



ROAD TO SACSCOC REAFFIRMATION

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2025



What is Reaffirmation of Accreditation?

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges' (SACSCOC) Reaffirmation of Accreditation is a comprehensive internal and external review process to ensure that member institutions maintain continuing compliance with Commission policies and with [The Principles of Accreditation: Foundation for Quality Enhancement](#).

According to SACSCOC, "At the heart of SACSCOC's philosophy of accreditation, the concept of quality enhancement presumes each member institution is to be engaged in ongoing improvement of its programs and services and be able to demonstrate how well it fulfills its stated mission. Although evaluation of an institution's educational quality and effectiveness in achieving its mission is a difficult task requiring careful analysis and professional judgment, an institution is expected to document the quality and effectiveness of all its programs and services."

Newsletter Archive

Missed a Newsletter? No problem! Visit our OAAE website to catch up on all past issues

- [December 2024](#)
- [January 2025](#)
- [February 2025](#)

SACSCOC SITE VISIT SAVE THE DATE!!

While there is much work to be done between now and the SACSCOC On-site Reaffirmation Committee visit, please mark your calendars.

MARCH 24th - 26th, 2026

STANDARD SHOWCASE:

Standard of the Month

SECTION 10: Educational Policies, Procedures, and Practices

10.5 Admissions, Policies and Practices

Standard 10.5 The institution: (a) publishes admissions policies consistent with its mission; (b) ensures that its recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution's practices, policies, and accreditation status; and (c) ensures that independent contractors or agents used for recruiting purposes and for admission activities are governed by the same principles and policies as institutional employees. (Admissions policies and practices)

Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) publishes admissions policies for each program that are consistent with its mission. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent BCM's practices, policies, and accreditation status. BCM does not use independent contractors or agents for other admission activities. This statement of compliance is supported by the narrative and evidence provided below, which includes BCM admission websites and handbooks, relevant policies and recruitment materials.

Published Admissions Policies

BCM's admissions policies are guided by programmatic and accreditation standards, congruent with widely accepted higher education standards for admissions, and driven by the College mission and institutional goals.

Admissions policies are developed by program leadership and committees of faculty to align with programmatic goals and institutional missions. They are clearly delineated and publicly available on the website and in student handbooks for the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS), School of Medicine (SOM), School of Health Professions (SHP), and National School of Tropical Medicine (NSTM) throughout the school's admissions process.

Due to the unique nature of health sciences education, each program has unique, rather than universally applicable, admissions requirements, and program specific requirements are published on their respective public webpages and/or in handbooks. There are, however, broad requirements for admission to educational programs at BCM, including:

- Proficiency in the English language as evidenced by TOEFL or IELTS scores for all programs, if English is not the primary language
- Completion of 90 hours of undergraduate level education in an accredited undergraduate institution in the United States (for the MD program)
- Completion of a baccalaureate degree or higher from an accredited institution for PhD, Doctor of Nursing Practice - Nurse Anesthesia, Master of Science or certificate of completion programs

There are no universally applicable GPA or standardized test score requirements.

To ensure consistent applicant evaluations, BCM's programs use established admissions requirements and policies, examples of which are provided in Table 10.5-1.

STANDARD SHOWCASE:

Standard of the Month

SECTION 10: Educational Policies, Procedures, and Practices

10.5 Admissions, Policies and Practices

Table 10.5-1. Admissions Documents by School/Program

| School/Program | Admissions Requirements & Policies |
|--|---|
| Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SOM Admissions Requirements• SOM Admissions Policies• Background Check Policy• BCM Diversity Policy• SOM Technical Standards• Criminal Allegations, Arrests, and Convictions Policy• Transfer Credit & Advanced Standing Policy |
| Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS)1; Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Programs, MS in Biomedical Sciences, and Certificates | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GSBS Admissions Requirements• GSBS Technical Standards• BCM Diversity Policy |
| Doctor of Nursing Practice Program (DNP) - Nurse Anesthesia | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• BSN-DNP Admissions Requirements• MS-DNP Admissions Requirements• Background Check Policy• DNP Technical Standards• BCM Diversity Policy |
| Genetic Counseling Program (GC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GC Admissions Requirements• GC Technical Requirements• Background Check Policy• BCM Diversity Policy |
| Physician Assistant Program (PA) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PA Admissions Requirements• Background Check Policy• PA Technical Standards• BCM Diversity Policy |

