



Academic Senate

COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS

August 16, 2023

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Peter Sadler, Chair
Committee on Undergraduate Admissions

Re: Proposed changes to the Guidelines for Admission by Exception (AxEx)

The Committee on Undergraduate Admissions reviewed the Guidelines for Admission by Exception (AxEx) at their June 16, 2023, meeting and propose the attached changes requested by the state auditor.

The main change to the document is removal of the language regarding the department's ability to recommend AxEx which was the main request from the State Audit, to ensure we properly protect all admissions activity against improper influence from campus partners. Applicants who qualify for AxEx may be identified by the Undergraduate Admissions office in its regular review of applications, by Studio Arts, or by the Athletics Department.

CC: Emily Engelschall, Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services
Veronica Zendejas, Director of Undergraduate Admissions
Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of the Academic Senate

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE
GUIDELINES FOR ADMISSION BY EXCEPTION
SUPPLEMENTAL CRITERIA
(Rev ~~December 1, 2020~~ April 28 December 5,
2023)

Admission by Exception (AxE) is an offer of admission reserved for applicants who do not meet current campus admission requirements, but meet a set of minimum academic requirements (as specified in Section I below) and

1. Have a special talent or are defined as “other students” (see criteria outlined in Section II below), or
2. Have attained academic achievement despite coming from disadvantaged circumstances, including but not limited to low-income students, first generation college students, and those from low-API schools (see criteria outlined in Section II below)

Effective Fall 2006, Undergraduate Admissions may admit the number of AxE applicants required to yield up to 6% of total first-year enrollment and up to 6% of total transfer enrollment for a specific admission term.

Up to 2% of AxE enrollments may be reserved for applicants outlined in number #1 above.

Up to a total of 4%, may be reserved for applicants outlined in #2 above.

The admission by exception percentages is reviewed on an ~~bi~~-annual basis and reported to the Undergraduate Admissions Senate Committee by the Director of Undergraduate Admissions.

1. The Director of Undergraduate Admissions will monitor these limits using an established report following the third week of each new fall and winter term.
2. The Director of Undergraduate Admissions in consultation with the Undergraduate Admissions Senate Committee will review the percentage of special talent applicants and applicants demonstrating academic promise and/or major disadvantage to determine if AxE percentages have met the established criteria, ensure that special talent applicants are not allocated an excessive number of slots, and whether an adjustment to the AxE percentage allocation is needed for a future term.

All applicants admitted by exception must be approved by three senior campus leaders. In the event that two senior leaders within Undergraduate Admissions or Enrollment Services are not available to approve AxE admits one approver may be replaced with a second approver from the Academic Senate.

The following criteria have been developed and approved by the Undergraduate Admissions Committee of the UC Riverside Academic Senate.

I. Minimum Academic Requirements

Applicants must meet the following minimum academic criteria in order to be considered for AxE.

Freshman Applicant

1. GPA – 2.8 minimum in A-G subjects.
2. A-G Course Omissions - 3 courses or less (no Math or English omissions/deficiencies are allowed).
3. Transferrable coursework taken after the summer following high school graduation – up to 30 units of transferrable coursework can be considered for [first-year](#) admission for international students in the Admission Preparation Program and other circumstances as warranted.

Transfer Applicant

1. GPA - 2.00 minimum allowed in transferable courses.
2. Units - A minimum of 24 transferable quarter units.
3. Subject Requirements – At least one transferable English Composition course, one transferable math course (has intermediate algebra as a prerequisite), and one appropriate third course from the required 7-course pattern.

All applicants who meet the above academic criteria may compete equally for AxE consideration. Declining academic performance is a factor used to defer applicants even though they may meet the criteria described above. Exceptions to the above criteria are rare.

Applicants who do not meet these criteria must demonstrate acceptable alternative academic achievement (see below: IV. Special Committee Review).

