Using This Guide

This quick guide is intended to support undocumented first-time freshmen students applying to the University of California campuses for the fall. Please use this guide alongside the UC Undergraduate Admissions Applying as a Freshman Webpage.

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 your account, select “Fall Quarter/Semester 2023” as the term when you will start college, and choose “Freshman” as your application level.

Because the Activities & Awards section and the Personal Insight Questions require long responses, it’s a good idea to create drafts of your statements that you can edit and refine. After you have finalized your responses, you can transfer them to the online application. You can 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
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 purpose regardless of their legal residency status. There are different admissions criteria for students residing in CA and 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 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.

**Your Household**

Indicate who lives with you in your permanent address, such as parents, stepparents or legal guardians. Permanent address refers to your family residence.

- 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.

**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. To see if you qualify, check the AB 540/SB 68 eligibility requirements.

- 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.”
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.”
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 the 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.”

NOTE: Undocumented who meet AB 540/SB 68 requirements may also be eligible to receive state financial aid through the CA Dream Act. Learn more here.

CAMPUS & 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 or will be eligible for AB 540 can receive up to four (4) application fee waivers. If you apply to more than four (4) campuses, each additional one will cost $70.

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.
- You may select “Undeclared” as a major. This is a good option if you know your general area of interest but not your specific field. For example, a student might select “Undeclared Life Sciences” instead of “Biology.”

NOTE: If you are not sure of your major, read through the descriptions of the different majors – like these ones for UC Merced and UC San Diego – and see what matches your interests.

ACADEMIC HISTORY

In this section, you will enter information about (a) high-school-level classes you took in 7th or 8th grade in (i) math or (ii) a language other than English, (b) high schools attended with courses taken and grades earned, and (c) any college attended with courses taken and grades earned. Consider this key point:

Additional Information

If you would like to provide additional context about your academic history (including low grades), this is the space to do so. You may 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.
TEST SCORES

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

**ACT/SAT**
Indicate if you’d like to report ACT or SAT test scores and enter what you earned.

**AP & IB Exams**
Indicate if you have any AP & IB exams to report, including what scores you earned. Planned exams – those scheduled for the end of senior year – should also be listed.

**English Language Proficiency Tests & International Exams**
Indicate if you have these additional tests to report, including what scores you received. Again, planned exams should also be included.

ACTIVITIES & AWARDS

In this section, you will enter information about how you spend or have spent your time outside of school. That includes anything you spend a significant amount of time doing, which may go beyond school activities. 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. Activities can include educational preparation programs, extra curriculars, 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. Previous activities, even those that you are no longer involved in, should also be listed.

- Activities can be defined broadly. Family responsibilities, supporting your parents in their job, involvement with church or cultural activities and summer classes/programs are just some examples of what can be listed in this section.

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. You can apply to them by simply choosing which scholarship 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 statement about why you are interested (240 characters maximum).

- 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

NOTE: The **UC system's standardized test policy** has been “test optional” for California freshman applicants since Fall 2022. Students are not required to submit SAT or ACT scores but have the option to do so.

REMEMBER: A good activity description (1) details what you did and (2) explains why it matters to you or to others.
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 must respond to any 4 of the 8 personal insight questions.

This section is not about trying to be a person you think the UCs want you to be, but about helping the campuses understand the real you. 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.

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, so your goal is to choose the 4 that give the most complete picture of your interests, qualities, and experiences. Some things to write about include:

• Service to Others
  ° PIQ #1 (leadership): If you or your parent’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 #7 (contribution to community): If your undocumented status has led you to be more involved with a school club or community organization — such as a group advocating for immigrants or first-generation students — then you might pick this question so you can show how your background has shaped your desire to help others.

• Creativity
  ° PIQ #2 (creativity): This prompt is an option to show creativity in art, problem-solving, or any other area. For example, if your life experiences or your immigration status have affected how you express yourself through art or music, then this question might make sense for you. You may also consider this prompt if your background has encouraged your creativity and helped you solve certain problems.

• Academic Achievement
  ° PIQ #4 (educational barrier) or PIQ #5 (significant challenge affecting your academic achievement): If your undocumented status has impacted your academic achievement, you might consider answering these prompts to show how you managed to succeed in the face of obstacles. You can describe how these challenges have inspired you to a deep commitment to succeed.
  ° PIQ #4 (educational opportunity) or PIQ #6 (favorite academic subject): If your experience as a student has led you toward a certain academic interest, such as politics or health care, you might consider answering this prompt to explain how your interest originated and how you have pursued it so far. For most students, these questions are also a good way to explain your choice of major from the “Campuses & Majors” section.
• Personal Qualities
  ◦ PIQ #3 (greatest talent or skill): This prompt is a good option to describe personality traits that have helped you succeed so far. If your undocumented status has led you to develop a personal characteristic that you are especially proud of, then you may consider answering this question.
  ◦ PIQ #8 (strong candidate): This question is a good way to explain how your life experiences have shaped who you are today. If your background has influenced your perspective on law, society, community, or people in general, then you can respond to this prompt to talk about why this perspective would benefit others.

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. Your response can be as short as a single sentence or as long as an essay. When you submit your application, you want to feel comfortable that the UC campuses reading your application see as much of your life as you want to share. Don’t be shy about using this section to fill in any gaps in your story.

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:

• 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 $70 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 fee waivers.
• Submit your application no later than November 30, 2022.

After you have submitted your application, you will receive an email confirmation. 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.