STANDARD SHOWCASE:

Standard of the Month

SECTION 10: Educational Policies, Procedures, and Practices

10.5 Admissions, Policies and Practices

| | |
|--|--|
| Orthotics and Prosthetics Program (OP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• OP Admissions Requirements• OP Technical Standards• Background Check Policy• BCM Diversity Policy |
| National School of Tropical Medicine (DTM) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NSTM Admissions Requirements• BCM Diversity Policy |

Recruitment

Guided by the SACSCOC policy on Advertising and Student Recruitment, BCM's educational program leadership and staff of the Office of Communications and Community Outreach provide current, clear, accurate and readily available information to aid all potential applicants to BCM in making informed decisions regarding the best place for them to pursue training in healthcare and science.

Educational program leaders have primary responsibility for creating recruiting materials for their respective programs. They ensure that all materials accurately reflect the most current status of the program, comply with individual program and accreditation requirements, and are consistent with materials from benchmark institutions. The process for approval is outlined below and followed by all BCM programs with regard to recruitment materials.

With oversight from Admissions Chairs and/or Committees, individual programs provide training and informational sessions with those involved in their programs' recruitment and admissions processes on an annual basis, to ensure consistency among those participants. Training differs by program, but all include asynchronous training materials, live presentations, small group sessions, and individual instruction.

Consistent with the BCM Advertising Policy, the Office of Communications and Community Outreach partners with leaders of the educational programs to review and prepare recruitment materials that adhere to all accreditation policies and institutional policies practices. The BCM's Advertising Policy states: "All advertising materials targeted to recruiting students, including brochures, websites, presentations, and other materials, must be reviewed by the head of the educational program or designee and by the Office of Communications and Community Outreach."

STANDARD SHOWCASE:

Standard of the Month

SECTION 10: Educational Policies, Procedures, and Practices 10.5 Admissions, Policies and Practices

OUR SCHOOLS



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
HOUSTON AND TEMPLE CAMPUSES
Exceptionally diverse clinical affiliates and a collaborative, supportive culture set Baylor apart as a leader among the world's best medical schools.



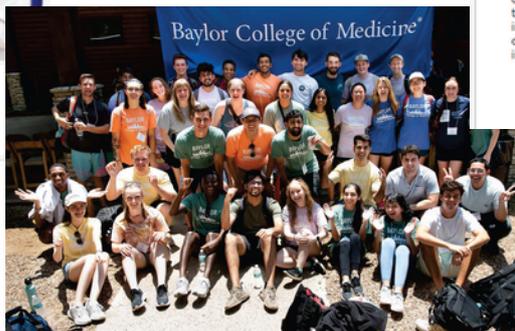
SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS
At Baylor, health professions include nurse anesthesia, physician assistant, genetic counseling and orthotics and prosthetics. Medical students gain valuable interprofessional experience in shared learning opportunities with students from these programs and affiliated programs in Houston.



GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES
One of the top 25 graduate schools of biomedical sciences in the nation, the school gives medical students interested in research a wide array of choices for short-term projects or in-depth dual-degree programs.



NATIONAL SCHOOL OF TROPICAL MEDICINE
Baylor is home to one of the few schools in the country devoted to the neglected diseases that disproportionately afflict "the bottom billion," the world's poorest people. Medical students have opportunities to take classes and conduct research in tropical medicine, as well as the option to pursue a diploma in Tropical Medicine as part of the Global Health Track.



