

SPRING START EDITION



UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

CENTER for ACADEMIC
NAVIGATION & SUCCESS

Your Transitional Advising Journey

For students beginning at UM in January: how your Transitional Guide helps you use your fall well, arrive ready, and find your footing at the U.

Deposit

Your Fall

Enrollment

Transitional Guides

January Arrival

Cane Navigation

Academic Planning

Graduation

Center for Academic Navigation & Success · Office of Transitional Guides

This guide covers the first stage of your student success journey, from deposit through your first term.

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WELCOME

You Are Starting in January, and That Is a Real Start

Welcome to the U. You are a Spring Start student, which means your first semester at UM begins in January rather than August. This guide is written for your path specifically.

Spring Start is not a delayed admission. It is a deliberate entry point, and students who begin in January can graduate alongside students who began in August. What is different is the shape of your first year: you have a fall to use well, a January arrival, and a first semester that begins when the campus is already in motion.

You have questions right now, and we have answers. **Start with your Admission Officer**, who can walk you through your options for the fall. Over the summer we run webinars with our campus partners covering those options and the timing of each step, and Transitional Guides support academic questions, including plans to take courses elsewhere, closer to when you register. Once you are enrolled in October, your **Transitional Guide** becomes your first academic advisor at UM, working with you through your first semester and handing you off, well prepared, to the Cane Navigator who will partner with you through graduation.

Our philosophy, in one sentence: Transitional Guides exist to turn the first, unfamiliar steps of college into a clear path you can walk with confidence, so that by the time classes begin you know how the U works, who your people are, and what comes next.

What your Transitional Guide does

- Provides support for planning courses outside of UM in the fall, at key points over the summer
- Interprets your placement results and any credit you are bringing with you
- Explains how your first-term schedule comes together, and in most cases builds it with you
- Introduces you to the systems you will use every day, including CaneLink, Navigate360, and Canvas, and teaches you how to use them
- Answers questions about requirements, holds, and registration before classes begin
- Connects you to the right office when a question is not an academic one
- Introduces you to your Cane Navigator and makes the handoff a real one

What Transitional Guides are not

- We are not your long-term advisor. Your Cane Navigator is, starting in your first year
- **We do not choose your classes for you.** We help you choose well
- We cannot override placement results, prerequisites, or university policy
- We are not the transfer advising team. Transfer students work with a Cane Navigator from the start
- We are not admissions, financial aid, or housing, but we know exactly who is

Find your Transitional Guide. Before your enrollment is complete, you can contact your assigned Admission Officer or email us at transitionaladvising@miami.edu.

Transitional Guides are assigned once enrollment is complete in mid-October, and your Transitional Guide will reach out by email. If you do not see an email in your UM inbox or a Transitional Guide listed in CaneLink, reach out to us and we will sort it out.

Your Fall Is Part of the Plan

The question Spring Start students ask first is what to do with the fall. There is no single right answer, and there is no penalty for choosing the quieter one.

Some students use the fall to earn credit, some to work or travel, some to rest. What matters is that you choose on purpose and that you understand how your choice affects your January start. Talk it through with your Admission Officer before you commit to anything.

Your options

- **Start Abroad.** Spend your first semester with other spring admits in Barcelona, Dublin, London, or Rome, earning credit that returns to UM. Details and deadlines at startabroad.miami.edu
- **Start Online.** Take up to 10 credits of online non-degree coursework with UM faculty through DCIE, in math, writing, and cognate subjects. Credit posts automatically to your UM transcript. Details at admitted.miami.edu/get-started/spring-start/start-online
- **Coursework at another institution.** Enroll as a non-degree or transient student near home, so the courses count toward your UM degree rather than one elsewhere. Guidance at admitted.miami.edu/get-started/spring-start
- Work, internship, service, or travel, with no coursework at all. This is a legitimate choice.

Taking courses elsewhere in the fall?

- **Your credits will transfer.** Coursework completed at an accredited institution with a grade of C or better comes to UM. That is the part students worry about most, and it is the part you can stop worrying about.
- **What MATES actually tells you.** The Miami Academic Transfer Evaluation System at mates.miami.edu does not decide whether a course transfers. It tells you *how* the course applies: directly to a requirement in your degree, or as elective credit, which most degrees require anyway.
- **When pre-approval matters.** Use MATES for courses tied to your major, and for anything subject to placement such as math and writing. For general electives, pre-approval is not required.
- Planning a math course? You must follow your UM placement, which is based on your ACT or SAT scores or qualifying math transfer credit. Join our summer webinar for help reading your placement.
- Add the courses you will have in progress during the fall to your pre-registration form, available in your applicant portal in October
- Order an official transcript sent to UM directly from the institution you attended, as soon as the term ends. Unless you are in one of the UM start programs, this is on you to request.
- Plan on 12 to 15 credits in the fall

A word about housing. On-campus housing for spring is **neither required nor guaranteed**, so the single most important thing you can do is apply on time. The Spring-Only Housing Application opens **November 1** in the On-Campus Housing Portal and closes **November 15**. Students who apply by the deadline hear about their status in early December.

