



NOLA KATE SUBER A2 ACHIEVE COLLEGE ADMISSION RISK ASSESSMENT

THE OVERALL PICTURE

Your application has one significant numeric weakness and several meaningful strengths. The weakness is easy to identify: your current ACT. The strengths include GPA, advanced coursework, substantial dual enrollment, clear career direction, media-related involvement, paid employment, social-media leadership, golf and relevant recognition. The risk assessment changes dramatically depending upon whether we use that 18 in the admission process. My plan is **not to use it where it hurts you without giving us something valuable in return.**

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

A2 Achieve Admission Risk: LOWER RISK

Current Category: Likely/Strong Target

Assuming your official unweighted GPA is comfortably above UNA's 2.5 regular-admission minimum, I see little reason at this point to consider UNA a high admission risk. UNA is test optional.

What Helps You

- Your GPA.
- Your Honors and dual enrollment coursework.
- Your direct academic connection to Mass Communication.
- Your existing journalism/video experience.
- Your employment.
- Your leadership through social media.

What Creates Risk

The biggest unknown is your unweighted GPA rather than admission itself.

Your ACT primarily creates **scholarship and honors risk**, not general-admission risk.

Scholarship Risk: MODERATE-HIGH AT CURRENT SCORE

With an 18, you are below the first ACT-based academic scholarship tier.

UNA does offer academic awards without an ACT for students with qualifying unweighted GPAs, but a 20 immediately changes the award table and higher scores increase it substantially. That makes retesting worthwhile.

Honors Risk: MODERATE-HIGH

At the moment I would treat Honors as something to pursue, not something to assume.

Your GPA, leadership, work and media involvement can help. Testing currently does not.

Application Strategy

Apply through **MyUNA/the UNA institutional application**. Do not wait for a better ACT to apply to the university. Then we will use the material I am building through Common App (your activities, honors, working resume, essay thinking and short-answer content) to complete UNA's Honors and scholarship work. UNA's General & Endowed Scholarship Application opens **November 2, 2026**, and has a **March 1, 2027** deadline. Cole Honors accepts applications year-round but uses March 1 for priority scholarship consideration.

UAB

A2 Achieve Admission Risk: LOWER-MODERATE RISK

Current Category: Strong Target

If your official weighted GPA remains at least 3.5, you qualify for UAB's Fall 2027 test-optional process. That is the strategy I currently prefer with an 18.

What Helps You

- 4.27 reported GPA.
- Substantial advanced coursework.
- Very strong connection between your intended major and your activities.
- Work experience.
- A clear academic direction.

What Creates Risk

If your official weighted GPA unexpectedly calculates below 3.5, UAB will require a score. That is why we need the transcript. The other risk is scholarship competitiveness rather than admission.

Testing Recommendation

Do not send the 18. If you retest in October, we can wait for that score before submitting UAB.

If the score remains below the range that benefits you, we use test optional. If it rises substantially, we reassess. Because UAB makes the testing choice final once the application is submitted, I do not want to submit this one prematurely.

Scholarship Risk: MODERATE-HIGH

UAB's published in-state merit schedule begins at a 22 ACT for a student with a 3.5+ GPA, while test-optional students are evaluated through an unpublished holistic process. Admission and scholarship strategy are not the same thing here.

Honors Risk: HIGH WITH CURRENT TESTING

Automatic Honors admission requires much stronger testing. But UAB does allow students who do not meet the automatic invitation criteria to submit an individual Honors application. Your media work, employment, leadership, writing and recommendations will matter there. I would absolutely let you apply. I simply would not describe Honors as likely right now.

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

A2 Achieve Admission Risk: MODERATE RISK

Current Category: Target/Reach Borderline Until Transcript Review

Samford is the school on your current list where I am least willing to assume the outcome. Your reported weighted GPA is strong. Your rigor looks good. Your major alignment is outstanding. Your activities make sense. But Samford's current middle ACT range is 23–29 and GPA range 3.48–4.1, and I do not yet know what your unweighted/recalculated GPA will look like in Samford's review.

Testing Recommendation

With an 18, **apply test optional**. Samford specifically allows Fall 2027 applicants to do that.

What Helps You

- Academic rigor.
- Media experience.
- Clear fit with Journalism and Mass Communication.
- Paid work.
- Leadership.
- Communication ability.
- Relevant Scholastic Press Association experience.
- Your personality.

What Creates Risk

Unknown unweighted GPA. No current test score that strengthens the file. Scholarship competition. The general unpredictability of holistic private-university admission.

Distinction Factor

Your strongest differentiator at Samford should be: **You are not merely interested in journalism; you have already started producing media and assuming communication roles within your school community.** That needs to be very obvious.

Application Timing

I want you in **Early Action by November 1**. Samford states that EA is nonbinding and that students who apply by November 1 receive a decision before Thanksgiving. That is the right round for you.

YOUR OVERALL RISK PICTURE

If we manage testing correctly:

- **UNA – LOWER RISK**
- **UAB – LOWER-MODERATE RISK**
- **Samford – MODERATE RISK**

I do **not** see a college list that is wildly unrealistic. I do see a list where scholarships could be considerably more difficult than admission. That distinction is important.