

# GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSITY POLICY ON UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS

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## I. OVERVIEW

On May 20, 1988, The Regents of the University of California adopted a University of California Policy on Undergraduate Admissions. The Policy states in part that:

*“Mindful of its mission as a public institution, the University of California...seeks to enroll, on each of its campuses, a student body that, beyond meeting the University's eligibility requirements, demonstrates high academic achievement or exceptional personal talent, and that encompasses the broad diversity of cultural, racial, geographic, and socio-economic backgrounds characteristic of California.”*

In December 1995, following passage the previous July of Regents Resolution SP-1, a task force convened by the President of the University reviewed existing *Guidelines for the Implementation of University Policy on Undergraduate Admissions* and recommended substantive changes. The revised *Guidelines* were issued in July 1996 and revised in May 2000 to reflect the University's newly adopted Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) policy.

In May 2001, The Regents adopted Resolution RE-28, which rescinded Resolution SP-1 and reaffirmed the goals of the 1988 Policy as follows:

*“the University shall seek out and enroll, on each of its campuses, a student body that demonstrates high academic achievement or exceptional personal talent, and that encompasses the broad diversity of backgrounds characteristic of California.”*

Following the passage of RE-28, the President asked the Academic Senate to consider the adoption of evaluation procedures that would look at applicants in a comprehensive manner and would utilize a variety of measures of achievement.

The present revision of the *Guidelines* follows extensive deliberation on the part of the Academic Senate, its Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS), and its individual campus divisions and faculty admissions committees undertaken during the summer of 2001. The work of the Academic Senate built on themes already developed by the 1995 Task Force. For example, the report of the Task Force commented on the “need for a comprehensive review of the methods used for assessing academic performance, beyond utilizing criteria such as GPA and standardized test scores” and suggested that “the selection process could be altered in the future to include a more comprehensive approach to reviewing students’ academic accomplishments and personal backgrounds.” The work of the Academic Senate should be considered as yet another step in the continuing evolution of undergraduate admissions practices and policies.

Following major policy changes subsequent to 2002, these guidelines have been amended. Effective with applicants seeking admission for the fall 2002 term and thereafter, the following revised guidelines and procedures shall be followed for implementation of the 1988 University of California Policy on Undergraduate Admissions and RE-28, adopted in May 2001. And, effective with applicants seeking admission for the fall 2012 term and thereafter, as a result of the new freshman admission requirements, and changes to the ELC program, these guidelines were further revised. Finally, following the University's decision to eliminate the use of standardized tests for admissions, these guidelines were further revised to eliminate test scores as a freshman selection criterion, effective for fall 2021 admission.

These selection guidelines apply to campuses that have to select from a large pool of applicants, and to students who have met the established UC minimum requirements for admission. These requirements are established by the University in conformance with the specifications outlined in the California Master Plan for Higher Education, which specifies that the top one-eighth of the State's public high school graduates, as well as those community college transfer students who have successfully completed specified college work, be eligible for admission to the University of California.

These guidelines provide the framework within which campuses shall establish specific criteria and procedures for the selection of undergraduate applicants to be admitted when the number of eligible applicants exceeds the places available.

## **II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW**

Campus admissions procedures should involve a comprehensive review of applications. BOARS defines comprehensive review as:

*The process by which students applying to UC campuses are evaluated for admission using multiple measures of achievement and promise while considering the context in which each student has demonstrated academic accomplishment.*

In designing campus procedures, campus admissions committees should adhere to the following guiding principles:

1. The admissions process honors academic achievement and accords priority to students of high academic accomplishment. At the same time, merit should be assessed in terms of the full range of an applicant's academic and personal achievements and likely contribution to the campus community, viewed in the context of the opportunities and challenges that the applicant has faced.
2. Campus admissions procedures should involve a comprehensive review of applications using a broad variety of factors to select an entering class.
3. No fixed proportion of applicants should be admitted based solely on a narrow set of criteria.
4. Campus policies should reflect continued commitment to the goal of enrolling classes that exhibit academic excellence as well as diversity of talents and abilities, personal experience, and backgrounds.

5. Faculty on individual campuses should be given flexibility to create admission policies and practices that, while consistent with Universitywide criteria and policies, are also sensitive to local campus values and academic priorities.

