



Student Orientation & Academic Readiness GUIDEBOOK



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Know Before You GO

We're thrilled to welcome you to UNA this summer at our SOAR sessions! Our team is dedicated to supporting you every step of the way and setting you up for success. With five SOAR sessions spread across the summer, you'll have the chance to connect with valuable resources, explore our beautiful campus, and start building lifelong friendships.

We can't wait to see you at SOAR—your UNA journey starts here!



Communication

Check your UNA email frequently for communication about your SOAR session. Students and family members will receive emails the week of their SOAR session with important information. Your SOAR counselor will also be emailing to connect before meeting in person! Email soar@una.edu with any questions prior to your session.

Session Changes

Contact soar@una.edu to request a change to your SOAR session date. Students and guests must register for a SOAR session at least one week before its date. Should you or your guest be unable to attend your scheduled SOAR session, please notify soar@una.edu as soon as possible.

Request for Accommodations

If you or your guests need any special accommodations that you did not indicate on your registration, please let us know at least one week before your SOAR session. We are happy to assist you with requests including mobility, dietary, health, and communication needs. If applicable, we recommend also contacting Disability Support Services at dss@una.edu or 256-765-4214

Know Before You GO

Family & Guests

Students can register up to two family members or guests to join them for Family Orientation as part of their Student Orientation registration. While Family Orientation runs on a separate schedule from Student Orientation, we've planned moments throughout the day for students and their families to reconnect and share the experience.

Please note that on-campus accommodations are only available for students attending the overnight SOAR session on June 22–23. Family members attending this session will need to arrange their own lodging accommodations.

Meals

Lunch is provided for students and family members during each one-day SOAR session. For the overnight session, dinner is provided on Day 1, and breakfast and lunch are provided on Day 2. Please indicate any dietary needs when registering for your SOAR session, or email soar@una.edu at least 1 week before your orientation session.

Travel Planning

All one-day SOAR sessions wrap up around 4:30 p.m. For the overnight session, Day 1 concludes at approximately 11:00 p.m., while Day 2 finishes around 4:30 p.m. Be sure to keep these times in mind when planning your travel.

Course Registration

We encourage all students to schedule an appointment with their academic advisor before attending their SOAR session. You can find your advisor and book your appointment at una.edu/findyouradvisor.

- Incoming freshmen can start meeting with their advisors on May 1, 2025.
- Transfer students can begin meeting with their advisors on March 3, 2025.

For added convenience, optional advising sessions will also be available before check-in during every SOAR session.



What to Bring

We recommend bringing the following items to make your orientation experience as easy and enjoyable as possible:

Overnight Session:

- Sleeping bag or Twin XL sheets
- Pillow
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Phone Charger
- Medications
- 2 sets of comfortable, casual clothing

All Sessions:

- Comfortable casual, clothing
- Walking Shoes
- Refillable Water bottle
- Umbrella/rain jacket
- State-issued picture ID
- Smartphone or device that scans QR codes

Helpful Hint:

Your UNA email and student ID number will be printed on the back of your nametag!



Student Schedule: ONE-DAY

8:00 – 8:45 AM	*Optional Advising Session (<i>Communications Building</i>)
8:15 – 9:00 AM	Check-In for all SOAR Attendees (<i>Norton Auditorium</i>)
9:00 – 9:30 AM	SOAR Kickoff (<i>Norton Auditorium</i>)
9:40 – 10:10 AM	Group Meeting
10:30 – 11:30 AM	Meet Your College Explore your academic home by touring facilities, connecting with faculty and current students, and participating in hands-on activities.
11:45 AM – 12:55 PM	Lunch/Campus Resources & Organizations Browse Fair (<i>Mane Market and Student Recreation Center (SRC)</i>)
1:10 – 3:05 PM	Breakout Sessions Meet Your Advisor (<i>Collier Library</i>): <i>Connect with your academic advisor and other incoming students pursuing the same major.</i> Engagement & Wellbeing (<i>SGA Chambers</i>): <i>Gain insights from Student Engagement, Health Services, and other campus resources here to support your college journey.</i> Financial Aid (<i>Commons 330</i>): <i>Learn how to pay for college and keep your financial aid on track with helpful tips on scholarships, grants, and loans.</i> Housing & Residence Life & Campus Safety (<i>Raburn Wing – Room 104</i>): <i>Get the inside scoop on living on campus and how we keep our community safe and supported.</i>
3:10 – 3:55 PM	Taking Care of Business <i>Take care of any last-minute questions and tasks before leaving orientation</i>
4:00 – 4:30 PM	SOAR Graduation (<i>Norton Auditorium</i>)

