



Comprehensive Review Q and A

1. What is comprehensive review?

Comprehensive review is a new University of California admissions policy. Acting on the recommendation of UC's faculty, the Board of Regents adopted this admissions process in November 2001 to more fairly evaluate the full achievement record of all its applicants. With comprehensive review, UC examines *all* information on the application rather than a narrow range of quantitative factors. Academic achievement remains the primary criterion in determining admissions to UC's eight undergraduate campuses. However, students' full range of accomplishments is also considered, including factors such as leadership, musical and athletic talent, and community service. The process is similar to those used at most selective universities in the country.

2. What is the goal of comprehensive review?

Comprehensive review was designed to improve the quality and fairness of admissions decisions at the University of California. Comprehensive review measures achievement through quantitative measures (such as grades and test scores) and other information in a student's record that indicate whether a student took full advantage of the educational opportunities available in school and showed a real determination to succeed.

3. What are the criteria that UC uses in the admissions process?

To be considered eligible for admission to UC, all students must meet specific academic requirements that place them in the top 12.5 percent of California's graduating senior class. Campuses that do not have space for all UC-eligible applicants use comprehensive review to select students.

Fourteen selection criteria are used in comprehensive review: ten are based solely on academic achievement and four are based on factors such as special talents and accomplishments, creativity, tenacity, community service and leadership. Grade point average and test scores are very important. However, UC also looks at breadth and depth of coursework completed, honors level courses, rank in class, improvement in academic performance over time and the quality of the senior year program.

(The following website has further information about the selection criteria:

<http://www.ucop.edu/news/factsheets/2001/comprev.pdf>)

4. Do students need to do anything differently in the application process under comprehensive review?

No. As before, prospective UC students need to take the most challenging courses in high school, do well in them, and describe the full range of their academic and extra-curricular achievements in the application. To become UC eligible, applicants still must complete the A-G course requirements and take the same standardized admissions tests (SAT I and/or ACT, plus three subject-matter SAT II exams).

Prior to November 2001, individual UC campuses admitted students from the pool of UC-eligible applicants in a "two-tiered" selection process. Systemwide policy required that 50-75 percent of the incoming class be admitted on the basis of academic criteria alone, while the remainder of eligible applicants were reviewed using comprehensive review. The only change in UC's admissions process is that now *all* applications are evaluated the same way by using comprehensive review.

5. Does UC reward students who have experienced hardships and disadvantages at the expense of students without such experiences?

No. The comprehensive review process is designed to look at the full record of applicants' achievements. Some students who have overcome particular hardships may have developed qualities such as persistence, maturity and insight that are important to the

successful completion of a UC education. But students of all backgrounds can display these qualities and UC values them regardless of how they were acquired. Comprehensive review in no way excludes students by economic background or by attendance at high-achieving schools.

6. Are grades and test scores still important in the admissions process? What counts the most?

Academic achievement remains the primary criterion in determining admissions to UC's eight undergraduate campuses. In fact, the strength of an applicant's high school record is the single most important component of the admissions process and GPA is the best predictor of how well a student will do at UC. Standardized test scores remain an important part of the application process because they provide additional information about the academic background of an applicant.

7. Does UC consider race and ethnicity in the admissions process?

UC does not consider race, ethnicity or gender in the admissions process, adhering strictly to the provisions of voter-approved Proposition 209. The part of the application where applicants may identify race and gender is masked before the application goes to any readers. Comprehensive review equally measures the achievements of eligible applicants, all of whom are in the top 12.5 percent of California's graduating senior class.

As predicted when comprehensive review was adopted by the Board of Regents, the ethnic composition of UC's admitted freshman class in Fall 2002 -- the first to be admitted under comprehensive review -- showed only very modest changes from the year before. Underrepresented students comprised 19.1 percent of the admitted class, compared to 18.6 percent for the year before comprehensive review was implemented. These rates of growth are consistent with demographic trends in the state.

8. How much does personal information in the application help? What kinds of achievements should applicants include?

Supplemental information beyond purely academic considerations make up four of the fourteen criteria in comprehensive review. UC, like most selective institutions in the country, is looking for evidence of leadership, talent in academics, and achievements specific to an applicant's own interests and efforts. UC encourages students to include in the application evidence of intellectual curiosity, special awards and projects, leadership and community service. UC would also like to know if, for instance, a student worked in a challenging job or showed interest in a particular academic field, was a student body president, or thrived in athletics, music or science.

9. What are the results of comprehensive review after the first year?

Traditional indicators of academic achievement, such as GPA, SAT scores and the number of rigorous courses completed in high school, are generally the same or higher for students admitted under comprehensive review.

In adopting comprehensive review, the Regents requested the University provide a status report for its first year of implementation. The Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS), the faculty committee in charge of admissions related issues at UC, is working on a status report and will present its findings to the Regents, possibly in November.