

UC CEQA CHECKLIST TEMPLATE – INSTRUCTIONS & GLOSSARY

A. Introduction

A project is an activity or transaction that may result in an environmental effect that is being approved or carried out by the University, and may consist of several discretionary actions or approvals. “Approval” of a project may include design approval, execution of a contract or lease, or the issuance of a permit or license, among other things. Environmental review in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) must be completed before the first project approval action is taken. For example, if a lease or contract committing the University to a project is executed before design approval, CEQA must be completed prior to execution of the binding document

The University of California has developed three templates for use in preparing documents in accordance CEQA. Campuses may use the templates to prepare any of the following document types as they are defined in the following paragraph: Addendum, Tiered Negative Declaration, Tiered Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Stand-alone EIR, Stand-alone Negative Declaration, and Project Findings. This “Instructions and Glossary” document provides instructions for correctly using the three templates. Further information about the University’s CEQA process is available in the UC CEQA Handbook.

An **addendum** is a short document containing information supplementing an earlier environmental document. An addendum may be used 1) to document that a proposed project is within the scope of and was fully evaluated in the earlier document or 2) to describe any minor, technical revisions or changes to the project or the environment in which it will be implemented, for purposes of establishing that no further environmental review is required pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The addendum is not the environmental document for the project. It is merely a supplement to the earlier environmental document. The Findings for the proposed project should be based on the earlier environmental document, as supplemented by the addendum. Template 1 may be used as an addendum, particularly when there have been changes to the project; however, it is not necessary to use the template where a brief memorandum documenting the adequacy of the earlier analysis will suffice. Both the earlier environmental document and the addendum should be provided to the decision maker prior to consideration of and approval of the proposed project. Although it is part of the administrative record supporting approval, an addendum does not need to be adopted or otherwise approved by the decision maker as an independent environmental document, but rather is incorporated into the earlier environmental document and is considered by the decision maker as part of the earlier environmental document that analyzed the project.

A **tiered EIR or negative declaration** may be prepared when a project has been evaluated at a program level in an earlier environmental document (*e.g.* the LRDP EIR) but further project level review is required prior to approval. A tiered environmental document is different from a subsequent or supplemental EIR, which are prepared when there have been changes to the project or the environment in which it will be implemented that trigger the need for further environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. The analysis in a tiered document should focus on project-specific information and analysis. Background information and conclusions from the program level document should be briefly summarized with cross-references to the earlier document. Information that is not relevant to the proposed project does not need to be included in the project level document. The project level and program level

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documents together constitute the environmental document for the proposed project and both must be provided to the decision maker prior to consideration and approval of the project.

A **stand-alone EIR or Negative Declaration** is a complete CEQA analysis in a single document. This type of analysis is not tiered from an earlier environmental document, but may incorporate an earlier analysis by reference. This type of document should be prepared when a program EIR is substantially out of date or the LRDP is in the process of being updated and a new LRDP EIR is being prepared. Stand alone EIRs and Negative Declarations are also used where the project was not evaluated in the LRDP, even at a program level (for example, off-campus projects at locations not addressed in the LRDP EIR) and when the program level document is subject to legal challenge.

Project **“Findings”** refer to a document that summarizes the information contained in the environmental document for a project and provide the rationale, based on that information for approval of the project. The Findings constitute the link between the evidence contained in the record, including most importantly, the environmental document, and the decision makers determination to approve the project. The CEQA Guidelines contain very specific requirements for the Findings that must be made before a project can be approved. Findings must be prepared for all project approvals based on either a negative declaration or EIR, regardless of whether the project is approved by the Regents, the Office of the President or at a campus level. When a determination has been made that a project is exempt from CEQA, the Findings can limited to a brief statement finding the project exempt and setting forth the basis for that determination. Where an addendum has been prepared, the Findings are not based on the addendum alone, but rather must be based on the earlier environmental document, as supplemented by the addendum. Where a project is within the scope of and was fully analyzed in an earlier document, it is acceptable to incorporate the support for this conclusion in the Findings and avoid the need to prepare a separate addendum. This has been referred to as going “straight to Findings.”