II. Definitions of Applicants to be Considered for AxE

The mere presence of one or more of the below factors does not justify review for AxE since such factors exist to some degree for many applicants. Review is justified only in situations where the student's overall achievement, academic promise in a specific area, and/or disadvantage, is truly distinctive. Such situations are expected to be rare.

1. **Special Talent or “Other” Applicants** – Applicants satisfying the above-stated minimum academic requirements and give evidence (outlined in Appendix B) of possessing special talent for university programs requiring such special talent, may be considered for AxE. Students defined as “other” may be considered for AxE if one or more of the following factors have been demonstrated at an exceptional level:
 - outstanding achievement in a specific subject area;
 - self-motivation and initiative;
 - leadership;
 - public or community service;
 - completion of significant special projects;
 - special endorsement of academic promise from their school;
 - demonstration of academic promise by achievement in specific areas of study; and/or

- marked improvement in academic performance as demonstrated by academic grade point average and/or enrollment in accelerated, challenging course work (e.g., honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and transferable college courses).

2. **Applicants from disadvantaged circumstances, including but not limited to low-income students, first generation college students, and those from ~~low-API schools~~ LCFF+ schools**

Students satisfying the above-stated minimum academic requirements may be considered for AxE if they have demonstrated academic achievement in the presence of major disadvantages compared to typical student applicants. Disadvantages may include geographical, physical, psychological, financial, or personal and may include, but are not limited to:

- **Low Income:** Family income and household size will be used to determine if an applicant is financially disadvantaged. The family income cutoff will be directly linked to the size of the family. A scale is used to assign variable points. The actual income cutoffs would be based upon annually published federal standards. The University of California Office of the President will provide the Undergraduate Admissions office applicable standards on an annual basis.
- **First-Generation College Attendee:** Parents/Guardians of applicants have not completed an undergraduate degree.
- **Disability (Learning, Physical, and/or Psychological):** Applicant will require further review by Student Special Services for recommendation.
- **English as a Second Language:** Applicant's native language is other than English.
- **Veteran:** Applicant is veteran of U.S. military.
- **Re-entry:** Applicant is 24 years of age or older by term of entry and has been out of school for two years or more.
- **Unusual Life Circumstances/Personal Hardship Indicators:** Applicant is or has one or more of the following: ward of the court; recent or chronic illness/injury; lives in foster home; comes from single parent family; single parent; runaway; death in the immediate family (parent, guardian, sibling); homeless; emancipated minor; incarcerated parent; a current/former inmate of a correctional facility; parolee; and/or a victim of physical/sexual abuse.
- **Location of Residence and/or Limited Educational Opportunity Indicators:** Applicant lives in or around one or more of the following: inner city dwelling/school or rural dwelling/school community with a high crime rate, high unemployment rate, and/or low education level.
- **Applicant Attends High School Where the Following Occurs:** Applicant is bussed to school (therefore, cannot participate in extracurricular/enriching activities); high school does not offer AP/Honors curriculum or high school does not send many applicants to UC; and/or high school has low college-going rate, low high school graduation rate, ~~and low high school test scores (mean average less than 500 on SAT I- Math and Verbal).~~
- **Job:** Applicant is working during the school year to supplement family income, save for college, or fulfill other basic needs.

- **Recent Immigrant Status:** Applicant has moved within last six years from non-English-speaking country.
- **Applicant from Another Country:** Applicant attended high school or higher-level education in another country and is unable to meet traditional UC admission requirements.

