Frosh applicants will be reviewed holistically, as covered in the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid’s “Policy for Frosh Admission – Holistic Review,” which defines the 14 criteria for selection review. The goal is to select a cohort of academically strong students which predict to have the highest potential for success at a research university and reflect the diversity of the state, country, and world.

All UCSC applications will be reviewed by UCSC readers who will award a score of 1 (Best), 2, 3, 4, 4.25, 4.50, 4.75, 5, or 5-Deny to each frosh applicant based on the rubric as defined below under “distribution of scores”.

The Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA) expects that Admissions readers will be consistent in their holistic reviews and scoring. Training and normalizing sessions will be required for each reader. Applicants will be reviewed and scored “in context,” meaning that their achievements will be contextualized in relationship to their peers and their educational opportunities. Readers will be able to compare a student against peers from their school, and from the UCSC and UC-wide applicant pools.

Readers should not relate their scoring to the probability of a positive or negative admissions decision (with the exception of 5-Deny). Readers will not read or score applicants with whom they have any association, including personal or professional. Readers will not read or score any application from a school in which they provide service. Readers will not read or score any application which they believe they are unable to score fairly. All such applications will be assigned to another reader.

In addition to the Holistic Score, all applicant files will also receive a computed Student Success Indicator (SSI) score using a Predicted First Year GPA (PFYGPA) calculation. If there is a discrepancy between the Holistic Score and the SSI, the applicant file will receive a second “adjudication” review by a reader who will have access to the details of the first Holistic read and the SSI calculation. The Office of Admissions will work with the CAFA Data Subcommittee during each admissions cycle, to determine the exact “adjudication” cut-off which will prompt applications receiving second reads.

In order to find students who will be successful at UCSC, we ask readers to focus on academic success as demonstrated by grade point average (within context) and test scores (within context). These two factors should comprise at least half of the score a reader will assign, with the GPA being given the most weight. This emphasis does not preclude additional weight on other academic factors. Students with weak test scores should be carefully assessed for appropriate scoring.

Only the highest single-sitting of the ACT with English Writing or SAT will be considered for
holistic review. SAT Subject exams are no longer required but may be used along with AP
exams and IB exams to meet the UC minimum ‘A-G’ requirement, but are not considered
courses in the scoring rubric.

GPA is calculated on A-G courses taken in the 10th and 11th grade, including extra weight for
approved honors courses (Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, UC-transferable
college courses, and UC-approved honors courses). The maximum GPA for selection
consideration is capped at 4.40.

With regards to non-residents, the University of California does not approve high school courses
for honors consideration. This issue must be accounted for during scoring by applying
flexibility with respect to the GPA and other academic criteria. Similarly, the ‘A-G’ pattern
requirements may include substitutions, provided there is a strong curriculum of
college-preparatory work, and the English and mathematics requirements are met or exceeded.

Distribution of Scores

CAFA expects scored applications to UC Santa Cruz will roughly fall into the following
distribution:

- Score 1: The top 10%
- Score 2: The next 15% (e.g., in top 25%)
- Score 3: The next 25% (e.g., in the top 50%)

The remainder of the applications will be scored as a 4.00, 4.25, 4.50, 4.75, 5, or 5-Deny,
according the rubric below.

Score of 1 Meets or exceeds all of the following criteria:

- GPA in the top 15% of either high school or UCSC application pool, typically 4.0 and higher.
- SAT/ACT scores in the top 20% of the UCSC application pool.
- Completion of ‘A-G’ at a high ratio (top 15%, high school context) including
  honors-designated courses, and courses satisfied by AP and IB if applicable.
- Senior year in-progress and planned courses indicate outstanding academic rigor
  (the highest track available), relative to the course offerings at the high school. More than a
  single honors-level course in the senior year should be reported, provided such are available.
- Academic record indicates outstanding performance in English or mathematics.
- Students have had the primary leading role in, or displayed both extraordinary talent and
  commitment to, specific projects, curricular or extracurricular, as evidenced by a certain
  award(s) or some other recognition.
- Demonstration of high proficiency in English.
EXCEPTION CRITERIA: Students that have overcome significant personal circumstances, while still earning an excellent academic record, should be awarded a score of 1, even if they fall slightly short on one or two of the above criteria.

Score of 2 Meets or exceeds all of the following criteria:

- GPA in the top 30% of either high school or UCSC application pool, typically 3.85 and higher.
- SAT/ACT scores in the top 35% of the UCSC application pool.
- Completion of ‘A-G’ courses at a good ratio (top 30%, high school context), including honors-designated courses, and courses satisfied by AP and IB if applicable.
- Senior year in-progress and planned courses indicate solid academic rigor, relative to the course offerings at the high school. One or more honors-level course(s) should be reported in the senior year, provided such are available.
- Academic record likely indicates outstanding performance in English or mathematics.
- Students have contributed significant amount of time to specific projects or demonstrated an unusual talent, curricular or extracurricular, as evidenced by a certain award(s) or some other recognition.
- Students from high schools where English is not the primary language of instruction demonstrate good proficiency in English.

EXCEPTION CRITERIA: Students that have overcome significant personal circumstances, while still earning a very good academic record, should be awarded a score of 2, even if they fall slightly short on one or two of the above criteria.

Score of 3 Meets or exceeds all of the following criteria:

- GPA in the top 50% of either the high school or UCSC application pool, typically 3.6 and higher.
- SAT/ACT scores in the top 55% of the UCSC application pool.
- Completion of ‘A-G’ courses, including honors-designated courses, and courses satisfied by AP, IB, and SAT subject exams, reflect an acceptable ratio of courses completed when compared to courses available at their school(s).
- Senior year in-progress and planned courses indicate academic rigor, both in the quantity and quality of the program, relative to the course offerings at the high school. At least one honors-level course in the senior year, provided these are available.
- Academic record **may indicate** solid performance in English or mathematics.

