

**Bluefield University**

**Virginia VCOM - Campus**

**Master of Arts in Biomedical  
Sciences**

**Student Handbook**

**2022-23**

**Bluefield University**  
**Main Campus**  
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**Bluefield, VA 24605**  
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**Website: [www.bluefield.edu](http://www.bluefield.edu)**

**Master of Arts in Biomedical Science**  
**Off-campus Instruction Site at:**

**The Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine**  
**1691 Innovation Drive, Suite 1100**  
**Blacksburg, VA 24060**  
**540.231.5090 ♦ FAX: 540.231.2001**

**Website: [www.vcom.edu](http://www.vcom.edu)**

**This *Handbook* is provided to the Biomedical Sciences Master’s Degree Program students of Bluefield University (BU) as a guide to the interpretation and application of BU policies and procedures. This *Handbook* does not include every detail of every policy but rather seeks to cover the essential provisions of the policies and procedures of BU and is considered BU policy.**

**Bluefield University reserves the right to delete any course described in this handbook. BU also reserves the right to effect any other changes in the curriculum, tuition/fees, administration, or any other phase of school activity without notice. BU also publishes a *University Academic Catalog* as well as a *Graduate Academic Catalog* that contain additional information about BU’s policies and procedures.**

**Bluefield University Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences  
Catalog and Student Handbook  
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# Mission and Values of Bluefield University

## Our Mission

Bluefield University is a Christ-centered learning community developing servant leaders to transform the world.

## Our Values

1. We are Christian in outlook, Baptist in tradition, and welcoming to each person.
2. We are committed to academic excellence and life-long inquiry embracing the liberal arts tradition through the study of humanities, sciences, professional studies, and graduate programs.
3. We are a diverse community characterized by integrity, mutual respect, support, and encouragement.
4. We are passionate about helping students understand their life calling and become compassionate, globally-minded servant leaders.

## Biomedical Sciences Master's Degree Program Goals

1. To provide a graduate educational opportunity for individuals who want to pursue a career in biomedical sciences especially those from rural areas, low-socioeconomic status backgrounds, and underrepresented minorities who desire to advance their education or are seeking a preparatory educational program which will prepare them for biomedical, allied health and related post-graduate programs.
2. To recruit and graduate students who will address STEM-H disparities including those related to rural locations, minority populations, poverty status, and primary care.
3. To advocate for osteopathic medicine, rural health, mission medicine and affordable, accessible healthcare for the medically underserved.
4. To generate, promote, and disseminate knowledge in disease prevention, chronic disease management, community health, and public health practices through Appalachian outreach programs.

## Accreditation

Bluefield University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate, baccalaureate, and master's degrees. Degree-granting institutions also may offer credentials such as certificates and diplomas at approved degree levels. Questions about the accreditation of Bluefield University may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling [\(404\)679-4500](tel:4046794500), or by using information available on SACSCOC's website ([www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org)).

# **Recruitment and Admissions**



## **Notice of Nondiscrimination**

BU recognizes, values, and affirms that diversity contributes richness to the University and enhances the quality of education. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators are valued for their diversity. BU is committed to providing an academic and employment environment in which students and employees are treated with courtesy, respect, and dignity. It is the policy of BU that no student or employee shall be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program sponsored by BU.

BU's commitment to the principles of non-discrimination includes and extends far beyond the federally protected classes of age, gender, sex, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, ancestry, marital status, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or status as a protected veteran. BU has a commitment to nondiscrimination against any individual or group of individuals. BU has zero tolerance to inappropriate behavior exhibited as an act of discrimination.

Any person having inquiries concerning BU's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 or Section 503, is directed to contact the Director of Human Resources at:

Bluefield University  
3000 College Ave.  
Bluefield, VA 24605  
Phone: 276.326.4461

Any person may also contact the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, regarding the institution's compliance with the regulations.

## **Recruitment Priorities**

The Bluefield University Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program considers applicants who possess the academic, professional, and individual promise to become exemplary osteopathic physicians or scientists. The program seeks to admit a portion of the class from applicants based in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas and the remaining Southern Appalachian Region. The Southern Appalachian Region consists of rural and underserved areas of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and West Virginia. Although the MABS program seeks students from these geographical areas, all applicants are considered and students are accepted from all areas throughout the United States who are committed to caring for underserved populations.

# Admissions Requirements

## Admissions Process and Professional Expectations

Within its competitive framework, BU uses multiple criteria to select the most promising candidates from an applicant pool which exceeds the number of seats available. Since a rolling admissions process is used, applications are reviewed and decisions are made at regular intervals during the admissions cycle. After the committee decision is made, students will be notified of their status via email.