A note on the June 9th Honors College SOAR Session:

The Honors SOAR session will follow the same schedule as the regular one-day student sessions, with a few adjustments. These include the addition of Honors College mentors, changes in locations for breakout sessions, and the replacement of SOAR graduation with a closing reception at Harrison Plaza hosted by the Cole Honors College.

Student Schedule: TWO-DAY

Day 1 (June 22nd)

2:30 – 3:30 PM	Check-In (<i>Olive Hall</i>)
4:10 – 4:30 PM	SOAR Kickoff (<i>Norton Auditorium</i>)
4:30 – 5:00 PM	Group Meeting
5:00 – 6:00 PM	The SOAR Games (<i>Student Recreation Center</i>) <i>Team up with new friends to compete in exciting challenges and games!</i>
6:00 – 7:00 PM	Dinner (<i>Mane Market</i>)
7:00 – 8:30 PM	Bingo Bango or the University Game Room (<i>GUC Atrium</i>) <i>Play Bingo for a chance to win prizes, or head to the Game Room to hang out and enjoy some downtime.</i>
8:30 – 10:00 PM	Silent Disco (<i>Student Rec Center</i>) or Game Night (<i>Olive Hall Lobby</i>) <i>Dance the night away at the Silent Disco or join Honors College students for a fun round of board games</i>
10:00 PM	Late Night Snack (<i>Olive Hall Patio</i>) <i>Grab a bite and meet Fraternity & Sorority Life members while enjoying a casual hangout.</i>

Day 2 Continued on Next Page...

WHY ATTEND THE OVERNIGHT SESSION?



Stronger Peer Connections

More time to bond with future Lions through social activities and shared experiences.



Campus Immersion

Staying overnight helps students feel comfortable navigating campus and experiencing dorm life.



Fun & Engagement

Extra time for games and casual conversations makes the experience more enjoyable and memorable.

Student Schedule:

TWO-DAY

Day 2 (June 23rd)

8:30 – 10:00 AM	Breakfast (<i>Mane Market</i>)
9:00 – 10:00 AM	Optional Advising Session (<i>Communications Building</i>) *
10:00 – 10:20 AM	Group Meeting
10:30 – 11:30 AM	Meet Your College Explore your academic home by touring facilities, connecting with faculty and current students, and participating in hands-on activities.
11:45 AM – 12:55 PM	Lunch/Campus Resources & Organizations Browse Fair (<i>Mane Market and Student Recreation Center (SRC)</i>)
1:10 – 3:05 PM	Breakout Sessions
	Meet Your Advisor (<i>Collier Library</i>): <i>Connect with your academic advisor and other incoming students pursuing the same major.</i>
	Engagement & Wellbeing (<i>SGA Chambers</i>): <i>Gain insights from Student Engagement, Health Services, and other campus resources here to support your college journey.</i>
	Financial Aid (<i>Commons 330</i>): <i>Learn how to pay for college and keep your financial aid on track with helpful tips on scholarships, grants, and loans.</i>
	Housing & Residence Life & Campus Safety (<i>Raburn Wing – Room 104</i>): <i>Get the inside scoop on living on campus and how we keep our community safe and supported.</i>
3:10 – 3:55 PM	Taking Care of Business <i>Take care of any last-minute questions and tasks before leaving orientation</i>
4:00 – 4:30 PM	SOAR Graduation (<i>Norton Auditorium</i>)

Family Schedule:

