

2025-2026 GOAL Handbook



Introduction

The purpose of the Go On And Learn Program (GOAL) Handbook is to introduce you to the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) GOAL's policies.

GOAL's purpose is to provide students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities the opportunity to attend UNC. GOAL is designed for students to achieve increased self-determination through the development of academic and social skills, career preparation, and campus engagement. This includes the successful completion of traditional, inclusive college courses and GOAL courses. Successful completion is measured by maintaining a GPA of 2.5 or higher, participation in vocational experiences, participation in one or more registered student organization activities each week, and maintaining satisfactory academic progress as outlined in this handbook.

We are constantly evaluating GOAL and making changes to the components of the program in service to ensure constant improvement. This handbook may also change as a result of changes to the program.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christina Ruffatti, CRC
Executive Director, GOAL

Overview of GOAL

GOAL is an inclusive higher education program for people aged 18 to 25 with intellectual and/or development disabilities. GOAL offers students a variety of opportunities, including access to college courses and residential hall living. GOAL students are UNC students first, and, as a result, have full access to UNC resources, activities, clubs, and events.

A student in the GOAL program must be their own legal guardian and must be able to read, understand, and follow the provisions of the UNC Student Code of Conduct, as well as to act responsibly and consistent with applicable laws, with the UNC Student Code of Conduct, with the UNC Housing & Residential Education Handbook, and all other UNC policies and regulations.

Expected GOAL Student Outcomes

We expect GOAL students to gain skills in six areas:

1. Financial Independence (skills related to budgeting and money management);
2. Vocational Development (skills related to getting and keeping a job);
3. Personal Development (skills related to having positive relationships, positive identity, self-determination, self-confidence, emotional intelligence, and self-advocacy);
4. Independent Living (skills related to self-care, time management, personal shopping, and leisure);
5. Community Participation (skills related to engagement in community and civic activities); and
6. Access to Resources (skills related to researching and securing available services and support).

GOAL students who successfully complete the program will earn a *Comprehensive Higher Education Certificate*.

GOAL Comprehensive Higher Education Certificate.

To graduate from GOAL, a student must complete the following requirements:

- (a) Complete a minimum of 72 academic credit hours;
 - a. GOAL courses: 8 x 4 credits = 32 credit hours; and
 - b. Non-GOAL courses: Minimum of 40 credit hours including, at a minimum:
 - i. Three credits in UNIV 101;
 - ii. Three credits of Health and Wellness;
 - iii. Three credits Communication; and
 - iv. Three credits of Social Sciences.
- (b) Maintain minimum GPA of at least 2.0;
- (c) Complete at least one vocational activity (as approved by GOAL staff) each semester; and
- (d) Participate in at least one Registered Student Organization (“RSO”).

Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (“FERPA”) Matters

Because GOAL is a UNC program, it must adhere to the requirements of FERPA. FERPA prohibits GOAL staff and any other UNC employees from sharing student information that constitutes an “education record,” as defined under FERPA, without the written consent of the student.

Each GOAL student can sign a FERPA release document in which the GOAL student identifies persons to whom UNC staff and faculty may provide information about the GOAL student.

Please refer to the [Registrar’s Page](#) for more information about FERPA.

Disability Accommodations

GOAL students who have questions about accommodation-related issues or requesting reasonable accommodations and services should contact UNC's Disability Resource Center ("DRC"). The DRC provides accommodations on a case-by-case basis through a collaborative process between the DRC and the student. GOAL students must comply with the Rights and Responsibilities of Students Requesting Disability Services at UNC and follow the DRC's process for requesting accommodations on the "Getting Started" page of the DRC website, both of which may be found at the [Disability Resource Center](#).

Progress Toward Certification

A student in the GOAL program must pass their GOAL class every semester to meet the prerequisites to advance to the next GOAL class. For example, a student must pass GOAL 102 to meet the prerequisite to take GOAL 201. If a student fails a GOAL class, they must withdraw from the GOAL program until the course is offered again (typically a one-semester withdrawal). Students who fail a GOAL class are subject to the Continuous Enrollment Requirement below and must reapply to the GOAL program.

GOAL classes are offered in the following terms:

Fall Semester	Spring Semester
GOAL 101	GOAL 102
GOAL 201	GOAL 202
GOAL 301	GOAL 302
GOAL 401	GOAL 402

Continuous Enrollment Requirement

A student in the GOAL program is required to continuously enroll in courses for consecutive semesters. Any student who does not maintain continuous enrollment must reapply to the program. Re-entry is subject to program capacity and will be determined by the GOAL program.

GOAL Domain: Academics

Each semester, GOAL students take a minimum of one GOAL course, as well as two non-GOAL courses from the course catalog. Non-GOAL courses may be modified to meet the specific needs of each individual student.