III. Review Process

Applicants who qualify for AxE may be identified by the Undergraduate Admissions office in its regular review of applications, by Studio Arts~~academic departments~~, or by the Athletics Department. Applicants identified through any of the aforementioned offices will be processed as follows:

1. **Undergraduate Admissions Office:** Applicants identified by the Undergraduate Admissions office will be forwarded to the Associate Director of Recruitment and Evaluation in Undergraduate Admissions for consideration.
2. **Studio Arts:** The Studio Arts department in collaboration with Undergraduate Admissions will identify applicants and submit the Department Recommendation Form to Undergraduate Admissions for a final decision.
3. ~~**Academic Departments:** Academic departments, which independently identify applicants, will submit the Special Talent and AxE Recommendation Form and forward it to the Undergraduate Admissions office for a final decision. The application file will be reviewed by the Associate Director of Recruitment and Evaluation in Undergraduate Admissions, who will consult with the Director of Admissions to determine if an AxE offer will be made. If the recommendation for admission is made primarily on the basis of special talent, the recommending department must follow the procedures outlined in Appendix B.~~
4. **Athletics Department:** The Athletics Department will submit the Athletic Release Authorization Form and the Request for Admission by Athletics Form to Undergraduate Admissions.

Upon review and in consultation with the Director of Admissions, a decision will be made to determine if an AxE offer will be made. If the recommendation for admission is made primarily based on special talent, the recommending department must follow the procedures outlined in Appendix B.

IV. Special Review Committee

Applicants who *do not* qualify for AxE and are supported by a UCR studio arts faculty member, admissions staff, or athletics department may be reviewed by a Special Review Committee (See Appendix A.)

Special Review Committee (SRC)

Charge:

Applicants who *do not* qualify for Admission by Exception and are supported by a UCR art studio faculty, admissions staff, or athleticsdepartment may be reviewed by a Special Review Committee comprised of UCR faculty, with faculty or staff from the appropriate UCR unit, staff from the Academic Resource Center, and the Director of Undergraduate Admissions as Ex-Officio members. The Special Review Committee will make final admissions decisions for such applicants based on its assessment of the likelihood of their academic success at UCR, which in turn is based on:

1. Academic history as reported on the *Application for Undergraduate Admissions and Scholarships*;
2. An academic evaluation by the Undergraduate Admissions office of all requested official transcripts and completed test scores;
3. The Personal Insight Questions; and other relevant materials provided to the Special Review Committee for consideration;
4. Additional requested materials.

As a condition of admission, the Special Review Committee may require the applicant to:

1. Meet specific goals at the Academic Resource Center; and/or
2. Meet specific goals from the Athletics Department's required Study Table; and/or
3. Meet other conditions as deemed appropriate.

There will be about 3-4 meetings each year, most occurring during the winter and spring quarters. Meetings may occur during the summer only when necessary.

Appeal Process

For an appeal to be considered by the Special Review Committee, new and compelling information must have come to light for the student that was not presented to the Special Review Committee when the student was originally considered for admission. This information must clearly show the student to be significantly stronger overall than had been earlier evidenced.

Items that must be included in the appeal:

1. A letter written by the original supporting department (including the student's full legal name and UCR student ID) requesting that the Special Review Committee reconsider its decision. The letter must explain why the new and compelling information was not presented to the Special Review Committee.
2. New documentation that supports the appeal such as a transcript or a revised test score report.

Appeal documents must be received in Undergraduate Admissions no later than 14 calendar days from the date the Special Review Committee's decision was communicated to the original supporting department.

Decisions made by the Special Review Committee as a result of an appeal are final.

Membership:

The Special Review Committee is comprised of at least four Academic Senate faculty members and up to five non-voting University faculty or staff members in Ex-Officio status. Membership is as follows:

Senate Faculty Members

Undergraduate Admissions Committee Representative, Chair

-Appointed by the Committee on Undergraduate Admissions

Faculty Representative from CHASS

-Appointed by the Committee on Committees

Faculty Representative from CNAS

-Appointed by the Committee on Committees

Faculty Representative from BCOE

-Appointed by the Committee on Committees

Faculty Representative

-Appointed by the Committee on Committees

Ex-Officio Members

ACE Program Coordinator, The Academic Resource Center

Director of Undergraduate Admissions

Admissions Counselor

Faculty Athletic Representative to NCAA when appropriate

Chair, Committee on International Education when appropriate

Other pertinent individuals as deemed appropriate by the Chair

Voting members must recuse themselves from any case file for which- there is a conflict of interest~~they serve as the faculty advocate~~. Further the SRC shall be considered a senate committee for the purpose of executing an annual COI.

