

A Note about Letters of Recommendation for Freshman Applicants: November 23, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

As you may know, UC Berkeley is again requesting letters of recommendation from some, but not all, freshman applicants. Like last year, we are making a letter request when we would like to see additional information. Three important distinctions remain: 1) the letter is optional, 2) students may only submit two letters each, and 3) while the student can choose the letter writer, Berkeley faculty policy prefers that one letter come from a teacher or academic contact.

To make sure that you are informed - and in the spirit of transparency - we are happy to share the following results from last year's letter process. Every year's applicants are unique so these numbers may be used as a point of reference, but should not be used to predict outcomes for the 2020-21 pool.

During the 2019-20 application cycle:

- UC Berkeley invited over 13% of our freshman applicants to submit letters,
- Over 53% of the invited applicants requested at least one letter from a recommender,
- Of the students that requested at least one letter, there was a response rate of over 92%.

We value the additional context the letters of recommendation provide. However, it is also important to note that the opportunity to submit letters of recommendation is not a predictor of admission. As we have done in prior years, we continue to admit students from all three groups: 1) students who were invited to and submitted letters of recommendation; 2) students who were not able to take advantage of the opportunity to submit letters, and 3) students who were not offered the opportunity to do so.

As we continue to use letters as resources in the 2020-21 application cycle, we want to thank you for your support of our holistic review process. As admission becomes more selective each year, we are fully committed to gathering as much information as we can. Your support of students is evident and we are incredibly grateful for your partnership.

The deadline for letter submission is January 15, 2021. Letter requests will be issued through the first week of December. If we can help in any way as the letter requests are generated, please do not hesitate to reach out. We are available to serve as resources to students, letter writers, and student advocates.

For more information on our Letters of Recommendation process, please visit our website: admissions.berkeley.edu/freshman-policy.

With much appreciation,

Office of Undergraduate Admissions
University of California, Berkeley