B. How to Use the Templates

Template 1 should be used when an initial determination has been made that the project has been evaluated in an earlier environmental document and the University seeks to rely on the earlier document for the analysis of the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. For example, Template 1 should be used where a proposed project was evaluated at a project level in an LRDP EIR. In this case, Template 1 can be used to document that the project is within the scope of the earlier environmental document and the potential impacts of the project as been fully addressed. Based on the information contained in Template 1, only project specific Findings need be prepared. Where there have been minor changes to the project or the circumstances under which it will be implemented, an Addendum should also be prepared to document that the changes do not trigger the need for further environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. Template 1 can be used as the actual Addendum. Finally, Template 1 can also be used to identify issue areas that have not been adequately analyzed by an earlier environmental document. In this case, Template 1 can be used to scope a project specific Tiered EIR.

Template 2 should be used if an initial determination has been made to prepare a Tiered Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). It is appropriate to use Template 2 for a proposed

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project's CEQA documentation when the project's potentially significant effects have been addressed in part in an earlier environmental document (for example, at a program level in an LRDP EIR), and the University seeks to rely on the earlier document for a portion of the analysis of the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. Template 2 differs from Template 1 (which should be used for a Tiered EIR) in that it provides a format for identifying where the proposed project's impacts are fully mitigated by LRDP mitigation measures or where the project level mitigation is required.

Template 3 should be used where an initial determination has been made to prepare a “stand-alone” MNDs and EIRs (see Glossary for a definition of these terms). It is appropriate to use Template 3 for a proposed project's CEQA documentation when the CEQA document being prepared will constitute the complete environmental analysis of the proposed project in accordance with CEQA. Note that previously prepared environmental documents relative to the analysis of the proposed project may be incorporated by reference into the MND or EIR.

C. Instructions

Template 1: Addendum, Findings-only, or Tiered EIR

I. Project Information

As indicated in the text, specify the project title, lead agency name and address, contact person and phone number, project location, project sponsor's name and address, custodian of administrative record, and identify previous environmental documents relied upon for tiering purposes.

II. Project Location and Description

As indicated in the text, specify the project location; physical characteristics including gross square footage, height, and population; project objectives, surrounding land uses and existing site conditions; consistency with the campus LRDP; and discretionary approvals.

III. Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

Use the checkboxes to indicate all environmental issue areas involving at least one impact in the “Additional Project-level Impact Analysis Required” category.

IV. Determination

On the basis of the Initial Study analysis, use the checkboxes to indicate the appropriate level of CEQA documentation required for the proposed project: an Addendum, Findings only, or a Tiered Environmental Impact Report (EIR). In order for an Addendum or Findings-only to be the appropriate level of CEQA documentation, none of the conditions described in CEQA Section 15162 can have occurred. If one or more of the impacts analyzed is in the “Additional Project-level Impact Analysis Required” category, it is not appropriate to use an Addendum or Findings-only for the CEQA documentation for the proposed project; a Tiered EIR must be prepared.

V. Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

Column Headings

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A) “Additional Project-level Impact Analysis Required” applies where the project may result in an environmental impact that was not considered in an earlier document, or not considered in sufficient detail, and/or substantial project changes, changed circumstances, or new information of substantial importance triggering CEQA Section 15162 has occurred since certification of the earlier document.

B) “Project Impact Adequately Addressed in Earlier Environmental Document” applies where the potential impacts of the proposed project were adequately addressed in an earlier environmental document and either no changes or no substantial changes to the project are proposed, and no new information of substantial importance has been identified.

Impact Analysis

- All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- The discussion of each issue should include the following:
 - Briefly summarize under each issue area the conclusion of the earlier environmental analysis of the project, including references to applicable mitigation measures.
 - Explain how any minor changes to the proposed project or circumstances would or would not change the environmental effects of the proposed project as analyzed in the earlier environmental document.

VI. Supporting Information Sources

List sources used and individuals contacted. Also cite sources in the discussion as appropriate.

VII. Initial Study Preparers

List the individuals, companies, and/or agencies who participated in preparation of the document.

Template 2: Tiered MND

I. Project Information

As indicated in the text, specify the project title, lead agency name and address, contact person and phone number, project location, project sponsor’s name and address, custodian of administrative record, and identify previous environmental documents relied upon for tiering purposes.

II. Project Location and Description

As indicated in the text, specify the project location; physical characteristics including gross square footage, height, and population; project objectives, surrounding land uses and existing site conditions; consistency with the campus LRDP; and discretionary approvals.

