

# AOA Selection Process Overview

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# What is the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society?

## About

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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.alphaomegaalpha.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.”

## AOA Selection Process Overview for Graduating **Class of 2027**:

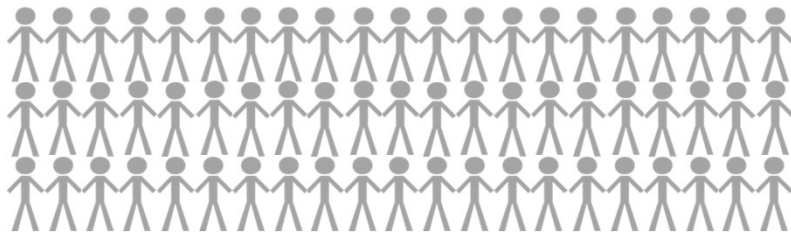


**PHASE 1:**  
Jan-Feb  
2026

 = **top ~15%** nominated by **NBME subject ("shelf") exam scores\*** (cutoff to be determined by SA/EAR Deans)

 = **additional ~20%** nominated based on **3 Honors Items\***, evaluated by the AOA Selection Committee

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



**AOA inductees  
(up to 20% of class):**



### **PHASE 2: Feb-March 2026**

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


- (1) NBME shelf exam scores (**40%**)
- (2) Leadership (**15%**)
- (3) Research/Scholarship (**15%**)
- (4) Service/Advocacy (**15%**)
- (5) Teaching/Mentorship (**15%**)

**April 2026**

\*More details on next 2 slides

 = **top ~15%** 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 10<sup>th</sup> percentile for class averages = 85.3%

 →  Student nominated to submit full portfolio

For **CLASS OF 2027**, 2 changes have been discussed to improve the selection process:

- Increasing nomination from top 10% of the class to **top 15%**; increasing weighting in Phase 2 from 20% to **40%**.
- Instead of top 3, including **“all but the lowest percentile score”**

Based on Class of 2026 data...*	Family	Neuro	Psych	Pedi	OB	Surg	IM
Approximate EPC cutoff for top 10%	85	90	92	88	88	84	85
Approximate EPC cutoff for top 15%	83	88	91	86	87	82	83

\*NOTE: based on top 3 NBME exam scores

## EXAMPLE STUDENT FOR **CLASS OF 2026**



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

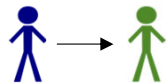
\*NOTE: There is no pre-defined benefit to submitting an Honor Item in one category over another.

	Ranked and sorted into quintiles by at least 2 members of the Selection Committee											
	Research/ Scholarship		Teaching/ Mentorship		Leadership		Service/ Advocacy					
1 = bottom quintile	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
2 = 2 <sup>nd</sup> quintile	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2				
3 = 3 <sup>rd</sup> quintile	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3				
4 = 4 <sup>th</sup> quintile	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4				
5 = top quintile	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5				
Composite scores	4.0				2.5				4.5			



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

Cutoff\* calculated to determine additional ~25% of Nominees = 9.00/15



Nominated to  
submit full portfolio

**\*Historical Cutoffs:**  
**Class of 2026: 9.00**  
 Class of 2025: 9.58  
 Class of 2024: 11.07



= for **Class of 2027**, additional ~20% nominated based on **3 Honors Items** (down from ~25% for Class of 2026)

# Approach to BCM as 1 school, 2 campuses

- NBME subject exams (~15% of graduating class): students will be nominated **independent of campus**
- Honors Items (~20% of graduating class): students submit items for review **by campus**; scores will then be consolidated across campuses **with one cutoff score**.
- Similar approach to both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the selection process
- Rationale:
  - No clear direction based on other schools with regional campuses (UIC/Kansas – campus-specific, Oklahoma/Temple U – all together)
  - Subject exams are a curricular requirement, while Honors Items are not
  - Consistent with the approach to GHHS, which is likely to be campus-specific for practical reasons

# Other Considerations

- Students who fail any NBME subject exam (exception: the Jan-Oct 2024 Pediatrics exam) or fail any core clerkship are disqualified from AOA nomination
- Please feel free to reach out to Dr. Maheshwari ([atul.maheshwari@bcm.edu](mailto:atul.maheshwari@bcm.edu)) if you have any questions or feedback about the process. You can also provide feedback anonymously using this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5622TFV>.
- **More info can be downloaded** from the BCM AOA website: <https://www.bcm.edu/education/school-of-medicine/m-d-program/current-students/student-organizations/alpha-omega-alpha-honor-medical-society>.



# 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

- 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 their lowest subject exam percentile score dropped before averaging across all percentile scores. For example, if a student completed 3 subject exams, 1 will be dropped.

## AOA Selection Process Timeline

- **September 2025** – Official guidelines for selection process announced
- **November 2025** – Virtual meeting with AOA Councilor to review AOA selection process
- **~Wed, 1/14/26** – 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, 1/28/26** – AOA Selection Committee reviews Honors Items for determination of student nominations (up to an additional ~25% of the class), ~2 weeks to review
- **~Wed, 2/18/26** – Portfolio requests sent out to all AOA nominees (up to 35% of the class); students have over 1 month to prepare portfolios
- **~Wed, 3/18/26** – Portfolios due for all MS3s/Class of 2027 (gives Selection Committee ~3 weeks to review portfolios)
- **~Monday, 4/20/26** – Class of 2027 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)

