

The logo for Citrus College, featuring the word "Citrus" in white on a blue background and "College" in white on an orange background, both enclosed in a white border.

Citrus College

Career/Transfer Center

UC PERSONAL INSIGHT QUESTIONS GUIDEBOOK

A student with dark hair, wearing a yellow and green striped shirt, is sitting on a concrete bench outdoors. She is looking down at a device in her hands. In the background, there are green bushes and a building with large windows.

Designed to help you brainstorm and
answer University of California (UC)
Personal Insight Questions



UC PERSONAL INSIGHT QUESTIONS (PIQ) CHECKLIST

Attend a UC PIQ workshop. Check the Career/Transfer Center calendar of events for dates and times.

Review the “Do’s and Don’ts of UC PIQs” and watch our **Writing Tips: UC Personal Insight Questions video** for suggestions on how to get started.



Read through all UC PIQ prompts and choose any three of the seven prompts.

Brainstorm responses to the UC PIQs selected.

Write your first draft and attend a group-setting workshop at the Writing Center for assistance. Check the Career/Transfer Center calendar of events for dates and times.

Incorporate the feedback received and complete your second draft.

Schedule a UC PIQ reader appointment in the Career/Transfer Center.

Finalize your UC application and submit it by the deadline.



***Note:** For assistance with the UC application, attend an Application Assistance Open Forum. For the Career/Transfer Center workshop schedule, use your phone to scan the QR code.*



DO'S

Start early and allow enough time for feedback and revisions.

Be clear, focused and concise, and organize your thoughts.

Write it yourself and about yourself: You are the focal point. Use "I" statements.

Get feedback early. Ask friends and family. They sometimes know the whole picture and can remind you of events or experiences you forgot to write about.

Ask instructors and strangers; they will give you feedback from an outsider's perspective.

Use concrete examples to illustrate your ideas and points.

Schedule a UC PIQ reader appointment in the Career/Transfer Center.

Proofread and edit. Grammatical errors can be distracting to the reader and get in the way of what you are trying to communicate.

Save your responses on a computer as a plain-text document, or use Google Docs, then paste the response into the UC application.



DON'TS

Use acronyms, humor, text talk, clichés and generalizations.

Try to be wildly creative (e.g., using poetry, quotes, questions, etc.).

Repeat things unless you are adding depth or clarity to something you already mentioned on the application.

Try to use all four responses to tell a complete story. Treat each prompt separately.

List accomplishments, experiences and events without going into detail.

Write more about an inspirational person than about yourself.

Email your drafts to an individual without first asking.

Wait until the last minute to request feedback.

Write about a specific school because your responses will go to all the campuses you apply to.

ACTION VERBS

Use these strong, descriptive verbs in your UC PIQ responses to highlight your experiences and accomplishments. The categories below are only suggestions.

CREATIVE

built
changed
composed
conceived
conceptualized
created
customized
designed
developed
devised
established
generated
illustrated
improvised
invented
performed
preserved
redesigned
restored
shaped
transformed

FINANCIAL

adjusted
allocated
appraised
audited
balanced
budgeted
calculated
conserved
doubled
eliminated
exceeded
financed
gained
increased
invested
maximized
minimized
projected
reconciled
reduced
secured

HELPING

advised
aided
assisted
clarified
coached
consoled
consulted
counseled
encouraged
facilitated
inspired
mediated
mentored
referred
served
strengthened
treated

RESEARCH

analyzed
applied
collected
compared
conducted
consolidated
detected
discovered
documented
examined
exhibited
explored
extracted
integrated
investigated
measured
monitored
researched
reviewed
revised
screened
surveyed
tracked

LEADERSHIP/ MANAGEMENT

accelerated
achieved
advanced
approved
assigned
attained
authorized
chaired
controlled
delegated
determined
directed
enforced
ensured
executed
formalized
founded
governed
hired
influenced
initiated
led
managed
motivated
oversaw
presided
prioritized
promoted
rated
recommended
selected
sponsored
streamlined
structured
succeeded
supervised
trained

OFFICE/ GENERAL

adapted
administered
activated
arranged
catalogued
categorized
compiled
completed
contributed
distributed
expanded
identified
implemented
incorporated
inspected
maintained
organized
overhauled
planned
prepared
produced
proofread
provided
recorded
reinforced
scheduled
secured
solved
updated

SALES

added
appealed
convinced
improved
launched
marketed
moderated
negotiated
persuaded
proposed
publicized
recruited
reduced
targeted

TEACHING

assessed
awarded
certified
coached
delivered
educated
empowered
evaluated
explained
facilitated
graded
instructed
lectured
taught
tutored

TECHNICAL

assembled
built
conceived
devised
eliminated
engineered
expedited
fabricated
installed
mastered
modified
prevented
processed
programmed
reconstructed
remodeled
repaired
upgraded

COMMUNICATION

addressed
articulated
authored
clarified
conducted
contacted
convinced
corresponded
critiqued
defined
demonstrated
described
drafted
edited
informed
interacted
interpreted
interviewed
lectured
mediated
moderated
observed
presented
publicized
published
recruited
reported
simplified
summarized
taught
translated
verified

RETAIL/ CUSTOMER SERVICE

answered
assisted
greeted
listened
interacted
operated
resolved
responded
supported

ACTIVITY: WHO AM I?