Housing & Residential Life keeps the full details for spring starters, including roommate requests, placement priority, the \$100 application fee, and what to do if you will live off campus:

hrl.studentaffairs.miami.edu, under For Spring Semester Housing. The application lives in the On-Campus Housing Portal, reached from CaneLink under Housing and Dining. Start there, and bring anything still unclear to us.

Thinking about sorority or fraternity recruitment in the spring? Eligibility depends on what you do this fall, so read this before you register for anything. You must complete **at least 12 credit hours of in-person, college-level coursework at a single institution in one semester**. Online and hybrid courses, AP credit, dual enrollment, and UM Summer Scholars **do not count** toward this requirement, and the UM Spring Start Online program does not meet it either.

You will also need a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5 and enrollment in at least 12 undergraduate credits in the spring. Eligibility is checked after fall grades post, and some study abroad programs do not report grades in time to participate. If recruitment matters to you, factor it into your fall decision now rather than in December.

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DEPOSIT TO JANUARY

What Happens, and When

These are milestones, not a race. Your Transitional Guide will tell you what matters next, so you never have to guess.

The five steps of your first term

Each step builds on the one before it.

1

You Deposit

You commit to the U and choose your fall path. Watch your personal email until October, and your UM email after that.

2

Enrollment

In mid-October you are officially enrolled at UM. This is called matriculation. Your UM accounts activate and your Transitional Guide connects with you. Check your UM email from this point on.

3

Road to UM

Complete onboarding: your UM account, placement assessments, health and housing items, and sending final transcripts and exam scores.

4

Plan & Register

Meet with your Transitional Guide and build your first-semester schedule at UM. Your appointment is a full, unhurried conversation. Completing it is what opens drop-in Zoom office hours to you for quick questions afterward.

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January Arrival

During Cane Kickoff, your orientation program, your Transitional Guide hands you off to your Cane Navigator, while helping you with drop/add once classes start.

Placement and credit

- **Start by understanding UM's math placement policy.** Your placement is based on your ACT or SAT scores or qualifying math transfer credit, and it determines which math course you begin in. Your placement and the quantitative requirement for your degree together determine how many semesters of math you will take. See *Taking courses elsewhere in the fall?* above if you are planning a math course this fall.
- If you have official ACT or SAT scores, you may submit them for math and writing placement, whether or not you applied test-optional.
- If you do not have scores to submit, the ALEKS math placement assessment is available over the summer if you plan to start your math sequence in the fall, in the fall if you will start it in the spring, and in person during Cane Kickoff if the Math Department assigns it. A valid placement is required before a math course can be approved.
- Send final transcripts and AP, IB, AICE, or dual enrollment scores **as soon as possible** so credit can be applied to your student record.

Building your first schedule

- Come with questions and interests, not a finished plan.
- If you are in the Miami Business School or the College of Engineering, your schedule will be created for you. You still meet with your Transitional Guide, so schedule your appointment.
- Expect a mix: major foundations, writing, math, and something that interests you.
- A balanced first term beats a heroic one.
- Spring sections of some courses fill differently than fall ones, so bring flexibility along with your preferences.
- **Your schedule can change during add/drop. Very little here is permanent.**

Before classes begin

- Clear any holds so registration and add/drop remain available to you. Holds can prevent you from registering during your registration appointment.
- Know your add/drop dates and where to find the academic calendar.
- Learn what lives where: Canes Central, the Camner Center, Toppel, the Counseling Center. These are campus resources worth getting familiar with.
- **Bonus item:** introduce yourself to at least one professor in the first two weeks.

- Taking fall coursework elsewhere? Your transcript arrives once your grades post at the end of the fall, so send the official copy as soon as it becomes available. In the meantime, tell your Transitional Guide it is coming in your pre-registration form, posted to your applicant portal in October.

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FIRST SEMESTER, THEN FOUR YEARS

Majors, Minors, and When to Add Them

Your first-semester schedule and your four-year plan are two different conversations, built on different information, and they happen with two different people. Here is why that order is deliberate.

