

**University of California, Berkeley  
Freshman Selection Procedures  
Fall 2016**

**Background**

The purpose of this document is to specify the process by which the review of applications translates into decisions on freshman admissions. The organizing principle of the selection procedures is to provide maximum possible information at each stage of the review, focus additional attention on marginal admit cases, and provide a feedback mechanism to enable improvement in future admissions cycles.

**Outline of the Selection Procedure**

Each file is first read by an external reader, who makes a preliminary recommendation, and next by an internal reader, who has access to the external reader's report, and makes a final recommendation. Next, all applications undergo Quality Control. This is followed by Faculty Review, By High School Review (BHSR), and Director's Review. The final decision is rendered at the end of this process with the exception of Regents' and Chancellor's Scholarship nominees, who are notified upon completion of the files being read. Appeals of denied applicants are handled as necessary.

Out-of-state admits are required to compare favorably to in-state admits—that is, “for admission to a given college or major (as appropriate) at UC Berkeley, the academic and personal qualifications of accepted nonresident applicants as reflected by the outcome of their holistic review must not be weaker than those of resident applicants accepted in that admissions cycle,” as described in the Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education's (AEPE's) Policy on Non-Resident Undergraduate Enrollment.

**Quality Control Review**

Both for quality control purposes and to ensure that the admission process affords all qualified applicants an equal opportunity for admission, OUA has implemented an additional predictive tool, referred to here as the Predictive Index.

Predictive Index Review is a quality control exercise based on a scale of predicted outcomes derived from regression analysis of previous admissions cycles. The Predictive Index Review gives a predictive read recommendation (“Yes,” “Possible,” “No”) for students based on easily quantifiable academic, socio-economic, and contextual factors. When a candidate's actual read recommendation differs from his or her predicted read recommendation, that candidate may be selected for additional review.

**Faculty Review**

This review takes place after the initial holistic review phase and is meant to bring disciplinary and broader academic expertise into the admissions process. The review

involves two components: one is the review by AEPE of marginal admits or declines and second is the review of select applications by faculty in Colleges/Divisions.

### ***AEPE Faculty Review***

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that faculty have given approval to the admission of students with the lowest numerical indicators of academic achievement or promise and conversely consented to rejection of students with the highest numerical indicators of academic achievement or promise.

Faculty members on AEPE (or past members of the committee) will review a total of 100 files of those freshman applicants who have been designated for admission and who have the lowest scores on the current UC systemwide eligibility index. If the faculty reader concurs with the recommendation to admit, the applicant will be admitted in due course. Otherwise, the application will be denied.

AEPE faculty members (or past members) will also review a total of 100 files of those freshman applicants who have been denied admission and who have the highest scores on the current UC systemwide eligibility index. If the faculty reader concurs with the recommendation to reject, the applicant will be denied. If the faculty reader recommends admitting the applicant, this will be done in due course.

### ***Review by College/Division***

A select set of applications (typically from the “Possible” ranks) will be subject to review by a group of faculty organized within Colleges or Divisions. The objective is to bring expertise in the academic disciplines to bear on the admissions selection process and also provide valuable feedback to the Admissions Office.

This review is voluntary and Colleges/Divisions may opt not to participate. If Colleges/Divisions decline to participate in the review process, all decisions on the disposition of the waitlist revert to the OUA. The review will occur after all files are read and will be organized in the form of a half-day meeting for each College or Division. Faculty representatives will be selected by the College/Division and will include Undergraduate Deans or other faculty officers charged with undergraduate admissions, members of department Undergraduate Admissions committees, etc. This review will generally take place in February and will be organized by the Admissions Office jointly with Colleges/Divisions. The outcome of this review will be to make admissions decisions on a cohort of students who are originally on the waitlist and also to provide tangible guidance to the Admissions Office.

### **By High School Review**

The By High School Review process (BHSR) allows for the review of applicants' achievement in the context of their high school, after all applications have been read and slated for decision. For each high school, experienced readers can view an array of quantifiable, primarily academic data for all applicants. The data include preliminary admit

and deny decisions so that experienced readers may either validate decisions or identify apparent anomalies, such as applicants ranking high in weighted GPA being denied admission when other students from the same high school ranking significantly lower in weighted GPA have been admitted. The data also allow experienced readers to identify schools where, based on preliminary admit and deny decisions, the admit rate appears to be at odds with the average for that year.

