



FACT Sheet – UC Berkeley Improvements to its Undergraduate Admissions Processes and Protocols

UC Berkeley has made numerous improvements in recent years, from 2016 through 2020, to strengthen our admissions protocols and we are committed to continual improvement. Please see our [separate fact sheet](#) for improvements related specifically to student-athlete admissions. In 2019, the University of California conducted an audit of the admissions policies at all UC campuses. It resulted in identical recommended policy changes for every campus. At UC Berkeley, many of the recommended changes were already implemented although there was need for more documentation, formalization of policies, or strengthened policies. In other instances, new policies or processes were needed. Also, starting in 2019 and apart from the UC audit, a new undergraduate admissions director implemented changes and activities to tighten controls and further ensure fairness in the admissions process. Below are some examples. This is not a comprehensive list

- **Additional process oversight:** Some admissions processes that involved one or two admissions staff making an initial recommendation about applicant scores, now involves a group of leaders from the Office of Undergraduate Admissions who provide input and oversight to ensure decisions align with goals to admit a class with a diverse set of interests, talents, backgrounds, etc., consistent with the UC mission and campus goals.
- **Admissions director no longer makes admissions decision alone.** Under previous university policy, the admissions director reviews the results of the application review process and may affirm or modify admissions decision (typically approximately 60 applications are reviewed) based on the director's professional judgment and consideration of such factors as admissions targets (for example, whether geographic areas, outreach communities etc., are adequately represented in the admitted class.). The goal of the director's review policy which had been approved by the Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education committee (AEPE, part of the local Academic Senate), was to ensure quality assurance and the integrity of the overall process. Under current policy

and practices, the admissions director is now joined by a team of senior leaders in the Admissions office to conduct this review and document their decisions.

- **New restrictions on communications with fundraisers:** Admissions now documents its protocol barring Admissions staff and external readers from communicating with University Development & Alumni Relation regarding specific applicants while applications are in the review process.
- **Additional restrictions on fundraisers:** Under a new campus protocol, development staff from any unit on campus is precluded from communicating with both admissions and athletics staff regarding recruitment or admission of particular students.
- **New conflict of interest procedures and training:** Admissions has updated its written procedures and strengthened and updated its conflict-of-interest training starting with the 2020-21 admissions cycle. Under the new processes, all individuals involved in reviewing admission applications and/or making admission decisions will disclose the nature of any acquaintance with known applicants, their families or any other potential conflict of interest and attest, under penalty of disciplinary action, that they have recused themselves from reviewing applications associated with these potential conflicts. Staff and external readers will be expected to report any improper influences they have encountered. The new training will inform staff and external readers regarding what constitutes improper influences and how to report it.
- **Unconscious bias training held:** A consultant with expertise in bias training met with admissions staff and external readers to discuss how unconscious bias may influence how they evaluate a student applicant and to explain how to guard against such bias. This will take place annually before the application evaluation cycle.
- **New oversight of Appeals process decisions:** Admissions has implemented a new protocol by which any decision to overturn a previous admissions decision must be reviewed by two members of the Admissions staff including a senior admissions leader. The rationale for any overturned decision must be fully documented.
- **Tighter controls on student application records.** Admissions enhanced its processes regarding appropriate levels of access to applications. This included additional documentation and more frequent review of access granted to individuals. The goal is to provide users with only the level of access needed to fulfill their role in the admissions process (i.e. the application reading and scoring process). Admissions added more frequent security checks to monitor who has access and to monitor any actions taken in the system.
- **New controls regarding transfers student admissions.** Once basic transfer-student eligibility standards are met, whether a student-applicant is admitted to a

particular college or school is decided at the school or college where the student is seeking admission. UC auditors recommended that there be greater transparency into that college- or school-level review, so that the Office of Undergraduate Admissions can help ensure consistency as to how approved admissions policies are applied across schools and colleges. AEPE, a faculty committee that addresses admissions, has required schools and colleges to align their admissions controls (such as enacting conflict of interest policies) with the Admissions office' controls. At the transfer student level, as opposed to freshman admissions, decisions are based largely on courses taken (and preparation for their major) that are equivalent to UC coursework and their academic performance in those courses at the institutions from which they are transferring.

- **New holistic review process implemented for student-athlete applicants in 2015-16.** Under the previous policy, applicants who were designated as student-athletes and who met specified academic benchmarks did not receive a further review from the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. A new Student-Athlete Admissions Policy implemented in 2015-16 by the Admissions, Enrollment and Preparatory Education (AEPE) Committee of the Academic Senate, required all prospective student-athletes to receive a holistic review by the Office of Admissions. Student-athletes are reviewed on numerous factors including their academic record, extracurricular activities, personal essays, etc. All applicants are instructed to list their extracurricular activities and awards on their application for admission, and if an applicant who is designated as a student-athlete fails to list a sufficient level of athletic activities and achievements, the Office of Admissions and Athletic Compliance Office conduct a further review to determine whether the student qualifies to receive consideration as a special talent athlete under the policy. See more about the numerous improvements regarding admissions and student-athletes on our [fact sheet from Intercollegiate Athletics](#).

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