Personal Statement Guide

The University of California at Berkeley is committed to excellence and equity in every facet of its mission. Teaching, research, professional and public service contributions that promote diversity and equal opportunity are encouraged and given recognition in graduate admissions and fellowships. Guidelines, such as those below, may be considered when composing the personal statement for the UC Berkeley graduate application.

- Potential to bring to one’s academic career the critical perspective that comes from a non-traditional educational background or one’s understanding of the experiences of groups historically underrepresented in higher education;
- Communication skills and cross-cultural abilities to maximize effective collaboration with a diverse cross-section of the academic community; Demonstrated significant academic achievement by overcoming barriers such as economic, social, or educational disadvantage;
- Potential to contribute to higher education through understanding the barriers facing women, domestic minorities, students with disabilities, and other members of groups underrepresented in higher education careers, as evidenced by life experiences and educational background. For example,
  - attendance at a minority serving institution;
  - ability to articulate the barriers facing women and minorities in science and engineering fields;
  - participation in higher education pipeline programs such as, UC Leads, Summer Research Opportunity Program (SROP), or McNair Scholars;
- Academic service advancing equitable access to higher education for women and racial minorities in fields where they are underrepresented;
- Leadership experience among students from groups that have been historically underrepresented in higher education;
- Research interests focusing on underserved populations and understanding issues of racial or gender inequalities. For example,
  - research that addresses issues such as race, gender, diversity, and inclusion;
  - research that addresses health disparities, educational access and achievement, political engagement, economic justice, social mobility, civil and human rights, and other questions of interest to historically underrepresented groups;
  - artistic expression and cultural production that reflects culturally diverse communities or voices not well represented in the arts and humanities.