



University of California

Personal Insight Questions for Transfer Applications

Presented by:

Gloria Darafshi
Transfer Counselor
Cañada College
Fall, 2021

Why does the UC use Personal Insight Questions (PIQ's)?

- ▶ Move away from formal essays
- ▶ Want to hear student voice
- ▶ Provides full picture of who you are
- ▶ Allows discussion of challenges & accomplishments
- ▶ Provides student choice in what to write

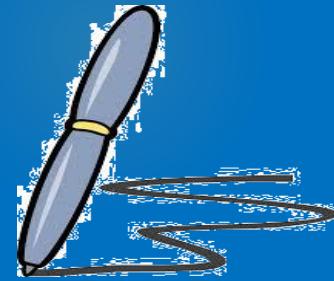


The Basics

- ▶ Must answer four questions
(one is required; choose 3 more out of 7 questions)
- ▶ Each question has a 350 word count limit.
- ▶ All questions have equal value.
- ▶ Select questions that showcase who YOU are



General Tips



- Don't use quotes, abbreviations, acronyms, or jokes. ☺
- Emphasize recent, college time, not high school.
- Don't only describe an experience; describe its impact and what you learned.
- Write in **1st person**; use "I" and "my" statements.





More Writing Tips

- Brainstorm ideas for each question and then decide which ones to choose.
- Write a draft, proofread for grammar and content, revise at least once.
- UC's, don't single out one UC.
- Start writing early.
- Consult with others: your Counselor, English Professor, Learning Ctr., and people who know you well.

Required Question for Transfer Students

Please describe how you have prepared for your intended major, including your readiness to succeed in your upper-division courses once you enroll at the university.

Prompts:

- ▶ How did your interest in your major develop?
- ▶ Your experiences outside of classroom that relate to your major.
- ▶ Related classroom experiences, i.e. research, group projects, etc.
- ▶ Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of your major.
- ▶ You may include how major relates to career goal.



Question 1: Leadership

Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time.

Prompts:

- ▶ Leadership is being in charge of a specific task(s).
- ▶ Did you have a lead role in a group project or event, sports team, within your family, or at work?
- ▶ Did you help resolve an important dispute at school, in your community or family?
- ▶ Discuss your leadership role, accomplishments and **what you learned from the experience.**
- ▶ Discuss how your experience shaped your perspective on leading others.



Question 2: Creativity

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.

Prompts:

- ▶ Creativity can mean producing something (art, music) or thinking creatively.
- ▶ Discuss a creative skill you have that is important to you. What have you been able to do with that skill?
- ▶ Did you use creativity to solve a problem? What was the solution?
- ▶ Explain how your creativity relates to your major or a future career.



Question 3: Talent or Skill

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

Prompts:

- ▶ Talent or skill could be many things: technical or artistic skills, public speaking, sports, multilingual, musical, etc.
- ▶ You don't have to be recognized or have received awards.
- ▶ Discuss how you developed your talent/skill.
- ▶ How has it influenced you, or defined you?



Question 4: Educational Opportunity or Barrier

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

Prompts:

- ▶ Must be academic focused.
- ▶ Opportunities could be: fin.aid, EOPS, DRC, Honors Prog., STEM, Counseling.
- ▶ Explain how this opportunity led to success in college.
- ▶ Describe an educational barrier and how you overcame it.
- ▶ Barriers could be: first-gen. college student, learning disability, financial stress.
- ▶ Explain how overcoming this barrier helped shape who are you today.

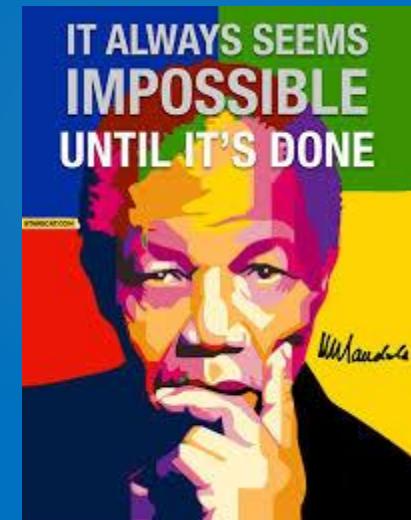


Question 5: Challenge

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?

Prompts:

- ▶ Describe a difficult experience in your life (past or current) and how you overcame it.
- ▶ Talk about any obstacles you've faced and what you learned from the experience.
- ▶ Did you have support from someone else or did you handle it alone?
- ▶ If your academic record is mixed – i.e. poor grades initially, or changed colleges several times, this is a good place to explain.



Question 6: Your Contribution

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

- ▶ Community can be a group, team, place, etc.
- ▶ Focus on recent events, rather than High School or earlier.
- ▶ Explain how your actions benefitted others.
- ▶ It can be something “small” as long as it had positive impact.
- ▶ Explain what inspired you to get involved.
- ▶ Describe what you have learned from your effort.



Question 7: Other Information

Beyond what has already been shared in your application, what do you believe makes you stand out as a strong candidate for admissions to the University of California?

- ▶ Is there something that you want UC reviewers to know that does not fit under questions 1-6?
- ▶ Share information that will allow the reader to better understand you and your life.
- ▶ Given who you are, why do you feel that you will be an excellent choice for UC admission?
- ▶ Don't be afraid to brag a little ☺ .





For more information, contact:
Gloria Darafshi, Transfer Counselor, darafshi@smccd.edu
Soraya Sohrabi, Transfer Supervisor, sohrabi@smccd.edu

To make a Counseling appointment, call 650-306-3452, email
canadawelcomecenter@smccd.edu, or Log into
SMCCD.onelogin.com and select “Student Success Link”