6. The admission process should select students of whom the campus will be proud, and who give evidence that they will use their education to make contributions to the intellectual, cultural, social, and political life of the state and the nation.

7. The admissions process should select those students who demonstrate a strong likelihood that they will persist to graduation.

8. Campus selection policies should ensure that no applicant will be denied admission without an individualized review of his or her application.

9. When distinguishing between competitive applications, final decisions should consider the entire application, including academic accomplishments in context, as well as other personal achievements in order to identify students who strive for excellence in many areas.

10. Campus selection criteria should give priority to freshman applicants who are eligible in the local context (ELC) and advanced standing applicants who complete a UC Transfer Pathway or a UC campus-specific major preparation course pattern.

11. Academic indices as part of the review process must be considered in the context of other factors that impact performance, including personal and academic circumstances (e.g. low-income status, access to honors courses, and college-going culture of the school).

12. Reviewers involved in individualized student review must undergo training and ratings should be reviewed for consistency to make the most of expert judgments in taking into account context, special circumstances and rating of personal accomplishment criteria. Reader review processes should also entail oversight and post-review analyses to ensure the quality and integrity of the review.

Faculty takes their responsibilities for admission and selection very seriously. BOARS anticipates that campuses will design campus-specific policies and processes that are consistent with Universitywide policies and guidelines. BOARS will continue to monitor campus policies and work with faculty to continuously improve the processes and outcomes.

### **III. SELECTION CRITERIA**

Campuses receiving applications in excess of the number required to achieve their enrollment target for a specific term shall select students for admission as follows:

#### **A. Freshman Applicants**

The following criteria provide a comprehensive list of factors campuses may use to select their admitted class. Based on campus-specific institutional goals and needs, admissions decisions will be based on a broad variety of factors to ensure attainment of the goals set forth in the 1988 University of California Policy on Undergraduate Admissions and RE-28.

1. Academic Grade Point Average (GPA) calculated on all academic courses completed in the

subject areas specified by the University's admission requirements (the a-g\* subjects), including additional points for completion of University certified honors courses (see 4, below). It is recommended that the maximum value allowed for the GPA shall be 4.0. *\*An additional subject requirement, labeled "g" Visual & Performing Arts was added in 2002.*

2. The number, content of, and performance in courses completed in academic subjects beyond the minimum specified by the University's eligibility requirements.
3. The number of and performance in University approved honors courses, College Board Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses, and transferable college courses completed. It is recommended that caution be exercised in order not to assign excessive weight to these courses, especially if considerable weight already has been given in the context of 1, above. Additionally, in recognition of existing differences in availability of these courses among high schools, it is recommended that reviewers assess completion of this coursework against the availability of these courses at the candidate's secondary school.
4. Being identified as eligible in the local context, by being ranked in the top 9% of the class at the end of the junior year, as determined by academic criteria established by the University of California. *\*\*Effective with applicants applying for Fall 2012 or thereafter, ELC increased from the top 4% to the top 9%.*
5. The quality of the senior year program, as measured by type and number of academic courses (see 3 and 4, above) in progress or planned.
6. The quality of academic performance relative to the educational opportunities available in the applicant's secondary school.
7. Outstanding performance in one or more specific academic subject areas.
8. Outstanding work in one or more special projects in any academic field of study.
9. Recent, marked improvement in academic performance, as demonstrated by academic grade point average and quality of coursework (see 3 and 4, above) completed and in progress, with particular attention being given to the last two years of high school.
10. Special talents, achievements, and awards in a particular field, such as in the visual and performing arts, in communication, or in athletic endeavors; special skills, such as demonstrated written and oral proficiency in other languages; special interests, such as intensive study and exploration of other cultures; or experiences that demonstrate unusual promise for leadership, such as significant community service or significant participation in student government; or other significant experiences or achievements that demonstrate the applicant's promise for contributing to the intellectual vitality of a campus.
11. Completion of special projects undertaken either in the context of the high school curriculum or in conjunction with special school events, projects or programs co-sponsored by the school, community organizations, postsecondary educational institutions, other agencies, or private firms, that offer significant evidence of an applicant's special effort and determination or

that may indicate special suitability to an academic program on a specific campus.

12. Academic accomplishments in light of the applicant's life experiences and special circumstances. These experiences and circumstances may include, but are not limited to, disabilities, low family income, first generation to attend college, need to work, disadvantaged social or educational environment, difficult personal and family situations or circumstances, refugee status, or veteran status.