A first semester usually carries one or two courses tied to your major. The rest of it starts your general education sequences: math, writing, and Areas of Knowledge, known at UM as cognates. Those courses count toward your degree no matter what you add later, which is exactly why the first term is a poor place to start optimizing for a second major or a minor.

Now: your first semester

- Built on two things: **your placement results** and **the credit you are bringing in**
- One or two major-related courses, with the rest launching your general education sequences: math, writing, and cognates
- Those requirements count toward your degree in nearly any direction you later take
- Planned with your Transitional Guide, who is working with the information that exists right now

Later: your four-year plan

- Built with your Cane Navigator, who stays with you through graduation
- This is where minors, second majors, certificates, and other additions get mapped into a real sequence
- You co-create a Canes Complete Plan during your first year, and revisit it every term as your goals change

Why we are not adding minors and second majors to your first schedule. It is not that we are putting you off. It is that the information needed to do it well has not arrived yet. Your final placement, your transfer and exam credit, and your own sense of what you want from the next four years all land over your first months here. A minor mapped in June, before any of that is settled, usually has to be remapped anyway, and in the meantime it can push a genuinely foundational course out of your first term.

Waiting is not falling behind. A second major or a minor is not a single course choice. It is a multi-year sequence that has to be mapped against your whole degree, which is what the Canes Complete Plan is for. Added deliberately, with the full picture in view, it usually fits. Bolted on early, before the inputs are settled, it tends to produce credits that do not advance your degree, and those are the credits that cost students time and money at the end.

So what should you do with this? Bring the interest to your advising appointment, by all means. Tell your Transitional Guide you are thinking about a minor in something, or a second major, or a certificate. We will make sure your first semester keeps that door open rather than closing it. Then you and your Cane Navigator will do the real mapping, with the full picture in front of you.

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YOUR PATH, MONTH BY MONTH

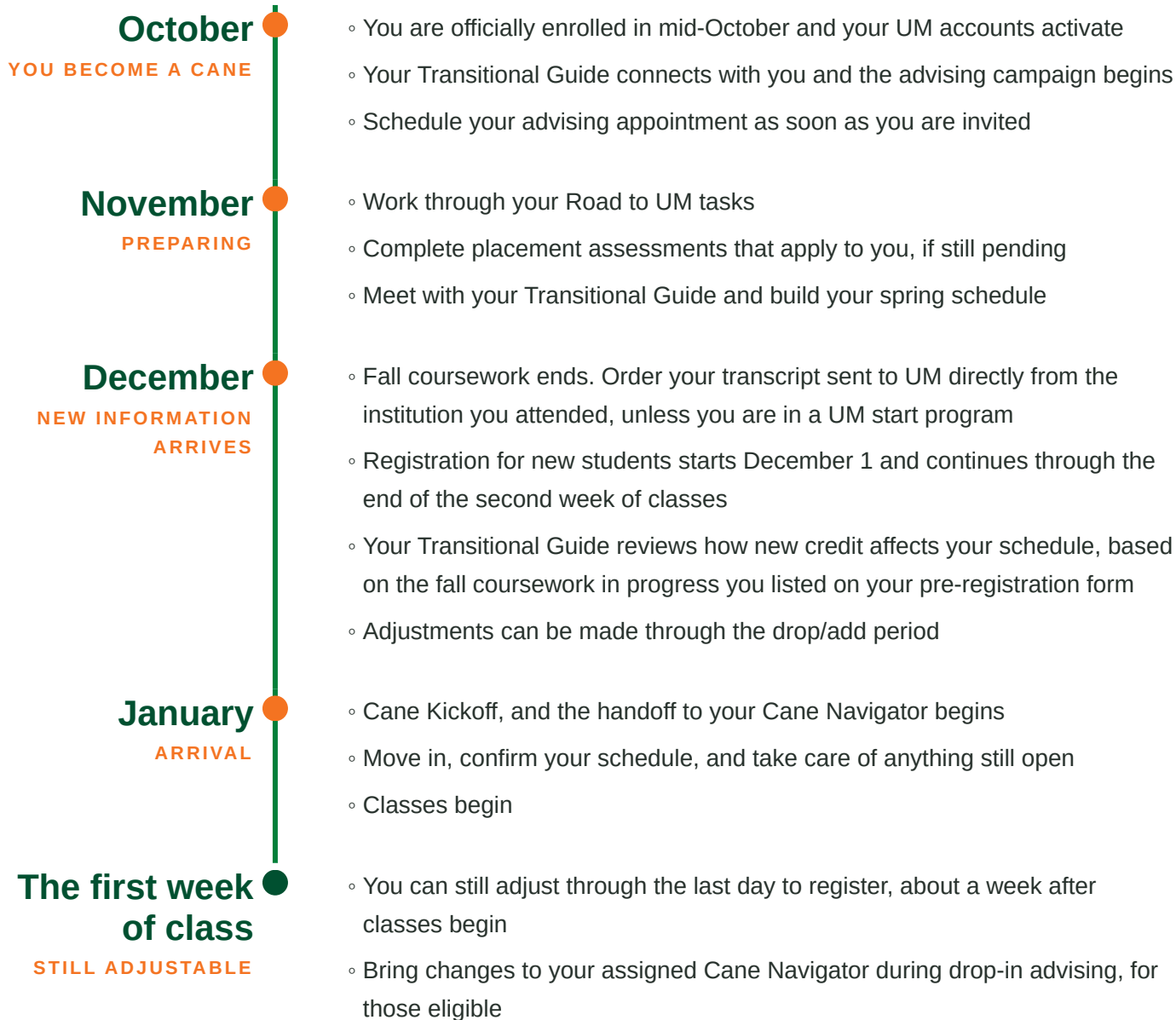
Registration Is a Journey, Not a Deadline