# High-Scoring Items from Class of 2025: Leadership

- Albert Schweitzer Fellowship Fellow 2022: lead Moms to Moms, a postpartum education program at LBJ/BTGH; 869 patients served that year, 100 student volunteers recruited, created the resource curriculum on the website that is still being used 2 years later to provide each patient with resources; 200 hours
- HOMES Clinic (3yrs): Manager (1yr, awarded Certificate in Clinical Management); Baylor Representative (1yr, 54hrs); Associate Co-Director of Clinic Operations (1yr, 128hrs), oversee staffing of 100+ volunteers, assisted in creating and supervising the HOMES Ophthalmology Clinic, implemented a clinical elective to increase student engagement, and integrated new computers to streamline workflow.
- Admissions Interview Subcommittee (Co-Chair (1yr), Student Interviewer (2yrs), Social Ambassador (2yrs)): Facilitated the coordination of prospective student application screenings, pre-interview socials, interview day experience (host and interviewer), and post-interview open houses/second looks at both Houston and Temple campuses. Participated in recruitment of other ambassadors/interviewers and admissions committee review meetings.
- Leader in multiple positions related to Quality Improvement and High Value Care, including: Texas Medical Association Medical Student Representative on Health Care Quality Council (2yrs), Choosing Wisely STARS Representative (4yrs), Coordinator of Dean's Distinction in HVC/QI (2yrs), Elective Coordinator of Advanced Topics in Quality Improvement (0.5yr).

# High-Scoring Items from Class of 2025: Research-Scholarship

- 19 peer-reviewed publications published (12 first-author, highest first-author impact factor: 8.3), ad-hoc reviewer (x3) for JMIR (impact factor: 7.4), 2 YMDC research travel scholarships, 4 EyeWiki articles, 1 MedScape article, 1 Doximity Op-Med article, 26 poster presentations. 4 manuscripts and 3 book chapters submitted.
- BRASS scholarship (2019-2023); F31 recipient (2021-present); IDSA grant for emerging researchers (2022); Dean's award of excellence (2022); 9 peer-reviewed publications at BCM, 3 are first author and fields include microbial pathogenesis, maternal-fetal health, and health equity. 39 cumulative citations, highest impact factor is 16.6. BCM COE Equity Research Scholar (2018-2023).
- 6 peer reviewed publications: author 3/6 [IF:13.8], author 5/8 [IF:2.4], author 3/6 [IF:2.57], author 4/6 [IF:1.2], author 2/5 [IF:1.2], author 2/6 [IF:2.5]. 4 publications in review: IF: 3.5, 5.3, 1.2, 1.7. 14 national abstract acceptances. Zimmer Biomet Ruth-Jackson Orthopaedic Society Medical Student Annual Meeting Scholarship recipient.
- MD/PhD James Lupski Publication Award: awarded to the MD/PhD student with the best publication of the year, 1st of 22 authors [IF:7.7], used CRISPR/Cas9 screens to identify novel therapeutic candidates to target PPM1D-mutated leukemias; I also published a review article - 1st of 3 authors [IF:5.2].

# High-Scoring Items from Class of 2025:

## Service-Advocacy

- Chair - BCM TMA/AMA Chapter (2 years, 120hrs), recruited+retained >18 members, co-authored 3 TMA resolutions + 1 brief - medical education and firearm safety; AMA Region 3 (>20 schools) DEI Chair (80+hrs), improved health policy/advocacy engagement with 6 identity-based national medical student organizations + created inaugural AMA DEI resolution committee
- Organized free community blood glucose and hypertension screenings in underserved Latinx communities (>600 hours, 500+ participants). Connected participants to low-cost clinics, followed by a phone call 1 month later to ensure follow-up care was attained (IRB-approved). Awarded a \$500 GLOW grant and fundraised \$2000 to continue screenings.
- Kathy Crawford Service Award: Awarded to one student annually for exceptional service to the MD/PhD community. Implemented all admitted student 'Second Look' weekends both in-person and in virtual space, using the Gather.town interface; was attended by all 108 MD-PhD students, numerous faculty, and 25 admitted students.
- I was the leader of Moms to Moms and a member of the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship which focused on delivering postpartum education to women at Ben Taub and LBJ hospital. We expanded this project by creating a new deliverable and making sessions with mothers more focused on addressing their needs

# High-Scoring Items from Class of 2025: Teaching-Mentorship

- Pinkie Pinner (25 hrs/week, COVID to in-person transition, MS1 curriculum contribution), PRN leader (50+ hours, closely mentored 8 students), anatomy lab TA, QI elective TA, CREW Communications Subcommittee (designed MS1 communications lessons), PARTAKE committee (designed MS1 orientation), Healthy Minds Healthy Bodies (middle school mental health lectures), ENTerst Group Research Chair
- Created "HassAnki", the most popular Anki deck tailored to Baylor lectures. Created 20,000 cards over the course of 18 months. This was the primary preclinical study resource for most MS2's and MS3's. Continuing to teach MS1's as DISCO Peer Tutor making weekly practice quizzes used by ~70 students each week.
- Senior Design Technical Advisor/Sponsor (2022-2024): taught/mentored five St. Mary's University undergraduate students throughout the iterative design and manufacturing processes for their year-long capstone projects, resulting in two novel biomedical devices (1 patent pending). PRN leader (2022-2024), Anatomy Buddies (2022-2024), mentoring through five other non-BCM mentorship programs (undergraduate pre-med societies, AMWA...)
- Partnership for the Advancement/Immersion of Refugees Ambassador (2021-Present): organized and led ~10 lectures for refugee students across HISD. Care of the Underserved Elective Coordinator (2022): Organized lectures on various topics related to underserved populations for MS1 elective. Anatomy Buddies (2022). PRN Grandparent (2023-Present). AOA Preclinical Academic Support Team (2022-23).



## 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, 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 2027 – 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, Honors 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 Honors Item?** All items that occurred after matriculation during a dual degree or Leave of Absence can be used toward an Honors 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 Honors Items.