Special Talent Admissions

Definition of Special Talent Admissions

Special talent admission is inclusive of any circumstance in which an applicant is considered for admission to the University of California, Riverside primarily on the basis of their special talent. Special talent refers to a non-academic talent, typically presented by Athletics or areas encompassing the visual and performing arts.

Minimum requirements for documented verification of special talent:

A minimum of two verifiable pieces of information from the options listed below must be obtained for any student being recommended for admission solely on the basis of the special talent. Two of the same type of verifiable pieces of information will not be allowed except for letters of recommendation. Information submitted for verification of special talent must be retained and attached to the official student record. The recommending department is responsible for verifying all documentation submitted on behalf of the applicant is official (e.g., team roster is on letterhead or includes an official team logo, etc.)

Types of information and trusted sources that can be used to confirm qualifications or credentials for a specific sport or talent:

1. Athletic Talent

- a. Video of athlete competing where the student is clearly identifiable
- b. Team roster with athlete listed as competing team member
- c. Documentation of talent from third party website to include achievement levels by sport*
- d. Two letters of recommendation by current and/or recent club or high school coach
 - i. Verified internet search to confirm person writing the letter has a confirmed association as a coach for the club or high school team
- e. Verified internet search of athlete to confirm recent participation in the sport and recognition received

2. Visual and Performing Arts Talent

- a. Video or portfolio of student's musical, theatrical, artistic, dance, or other visual and performing art talent
- b. Program from visual and performing art performance, showcase, or competition listing the student
- c. Two letters of recommendation from visual and performing arts professionals familiar with the student's work
 - i. Verified internet search to confirm person writing the letter has a confirmed association as a visual and performing arts professional in the noted area
- d. Verified internet search of student to confirm recent visual and performing arts performances and recognition received

~~3. Other Special Talent~~

- ~~a. Video or portfolio of student's special talent~~
- ~~b. Documentation of talent from third party website to include achievement or award in a particular field~~

- ~~c. Two letters of recommendation from professionals familiar with the student's work~~
- ~~i. Verified internet search to confirm person writing the letter has a confirmed association as a professional in the noted area~~
- ~~d. Verified internet search of student to confirm recent recognition in particular field received~~

**Third party websites include, but are not limited to, the following:*

1. Tennis: <https://www.atptour.com/en/players>
2. Golf: <https://www.amateurgolf.com/Players/Search>; <https://www.ajga.org/Rankings/>; <https://scpgajt.bluegolf.com/bluegolf/scpgajt17/profile/memsearch.htm>
3. Track and Field: <https://www.usatf.org/resources/statistics>
4. Softball: <https://www.softballamerica.com/rankings/>
5. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0A5W66_0K-HnZEqecYGSw
6. <https://www.maxpreps.com/>
7. <http://www.verbalcommits.com/>

Special Talent Verification Process:

A two-step verification process is required for any applicant recommended for admission primarily based on special talent that includes the following:

1. *The initiator of the recommendation must document and attest, under penalty of disciplinary action that they have performed an assessment and determined that the level of special talent warrants a recommendation for admission.
2. An individual in a supervisory capacity to the initiator must approve the recommendation being put forward. Individuals designated in a supervisory capacity must minimally be at the Director or Associate Dean level.

*For applicants recommended by Athletics it is required that the Athletics Compliance Office verify the qualifications of the recommended applicant.

Approval from a senior leadership member from an office external to the recommending department is required for applicants recommended for admission primarily based on special talent. The person serving in this capacity can be either the Director of Undergraduate Admissions or the Associate Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Services.