

From: Chair Wendrich and Vice Provost & Dean Garrell

Sent: Wednesday, August 21, 2019 5:56 PM

Subject: New Essay Prompts on the Application for Admission to UCLA Graduate Programs



Graduate Council Graduate Division

To: Members of the Academic Senate

Dear colleagues,

In Spring 2019, the Graduate Council approved significant changes to the application for admission to UCLA graduate degree programs. This application is used by all graduate and professional degree programs except those leading to the MD, DDS, JD, LLM, and professional degrees in UCLA Anderson. Applicants to many UCLA degree programs may also be asked to provide supplementary materials, which may include responses to additional essay prompts, portfolios, or documents such as writing samples, résumés or lists of publications.

For many years, the UCLA application has asked prospective students to submit three essays: two that were required for all applicants, and one that was required for Cota-Robles and Graduate Opportunity fellowship candidates. The revised application for Fall 2020 enrollment requires just two essays for everyone. This change was made to ensure that admissions committees have the information they need to support holistic admission decisions for all candidates. The prompts invite applicants to consider how they might contribute to broadening participation and inclusive excellence, both of which are core to UCLA's mission as a public university.

To lessen the reliance on supplementary materials and facilitate faculty review, the prompts for both the Statement of Purpose and the Personal Statement have been clarified, and reasonable lengths have been established for each essay.

Action items:

1. Please familiarize yourself with the new essay prompts, which are provided below.
2. **Time sensitive:** Graduate admissions committees should consider whether the revised prompts will enable your program to reduce or eliminate the need for candidates to submit supplementary materials with their application. The Graduate Division IT/DIA staff will ask you to confirm or modify your customized application accordingly.

Revised Essay Prompts on the Application for Graduate Admission

Statement of Purpose Instructions and Prompts

What is the statement of purpose, and what is it used for?

The statement of purpose is an integral part of your application for graduate admission and consideration for merit-based financial support. It is used to understand your academic interests, and to evaluate your aptitude and preparation for graduate work, as well as your fit with the proposed program of study. It is also used to assess your ability to write coherent and convincing prose.

Instructions: Please respond to the following. Your statement can be up to 500 words in length (approximately 1-page, single spaced, using 1-inch margins and 12-point font). You do not need to answer every question; focus on the elements that you feel are most relevant to your candidacy.

- What is your purpose in applying for graduate study in your specified degree program? Describe your area(s) of interest, including any subfield(s) or interdisciplinary interests.
- What experiences have prepared you for advanced study or research in this degree program? What relevant skills have you gained from these experiences? Have your experiences led to specific or tangible outcomes that would support your potential to contribute to this field (examples: performances, publications, presentations, awards or recognitions)?
- What additional information about your past experience may aid the selection committee in evaluating your preparation and aptitude for graduate study at UCLA? For example, you may wish to describe research, employment, teaching, service, artistic or international experiences through which you have developed skills in leadership, communication, project management, teamwork, or other areas.
- Why is the UCLA graduate program to which you are applying is the best place for you to pursue your academic goals? If you are applying for a research master's or doctoral program, we encourage you to indicate specific research interests and potential faculty mentors.
- What are your plans for your career after earning this degree?

Personal Statement Instructions and Prompts

What is a Personal Statement and what is it used for?

The Personal Statement is an opportunity for you to provide additional information that may aid the selection committee in evaluating your preparation and aptitude for graduate study at UCLA. It will also be used to consider candidates for the Cota-Robles and Graduate Opportunity fellowships.

Instructions: Please respond to one or more of the following prompts. Your statement can be up to 500 words in length (approximately 1-page, single spaced, using 1-inch margins and 12-point font). To be considered for a Cota-Robles or Graduate Opportunity fellowship, be sure to describe your contributions to diversity. *The [University of California Diversity Statement](#) can be found online.*

- Are there educational, personal, cultural, economic, or social experiences, not described in your Statement of Purpose, that have shaped your academic journey? If so, how? Have any of these experiences provided unique perspective(s) that you would contribute to your program, field or profession?
- Describe challenge(s) or barriers that you have faced in your pursuit of higher education. What motivated you to persist, and how did you overcome them? What is the evidence of your persistence, progress or success?
- How have your life experiences and educational background informed your understanding of the barriers facing groups that are underrepresented in higher education?
- How have you been actively engaged (e.g., through participation, employment, service, teaching or other activities) in programs or activities focused on increasing participation by groups that have been historically underrepresented in higher education?
- How do you intend to engage in scholarly discourse, research, teaching, creative efforts, and/or community engagement during your graduate program that have the potential to advance diversity and equal opportunity in higher education?
- How do you see yourself contributing to diversity in your profession after you earn your advanced degree at UCLA?