All courses, grades, and credit hours are listed on a student in the GOAL program's UNC transcript with the following statement:

"Grades on this transcript are for a student enrolled in UNC GOAL, a modified program for students with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Unless otherwise noted, this student was not held to the same academic standards as other students and the grades achieved are reflective of the student's work in modified courses."

GOAL Courses

More information about the GOAL courses can be found in the [UNC Course catalog](#).

Non-GOAL Courses

Students take four to six credits of modified non-GOAL classes each semester (normally two courses each semester).

Selecting Courses (Advising)

By the end of their first year, a student in the GOAL program works with GOAL staff to develop a four-year plan of study. The student then meets with GOAL staff each semester before registration to review the courses on their four-year plan and develop a schedule for the next semester based on their plan of study.

Student Responsibilities

A student in the GOAL program must accept their academic opportunities, expectations, and requirements to develop increased independence, critical thinking methods, self-advocacy, and individual responsibility. To do so, the student must:

- Attend all their classes;
- Participate during their classes;
- Use an organization system and planner;
- Complete all assignments by their due dates;
- Check their grades;
- Ask for help if they are struggling with their classes;
- Access and use academic supports, including peer mentors;
- Attend all academic-related meetings (including peer mentor and advising meetings);
- Self-advocate for accommodations and modifications;
- Keep a copy of their academic modifications with them;
- Develop a four-year plan of study with GOAL staff;
- Communicate any questions or concerns to GOAL and/or UNC staff; and
- Respond to communications from GOAL and/or UNC staff.

Academic Supports

Resources available to a student in the GOAL program include tutoring and required support from peer mentors. A student may also receive academic accommodations and other support through the Disability Resource Center (“DRC”) and also has access to other UNC-based support services, including from Information Management & Technology, Tutorial Services, Counseling Center, and Writing Center.

GOAL Domain: Vocational Experiences

A student in the GOAL program has the opportunity to engage in on- and off-campus vocational experiences. Vocational experiences (such as internships, paid employment, volunteer positions, job shadowing, informational interviews, and vocational workshops) and are based on availability, schedules, and student interest. Vocational experiences help to prepare a student to express their employment goals and help teach students the skills and information they need to obtain competitive integrated employment.

Student Responsibilities

A student must engage in vocational experiences on- or off- campus, self-advocate, and communicate with co-workers, supervisors, and GOAL staff about their experiences. To do so, a student must:

- Arrange for their transportation to and from work;
- Report to work on-time;
- Inform their supervisor before their workday begins if they will be absent;
- Use proper workplace hygiene and grooming;
- Follow all workplace rules, policies, and regulations;
- Self-advocate for workplace accommodations and modifications;
- Communicate with others in a professional manner;
- Complete all required paperwork in a timely manner; and
- Communicate any questions or concerns to GOAL staff and to their internship and/or employment supervisors.

Vocational Supports

Because vocational experiences are meant to promote natural relationships, self-advocacy, and independence, GOAL staff do not provide extensive on-the-job support to each GOAL student. GOAL staff works with each student to determine their support needs and available resources.

GOAL Domain: Residential/Student Life

A student in the GOAL program must live on-campus in the GOAL Residential Learning Community (RLC) for their freshman (first) year, where they have full access to UNC events, organizations, and activities. A student in the GOAL program should explore and participate in campus events of interest to them.

Housing and Residential Education Policies

The Housing and Residential Education (“HRE”) Handbook may be accessed at [Housing Forms](#).

Residential Safety

Please review the safety information here: <http://www.unco.edu/safety/housing-residential-life.aspx>. All GOAL students are encouraged to save the phone number for the UNC Police Department (“UNCPD”) ((970) 351-2245) in their cellphones and should not hesitate to call that number to report a crime or suspicious activity. UNCPD is open 24 hours a day and 365 days a year and will respond to your call immediately. If a student in the GOAL program has an emergency or needs to report an in-progress crime, they should call (970) 351-2245 or call 911 immediately. UNCPD also offers an after-hours escort program available to anyone on campus. These escorts are provided by police officers and student security officers during hours of darkness for persons walking on campus. To request an escort, call the UNCPD at (970) 351-2245.

Student Responsibilities

A student in the GOAL program should use social opportunities and residential life to develop their ability to navigate independent living, critical thinking, social skills, self-advocacy, and individual responsibility. To do so, a student must:

- Communicate any questions or concerns to GOAL staff or HRE staff;
- Self-advocate for accommodations and modifications;
- Follow all HRE rules, policies, and regulations, including the provisions of the housing contract
- Follow the instructions for submitting a request if there is a problem in their residence that needs attention or repair;
- Keep track of and budget meal plan usage;
- Read, understand and follow the UNC Student Code of Conduct;
- Report an incident or concern about a potential violation of the UNC Student Code of Conduct to UNC’s Office of Student Conduct & Accountability at (970) 351-2001 or submit an online report at <https://unco.edu/dean-of-students/share-concern.aspx>
- Practice good hygiene and self-care;
- Attend all scheduled floor and residence hall meetings;
- Learn about and participate in activities, organizations, and events of interest; and
- Arrange for their transportation to and from activities.

