The Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA) recognizes that some students with high potential for academic success and leadership may not have satisfied the UC requirements for eligibility. UC and CAFA have policies on admitting ineligible students as follows.

**University of California Guidelines**

Admission by Exception is the process by which a campus may admit applicants who have not achieved University of California Eligibility\(^1\), or guaranteed admission to some campus, but who “demonstrate high potential for academic success and leadership.”\(^2\) At most 6% of a campus’ frosh matriculants may have been admitted by exception, with at most 4% admitted based on “low socio-economic backgrounds or students having experienced limited educational opportunities.”

The Guidelines present 5 principles, summarized as:

1. Campus-level flexibility in admissions is essential to the University.
2. Admission by exception does not confer guaranteed admission to any other campus.
3. “Admission by Exception provides a means to identify students who do not meet numerical requirements for eligibility but who demonstrate strong likelihood of success at UC or exceptional potential to contribute to the University of the State of California.”
4. “Coordination of Admission by Exception with Comprehensive Review ... should guard against the unlikely event that applicants the campus determines to be less qualified for UC are admitted instead of applications the campus determines to be more qualified.” But, lack of an eligibility criterion must “not automatically classify a student as non-competitive.”
5. “Admission by Exception also permits campuses to seek improvement in admission procedures by applying alternative criteria to small numbers of applicants and monitoring those students’ subsequent performance at UC.”

The Guidelines recommend (1) maintenance of the 6%/4% ceilings; (2) faculty development of written policy on each campus; (3) evaluation using comprehensive review criteria with the potential for additional procedures, such as letters of recommendation; and (4) “periodic reviews to ensure that

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\(^1\) Eligibility is most often conferred by completing a pattern of courses (“a-g”), achieving a 3.0 GPA, and completing the ACT or SAT tests. In the SAT case, the three-part reasoning test and 2 subject tests are required. Students may also be eligible by being in the top 4% of their class or scoring very well on the tests. For Fall 2012, BOARS’ new Entitled to Review structure will significantly change admissions guarantees. [http://admissions.ucsc.edu/apply/freshman_guide.cfm](http://admissions.ucsc.edu/apply/freshman_guide.cfm)

\(^2\)All quotations are from *Guidelines for Implementation of University Policy on Admission By Exception*, Endorsed by the Academic Council on September 28, 2005, as submitted by the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools. [http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/committees/boars/a.by.e.guidelines.1005.pdf](http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/committees/boars/a.by.e.guidelines.1005.pdf)
students admitted through the process are maintaining satisfactory academic success, that the goals of the process are being met, and that campus and University policies are being followed.”

Finally, the Guidelines differentiate 6 categories of applicants, discussed latter in this document.

**Santa Cruz Campus Policy**

While UC eligibility informs the process of frosh admission, the primary determinant of admission is the UCSC comprehensive review system, as established by the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid. The system balances academic achievement measures with other measures designed to enhance opportunity for applicants with “high potential for academic success and leadership”. The system determines which applicants are admitted to the Santa Cruz campus. Applicants who are not UC Eligible and score above the annual cutoff (the point value above which all eligible students are admitted) may be admitted “by exception”.

**Applicant Categories**

The Guidelines provide 6 categories. Their applicability to UCSC is discussed in turn.

1. **Applicants who have overcome personal challenges that have affected their ability to meet UC eligibility requirements and who demonstrate strong potential for success at UC.**

   The comprehensive review system takes into account several measures of challenge, such as being a first-generation college student, coming from a low-income family, or attending an under-performing high school. Applicants in this category that receive a comprehensive review score, subject to course pattern rules discussed below, that is greater than the annual cutoff may be admitted by exception after qualitative review.

   When an applicant requests consideration due to a disability, the case will be reviewed in collaboration with the Disability Resource Center. If a compelling application falls below the annual threshold, it may be brought to the committee or committee chair for discussion.

