicable, (b) college(s) attended with courses taken, grades earned and degree completed; and (c) minimum transfer requirements. If you have used the [UC Transfer Admission Planner \(TAP\)](#), you can also transfer information over by logging into your account. Be sure that all information has transferred correctly onto your application. Consider this key point:

Additional Information

If you would like to provide additional context about your academic history, this is the space to do so. Use this to provide more background about your academic journey, such as explaining low grades, gaps in education, or health or financial challenges that affected your academic performance. You may also talk about legal issues or other obstacles related to your immigration status or to the immigration status of family members as it relates to your academic experiences. Any information shared will only be used for admission purposes or to connect you to relevant services or benefits. Be sure to limit your answer to 550 characters.



TEST SCORES

In this section, you will enter information about your standardized test scores. Here are some key points:

AP & IB Exams

Indicate if you have any AP & IB exams to report, including what scores you earned.

English Language Proficiency Tests & International Exams

Indicate if you have these additional tests to report, including what scores you received.

NOTE: The [UC system’s standardized test policy](#) has been “test blind” for California applicants since Fall 2022. Students are no longer required to submit SAT or ACT scores, and the page to include them is no longer part of the application.



ACTIVITIES & AWARDS

In this section, you will enter information about how you spend or spent your time outside of school. These questions will help provide context on your daily life. Here are some key points:

Adding Activities & Awards

Choose the category for your activity or award. You can list up to 20 activities and awards with a 350-character limit for each description.

Activities can include educational preparation programs, extracurriculars, other coursework, volunteer/community service or work experience.

- For each item, you will be asked to describe the award or activity, when you earned or participated in it, and how involved you were. Be sure to highlight any leadership roles you played in your description.
- Activities can be defined broadly. Family or parental responsibilities, involvement with church or cultural activities, summer classes/programs and internships/fellowships are just some examples of what can be

REMEMBER: A good activity description (1) details what you did and (2) explains why it matters to you or to others, while a good award description is clear about the reason why you received this recognition.

listed in this section. All activities are valued equally, so be sure to include all that you participated in.

- Focus on activities and awards from your time at your current community college or university. If space allows, you may also include any involvement or accomplishments from your high school.

SCHOLARSHIPS & PROGRAMS

In this section, you have the opportunity to indicate your interest in scholarship opportunities and additional support. Here are some key points:

Applying for Scholarships

Indicate which scholarship category applies to you. All UC applicants — including undocumented students — are eligible to apply for scholarships. Transfer students may also be considered for specific types of scholarships. You can apply to them by simply choosing which categories are relevant to you.

Support Programs

Check the box if you are interested in participating in the [Educational Opportunity Program \(EOP\)](#). If you check the box, you will be asked to write a 240-character statement about why you are interested.

- Campuses that don't offer EOP do provide similar support through other on-campus programs listed below:
 - [UC Irvine's Student Success Initiatives](#)
 - [UCLA's Academic Advancement Program](#)
 - [UC Merced's Fiat Lux Scholars Program](#)
 - [UC Riverside's Academic Resource Center](#)
 - [UC San Diego's Office of Academic Support and Instruction Support \(OASIS\)](#)

NOTE: Each UC campus also offers programs specifically for [undocumented students](#) and [transfer students](#). You do not need to do anything in the UC application to indicate your interest. Rather, the program may reach out to you or you can contact them after you are admitted.

You do not need to apply to these programs through the UC application. Instead, you may take advantage of these resources by visiting these offices after you arrive on campus. Connecting with these programs can help you get your questions answered, build community, and learn about resources as a new student.

PERSONAL INSIGHT

In this section, you have the chance to write about your academic interests, personal qualities, and life experiences. You'll need to answer 4 of the 8 [personal insight questions](#). One question is required, but you can choose the other 3. Each prompt is weighed equally with no preference given to a specific question.

This section provides context about your environment, experiences, and achievements. You always get to decide what to share and what not to share, and you do not need to write about any details that make you uncomfortable or that feel too personal. Be sure to limit your responses to 350 words each.

Here are some tips for writing this section:

Writing About Immigration Status

You are in no way required to disclose your immigration status. However, if you would like to discuss the effect of your (or a family member's) immigration status on your education or experiences, you should feel free to do that. Any information shared will only be used for application purposes or to connect you to relevant educational opportunities or services.

