

Alabama Colleges & Universities

Where they are, what they play, and what they're known for

Alabama is home to 24 four-year colleges and universities (plus 20+ two-year community and technical colleges statewide) spanning NCAA Division I football powerhouses, historically Black colleges and universities, and small private liberal-arts schools. Here's the full rundown -- location, conference/division, public or private, and what each is known for.

Alabama Colleges & Universities

#	School	City	Conference / Division	Type	Known For
1	University of Alabama	Tuscaloosa	SEC (D1 FBS)	Public	Business, engineering, nursing, journalism; major national research institution.
2	Auburn University	Auburn	SEC (D1 FBS)	Public	Engineering, veterinary medicine, business, agriculture.
3	Troy University	Troy	Sun Belt (D1 FBS)	Public	Business, journalism/mass communication. Also has Montgomery, Dothan & Phenix City campuses.
4	Univ. of South Alabama	Mobile	Sun Belt (D1 FBS)	Public	Medicine, engineering, marine sciences.
5	UAB	Birmingham	American (D1 FBS)	Public	Medicine, nursing, public health, biomedical research.
6	Alabama State University	Montgomery	SWAC (D1 FCS)	Public HBCU	Music/marching band (Mighty Marching Hornets), business.
7	Alabama A&M University	Normal (Huntsville)	SWAC (D1 FCS)	Public HBCU	Agriculture, engineering, applied sciences.
8	Jacksonville State Univ.	Jacksonville	Conference USA (D1 FCS)	Public	Education, criminal justice.
9	Samford University	Homewood	Southern Conf. (D1 FCS)	Private	Pharmacy, law, business, nursing.
10	Univ. of North Alabama	Florence	ASUN (D1 FCS)	Public	Business, entertainment industry/music business program.
11	UAH	Huntsville	Gulf South (D2)	Public	Engineering, physics/space science, business.
12	Auburn Univ. at Montgomery	Montgomery	Gulf South (D2)	Public	Business, nursing, criminal justice.

Alabama Colleges & Universities

Where they are, what they play, and what they're known for

#	School	City	Conference / Division	Type	Known For
13	Univ. of Montevallo	Montevallo	Gulf South (D2)	Public	Fine arts, education, business.
14	Univ. of West Alabama	Livingston	Gulf South (D2)	Public	Education, forestry.
15	Miles College	Fairfield	SIAC (D2)	Private HBCU	Business, education.
16	Spring Hill College	Mobile	SIAC (D2)	Private	Jesuit liberal arts, business.
17	Tuskegee University	Tuskegee	SIAC (D2)	Private HBCU	Engineering, veterinary medicine, aerospace science (historic Tuskegee Airmen connection).
18	Huntingdon College	Montgomery	USA South (D3)	Private	Methodist-affiliated; business, education.
19	Faulkner University	Montgomery	NAIA	Private	Jones School of Law, business.
20	Talladega College	Talladega	SIAC (transitioning)	Private HBCU	Oldest private HBCU in Alabama; liberal arts.
21	Stillman College	Tuscaloosa	SIAC	Private HBCU	Education, business.
22	Selma University	Selma	Independent	Private Baptist HBCU	Ministry, liberal arts.
23	Judson College	Marion	Independent	Private Baptist	Women's college; liberal arts.
24	Athens State Univ.	Athens	Independent (upper-division)	Public	Junior/senior + graduate transfer institution; business, education.

Alabama also has 20+ public two-year community and technical colleges statewide (e.g. Shelton State, Bishop State, Calhoun, Wallace State, Lawson State, Jefferson State, Gadsden State) — ask if you'd like a separate guide to workforce/technical training options near a specific area.

Explore public and private colleges and universities across Alabama with this downloadable guide featuring campus locations, enrollment, academic programs, and surrounding communities.

Alabama Colleges & Universities

Where they are, what they play, and what they're known for

Choosing a College

Which colleges are in Alabama?

24 four-year colleges and universities (see the table above), plus 20+ public two-year community and technical colleges statewide.

How many colleges are in Alabama?

24 four-year institutions and 20+ two-year community/technical colleges -- around 44+ total higher-ed options in the state.

Public vs. private colleges in Alabama

14 of the 24 four-year schools are public; 10 are private (including 6 of Alabama's 7 HBCUs). Public schools generally cost less for in-state residents; private schools vary widely by size and mission.

What are the largest universities in Alabama?

The University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa) leads with about 42,360 total students (fall 2025) -- 36,160 undergraduate, 6,200 graduate. Auburn follows with about 34,195 total students. UAB and Troy are also among the state's largest by enrollment.

What are the best engineering schools in Alabama?

Auburn's Samuel Ginn School of Engineering ranks #1 in the state (top 50 nationally in several specialty areas), with the University of Alabama's College of Engineering ranked #2.

What are the best nursing schools in Alabama?

UAB's School of Nursing is the highest-ranked nursing program in the state -- #13 nationally for undergraduate nursing, with strong graduate rankings in DNP and MSN programs.

What are the best business schools in Alabama?

