

# APPLYING FOR ADMISSION TO UC SAN DIEGO - TRANSFER

## The Personal Statement

### What is it?

The Personal Statement is an integral part of the UC application. You're asked to respond to two "prompts" – or questions – about the personal qualities and experiences that have influenced you.

### Why is it important?

What you write here should add clarity, richness, and meaning to the information you present in other parts of your UC application, giving the Office of Admissions an accurate impression of who you are.

### What do I need to know?

*Answer the question.* Take time and think about each prompt before you start writing. Use details and examples to support your point. Write to add context and depth, not to fill space. Make sure there are reasons behind the examples you give.

- You have a total of 1,000 words to answer both prompts.
- Neither response should be less than 250 words.
- Avoid the use of special keyboard characters.
- Feedback and suggestions from others are useful, but *you* are responsible for writing the Personal Statement.

*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.

*Be yourself.* Tell us about you – we want to get to know your personality, talents, accomplishments, and potential to succeed at a UC campus. Use plenty of "I" statements – it's all about you!

*Stay focused.* Stick to one topic per response – expand on a topic by using examples and facts for maximum impact. Merely listing your accomplishments, activities, or awards will lessen the impact of your words.

*DO think outside the box.* When composing your Personal Statement, you might consider including:

- personal triumphs or challenges – don't forget to explain what you learned from the experience;
- leadership opportunities – we value leadership at many levels, family, school, or community;
- outside-the-classroom experiences – describe the impact on your life of involvement with travels, youth groups, church/temple, work, or your family, for example;
- disabilities – feel free to talk about living with a disability in the context of your ability to succeed;
- culture and society – if your background has influenced who you are, let it add to the picture we form of you.

*DON'T make common mistakes such as:*

- using humor inappropriately;
- including creative writing forms – poems, clichés, or scene setting;
- relying on quotations – we want to know *your* thoughts and words, not someone else's;
- falling back on generalities – stick with the specifics you want us to know about yourself;
- making lists of accomplishments or activities – instead, provide explanations to place them in context.;
- raising questions without answers – describe your world with facts and examples rather than writing about abstract philosophies;
- repeating yourself – give us new information we cannot find in other sections of the application rather than talking about the same topic in each response.

### Where do I find it?

The Personal Statement is included in the UC application, 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. Turn this page over for a worksheet to get started.

# The Personal Statement Worksheet – TRANSFER

## How do I start?

Filling out this worksheet can help you start creating your Personal Statement. The idea is to think about all the elements – school, family, background – that make you who you are, and then choose an area to write about in response to each prompt.

Avoid using the same topic or examples in both responses. Every piece of *new* information can add clarity to your application. **There is no one “correct” answer**, so just start writing. Good luck!

### 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.

How did you get interested in the subject of your intended major?

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List the types of course work experiences have you had – maybe you’ve worked with faculty, done a research project, something beyond going to class.

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- *These answers can help describe how your interest developed. Can you see areas where you want to share more information?*

How are you challenging yourself in school to prepare for the next level? How does your intended major fit into any post-graduation goals you may have?

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What experiences or activities have you had or been involved with away from the classroom? You might describe how those have shaped you, how you are influenced by the culture you grew up in, or the impact of your real-world life on you as a student.

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- *The area that was easiest to answer could be a good topic for Prompt #1. Remember to add examples and facts that describe the experiences that have influenced you.*

### PROMPT #2 (All Applicants)

TELL US ABOUT A PERSONAL QUALITY, TALENT, ACCOMPLISHMENT, CONTRIBUTION, OR EXPERIENCE THAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU. WHAT IS IT ABOUT THIS QUALITY OR ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT MAKES YOU PROUD, AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO THE PERSON YOU ARE?

- *Try answering this prompt first, as it may help set the context you will wish 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.*

Make a list of four things that really describe and define you – maybe you’re an athlete, a leader, first in your family to go to college, started a club or a 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 are you good at?

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- *This can be another possible topic for Prompt #2.*



[www.admissions.ucsd.edu](http://www.admissions.ucsd.edu)

adapted from materials provided by UC Santa Barbara