ONE-DAY

8:00 – 8:45 AM	Optional Advising Session (<i>Communications Building</i>) * <i>Students Only. Family members may enjoy refreshments in Norton Auditorium during this time.</i>
8:15 – 9:00 AM	Check-In for all SOAR Attendees (<i>Norton Auditorium</i>)
9:00 – 9:30 AM	SOAR Kickoff (<i>Norton Auditorium</i>)
9:30 – 10:00 AM	“Transitions” with Dr. Andrea Hunt <i>Get advice on how to guide your student through the transition to college with confidence and care.</i>
10:05 – 10:30 AM	Group Meeting
10:30 – 11:30 AM	Breakout Sessions
	Family Connections (<i>GUC Performance Center</i>) <i>Explore the University Family Portal, learn about upcoming family events, and discover how to stay connected with the university.</i>
	Safety & Wellbeing (<i>GUC Banquet Hall B</i>) <i>Learn about campus safety, health resources, and how we support student wellbeing throughout their college experience.</i>
	Student Success (<i>GUC Banquet Hall A</i>) <i>Gain insights on how to support your student’s academic success.</i>
	Housing & Residence Life (<i>GUC Room 200</i>) <i>Learn about on-campus housing and how we support students living in our campus communities.</i>
	Student Panel (<i>GUC Loft</i>) <i>Hear from current students about their college experiences and get your questions answered during this interactive Q&A session.</i>
11:45 AM – 12:55 PM	Lunch/Campus Resources & Organizations Browse Fair

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Family Schedule:

ONE-DAY

CONTINUED

1:10 – 2:45 PM

Breakout Sessions**Family Connections (GUC Performance Center)**

Explore the University Family Portal, learn about upcoming family events, and discover how to stay connected with the university.

Safety & Wellbeing (GUC Banquet Hall B)

Learn about campus safety, health resources, and how we support student wellbeing throughout their college experience.

Student Success (GUC Banquet Hall A)

Gain insights on how to support your student's academic success.

Housing & Residence Life (GUC Room 200)

Learn about on-campus housing and how we support students living in our campus communities.

Student Panel (GUC Loft)

Hear from current students about their college experiences and get your questions answered during this interactive Q&A session.

3:00 – 3:30 PM

Money Talks (GUC Performance Center)

Get helpful information on managing college costs and campus resources from Financial Aid, Listerhill Credit Union, and Dining Services.

3:30 – 3:50 PM

Group Meeting

4:00 – 4:30 PM

SOAR Graduation (Norton Auditorium) **

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Family Schedule:

TWO-DAY

Day 1 (June 22nd)

2:30 – 3:30 PM	Check-In (<i>Olive Hall</i>)
4:10 – 4:30 PM	SOAR Kickoff (<i>Norton Auditorium</i>)
4:30 – 5:00 PM	"Transitions" with Dr. Andrea Hunt <i>Get advice on how to guide your student through the transition to college with confidence and care.</i>
5:00 – 5:30 PM	Group Meeting
5:30 PM	Family Dismissal & Evening on Your Own

Day 2 Continued on Next Page...

Helpful Hint:

Family members are not permitted to stay overnight in the residence halls during orientation. Please plan for local accommodations!



Family Schedule:

TWO-DAY

Day 2 (June 23rd)

8:30 – 10:00 AM	Optional Breakfast with Students (<i>Mane Market</i>)
10:00 – 10:30 AM	Group Meeting (<i>GUC 1st Floor Atrium</i>)
10:30 – 11:30 AM	Breakout Sessions
	Family Connections (<i>GUC Performance Center</i>) <i>Explore the University Family Portal, learn about upcoming family events, and discover how to stay connected with the university.</i>
	Safety & Wellbeing (<i>GUC Banquet Hall B</i>) <i>Learn about campus safety, health resources, and how we support student wellbeing throughout their college experience.</i>
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	Student Panel (<i>GUC Loft</i>) <i>Hear from current students about their college experiences and get your questions answered during this interactive Q&A session.</i>
11:45 AM – 12:55 PM	Lunch/Campus Resources & Organizations Browse Fair
1:10 – 2:45 PM	Breakout Sessions Continued
3:00 – 3:30 PM	Money Talks (<i>GUC Performance Center</i>) <i>Get helpful information on managing college costs and campus resources from Financial Aid, Listerhill Credit Union, and Dining Services.</i>
3:30 – 3:50 PM	Group Meeting
4:00 – 4:30 PM	SOAR Graduation (<i>Norton Auditorium</i>)

Academic Advising

You can register for fall classes beginning May 1. It is highly recommended that you meet one-on-one with your advisor before attending your SOAR session.