Building a first-semester schedule takes information that arrives at different times. That is normal, and it is planned for. You do not have to have everything at once.

Spring & Summer

DECIDING

- You deposit and confirm Spring Start
- Choose your fall path. Pre-approval through MATES is for students taking classes away from UM, and only for major coursework or courses subject to placement
- Keep an eye on your personal email. You will receive webinar invitations covering next steps for Spring Start and opportunities to connect with the UM community. We have it mapped out for you, including when to take each action



Your placement information keeps evolving, and we plan for that. Your Transitional Guide reviews your pre-registration form submission carefully, so complete it carefully. Course adjustments can be made along the way.

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YOUR FIRST COURSE WITH US

First Year Directions

Most first-year students take First Year Directions, or another school-specific first-year seminar course, in their first term. It is a short course, and it is the one place where learning to navigate the U is the actual subject matter.

What you will do

- Learn to read your degree requirements and academic policies
- Practice planning a term, not just picking classes
- Find the campus resources you will actually use
- Build connections with classmates and with your lecturer

Good to know

- Students in the **Miami Business School** and the **Rosenstiel School** follow a different first-term path
- Your Transitional Guide will tell you which version applies to you

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THE PARTNERSHIP

A Partnership From the Very First Step

Advising works when both people show up. That is true in your first month here, and it stays true for the next four years.

A quick word on email. Writing to your Transitional Guide or a professor? Use your UM email, include a clear subject line, and say who you are and what you need. It takes one extra minute and it changes how the university experiences you.

Send one email, not five. Email is not texting. Gather your questions into a single clear message rather than sending them as they occur to you. One good email gets you a complete answer; five short ones get you to the back of the line five times.

When you will hear back. Most of the year, expect a reply within 24 to 48 business hours. During our busiest stretches, when your Transitional Guide may be in advising appointments most of the day, a reply can take five to seven business days. We promise we are not ignoring you, and resending your email will only delay us further. If something is time-sensitive, say so in your subject line. And once you have completed your advising appointment, drop-in Zoom office hours open up to you: if your question is truly a quick one, they will get you an answer faster than email will.

What you can expect from your Transitional Guide

- A clear picture of what to do next, and why it matters now.
- Honest information about requirements, placement, and credit.
- Help building a first term that fits you, not a template.
- Warm referrals: a name and a contact, not just "go ask that office."
- One thorough advising appointment first; once it is complete, drop-in Zoom office hours are available to you for quick follow-up questions.
- Prepared, focused meetings and an honest answer about when you will hear back.
- A real introduction to your Cane Navigator, not a cold handoff.

Your role in the partnership

- Check your UM email regularly once your accounts are active.
- Complete your onboarding and placement tasks, found in your applicant portal, on time.
- Come to your appointment with questions and an open mind.
- Send your own emails and ask your own questions.
- Tell us when something is confusing. That is useful information, not a bother.
- Follow through on next steps and deadlines.

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THE HANDOFF

From Your Transitional Guide to Your Navigator

Transitional Advising is designed to end well. Our success is measured by how ready you are for the partnership that follows.

During your first semester, your Transitional Guide introduces you to your **Cane Navigator**, the advisor who will work with you from that point through graduation. You will know who they are, how to reach them, and what to expect from your first conversation. Nothing about your record, your plan, or your questions gets lost in between.