An applicant aspiring to become a future osteopathic physician is expected to show integrity and professionalism throughout the application process. The applicant's professional interactions with the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program faculty and staff and with the VCOM osteopathic medical program admissions staff will be considered in the acceptance process. The applicant's interactions with the medical college faculty and staff during the admissions process will be considered in the acceptance process as well. Applicants must familiarize themselves with the admissions requirements, procedures, deadlines, report and update any changes to the application, be accurate and complete in their application, and disclose all information requested.

## Minimum Requirements for Admission to the MABS Program

The requirements to succeed at BU are those required to successfully complete the curriculum and, if applicable, to the student's desire and ability to gain admission to the D.O. program, to ultimately practice osteopathic medicine with full practice rights. Students must be able to function in a variety of learning environments and quickly, accurately, and consistently learn and process data. Successful completion within the program is defined as satisfying all academic requirements with an overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4-point scale, having a grade of "C" or higher for each course, and meeting other requirements as noted in this Handbook. Many criteria play a role in the admissions process to professional schools and to be competitive, students must have grades significantly higher than a "C." While the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program provides an opportunity for the student to demonstrate academic capability, it does not assure admission to a professional school.

Admission to the MABS program is limited to candidates capable of performing on the graduate level. Applicants for admission must meet the following requirements prior to entry into the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences program.

- Earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution.
- The following undergraduate courses must be completed with a grade of C or better prior to matriculation:
  - o Biological Sciences – One year with laboratory
  - o Physics – One year
  - o General or Inorganic Chemistry – One year
  - o Organic Chemistry – One year
  - o English – One year

Laboratories for Physics, General or Inorganic Chemistry, and Organic Chemistry are strongly encouraged for all applicants.

- Minimum GPA required:
  - o Overall GPA of 3.0
  - o Science GPA of 3.0

- While the MCAT is required to obtain admission to medical school, it is not required for admission to the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences program; however, students who enter the program having already obtained an MCAT score of 496-498 or higher have an advantage in that they have already met the MCAT component of the benchmarks required for admission into the VCOM DO program and can therefore focus solely on their BU MABS coursework.
- All students are required to meet the Bluefield University Technical Standards for Admission and Continued Enrollment found in the MABS Student Handbook.
- A completed application for admission submitted through the Post Baccalaureate Centralized Application Service (Post-BacCAS)
- Two letters of recommendation – one from a premedical committee or science faculty member and one professional letter from a supervisor or shadowing mentor (preferred from an M.D. or D.O.) (submitted directly to the PostBacCAS).
- Official, verified, transcripts from all universities and/or colleges attended (submitted directly to the PostBacCAS)

Note: Many criteria beyond GPA play a role in the admissions process to this program, and acceptance into the program is competitive. While the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences program provides an opportunity for the student to demonstrate improved academic capability, it does not assure admission to a professional school.

## **Background Check Requirements**

All incoming students are required to submit (directly to PreCheck) an application for a criminal background check. No other service will be accepted. A monetary fee (payable to PreCheck) must accompany the PreCheck application which is to be submitted by the tuition deposit date. An offer of admission and continued enrollment is contingent upon acceptable results from an accepted student's Pre-Check report. Bluefield University/VCOM reserves the right to put restrictions on or rescind an offer of admission based on information received on a background check. Also note that should any charge or arrest occur after acceptance, whether or not the accepted student was convicted, the student is required to inform the MABS Program director within 72 hours of the incident. Failure to report such charges or arrests, whether guilty or not, and/or failure to report within 72 hours, can result in the student's offer of admission being rescinded. Upon review of the charge, Bluefield University/VCOM reserves the right to rescind the offer of admission prior to matriculation.

## **Technical Standards for Admission and Continued Enrollment in the VCOM D.O. Program**

The requirements to succeed at VCOM are those necessary to successfully complete the curriculum. Since many MABS students will consider entering VCOM's Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine program or another graduate level professional program, Bluefield requires all Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences program applicants and students to possess the same technical standards required of D.O. students at VCOM.

It is important that applicants and students review the Technical Standards for Admission and Successful Completion of the D.O. Program at VCOM prior to admission. The requirements to succeed at VCOM are based upon those necessary to successfully complete the medical school curriculum and to safely practice osteopathic medicine with full practice rights in the future.

