

Overview: Applying to College/University (c/o 2027)

California Community College (CCC)

www.cccapply.org



CCC has one website for all CA community colleges.

Each college has a separate online application.

- Applications begin to open around Oct/Nov
- Recommended Deadline: February 28
- Application fee: \$0

The community college application asks for basic personal and educational history information.

SAT/ACT, letters of recommendation, essay/writing and transcript are **NOT required** to apply to a community college.

Anyone with a HS Diploma or equivalent can apply to a CA community college!

California State University (CSU)

www2.calstate.edu/apply



CSU has one online application for 23 CSU campuses.

- **Application filling period**: 10/1/2026 to 11/30/2026
- **Application fee**: \$70 per campus (**or free for up to 4 colleges w/ a fee waiver**)

Application Components:

- **A-G classes and grades**: Self-reported
- **SAT/ACT/Subject Tests**: Not required
- **Activities and awards**: Not reported
- **Essay/Writing**: Not required
- **Letters of Recommendation**: Not accepted
- **Transcript Submission**: Not required

Out-of-State/Private University

<https://www.commonapp.org/>



Out-of-state and/or Private Universities may have their own online application, while some accept the Common Application

- Application Deadline & Fee: varies by college (**fee waivers available for those who qualify**)

General Application Components:

- **Classes and grades**
- **Activities and awards**
- **SAT/ACT**: Optional for many colleges; Check each admissions website for their own test policy
- **SAT Subject Tests**: Usually not required
- **Essay/Writing**: Check admissions website
- **Letters of Recommendation**: Check admissions website
- **Transcript**: Submit if required using Parchment

University of California (UC)

admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply-now.html



UC has one online application for 9 UC campuses.

- Application filing period: 10/1/2026 to 11/30/2026
- Application Fee: \$80 per campus (**or free for up to 4 colleges w/ a fee waiver**)

Application Components:

- **Classes and grades**: Self-reported
- **Activities and awards**: Self-reported
- **SAT/ACT/Subject Tests**: Not required
- **Essay/Writing**: Personal Insight Questions required
- **Letters of Recommendation**: Not accepted
- **Transcript Submission**: Not required

Private College/University

★ Common Application is an online application accepted by 800+ colleges/universities: www.commonapp.org

★ A college/university may use their own application, also. Check their admissions webpage

- Application Deadline & Fee: varies by college, fee waivers available for those who qualify
-Some colleges offer an early action or early decision option. Check their website for deadlines.

General Application Components:

- **Classes and grades**
- **Activities and awards**
- **SAT/ACT/Subject Tests**: Optional for many colleges; Check admissions website for detailed information
- **Essay/Writing**: Essay usually required
- **Letters of Recommendation**: Usually 1-3 requested from teachers and/or counselor
- **Transcript**: Submit if required using Parchment
- **Interview**: May be offered/recommended/required

Common Application Essay Prompts:

Select one of the following prompts to write an essay on. Word limit: 650 words.

1. *Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.*
2. *The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?*
3. *Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?*
4. *Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.*
5. *Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.*
6. *Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?*
7. *Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.*

UC Personal Insight Questions (PIQs)

Answer any 4 of the 8. Word limit: up to 350 words for each response.

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.*
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.*
3. *What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time.*
4. *Describe how you have taken advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier you have faced.*
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?*
6. *Think about an academic subject that inspires you. Describe how you have furthered this interest inside and/or outside of the classroom.*
7. *What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?*
8. *Beyond what has already been shared in your application, what do you believe makes you stand out as a strong candidate for admissions to the University of California?*