Deposit → Your Fall → Matriculation → Transitional Guide Support → January Arrival → Cane Navigator Partnership → Academic Planning → Graduation and Beyond

This guide covers the stages in orange. Your Academic Navigation Journey guide picks up where this one leaves off.

Transferring to the U from another college or university? Your path starts differently, because this is not your first rodeo: you arrive with college coursework behind you and graduation planning ahead. Transfer students work with a Cane Navigator from the beginning rather than with a Transitional Guide, and your first stop is the Miami Academic Transfer Evaluation System (MATES) to see how your previous coursework is evaluated. Taking a few courses in the fall before your January start does not make you a transfer student.

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GETTING HELP

The Right Person for the Right Question

Knowing who to ask, and what to ask, is a skill, and it is one of the first ones you will build here. When in doubt, start with your Transitional Guide. If someone else is the better next step, we will connect you by name.

Start with your Transitional Guide

- Placement results, incoming credit, and what it means for your first term
- Planning a fall course elsewhere? Start with your Admission Officer. If they do not have the answer, they will connect you with a Transitional Guide, though appointment availability in July is limited, so ask early.
- Building or adjusting your first schedule, or understanding the schedule created for you if you are in Business or Engineering
- Registration questions, holds, and add/drop before and during your first weeks
- Questions about First Year Directions
- Not knowing where to start

Another office may be the better next step

- **Office of Undergraduate Admissions** — before your first bill is generated, your one stop for everything non-academic, especially financial aid, at 305-284-6000, and your Admission Officer for fall semester planning
- **Canes Central** — financial aid, billing, transcripts, and enrollment verification once you are enrolled and receive your first bill
- **Orientation & Commuter Student Involvement** — Cane Kickoff and getting connected
- **Housing & Residential Life** — assignments and residential community life, including the Spring-Only Housing Application
- **Camner Center** — tutoring, learning specialists, accommodations
- **Counseling Center** — mental health support, from everyday stress to crisis care

Financial aid: who to ask, and when. Before your bills are released, questions about your financial aid package or awards go to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at 305-284-6000. Once bills are released, Canes Central becomes your one-stop shop for financial aid and billing questions.

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A NOTE FOR THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE OUR STUDENTS

For Families

A January start raises questions an August start does not, and the fall can feel long. Thank you for caring this much. Here is how the partnership works from the start.

The fall is not lost time. Whether your student takes courses, works, or rests, the fall is theirs to use. We offer an informational webinar for families and students over the summer covering options and next steps, so have your student keep an eye on their personal email.

We work directly with your student. Transitional Guides build the relationship with the student, because the habits formed now, checking email, asking questions, following through, are the ones that carry them through the next four years.

A note on privacy. A federal law called FERPA protects college students' education records. Once a student is in college, their academic information belongs to them, and university staff cannot share certain details, even with parents, unless the student has granted permission. At the University of Miami, this is called delegated proxy access, and your student can set it up through CaneLink.

A note on timing. Your student's Transitional Guide typically replies within 24 to 48 business hours. In the heaviest weeks of the summer, when Guides are in back-to-back advising appointments, a reply may take five to seven business days. That is a sign of how much direct time students are getting, not a sign that your student has been forgotten. Encourage your student to send one complete email rather than several. Once your student has completed their advising appointment, drop-in Zoom office hours become available to them, and are the fastest route for a quick question.

How families help most: encourage your student to complete their onboarding tasks and attend their advising appointment, let them send their own emails, and resist solving the first problem for them. Ask instead: who have you talked to, and what is your next step?

Our Commitment, and Yours

We commit to this:

We will meet you where your path actually starts, tell you the truth about what is ahead, and make sure that by the time classes begin in January you are not guessing. We will hand you off to your Cane Navigator with care, and we will make sure you know their name before we do.

And we invite you to commit to this:

- I will use my fall on purpose, whatever I choose to do with it.
- I will check my UM email and complete what is asked of me on time.
- I will show up to my advising appointment prepared and curious.
- I will ask questions until I understand.
- I will ask for help early, before something small becomes something big.
- I will start building my success team from day one.

That is how the journey starts. Welcome to the U. **Go Canes!**

NEED HELP?

Having an Issue?

Talk to your Transitional Guide first. They know you and your first-term plan, and they are your best starting point for almost anything, from a hold to a question about placement.

You can also reach the team at transitionaladvising@miami.edu. If the issue persists after working with your Admission Officer before enrollment in October, or your Transitional Guide after enrollment, contact **Anna Grinfeder, Executive Director, Student Success & Transitions**, who can help connect you with the right person to resolve it.



This is the Transitional Advising companion to **Your Academic Navigation Journey**, which continues the story from your first term through graduation.