

AOA Selection Process Overview

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What is the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society?

About



Alpha Omega Alpha, founded in 1902, is the national medical honor society. Its mission is:

Alpha Omega Alpha – dedicated to the belief that in the profession of medicine we will improve care for all by:

- recognizing high educational achievement;
- honoring gifted teaching;
- encouraging the development of leaders in academia and the community;
- supporting the ideals of humanism; and
- promoting service to others.

Election to Alpha Omega Alpha is an honor signifying a lasting commitment to professionalism, leadership, scholarship, research, and community service. A lifelong honor, membership in the society confers recognition for a physician's dedication to the profession and art of healing.

<https://www.alphaomegalpha.org/about/>

Rules for AOA Selection

“Each school may elect **up to 20% of the graduating class** of students, up to 25 residents/fellows, up to 10 faculty, and three to five alumni, who, based on merit, demonstrate the characteristics of excellent physicians in alignment with AΩA’s mission and values.”



Major changes that start for the Class of 2026

- 10% of class nominated by NBME subject exam performance instead of Core Clinical GPA ([Slide 6](#))
- Greater emphasis to Selection Committee on quality over quantity of Honors Items submissions ([Slide 8](#))
- Items performed during a dual degree or a leave of absence (after matriculation) can count toward Honors Items, but the total time spent outside of traditional medical school enrollment must be disclosed ([Slide 10](#))

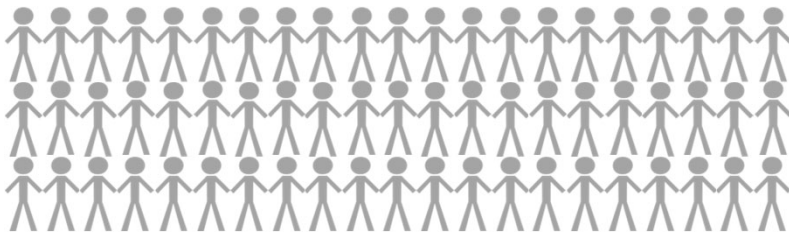
AOA Selection Process Overview for Graduating Class of 2026:



PHASE 1: Jan-Feb 2025

-  = top ~10% nominated by **NBME subject exam scores*** (cutoff to be determined by SA/EAR Deans)
-  = additional ~25% nominated based on **3 Honors Items***, evaluated by the AOA Selection Committee

All AOA nominees (up to 35% of class):



PHASE 2: Feb-March 2025

AOA nominees are invited to submit a full portfolio, evaluated by the Selection Committee based on 5 factors, **each weighted equally**:

- (1) Leadership
- (2) Research/Scholarship
- (3) Service/Advocacy
- (4) Teaching/Mentorship
- (5) NBME shelf exam scores

AOA inductees (up to 20% of class):




April 2025

*Process detailed in following slides



 = top ~10% nominated by **NBME subject exam scores** (cutoff to be determined by SA/EAR Deans)

EXAMPLE STUDENT FOR **CLASS OF 2026**

 = takes all 7 Shelf Exams before January 2025 →

	Family	Neuro	Psych	Pedi*	OB	Surg	IM
Equated Percent Correct	85	95	76	84	80	83	72
National Percentile	90	98	77	92	85	83	65

Average percentile score from **top 3** exams = **93.3%**
Hypothetical Cutoff for top 10th percentile for class averages = 85.3%

 →  Student nominated to submit full portfolio

*Note: although the Pediatrics exam was optional in 2024, it can count toward nomination if the score was among the top 3 percentile scores