2. **Applicants from nontraditional high school settings that have adversely affected their ability to complete UC’s eligibility requirements, but who nonetheless demonstrate strong potential for success at UC.**

   The Office of Admissions is directed to use its best judgment in conservatively converting nontraditional records into the campus’ comprehensive review system. Applicants in this category that receive a comprehensive review score, subject to course pattern rules, that is greater than the annual cutoff may be admitted by exception after qualitative review.

3. **Applicants who demonstrate extraordinary talent in a specific academic area such as mathematics, writing, science, or language.**

   The comprehensive review system includes points for achievement in a specific subject area, regardless of eligibility, as well as points for regional, statewide, and national academic accomplishments. Applicants in this category that receive a comprehensive review score,
subject to course pattern rules, that is greater than the annual cutoff may be admitted by exception after qualitative review.

4. *Applicants who demonstrate other exceptional talent, accomplishment, or potential in specific areas such as performing arts, athletics, leadership, or contribution to the community.*
The comprehensive review system includes reader points in these areas, regardless of eligibility. Applicants in this category that receive a comprehensive review score, subject to course pattern rules, that is greater than the annual cutoff may be admitted by exception after qualitative review.

5. *Applicants whose enrollment would enable campuses to establish new majors or academic programs.*
The UCSC frosh admissions criteria are independent of proposed major.

6. *Applicants who have achieved academically at a level equivalent to those of UC-eligible applicants but who have narrowly missed meeting one or more of UC’s eligibility criteria, generally for a technical reason such as a late or missing test scores when the applicant has otherwise demonstrated proficiency.*
Applicants in this category that receive a comprehensive review score, subject to course pattern rules, that is greater than the annual cutoff may be admitted by exception after qualitative review. Some applicants enter this category as ‘administrative commitments’ after admissions.

**Comprehensive Review of Ineligible Applicants**
The Committee recognizes the accomplishments of applicants through its system of comprehensive review scoring. The scoring is independent of eligibility, with the following comments and exceptions.

- *Ineligible due to low grades or test scores.*
  Low grades or test scores are accounted for in the comprehensive review scoring system.

- *Ineligible due to missing English or Mathematics.*
  Applicants who have not completed (b) English, 4 years, or (c) Mathematics, 3 years, will not be admitted to the Santa Cruz campus, and are encouraged to complete this work at community college and reapply. This is a long-standing campus practice.

- *Ineligible due to missing one unit (year) or less of an (a) or (d)-(g) subject.*
  Applicants missing up to one year of an (a) or (d)-(g) subjects, or, for example, one half year in each of two different subjects, with sufficiently high comprehensive review score, may be admitted after qualitative review.

- *Ineligible due to missing more than one unit (year) of (a) and (d)-(g) subjects.*
  Applicants missing more than one year of the UC course pattern will not be admitted, and are encouraged to complete the work at a community college and reapply.
Qualitative Review

Ineligible applicants with an adjusted comprehensive review score above the annual cutoff are subjected to a final qualitative review to confirm that they “demonstrate high potential for academic success and leadership”, and are then admitted.

CAFA may additionally permit 0% to 1% of the incoming frosh class, ineligible (admission by exception) or eligible (selection by exception) to be admitted using predefined experimental alternative or additional criteria, in an effort to improve admissions procedures and seek candidates that “demonstrate high potential for academic success and leadership.” Use of this option takes place in close collaboration with CAFA, and may be related to programs such as Summer Bridge or to other campus goals. After careful monitoring, such criteria may be fully integrated into the comprehensive review system.

The Office of Admissions shall report to the committee on the number and character of potential offers of admission by exception prior to making those offers, and on probable conformance to the system-wide maxima. If the 4%/2% criteria may be exceeded, the number of admission by exception offers will be reduced by dropping the lowest-scoring students within each category until probable compliance is reached. After the first year, post-admission reporting and review of the performance of prior admission by exception students will also be presented. Admission by exception students should be flagged within campus databases to simplify evaluation of the efficacy of this program.