## General Overview:

1. Students must be able to function in a variety of learning and clinical settings and to learn and process data quickly, accurately, and consistently in order to succeed in the medical school curriculum and to meet technical standards for safely practicing osteopathic medicine as a physician. As the medical school program is a career path toward the practice of medicine in which students often accumulate great debt, all technical standards are considered in relationship to culmination of a career to practice of osteopathic medicine. Students are also subject to external performance testing in national boards as a requirement for graduation and to practice osteopathic medicine.
2. As osteopathic medicine believes a good physician must be a primary care generalist first (skills learned in medical school and the first year of residency before moving to specialized training later in residency), students must meet technical skills to perform as a primary care osteopathic physician in order to successfully complete the curriculum. Osteopathic primary care physicians utilize a hands-on approach to the examination and treatment of a patient; therefore, the following technical skills are required:

## I. Observation

**Touch:** Osteopathic medicine requires a physician to exhibit the sense of touch for examination. The education of the osteopathic student, therefore, requires a student to be comfortable and have the ability to touch a human being of both sexes as part of learning the osteopathic approach to diagnosis and treatment. As part of the educational process, VCOM students must learn to palpate or touch patients and understand the impact of human touch. The only reasonable approach in our physical diagnosis and OMM laboratories is then for a student to touch and to tolerate being touched. Therefore, students who wish to attend VCOM must agree in writing to touch others in order to acquire the skills necessary for palpation and examination of peers (classmates) and to be touched by peers in these laboratories. In addition, students must learn the maneuvers of manipulative treatment while under supervision in the learning environment and fulfill the role of both patients and future physicians. Prior to matriculation students must sign a waiver whereby they agree to touch other students in the process of examination and to be touched, and to participate in the student practice sessions for the development of osteopathic manipulative medicine skills. Acquiring the skills to palpate and examine patients requires examination of disrobed patients of both genders; therefore, examination of fellow students of both genders, who may be partially disrobed, is required. These are requirements for all students, regardless of cultural or religious beliefs, in order for the student to acquire the skills necessary to safely practice osteopathic medicine. Students who have any concerns or questions should discuss them with the Vice President for Student Services prior to applying.

**Vision:** An osteopathic physicians must utilize visual inspection to examine the position and balance of the musculoskeletal system; tissue texture changes; skin lesions and rash types; skin, nail, and mucus membrane color; eyes (including fundoscopic); ears, nose, throat; genitalia; and other areas in the process of diagnosis. Vision is also required to master fine skills such as suturing or using a scalpel, and surgical removal of foreign bodies or certain tissues, and other surgical procedures. Vision is required to interpret many diagnostic tests, including, but not limited to: x-ray, CT scan, MRI, and PET scan. The student must be able to visually observe changes in the human body, laboratory demonstrations, microscopic tissue with the aid of the microscope, and computer based pictures used in laboratory demonstrations. The student must be able to visually and accurately observe physical signs and symptoms of a patient used in diagnosis and

management. The use of a trained intermediary to perform such activities does not result in the same level of competency when mediated by another individual's power of selection, observation, and experience, nor does it assure that the secondary person's perceptions are accurate who do not have an equal education. Therefore, to be a successful applicant and student, correctable vision to a level meeting these requirements is necessary.

**Hearing:** The sense of hearing for auscultation is required in osteopathic medicine to listen for the sounds of bodily functions such as heart beat, murmurs, blood pressure, lung sounds, bowel sounds, the flow of blood through vessels, and other sounds associated with normal and abnormal findings. Reasonable accommodations may be made for students with hearing loss in the use of specialized stethoscopes and with the student using their own personal hearing aids. The aids must lead to a reasonable hearing level to identify normal from abnormal body sounds.

**Smell:** An osteopathic physician also uses the sense of smell, and although not considered an essential sense, is not easily accommodated.

## **II. Communication**

The student must be able to communicate orally and effectively in English as the curriculum and clinical experiences are offered in English and the physician must be able to effectively communicate with patients to offer safe and effective medical care. Students are encouraged to learn other languages for medical communication; however, all curriculum and assessment is given in English. VCOM requires the functional ability to speak, hear, and observe patients in order to elicit accurate medical information. The student must learn and demonstrate the ability to gather medical information in a humanistic manner and must be able both to recognize and describe changes in mood, activity, posture, and other physical characteristics and to perceive nonverbal communication required in patient centered medicine. The student must be able to communicate through accurate writing and typing, and through verbal conversation that effectively and efficiently communicates with the patient and all members of the health care team. This requirement is essential to safe and high quality patient care. The student must be able to demonstrate these forms of effective communication including, in a taped video setting with standardized patients in the first two years and in the clinical setting during the OMS 3 and 4 years. Students are also required to read large volumes of medical literature in order to learn the required information for practicing medicine. This requires a proficiency in reading and the ability to complete all coursework in the given timeframe. Reasonable accommodations that can be provided include: spellcheck and extended time for exams.

## **III. Motor and Physical**

Students must have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, percussion, and other diagnostic measures. The student must have sufficient motor function to carry out maneuvers of general medical care and emergency care. Students must have sufficient motor function to perform osteopathic manipulation. Examples of emergent motor functions are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, administration of intravenous fluids and intravenous medications, management of an obstructed airway, hemorrhage control, closure by suturing of wounds, and obstetrical deliveries. In addition, the delivery of osteopathic manipulation requires the use of extremities in palpation, positioning, and carrying out maneuvers of manipulation. These actions require fine and gross motor and sensory function. Students must be able to perform these maneuvers. Students who have conditions that do not allow physically taxing workloads must

consider the long hours of study, the hours required in the classroom and laboratories, the physical strength required in the osteopathic examination and treatment, and the need to stand and walk for long hours in the clinical setting.