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III. Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

Use the checkboxes to indicate all environmental issue areas involving at least one impact in the “Potentially Significant Impact” category.

IV. Determination

On the basis of the Initial Study analysis, use the checkboxes to indicate the appropriate level of CEQA documentation required for the proposed project: a Negative Declaration, a Mitigated Negative Declaration, or an Environmental Impact Report.

V. Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

Column Headings

A) “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that the project’s effect may be significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impacts” a Project EIR will be prepared.

B) “Project Impact Adequately Addressed in LRDP EIR” applies where the potential impacts of the proposed project were adequately addressed in the LRDP EIR and mitigation measures identified in the LRDP EIR will mitigate any impacts of the proposed project to the extent feasible. All applicable LRDP EIR mitigation measures are incorporated into the project as proposed. The impact analysis in this document summarizes and cross references (including section/page numbers) the relevant analysis in the LRDP EIR.

C) “Less Than Significant With Project-level Mitigation Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of project specific mitigation measures will reduce an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.” All project-level mitigation measures must be described, including a brief explanation of how the measures reduce the effect to a less than significant level.

D) “Less Than Significant Impact” applies where the project will not result in any significant effects. The effects may or may not have been discussed in the LRDP Program EIR. The project impact is less than significant without the incorporation of LRDP or Project-level mitigation.

E) “No Impact” applies where a project would not result in any impact in the category or the category does not apply. “No Impact” answers need to be adequately supported by the information sources cited, which show that the impact does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project specific screening analysis).

Impact Analysis

- All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

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- The discussion of each issue should include the following:
 - Discussion of Potential Project Impacts
 - Applicable LRDP EIR Mitigation Measures Assumed in Project
 - Significance Determination after LRDP EIR Mitigation
 - Additional Project-Level Mitigation Measures
 - Significance Determination after All Mitigation

VI. Supporting Information Sources

List sources used and individuals contacted. Also cite sources in the discussion as appropriate.

VII. Initial Study Preparers

List the individuals, companies, and/or agencies who participated in preparation of the document.

Template 3: Stand-alone MND or EIR

I. Project Information

As indicated in the text, specify the project title, lead agency name and address, contact person and phone number, project location, project sponsor's name and address, custodian of administrative record, and identify previous environmental documents relied upon for tiering purposes.

II. Project Location and Description

As indicated in the text, specify the project location; physical characteristics including gross square footage, height, and population; project objectives, surrounding land uses and existing site conditions; consistency with the campus LRDP; and discretionary approvals.

III. Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

Use the checkboxes to indicate all environmental issue areas involving at least one impact in the "Potentially Significant Impact" category.

IV. Determination

On the basis of the Initial Study analysis, use the checkboxes to indicate the appropriate level of CEQA documentation required for the proposed project: a Mitigated Negative Declaration or an Environmental Impact Report.

V. Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

Column Headings

A) "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that the project's effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impacts" a Project EIR will be prepared.

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B) “Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of project specific mitigation measures will reduce an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.” All mitigation measures must be described, including a brief explanation of how the measures reduce the effect to a less than significant level.

C) “Less Than Significant Impact” applies where the project will not result in any significant effects. The effects may or may not have been discussed in the LRDP Program EIR. The project impact is less than significant without the incorporation of LRDP or Project-level mitigation.

D) “No Impact” applies where a project would not result in any impact in the category or the category does not apply. “No Impact” answers need to be adequately supported by the information sources cited, which show that the impact does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project specific screening analysis).

Impact Analysis

- All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- The discussion of each issue should include the following:
 - Discussion of Potential Project Impacts
 - Applicable LRDP EIR Mitigation Measures Assumed in Project
 - Significance Determination after LRDP EIR Mitigation
 - Additional Project-Level Mitigation Measures
 - Significance Determination after All Mitigation

VI. Supporting Information Sources

List sources used and individuals contacted. Also cite sources in the discussion as appropriate.

VII. Initial Study Preparers

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D. Glossary of Abbreviations and Definitions

CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
Earlier Environmental Document	An previously prepared and certified/adopted environmental impact analysis
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
Initial Study	CEQA evaluation done to determine if project will or may have a significant impact
LRDP	Long Range Development Plan
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
ND	Negative Declaration

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