Residential Supports

A student in the GOAL program will receive support from one or more Resident Assistants (“RAs”) who live on each floor of North Hall. RAs provide support to North Hall residents

including promoting student safety and that students follow all policies, rules, and contracts. RAs are available to answer student questions or direct a student to the appropriate office to answer their questions.

University of Northern Colorado
GOAL Student Acknowledgment of UNC GOAL Program Requirements
Including
Required Academic, Social, and Vocational Behavior

I, [INSERT STUDENT'S FULL NAME] _____, confirm and agree to each one of the provisions contained below. I understand that if I do not follow each and every one of these provisions, I may be disciplined, suspended, and/or expelled from the University of Northern Colorado ("UNC") GOAL program consistent with applicable UNC policies, including but not limited to the UNC Student Code of Conduct, the UNC Discrimination Complaint Procedures, the UNC Housing & Residential Education Handbook, and/or the UNC GOAL Handbook.

Please initial before each statement below to indicate you have read, understood, and comply, and will continue to comply, fully with each statement

- I am my own legal guardian.
- If, at any time during my enrollment in the UNC GOAL program, I am no longer my own legal guardian, I will notify the Executive Director of the GOAL program immediately of such change.
- I have been provided with the UNC Student Code of Conduct applicable to the academic year for which I have enrolled at UNC, and I have read, understood, and will comply fully with it.
- I have been provided with the Housing & Residential Education Handbook applicable to the academic year for which I have enrolled at UNC, and I have read, understood, and will comply fully with it.
- I have been provided with the UNC GOAL Handbook applicable to the academic year for which I have enrolled at UNC, and I have read, understand, and will comply fully with it and with all policies established by the GOAL program during the academic year for which I am enrolled.
- I understand that the UNC GOAL program does not provide 24/7 supervision, help, and/or support.
- I understand that I am responsible for my safety, welfare, and actions at all times that I am enrolled in the UNC GOAL program.
- I understand that if I do not attend the classes in GOAL program courses in which I have enrolled, and do not complete class work in those courses, I can fail a course or courses, which may result in a required Academic Success Plan for me, academic probation, suspension, and/or expulsion from the UNC GOAL program.

- I will attend scheduled meetings with all relevant advisors, instructors, tutors, counselors, and GOAL staff or will be given an excused absence prior to such meeting by the relevant UNC staff and/or faculty.
- I will be an active participant and communicate any issues to GOAL and/or Residential Life staff and will propose solutions.
- I will participate in vocational experiences on and/or off campus.
- I will attend vocational experiences or otherwise notify the relevant person of any absence prior to my expected arrival time.
- I understand I am responsible for payment timely of all tuition, fees, and related expenses.
- I understand that UNC GOAL is a non-degree seeking program and that I will not be earning a degree.
- I understand that to receive my Comprehensive Higher Education Certificate, I need to successfully complete eight semesters in the UNC GOAL program and meet the requirements of that program.
- I understand that I am not guaranteed employment on or after I successfully complete the GOAL program.
- I understand that receiving a Comprehensive Higher Education Certificate does not guarantee entry or eligibility into further vocational, technical, or any other educational program.
- I can and will participate in the creation of my Person-Driven Plan and will work on the goals and next steps created in this plan to the best of my ability.
- I can and will use the academic support provided and available to me for my success and advocate for more assistance when needed.
- I understand that my coursework will be modified to my ability; therefore, college course credits are not guaranteed.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to attend all courses in which I am enrolled.
- I can and will practice good hygiene and self-care.
- I can and will complete and follow a roommate contract to create and participate in a healthy and cooperative living environment with my roommate(s).
- I can and will treat all UNC staff, instructors, and students with respect and dignity.
- I understand that, as a person with a disability, I have rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- I can and will communicate with UNC staff or my support circle to assist me with successful completion of the requirements of the GOAL program, or if I feel my legal rights have been violated.
- I understand that during my enrollment in the UNC GOAL program I may enter into a supported decision-making agreement under Colorado Revised Statute Section 15-14-801 et seq., and, if I do so, I also understand that I am still responsible for communications to and from GOAL staff and other UNC staff and faculty, about the GOAL program, and cannot delegate authority for those communications to any person(s) with whom I have a supported decision-making agreement.

By my signature and date below, I acknowledge that I have read all the terms and provisions of the **GOAL Student Acknowledgment of UNC GOAL Program Requirements Including Required Academic, Social, and Vocational Behavior**, and that I understand these provisions, that I agree to each and every one of them, and understand that I am subject to discipline, suspension, and/or expulsion from the GOAL program if I fail to comply with each of these terms and provisions.

Student Name (Print) _____

Signature _____

Date _____