13. Location of the applicant's secondary school and residence. These factors shall be considered in order to provide for geographic diversity in the student population and also to account for the wide variety of educational environments existing in California.

## **B. Advanced Standing Applicants**

Advanced standing applicants shall be selected by each campus using the criteria listed below. Priority consideration for admission of advanced standing applicants shall be given to upper division junior transfers from California Community Colleges.

### Criteria to Select Advanced Standing Applicants

1. Completion of a specified pattern or number of courses that meet breadth or general education requirements.
2. Completion of a specified pattern or number of courses that provide continuity with upper division courses in the major, such as a UC Transfer Pathway (as described in Senate Regulation 476.C), an associate of arts degree for transfer (AA-T/AS-T) offered by a California community college, or a UC campus-specific major preparation course pattern.
3. Grade point average in all transferable courses, and, in particular, grade point average in lower division courses included in a UC Transfer Pathway, or required for the applicant's intended major.
4. Participation in academically selective honors courses or programs.
5. Completion of a UC Transfer Pathway or an associate of arts or science degree for transfer (AA-T/AS-T) offered by a California community college.
6. Special talents, achievements, and awards in a particular field, such as in the visual and performing arts, in communication, or in athletic endeavors; special skills, such as demonstrated written and oral proficiency in other languages; special interests, such as intensive study and exploration of other cultures; or experiences that demonstrate unusual promise for leadership, such as significant community service or significant participation in student government; or other significant experiences or achievements that demonstrate the applicant's promise for contributing to the intellectual vitality of a campus.
7. Completion of special projects undertaken either in the context of the high school curriculum or in conjunction with special school events, projects or programs co-sponsored by the school, community organizations, postsecondary educational institutions, other agencies, or private firms, that offer significant evidence of an applicant's special effort and determination or that

may indicate special suitability to an academic program on a specific campus.

8. Academic accomplishments in light of the applicant's life experiences and special circumstances. These experiences and circumstances may include, but are not limited to, disabilities, low family income, first generation to attend college, need to work, disadvantaged social or educational environment, difficult personal and family situations or circumstances, refugee status, or veteran status.

9. Location of the applicant's secondary school and residence. These factors shall be considered in order to provide for geographic diversity in the student population and also to account for the wide variety of educational environments existing in California.

#### **IV. GUARANTEED ADMISSION FOR ADVANCED STANDING APPLICANTS**

Applicants who fulfill the campus-specific conditions for a Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG) and apply for the TAG during the requisite timeframe are guaranteed admission into the student-specified major at the campus offering the TAG. Applicants may apply to multiple campuses in addition to the TAG campus.

Applicants who successfully complete the UC Transfer Pathway course expectations in an applicable major per Comprehensive Review criterion #5 under Section III.B.5, AND who demonstrate academic achievement through their grade point average per Comprehensive Review criterion #3 under Section III.B.3, will have additional admissions consideration at all campuses to which the applicant applied.

#### **V. APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

A common filing period for submission of applications shall be established by the Office of the President in consultation with the campuses. These dates shall be observed by all campuses and may be extended only if a campus determines that additional applications are required to meet enrollment targets. All applications submitted during the prescribed dates shall receive equal consideration for admission.

Applicants shall file one application on which they shall indicate all the campuses where they wish to be considered for admission.

Campuses shall observe and publish a common notification period for notifying applicants of their admission status.

#### **VI. ACCOMMODATION OF UC ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

California resident applicants that meet the minimum admission requirements for the statewide 9% or local (ELC) 9%, who have not been admitted at any of the campuses of their choice shall be offered a space at other UC campuses where space is available. This process, called referral, reaffirms the long-standing University commitment to provide a place for every eligible California applicant who wishes to enroll.

In addition to the referral process, campuses may choose to offer other enrollment alternatives to UC eligible applicants. Examples of such alternatives may include:

1. Fall term admission to a different major,

2. Deferred admission to another term; or,

3. Enrollment at a community college with provision for admission at a later time, if a stated level of academic achievement is maintained (for freshman applicants only).

*University of California: Issued 2001; Revised 2010; Revised 2012; Revised 2014; Revised 2016; Revised 2019. Last updated December 2022.*