STUDENT LIFE

©2019 West-Beck March, Facebook, Instagram

2025

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

THE CITY OF HOUSTON HOUSTON IS THE MOST DIVERSE LARGE METROPOLITAN AREA IN THE U.S.



| HOUSTON FACTS & FIGURES | | |
|-------------------------|--|-------------|
| 1st | IN TOTAL RANK AMONG U.S. CITIES WITH MORE THAN 1 MILLION RESIDENTS | 60 |
| 2nd | LARGEST CONCENTRATION OF HISPANIC 1,000 COMPANIES IN THE COUNTRY | 145 |
| 4th | LARGEST CITY IN U.S. AT 2.3 MILLION RESIDENTS | 500+ |
| 4.4% | BELLOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGE COST OF LIVING | |

Source: City of Houston

- ACTIVITIES AND ATTRACTIONS**
- Professional, collegiate and recreational sports leagues
 - Theater, ballet, concerts, opera and museums
 - Nightlife options around town
 - Shopping galore
 - 350+ parks, 90+ miles of nature, hiking and bike trails and three state parks nearby
 - More than 10,000 restaurants representing 70 countries and U.S. regions
 - Water recreation within a short drive (Galveston beaches, Clear Lake, Lake Conroe and Lake Livingston)

Choosing to attend Baylor has been one of the best decisions I've made. The diverse array of patients I've encountered has broadened my perspective, and the courses have honed my critical thinking skills. The faculty has provided invaluable guidance in my journey toward becoming a clinician. Beyond that though, I'm grateful for the personal growth I've experienced. Baylor has helped me become a better person, better equipped to care for my future patients.

DR. RICHARD BULZCOA BAYLOR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE GRADUATE

Life in Houston

THE CITY OF TEMPLE TEMPE IS REGARDED AS ONE OF THE GREATEST PLACES TO LIVE AND WORK IN TEXAS.



| TEMPE FACTS & FIGURES | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| 90K+ | POPULATION OF TEMPLE REGION | |
| 34Y | MEDIAN AGE | |
| 6th | MOST AFFORDABLE PLACE TO LIVE IN THE U.S. AND THE COST OF LIVING IS 14.3% LOWER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE | |
| 30% | BELLOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGE HOUSING COST | |

Source: City of Temple and Census Bureau

- ACTIVITIES AND ATTRACTIONS**
- 45+ public parks, multiple dog parks, 25 miles of trails, water parks, golf courses and a skate park
 - Cultural arts, theater and musical offerings
 - Lake Bellon, features hiking, camping, fishing, kayaking, mountain biking, cycling, Hiker Springs
 - 550+ House Hollow Lake

I could just tell during my interview that Baylor College of Medicine was a really special place. When I met the students, that's when it kind of clicked it for me — just getting to experience the community that they built and how much every student really cared about the success of their classmates. There's definitely a lot of things that make the Temple campus unique. The small class size, I think, is the driving force for a lot of it. You feel like you're important and no one's letting you fall through the cracks when you're in school because everyone knows each other.

HOWE SCHENGER, SECOND-YEAR MEDICAL STUDENT

Life in Temple

Admission Policy Consistency across Sites

BCM's admissions policies are consistent regardless of instructional site or mode of education delivery. The SOM Admissions Committee as well as admissions leaders, including an associate dean of admissions and students of the Temple campus, ensure that there is a single admissions process for the MD program. They ensure consistency across both campuses through following policies, procedures, committee meetings, regularly weekly program leadership meetings, and ad hoc meetings.

There are no programs at BCM which qualify as distance education as defined by SACSCOC, including at Temple.