Moreover, the experienced readers review any applications that appear to have been anomalously denied. This will include comparing them with any admitted applications of similar characteristics from the same high school. This review may reveal that, for example, the denied applicant had an inflated count of honors courses or a notably light senior year course load, with no contextual explanation. In such a case, the read score and deny decision would be validated. Or, this review could reveal that, for example, the denied applicant had a set of academic and other qualities such as leadership, overcoming challenges, etc., comparable to admitted applicants in proximity on the list. In such a case, the initially denied applicant would then be admitted.

All By High School Review recommendations are reviewed by the Director of Undergraduate Admissions, who is responsible for the final admission decision.

### **Director's Review**

In selecting freshman applicants for admission under the campus' holistic admission process, OUA will first fill the available spaces. As the distribution of admission recommendations will not align neatly at the break point, OUA will very likely have more applicants with the same admission recommendation than there are remaining spaces available. The Director's Review (DR) process is critical, as the decisions made at these edges of the admit pool often determine whether an applicant is admitted or not. Because of this, only experienced OUA internal readers serve as DR readers.

Readers will be instructed to positively weigh whether an applicant would be a first-generation college student, whether a public school applicant attends a school with a low Academic Performance Index (API) of 1 to 4, or whether a private school applicant comes from a low socioeconomic background. For all applicants in the DR pool, readers will consider whether fewer than 5% of their high school's seniors apply to UC annually. In addition, Eligibility in Local Context (ELC), defined as California resident applicants in the top 9% of the applicant's senior class, will be a positive factor. Geographic balance will be an additional consideration in DR. Also, special-talent applicants will be considered in the context of overall campus expectations of a well-rounded freshman class. Lastly, available capacity in the intended major of a student should be considered an important parameter in DR.

### **Waitlist Management**

In selecting freshman applicants for admission, OUA will first fill available spaces with admitted students who accept the offer by submitting a Statement of Intent to Register

(SIR) before the May 1 deadline. As an enrollment management tool, OUA will also create a waitlist for qualified students who are not initially offered a seat in the class because of space limitations. The waitlist decision will be released on the same date as the final round of admission decisions. If space is available after May 1, a portion of the students on the waitlist will be offered seats in the class.

### ***Post-Notification Waitlist Review Criteria***

Once notified, waitlisted applicants must indicate a continued interest in UC Berkeley by opting in, effectively asking to remain on the waitlist. If a student does not opt in before May 1, the application will no longer be considered as a part of the waitlist pool. Students who opt in will be asked to supply high school records for the fall semester of the senior year as well as a 250-word essay responding to a prompt set by AEPE every year.

Applications of those who opt in will be sorted, using the criteria described below and recommended for admission where space is available after May 1.

As with DR, readers will be instructed to positively weigh whether an applicant would be a first-generation college student, whether a public school applicant attends a school with a low Academic Performance Index (API) of 1 to 4, or whether a private school applicant comes from a low socioeconomic background. For all applicants in the waitlist pool, readers will also consider whether fewer than 5% of their high school's seniors apply to UC annually. In addition, Eligibility in Local Context (ELC) will be a positive factor. Geographic balance will be an additional consideration in waitlist management. Lastly, available capacity in the intended major of a student should be considered an important parameter in clearing the waitlist.

Students in the waitlist pool who opted in, but are not offered a seat in the class will receive appropriate notification from OUA as soon as the freshman class is complete.

### **Appeals**

Since the holistic review process is extremely thorough, it is not expected that information applicants provide will be overlooked or that errors will be made in the evaluation of applications. For this reason, the number of admissions appeals of denied applications granted is very small (ordinarily no greater than one percent of total freshman admissions).

In order for an appeal of a denied application to be initiated, an applicant must submit a letter of appeal and supplemental application materials, if any (such as 7<sup>th</sup> semester grades, documentation/proof of circumstances and/or achievement), to OUA. Only the applicant can initiate an appeal. Third party inquiries are not considered an official appeal. Successful appeals generally supply significant and/or compelling new information not contained in the original application.

APPROVED

For the Colleges of Chemistry, Engineering, Environmental Design, and Natural Resources, Associate Deans of the colleges review appeals in consultation with OUA staff and make recommendations to the Director. For the College of Letters and Science (L&S), a committee of OUA senior readers reviews each appeal, re-reading the application and supporting materials in their entirety. Reviewers will identify the strongest cases and recommend those that they believe have merit to the Director. The Director again reviews files based on recommendations of the appeals committee and deans, and makes final decisions.

*Approved by the Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education Committee on 04/10/15*