Figuring Out Which Personal Insight Question Prompts to Answer

You only get to answer 4 of the [Personal Insight Question \(PIQ\) prompts](#) (with one being required), so your goal is to choose the other 3 that give the most complete picture of your interests, qualities, and experiences. Remember, your responses will only add value to your application, not harm it. Some things to write about

include:

- **Major Preparation:** This is the required question that all transfer applicants must complete. Think about how your life experiences, including your immigration story, have influenced your pursuit of your intended major. You can write about how your background has sparked your interest in this subject or how you've explored your major inside the classroom or outside in your community. If you're applying to different majors at each campus, consider writing more generally about your interest in that specific field.
- **Service to Others**
 - **PIQ #1 (leadership):** If you or a family member's undocumented status has required you to take on additional responsibilities at home, then you might consider responding to this prompt to show how you have helped your family.
 - **PIQ #6 (contribution to community):** If your identities or experiences have led you to be more involved with a school club or community organization – such as a student government or a group advocating for immigrants – then you might consider responding to this question so you can demonstrate how your experiences have shaped your desire to help others.
- **Creativity**
 - **PIQ #2 (creativity):** This prompt is a good option to show creativity in art, problem-solving, or any other area. For example, if your life experiences or status have affected how you express yourself through art or music, then this prompt might make sense for you. You may also consider this prompt if your background has encouraged your creativity and helped you solve certain problems for your family or community.
- **Academic Achievement**
 - **PIQ #4 (educational barrier) or PIQ #5 (significant challenge affecting your academic achievement):** If your experiences have impacted your academic achievement, you might consider answering these questions to show how you managed to succeed in the face of obstacles.
 - **PIQ #4 (educational opportunity):** If your experience as an undocumented student has led you toward a certain academic interest, such as arts, sciences, or politics, you might consider answering this prompt to explain how your interest originated and how you have pursued it so far.
- **Personal Qualities**
 - **PIQ #3 (greatest talent or skill):** This question is a good option to describe characteristics that have helped you thrive so far. If your background has led you to develop a personality trait that you are especially proud of, then use this prompt to talk more about that.
 - **PIQ #7 (strong candidate):** This prompt is a good way to explain how your life experiences have helped you succeed so far. If your undocumented status has influenced your perspective on law, society, community, or people in general, then you can respond to this question to talk about why this perspective would benefit others.

Brainstorming what to include for each PIQ

Because Personal Insight Questions require more thoughtful responses, it's a good idea to create drafts of your statements that you can edit and refine outside of the application. Consider using [the UC's PIQ Guide for Transfer Applicants](#) or [Immigrants Rising's Building Your Scholarship or Fellowship Essay](#) to gather and organize your thoughts. When drafting your responses, make sure you are focusing on you, your experiences, and your accomplishments.

Taking Advantage of the “Additional Comments” Section

If you feel like your Personal Insight Question responses and the rest of your UC application leave out something important about you, then you should use this “additional comments” section to provide that information. Note, this section shouldn't be treated as an additional PIQ, and should only be used to fill in any gaps in your story. This can include situations that led to poor academic performance, impact of local events like wildfires on available opportunities, or additional responsibilities that affected the amount of formal extracurriculars you participated in.

Submitting Your Application



After you have completed your application, click “Review & submit.” You might find it convenient to click the “Print version” button so you can view a PDF of your application. Here are some key points to consider:

NOTE: Consider submitting your application 2-3 days before the deadline to avoid technical difficulties.

- Before you click the “Start submission” button, be sure to review your application and correct any errors.
- If you did not qualify for fee waivers, or if you are applying to more than four (4) UC campuses, you will have to pay the application fee of \$80 per application. You can pay online by credit card or by sending a check or money order by mail. Remember that undocumented students who meet [AB 540/SB 68 eligibility](#) can qualify to receive up to four (4) fee waivers.
- Submit your application no later than **November 30, 2023**.

After you have submitted your application, you will see a confirmation page and receive an email with your UC Application ID number.

You will also be required to provide a [Transfer Academic Update](#) with final grades from the previous term and a list of planned coursework by **January 31, 2024**. Be aware of the important deadlines listed [here](#), and check your email regularly for updates. If a UC campus requests additional information, be sure to respond promptly, and ask your school counselor if you have any questions.

This resource was created by Jonathan Perkins, founder of Marion’s Promise, and Madeleine Villanueva of Immigrants Rising. Marion’s Promise provides mentorship and scholarship support for first-generation, low-income students in California.

Special thanks to Alberto Moreno from UCLA’s Center for Community College Partnerships for providing updates to this resource.

Immigrants Rising helps you make decisions based on your potential, not your perceived limits. Visit our website so you can see what’s possible: immigrantsrising.org. For inquiries regarding this resource, please contact Madeleine Villanueva, Higher Education Manager, at madeleine@immigrantsrising.org. Revised 9/2023.