For more information contact the SACSCOC Liaison, Jennifer Christner at jennifer.christner@bcm.edu or Office of Accreditation and Education Effectiveness at accreditation@bcm.edu

REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION TIMELINE:

All dates subject to change throughout the process

| Target Date | Accreditation Process | Quality Enhancement Plan |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| October 2024 | SACSCOC Executive Committee Established and First Meeting SACSCOC Reaffirmation 2026 Kick-Off Review of SACSCOC narratives begins | Launch QEP Survey Recruit QEP Director |
| November 2024 | Reaffirmation Newsletter Review of SACSCOC narratives | Review Survey Results/Analyze Comments Examine Feasibility of Topic Recruit QEP Director |
| December 2024 | SACSCOC Annual Meeting, Austin, TX (12/7 to 12/10) Reaffirmation Newsletter Review of SACSCOC narratives | Review Survey Results/Analyze Comments Examine Feasibility of Topic |
| January 2025 | Reaffirmation Newsletter | Engage Content Specialist Identify External review/advisory committee Recommend Topic to Executive Leadership QEP Topic Announced to BCM Community |
| February 2025 | Reaffirmation Newsletter | Determine QEP time frame for implementation and budget |
| March 2025 | Reaffirmation Newsletter | |
| April 2025 | Leadership Review of Compliance Certificate begins | |
| July 2025 | Compliance Certificate Draft Completed | |
| August 2025 | Final Review of Compliance Certificate | |
| September 2025 | Compliance Certificate Due (9/8) | |
| November 2025 | Site Visit Prep Off-Site Peer Review Conducted (11/4 to 11/7) | |
| December 2025 | Site Visit Prep Mock Visit | |
| January 2026 | Site Visit Prep Mock Visit | |
| February 2026 | Site Visit Prep Optional Focused Report Due (2/10) | QEP Due (2/10) |
| March 2026 | On-Site Peer Review Conducted (3/24 to 3/26) | Present and discuss QEP (3/24 to 3/26) |
| December 2026 | Review by SACSCOC Committee Board (12/3 to 12/6) | |

OUR MISSION, OUR PURPOSE

Mission: Our mission at Baylor College of Medicine is to provide guidance, support and resources to help faculty and staff create and implement effective changes while ensuring the highest quality of education for our students.

Purpose: Our purpose is to promote academic excellence and innovation through accreditation and education effectiveness. We strive to foster a culture of continuous improvement and to provide resources and support for faculty and staff to develop and implement effective educational programs that prepare students for success.

The Office of Accreditation and Education Effectiveness supports the Baylor College of Medicine education enterprise by:

- Facilitating institutional accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and monitoring ongoing compliance with SACSCOC principles of accreditation
- Providing support for program level specialized accreditation
- Coordinating ongoing assessment of educational programs and the university's quality enhancement plan (QEP)
- Conducting and reporting the results of academic program reviews
- Conducting general institutional research and data analysis
- Reporting key academic performance metrics to federal, state, and professional organizations
- Conducting general institutional research and data analysis
- Providing process expertise in the approval of substantial changes to existing programs
- Managing educational affiliation agreements, observerships, and external learners

CONTACT US

Ricky Mercado, M.P.H., CHES

Director, Accreditation and Education Effectiveness

 **Phone**
713-798-2076

 **Email**
RMercado@bcm.edu

Caroline Young, Ed.D.

Institutional Effectiveness, Accreditation

 **Phone**
713-798-3147

 **Email**
Caroline.Young@bcm.edu

Michael Rodriguez, B.S.

Project Manager, Accreditation

 **Phone**
713-798-7635

 **Email**
Michael.Rodriguez@bcm.edu

June Zhou, Ph.D.

Institutional Research, Accreditation

 **Phone**
713-798-7295

 **Email**
Qiong.Zhou@bcm.edu

Liz De Los Rios, M.ED.

Sr. Project Manager, Accreditation

 **Phone**
713-798-8572

 **Email**
Liz.DeLosRios@bcm.edu

Palmira Britton-Wilson

Coordinator, Accreditation

 **Phone**
713-798-1613

 **Email**
Palmira.Britton-Wilson@bcm.edu