Should you choose not to schedule a one-on-one meeting with your academic advisor, please register for the optional group advising session on the morning of your SOAR session. You can opt in to day-of advising on your SOAR reservation form or by emailing soar@una.edu.

For questions regarding academic advising, email advising@una.edu.

WHY SCHEDULE AN ADVISING APPOINTMENT OUTSIDE OF SOAR?



Personalized Course Selection

A one-on-one meeting allows for a tailored discussion about degree requirements, dual/transfer credits, and course options based on your academic goals and interests.



In-Depth Guidance

Advisors can take the time to answer specific questions about your major, prerequisites, and unique needs without the time constraints of a group session.



Less Pressure

Meeting privately allows you to ask detailed questions without the concern of slowing a group. Completing advising beforehand lets you enjoy the rest of your orientation experience stress-free.

Academic Advising

PREPARING FOR YOUR ADVISING APPOINTMENT

Being prepared for your academic advisement session is key to your success. Advisors can help you navigate your curriculum, discover and discuss career and other life goals, and connect you with resources and opportunities outside the classroom. You must meet with an advisor before you can register for classes.

Get Logged In

1. Your UNA email address and password are provided in your acceptance letter.

Your UNA email address will serve as your log-in credentials for all UNA accounts.

2. Set up DUO Two-Factor Authentication.

Instructions here: <https://www.una.edu/its/duo>

3. Add Microsoft Outlook App to Your Phone for Easy Email Access.

Enable push notifications so you don't miss an important email!

Submit Academic Records

1. Have All Official Transcripts Sent to UNA.

To receive official credit for any college coursework, including dual enrollment, you must submit your transcripts to the Office of Admissions.

2. If you took AP or IB tests, request scores to be sent directly to UNA through the testing agency.

- To request AP scores, visit <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/>
- To request IB scores, visit <https://ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/assessment-and-exams/requesting-transcripts>

Plan Ahead

1. Schedule an Advising Appointment.

Advisors are assigned by major. Locate the advisor for your major here: <https://www.una.edu/findyouradvisor>

2. Schedule Placement Tests, if Needed.

Placement tests can be used in place of an ACT or SAT score to meet course pre-requisites. More information is available at <https://una.edu/successcenter/testing>

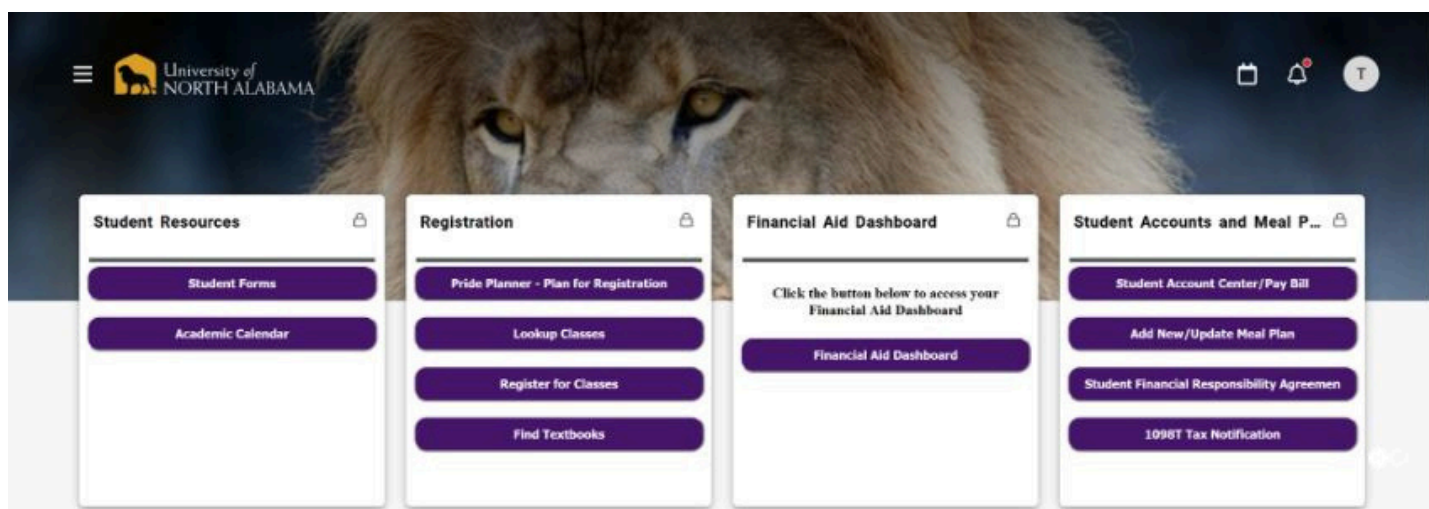
3. Build Schedule Options Using the Pride Planner