UAB's Collat School of Business, Auburn's Harbert College of Business, and the University of Alabama's Culverhouse College of Business are the state's major AACSB-accredited programs; UAB's part-time MBA ranked #91 nationally in U.S. News' 2026 rankings.

Which Alabama colleges offer online degrees?

Troy University and UAB both have extensive online degree catalogs; Athens State University (an upper-division transfer school) also offers substantial online options for junior/senior and graduate students.

What are the HBCUs in Alabama?

Alabama State University, Alabama A&M University, Miles College, Tuskegee University, Talladega College, Stillman College, and Selma University -- 7 HBCUs total.

Which Alabama colleges have medical schools?

UAB's Heersink School of Medicine (Birmingham, with branch campuses in Huntsville, Montgomery, and Tuscaloosa) is the state's major MD-granting medical school. Auburn also hosts a campus of the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM).

Alabama Colleges & Universities

Where they are, what they play, and what they're known for

Which colleges have law schools?

University of Alabama School of Law (Tuscaloosa) is the state's top-ranked law school (#40 nationally); Samford University's Cumberland School of Law (Birmingham) and Faulkner University's Jones School of Law (Montgomery) are the others.

Cost

How much does college cost in Alabama?

Alabama public 4-year tuition averages roughly \$11,672/year in-state and \$31,460/year out-of-state -- well below many national averages.

In-state vs. out-of-state tuition

University of Alabama: about \$12,467 in-state vs. \$35,172 out-of-state. Auburn: about \$11,790 in-state vs. \$33,944 out-of-state. Always confirm current-year figures directly with the school -- rates change annually.

What scholarships are available?

Both merit-based (test scores, GPA, National Merit status) and need-based aid are available at every public university, plus institution-specific scholarships that vary by school.

Alabama merit scholarships

University of Alabama's Presidential Scholarship covers full tuition for National Merit Finalists. Auburn's National Scholars Presidential Scholarship is worth \$46,000 over four years (\$11,500/year) for Alabama-resident National Merit Finalists.

Need-based financial aid

Available through FAFSA-linked federal aid plus state programs like the Alabama Student Grant Program and the Alabama Student Assistance Program (ASAP).

FAFSA information

File as early as possible after it opens each year -- many state and institutional aid programs award on a priority-deadline, first-come basis.

Cost of living in college towns

Varies by town -- see the Area Guides for Auburn, Tuscaloosa, Birmingham, Huntsville, and Mobile for real income, tax, and housing-cost data for each.

Campus Life

What is campus life like?

Varies significantly by size: large flagships (Alabama, Auburn) offer extensive Greek life, SEC athletics, and hundreds of student organizations; smaller schools offer a tighter-knit community feel.

Greek life

Prominent and large at Alabama and Auburn in particular; presence varies widely at smaller and private schools.

Alabama Colleges & Universities

Where they are, what they play, and what they're known for

Athletics

SEC Division I athletics at Alabama and Auburn draw national attention; other schools compete across D1 FCS, D2, D3, and NAIA depending on the program (see the table above).

Student organizations

Large universities typically offer several hundred registered clubs and organizations spanning academics, culture, service, and recreation.

Study abroad

Most four-year schools offer study abroad options; the larger universities (Alabama, Auburn, UAB) have dedicated international programs offices with the widest range of destinations.

Freshman housing

Most four-year schools require or strongly encourage on-campus housing for first-year students -- confirm the specific policy with each school's housing office.

Dining options

Larger campuses have multiple dining halls and meal plan tiers; smaller schools have more limited but still functional on-campus dining.

College Towns

Living in Auburn

A classic college town where Auburn University drives the local economy directly (about a quarter of the workforce). Steady population growth, strong public schools, and a downtown built around Toomer's Corner. See the full Auburn Area Guide for income, tax, and housing data.

Living in Tuscaloosa

College-town energy year-round around the University of Alabama, with a growing manufacturing base (Mercedes-Benz U.S. International) and an easy drive to both Birmingham and the Gulf Coast. See the full Tuscaloosa Area Guide.

Living in Troy

A smaller college town in southeast Alabama built around Troy University's main campus -- more rural and quieter than the state's larger college towns, with Montgomery about 50 miles away for bigger-city amenities.

Living in Florence

Home to the University of North Alabama along the Tennessee River in the Shoals area -- a smaller metro known for its music history (Muscle Shoals) alongside the university.

Living in Jacksonville, Alabama

A small northeast Alabama town built around Jacksonville State University, roughly equidistant between Birmingham and Anniston.

Alabama Colleges & Universities

Where they are, what they play, and what they're known for

Living near UAB

UAB sits in Birmingham's Southside/Five Points South area -- one of the city's more walkable pockets, with a concentration of student housing, restaurants, and the state's largest medical/research employment base right on campus.

Living in Huntsville while attending UAH

Huntsville combines a full metro's amenities (Bridge Street Town Centre, a strong job market) with UAH's engineering-and-space-science-focused campus -- see the full Huntsville Area Guide.

Living in Mobile while attending South Alabama

Mobile pairs a historic port-city economy (including Airbus's growing final-assembly operations) with the University of South Alabama's medicine and engineering programs -- see the full Mobile Area Guide.