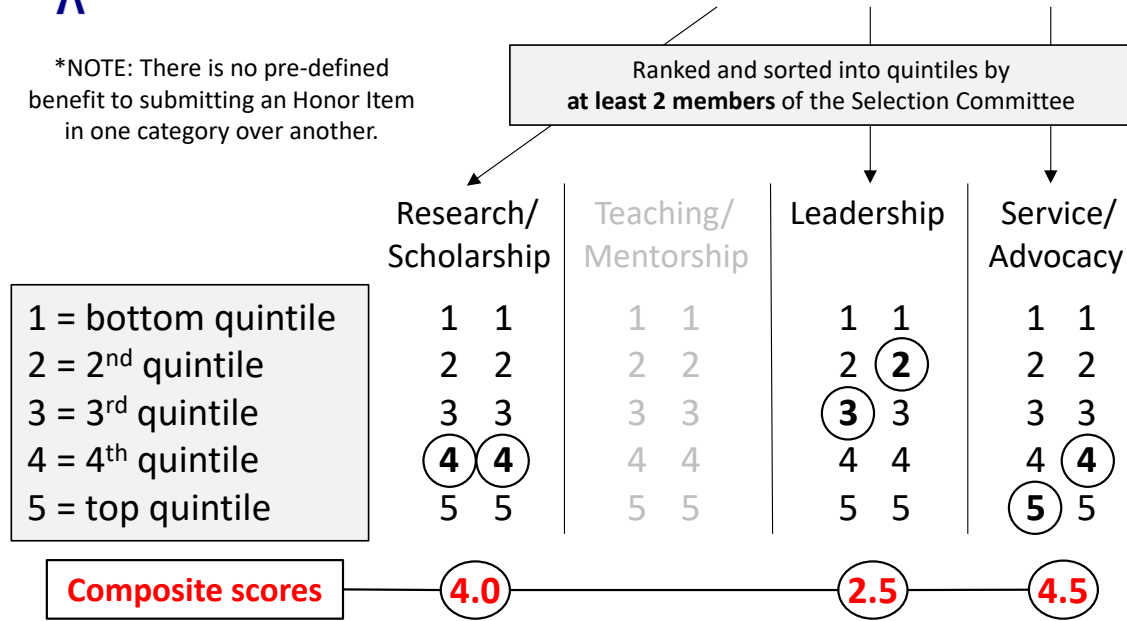
= additional ~25% nominated based on **3 Honors Items**, evaluated by the AOA Selection Committee

EXAMPLE STUDENT FOR CLASS OF 2026



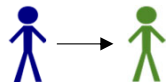
= submits **3 Honors Items**: 1 each from Research, Leadership and Service

*NOTE: There is no pre-defined benefit to submitting an Honor Item in one category over another.



= **4.0 + 2.5 + 4.5 = 11.0/15**

Cutoff calculated to determine additional ~25% of Nominees = **10.91/15**



Nominated to submit full portfolio

Guidance on Honors Items Criteria

Describe each Honors Item using up to **50** words, aiming for the top 20% of your class in 1 of 4 categories:

- **Leadership**: time dedicated, level of position, **impact**, accomplishments
- **Service/Advocacy**: time dedicated, degree of **impact**
- **Research/Scholarship**: for peer-reviewed publications: **impact** factor, author position out of total authors; for grants/scholarships: selectivity (if available), total amount awarded; emphasis on quality over quantity of research
- **Teaching/Mentorship**: time dedicated, degree of **impact**

Overall, AOA values (<https://www.alphaomegaalpha.org/about/>):

- **Quality over quantity**
- Broad representation

Reviewing Members of the AOA Selection Committee

- Dr. Mahboob Alam
- Dr. Philip Alapat
- Dr. Claire Bocchini
- Dr. Biykem Bozkurt
- Dr. Danny Chelius
- Dr. Eva Clark
- Dr. Geeta Singhal Das
- Dr. Joan Friedland
- Dr. Lindsey Gay
- Dr. William Gibbons
- Dr. John Goss
- Dr. Alexander Hanania
- Dr. Timothy Hotze
- Dr. Grace Kim
- Dr. Malvika Juneja
- Dr. Kimberly Lopez
- Dr. Michelle Lopez
- Dr. Lee Lu
- Dr. Joan Mastrobattista
- Dr. Martha Mims
- Dr. Tamara Ortiz-Perez
- Dr. Tyson Pillow
- Dr. Rayne Rouse
- Dr. Elizabeth Rossman Beel
- Dr. Sarah Sartain
- Dr. Richa Shukla
- Dr. Danielle Takacs
- Dr. Tiphonie Vogel
- Dr. Carina Wasko
- Dr. Christina Weng
- Dr. Jennifer Whitaker
- Dr. LeChauncy Woodard

Important Notes

- Students who fail any NBME subject (“shelf”) exam are disqualified from AOA nomination (*exception*: the 2024 Pediatrics exam)
- Students who fail any core clerkship are disqualified from AOA nomination
- Items performed during a dual degree or a leave of absence (after matriculation) can count toward Honors Items, but the total time spent outside of traditional medical school enrollment must be disclosed
- Any student with fewer than 7 subject exams completed at the time of nomination (e.g. MD/PhD students) will have up to half of their subject exam scores dropped from the calculation. For example, if a student completed 3 subject exams, 1 will be dropped.