- Students have participated in special projects, demonstrated certain talent, or contributed substantial time to, one or more specific projects, curricular or extracurricular, as evidenced by a certain award(s) or some other recognition.

- Students from high schools where English is not the primary language of instruction **demonstrate good achievement** in English Proficiency.

**EXCEPTION CRITERIA:** Students that have overcome significant personal circumstances, while still earning a **good academic record**, should be awarded a score of 3, even if they fall slightly short on one or two of the above criteria.

**Score of 4.00** Meets or exceeds all of the following criteria:

- GPA is **typically 3.50** or above.

- SAT/ACT **meets the UC admissions index**.

- Completion of ‘A-G’ courses, including honors-designated courses, and courses satisfied by AP, IB, and SAT subject exams, **reflect an average ratio** of courses completed when compared to courses available at their school(s). Students **may have a single** ‘A-G’ omission in a subject other than English or mathematics.

- Senior year in-progress and planned courses **should indicate rigor**, both in the quantity and quality of the program, relative to the course offerings at the high school.

- Students have participated substantially in specific projects, curricular or extracurricular, as evidenced by a certain award(s) or some other recognition.

- Students from high schools where English is not the primary language of instruction **clearly meet the TOEFL requirement**.

**EXCEPTION CRITERIA:** Students that have overcome significant personal circumstances, while still **meeting academic requirements**, should be awarded a score of 4, even if they fall short on one of the above criteria or slightly short on two of the above criteria.

**Score of 4.25** Meets or exceeds all of the following criteria:

- GPA is **typically 3.35** or above.

- SAT/ACT **meets the UC admissions index**.

- Completion of ‘A-G’ courses, including honors-designated courses, and courses satisfied by AP, IB, and SAT subject exams, **may reflect an average ratio** of courses completed when compared to courses available at their school(s). Students **may have a single** ‘A-G’ omission other than English or mathematics.
Senior year in-progress and planned courses should indicate some rigor, both in the quantity and quality of the program, relative to the course offerings at the high school.

Students have demonstrated certain participation in specific projects, curricular or extracurricular, as evidenced by a certain award(s) or some other recognition.

Students from high schools where English is not the primary language of instruction meet the TOEFL requirement in English Proficiency.

EXCEPTION CRITERIA: Students that have overcome significant personal circumstances, while still meeting academic requirements, should be awarded a score of 4.25, even if they fall short on one of the above criteria or slightly short on two of the above criteria.

Score of 4.50 Meets or exceeds all of the following criteria:

- GPA is typically 3.20 or above.
- SAT/ACT meets the UC admissions index.
- Completion of ‘A-G’ courses, including honors-designated courses, and courses satisfied by AP, IB, and SAT subject exams, may reflect an average ratio of courses completed when compared to courses available at their school(s). Students may have a single ‘A-G’ omission other than English or mathematics.
- Senior year in-progress and planned courses may indicate some rigor, both in the quantity and quality of the program, relative to the course offerings at the high school.
- Students have demonstrated limited participation in specific projects, curricular or extracurricular, as evidenced by a certain award(s) or some other recognition.
- Students from high schools where English is not the primary language of instruction meet the TOEFL requirement in English Proficiency.

EXCEPTION CRITERIA: Students that have overcome significant personal circumstances, while still meeting academic requirements, should be awarded a score of 4.50, even if they fall short on one of the above criteria or slightly short on two of the above criteria.

Score of 4.75 Meets or exceeds all of the following criteria:

- GPA is typically higher than 3.00.
- SAT/ACT meet or nearly meet the UC admissions index.
- Completion of ‘A-G’ courses, including honors-designated courses, and courses satisfied by AP, IB, and SAT subject exams, may reflect an average ratio of courses completed when compared to courses available at their school(s). Students may have a single ‘A-G’ omission other than English or mathematics.
Senior year in-progress and planned courses **may indicate some rigor**, both in the quantity and quality of the program, relative to the course offerings at the high school.

Students have not demonstrated any participation in specific projects, curricular or extracurricular.

Students from high schools where English is not the primary language of instruction **meet the TOEFL requirement** in English Proficiency.

**Score of 5**

- GPA is **typically at or below 3.00**.

- SAT/ACT **may not meet the UC admissions index**.

- Completion of ‘A-G’ courses, including honors-designated courses, and courses satisfied by AP, IB, and SAT subject exams, **may not reflect an average ratio** of courses completed when compared to courses available at their school(s).

- Senior year in-progress and planned courses **may not indicate rigor**, both in the quantity and quality of the program, relative to the course offerings at the high school.

- Academic record **may not indicate** outstanding performance (all A grades) in one or more ‘A-G’ subject areas.

- Students have demonstrated no interests or intention in any projects, curricular or extracurricular.

- Students from high schools where English is not the primary language of instruction **may not quite meet the requirement** in English Proficiency.

**Score of 5-Deny**

- The record has significant deficiencies in comparison to a Score of 5, and the applicant would not meet Admission by Exception criteria.

- Academic record may show a grade trend that **causes concern** for potential success at UC Santa Cruz.

- The overall GPA of the applicant is not sufficient to be successful at UC Santa Cruz.

- The applicant has already graduated from high school and their senior year grades would not have met UCSC’s “Conditions of Admission.”