Parents Google These

How far is Auburn from Birmingham?

About 115 miles, roughly a 1 hour 45 minute drive.

Is Birmingham a good place for college students?

Birmingham hosts UAB directly in the walkable Southside/Five Points South area, with restaurants, transit access, and the city's largest employment base nearby -- a genuinely urban option compared to Alabama's other college towns.

What airport is closest to Auburn?

Auburn University Regional Airport handles general aviation only. For commercial flights, Columbus Metropolitan Airport (CSG) in Georgia is closest (about 32 miles) but has limited service; most families fly into Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson (about 110 miles) for more flight options.

What airport is closest to Tuscaloosa?

Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport (BHM), about 60 miles away.

Can freshmen have cars?

Policies vary by school, but most Alabama campuses allow freshman vehicles with a parking permit, reflecting the state's generally car-dependent culture -- confirm the specific policy with each school's parking services office.

Is public transportation available?

Generally limited statewide. Larger campuses run their own shuttle/transit systems, but city-wide public transit is minimal outside small pockets of Birmingham -- plan on a car for most day-to-day needs.

Best apartments near UAB

The Southside/Five Points South area around UAB has the highest concentration of student-oriented housing in Birmingham -- worth a dedicated search closer to enrollment as availability and pricing shift each year.

Cost of living for college students

Follows the same pattern as the broader area -- see the relevant Area Guide for income and housing-cost context for each college town.

Alabama Colleges & Universities

Where they are, what they play, and what they're known for

International & Out-of-State Students

Moving to Alabama for college

The same practical basics apply as any relocation -- see our Moving to Alabama resources for a full checklist.

What is Alabama like?

See our Ask Me Anything FAQ and blog for an honest, detailed picture of everyday life, culture, and what surprises transplants most.

Weather in Alabama

Hot, humid summers; mild winters; a real tornado season each spring. See our full seasonal weather guide.

Transportation

Car-dependent almost everywhere in the state; budget for a vehicle unless you're attending a school with strong on-campus/walkable amenities.

Driver's license

New Alabama residents are generally required to obtain an Alabama driver's license within a set window after establishing residency -- confirm the current exact requirement with the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA).

Banking

National and regional banks plus credit unions are widely available in every college town covered in this guide.

Healthcare

Every major campus has a student health center; nearby hospital systems are noted in each Area Guide.

Internet providers

Availability varies more than in dense coastal metros -- verify actual provider speeds at your specific address before committing, especially in smaller college towns.

Utilities

Set-up is standard -- electric, water, and internet are typically separate providers; your leasing office or the city utilities department can point you to the right ones.

Career

Internship opportunities

Tied directly to each region's major industries -- aerospace in Huntsville, automotive manufacturing in Tuscaloosa/Montgomery, medicine/research in Birmingham, shipbuilding/aerospace in Mobile, state government in Montgomery.

Major employers

See each Area Guide for the specific major employers in that college town's region.

Job market after graduation

Alabama's growth industries (aerospace, automotive, healthcare, logistics) have been adding jobs steadily, particularly

Alabama Colleges & Universities

Where they are, what they play, and what they're known for

around Huntsville and Mobile.

Industries in Alabama

Aerospace and defense, automotive manufacturing, healthcare and biotech, banking and finance, shipbuilding, government, and agriculture.

Healthcare jobs

Concentrated around UAB and Birmingham's hospital systems, with growing healthcare employment statewide.

Engineering jobs

Auburn and UA's engineering pipelines feed directly into Mercedes-Benz, NASA/Redstone Arsenal, Boeing, and Airbus.

Aerospace jobs

Huntsville (NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, Redstone Arsenal, Boeing) and Mobile (Airbus's U.S. manufacturing facility, now running three A320/A220 final assembly lines with 2,000+ employees) are the state's two aerospace hubs.

Fun Stuff

Best college football traditions

Auburn's "War Eagle" and rolling Toomer's Corner after wins; Alabama's "Roll Tide" and Bear Bryant's houndstooth legacy; the Iron Bowl (Alabama vs. Auburn) is one of the sport's biggest rivalries.

Things to do on weekends

Game days, nearby lakes and state parks, and each college town's downtown district -- see the relevant Area Guide for specifics.

Best coffee shops near campus

Every college town has its own local favorites -- worth exploring in person or asking current students, since these change often.

Local restaurants

Same -- each college town's downtown or campus-adjacent district has its own restaurant scene worth exploring firsthand.

Hiking near campus

Chewacla State Park is a short drive from Auburn; Lake Lurleen State Park is near Tuscaloosa; Monte Sano State Park is right in Huntsville.

Lakes near campus

Lake Martin is close to Auburn; Lake Tuscaloosa sits just outside Tuscaloosa; Guntersville Lake is within reach of Huntsville.

Beaches near campus

University of South Alabama students in Mobile are about 45 minutes from Gulf Shores and Orange Beach.

Alabama Colleges & Universities

Where they are, what they play, and what they're known for

Have a specific college-town question this didn't answer, or want the deep-dive version for a particular school? Reach out any time at krysten@yoursweethomealabama.com.