Your advisor will guide you through understanding course requirements and registering for classes. Pride Planner is our course schedule builder that helps you select your days and class times out of available options. [Pride Planner Guide.](#)

UNA Portal

UNA Portal is a secure online platform that provides students, faculty, and staff with access to academic records, course registration, financial information, campus resources, and communication tools.

Click the “Portal” link at the top of any UNA web page to access UNA Portal. After you log in with your UNA email and password, your Dashboard will contain important links for your student academic and financial information.



- **Sign the Financial Responsibility Agreement to Remove the Hold on Your Account** (Under the “Student Accounts” tab on UNA Portal). This is a registration hold that is placed on all incoming students but is lifted automatically once this agreement is signed.
- **Review Financial Information**
 - Accept financial aid awards, complete entrance counseling, and sign your Master Promissory Note in the Financial Aid Dashboard. [More Info.](#)
 - Set up payment plans or add an authorized user in the Student Accounts dashboard. [More Info](#)
- **Review Academic Profile**
Verify that your major is listed correctly and that ACT/SAT/Placement Test scores have been received.
- **Explore Degree Works**
Review AP, dual enrollment, and/or transfer credits. If you completed dual enrollment or transfer credit, request a final transcript from the institution to be sent to UNA.
- **FERPA (Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act)**
UNA cannot release student information to parents/guardians without written consent. [More Info & Consent Form.](#)

First-Year Experience

Are you ready to make the most of your first year at UNA?

Starting college is an exciting journey, and the University of North Alabama is here to help you succeed from day one! Our First-Year Experience (FYE) Program is designed to support new students as they transition into college life, providing resources, guidance, and a strong sense of community.

With an array of courses, a network for personal support, interactive online resources, and unique living/learning experiences, The First Experience program helps new students achieve success and start understanding their passions.

FYE 101: Seminar

A 1-credit hour course designed to help students with:

- Developing academic success strategies
- Learning about campus resources & opportunities
- Building connections with faculty, staff, and peers
- Exploring personal and professional growth

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit una.edu/case/fye

Stop by the FYE Office (109 Powers Hall)

Or contact Tammy Rhodes, Director, at tdrhodes@una.edu



Explore the Area

The Shoals area of Alabama, made up of Florence, Muscle Shoals, Sheffield, and Tuscumbia, is a hidden gem bursting with vibrant charm and southern hospitality.

Visitors can explore its rich musical history, from the legendary Muscle Shoals Sound Studio to the iconic Fame Recording Studios, where musical legends like Aretha Franklin and the Rolling Stones recorded. The area's beautiful natural landscapes, including the Tennessee River and nearby waterfalls, offer stunning views and outdoor adventures. Whether you're strolling through the historic districts, savoring local Southern cuisine, or soaking in the local art scene, the Shoals effortlessly blends history, culture, and natural beauty—making it a must-visit destination for anyone looking for a unique Southern experience.

Hotels:

- Hampton Inn
- Renaissance Shoals Resort & Spa
- The Stricklin Hotel
- GunRunner Boutique Hotel
- Holiday Inn

Dining:

- Big Bad Breakfast
- Jack's Place Bistro
- Lost Pizza
- Wildwood Tavern
- Yumm Thai: Sushi
- Pie Factory
- Odette
- Rosie's Mexican Cantina
- Lava Room
- Ricatoni's Italian Grill
- Rice Box
- Mugshot's Grill & Bar



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