- What is your major? What do you like about your major?
- Why is education important to you? What motivates you to continue your education?
- What inspires you and why?
- Where are you from? Where did you grow up?
- What do you value and why? Who and/or what inspires you?
- What degree of education is required to reach your career goal?
- What are your strengths? What do you enjoy doing?
- What is your career goal? Why do you want to pursue this career?
- What classes have been transformational and/or impactful?
- What are some of your weaknesses?



Using the space below, answer the above questions about yourself.

A large, empty rectangular area with rounded corners and an orange border, intended for writing answers to the questions listed above.

REQUIRED PROMPT:

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.



TIPS:

1. How did your interest in the major develop? Discuss your career goals.
 - Think of experiences such as volunteer work, internships, employment, research projects and participation in clubs.
2. If you are applying to multiple campuses with a different major at each campus, find a common thread among the majors you have chosen.

What other influences (culture, community, family, etc.) have steered you toward this major?

How is your intended major tied to your long-term career goals?

How have classroom experiences shaped your interest in this major?

PROMPT 1:

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

Name a leadership role you've had at school, community, church, organization or within your family.

Did you help resolve a dispute or contribute to a group effort, what did you do?



LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES

What did you accomplish? What were your responsibilities?

What did you learn from the experiences?



TIPS:

1. A leadership role can mean more than just a title. It can mean:
 - Being a mentor
 - Acting as the person in charge of a specific task
 - Taking a lead role in an organization or event
 - Being a caregiver for a family member
2. Did you lead a team?

How do you define "leader"? List words that best describe a leader: _____

PROMPT 2:

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.

For the first 5 minutes, write as though you are talking to someone. Write down everything that comes to mind.

- Write without editing yourself
- Write whatever comes to mind
- Keep your hand moving



TIPS:

1. Do you have a passion for music, theater, visual arts, dance, etc.? What have you gained from it, and how has it impacted other parts of your life?
2. If you used creativity to solve a problem, what was the solution? What steps did you take to solve the problem?
3. How does your creativity influence your decision inside and/or outside the classroom?
4. Does your creativity relate to your major or future career?

PROMPT 3:

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

List one of your talents or skills: _____

WHO:

WHAT:

HOW:

WHERE:

WHY:

WHEN:



TIPS:

1. Choose to talk about a talent or a skill. **DO NOT TALK ABOUT BOTH.**
2. Remember that you do not have to have been recognized or have received awards for your talent or skill.
3. Does your talent or skill allow you opportunities inside and/or outside the classroom? If so, what are they and how do they fit into your schedule?

PROMPT 4:

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

WHAT?

HOW?

RESULTS?



TIPS:

1. An educational opportunity can be anything that has added value to your educational experience and better prepared you for college.
 - Participation in an honors or academic enrichment program.
 - Taking advanced courses that interest you.
2. Only talk about an educational opportunity or an educational barrier; **DO NOT TALK ABOUT BOTH**. If you write about an educational barrier you have faced, it is crucial to discuss how you overcame **OR** are striving to overcome the barrier.

PROMPT 5:

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?

Significant challenge:

How did this challenge affect your academic achievement?

What steps did you take to overcome this challenge?

STEP 1:

STEP 2:



TIPS:

1. A challenge could be personal or something you have faced in your community or at school.
2. Why was this challenge significant to you?
 - How did you get through it?
3. How has your life changed at home, at school, with friends or with family as a result of having experienced this challenge?

PROMPT 6:

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

FIRST,

NEXT,

THEN,

IN THE END,

TIPS:

1. You can define community as you see fit; just make sure you talk about your role in that community.
 - Was there a problem that you wanted to fix in your community?
 - How did your actions benefit others, the wider community or both?
2. Did you contribute to positive change in your school or in your community?
 - What steps have you taken to accomplish this?



PROMPT 7:

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

DETAIL:

DETAIL:



DETAIL:

DETAIL:

WHAT MAKES
YOU AN
EXCELLENT
CHOICE FOR THE
UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA (UC)
SYSTEM?

RESULTS:



TIPS:

1. What do you feel makes you an excellent choice for UC?
2. What have you not shared with UC evaluators that will highlight a skill, talent, challenge or opportunity?
 - What are you passionate about?
 - What do you value in your life? What's important to you?

NOTES



To schedule an appointment with a counselor,
visit the Citrus College Career/Transfer Center
in the Student Services Building
or call 626-914-8639



Career/Transfer Center
Student Services Building, Second Floor



citruscollege.edu/stdntsrv/ctcenter



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