AOA Selection Process Timeline

- **September 2024** – Official guidelines for selection process announced
- **November 2024** – Zoom vs hybrid meeting with AOA Councilor to review AOA selection process
- **~Wed, 1/15/25** – Top ~10% based on NBME shelf exams are notified of nomination to submit full portfolios; all other students are invited to submit “3 Honors Items” for consideration for nomination – due 1/29/25 (2 weeks to submit)
- **~Wed, 1/29/25** – AOA Selection Committee reviews Honors Items for determination of student nominations (up to an additional ~25% of the class), ~2 weeks to review
- **~Wed, 2/19/25** – Portfolio requests sent out to all AOA nominees (up to 35% of the class); students have over 1 month to prepare portfolios
- **~Wed, 3/18/25** – Portfolios due for all MS3s/Class of 2026 (gives Selection Committee ~3 weeks to review portfolios)
- **~Monday, 4/20/25** – Class of 2024 inductees notified (gives MS4 AOA students 2 months to orient the new class to AOA activities before the MS4s leave for residency)

Phase 1
(nomination)

Phase 2
(selection)

Considerations for Class of 2027 and beyond

- Increasing relative weighting of NBME shelf exam scores in the selection process

	Class of 2026 (MS3s)	Class of 2027 (MS2s)
Phase 1 (Nomination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 10% of the class (29% of nominees) • Additional 25% nominated via submitted Honors Items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 15% of the class (43% of nominees) • Additional 20% nominated via submitted Honors Items
Phase 2 (Final Selection)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% of the weighting • 20% each for Leadership/Research/Service/Teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% of the weighting • 15% each for Leadership/Research/Service/Teaching

- Placing a cap on the number of items that can be submitted in the leadership/research/service/teaching domains
 - Currently unlimited items possible for each domain (e.g. 3 research projects)
 - Proposal: limit to one “item” per domain (e.g. have to pick 1 research project)

Frequently Asked Questions (Page 1 of 2)

- 1. Is anyone checking to make sure students are submitting Honors Items correctly?** We are placing a lot of trust in students, but the submissions will be scanned for accuracy by the Student Affairs Deans.
- 2. Who can I go to for help with determining my Honors Items?** Other students, Learning Community Advisors, Student Affairs Deans, Specialty Specific Mentors (all of these individuals are not allowed to be reviewing members of the Selection Committee).
- 3. Who will make up the Selection Committee?** The goal is to have the committee comprised of BCM faculty who are knowledgeable about student activities/honors and representative of the larger BCM community. At least 50% of the committee are required to be current AOA members. The final membership is determined by the AOA Councilor in concert with the Student Affairs Deans.
- 4. I was treasurer for an organization one year, president the following year, and founder of another organization – can I enter those as 3 separate “Honors Items”?** Yes. Alternatively, for the Class of 2026, you can choose to lump them into one entry which may have more of an impact (e.g. Leadership: “xxx organization”, Treasurer: 21-22, President: 22-23; “yyy organization”, Founder, both raised HIV awareness in children). Please note that the selection committee has been asked to reward quality over quantity, so conveying the impact of one high-impact item may be better received than trying to convey the impact of 2 or more low-impact items within the 50 word limit.

Frequently Asked Questions (Page 2 of 2)

5. **I was in the class where clinical GPA was affected by COVID, but I am graduating with the Class of 2026 – how will the selection process work for me?** The subject exam component of your grades will be considered for nomination.
6. **I worked on my first author paper in the *New England Journal of Medicine* while I was in college, but it was published during my time as a medical student – does that count as an Honor Item?** No. While this is certainly an item that should be highlighted on one's CV for residency, Honor Items all must have taken place after matriculation into medical school. This allows all students to come into the process on a more equal footing.
7. **As a traditional MD/PhD student, I have ~6 months less time in medical school than my traditional MD classmates. Can I use activities during my PhD training toward an Honor Item?** All items that occurred during a dual degree or Leave of Absence can be used toward an Honor Item submission. The amount of time spent outside of the traditional medical school curriculum must be disclosed. The Selection Committee will take into account the relative impact based on the extra time allotted when determining relative ranking of Honor Items.