#### **IV. Intellectual**

The student must have the ability to reason, calculate, analyze, measure, and synthesize information in order to evaluate critically the patient and the most recent evidence based information for treatment. The student must be able to comprehend, memorize, synthesize, and recall a large amount of information without assistance in order to successfully complete the curriculum and to safely and successfully practice osteopathic medicine.

The student must be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand spatial relationships as it pertains to body chemicals and microscopic functions to anatomical functions in order to succeed in school and to administer safe medical care. The student must be able to gain knowledge through all types of learning materials that the VCOM curriculum offers and must be able to perform pattern identification, memorize, recall information, identify and discriminate important information, and problem solve.

The intellectual abilities described above are necessary for the practice of osteopathic medicine. Therefore, the VCOM curriculum requires students to examine patients as well as calculate and make medical decisions in timed testing situations and in the presence of noise and distraction, all of which a physician faces wherever medicine is practiced. Students must consider these requirements at the time of application and must also consider whether or not they can meet these technical standards in our curriculum and in the practice of medicine. Once enrolled, students must maintain their ability to meet these technical standards to make academic progress and succeed in the curriculum.

In order to pass the third and fourth year of medical school and to complete the first year of residency training, students and graduates will be expected and required to perform pattern identification, immediate recall of memorized material, identification and discrimination to elicit important information, problem solving, and decision-making as to emergent diagnosis and treatment of patients in urgent and emergent settings. This type of demonstrated intellectual ability must be performed in a rapid and time-efficient manner so as not to place patients in emergent conditions at risk, which may occur in the presence of visually distracting and noisy environments. Such emergent situations include, but are not limited to, cardiopulmonary compromise, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, obstetrical and neonatal emergencies, trauma presentations, poisonings and toxic exposures, shock, and hemorrhage. For the student, these situations are simulated, taught, and tested in the classroom, clinical setting and in the simulated medicine testing laboratories.

**Ability in Standardized Test Taking:** In addition, VCOM's accreditor, the COCA, requires students to pass COMLEX Level I, Level 2-CE, and Level 2-PE exams prior to graduation; therefore, students must be able to perform satisfactorily on timed, computerized and clinical performance comprehensive standardized exams. NBOME determines the student's ability to receive accommodations (or not) for this exam and; therefore, the student's ability to pass the board exams

with the accommodation level awarded by NBOME is the technical standard. Students may ask NBOME to be reviewed for accommodations.

## **V. Behavioral and Mental Health Attributes**

The student must have the emotional health needed for full use of his/her intellectual capabilities at all times. The emotional health required for effective communication and for professional, ethical, mature, sensitive, and compassionate patient/physician or patient/student relationships must be present. Students must be able to function effectively under the high degree of stress and testing required in medical school, in COMLEX national board testing, as well as in specialty board certification at the end of residency. Students who suffer from serious mood disorders and/or test anxiety should strongly consider if they will meet this technical standard, as they are essential to the success of a physician in being able to practice. Students must be able to tolerate mentally taxing workloads. Students who have conditions that do not allow mentally taxing workloads must consider the long hours of study and the hours required in the classroom and laboratories, and the long hours required in the clinical setting.

Students must have the emotional health to be able to safely care for patients without medication known to adversely affect intellectual abilities and clinical judgment. The student must have the emotional stability and motivation to deliver patient care and to make emergent decisions at all times. The ability to adapt to changing environments and stressful situations and to display compassion and integrity, while maintaining the necessary intellectual capacity to care for patients is one that is observed during the interview process and throughout the progress in medical school. An ability to demonstrate the emotional health necessary for the delivery of quality and safe medical care is mandatory throughout medical school. VCOM and the medical institutions they collaborate with for clinical training consider serious mental illness, that does not allow safe coherent reasoning or that may cause a risk to the patients for unsafe medical care, a reason for not accepting a student or for dismissal. VCOM also considers substance abuse a serious mental illness that may cause a risk to patients for unsafe medical care.

## **VI. Professional and Ethical Attributes**

Students must have the professional and ethical capabilities to effectively and safely care for patients. This requires the student to demonstrate careful and safe decision making at all times, to be free from addiction, to discriminate between legal and illegal behaviors, to make moral rather than immoral decisions, to make ethical rather than unethical decisions, and to demonstrate professional rather than unprofessional behaviors. These same behaviors are expected of students throughout their program. Professional and ethical attributes are those expected of a physician by all of society and generally by medical boards. These attributes are those that instill a sense of trust by patients in the medical community.

## **Requesting Assistance with Disabilities as an Applicant**

Bluefield University MABS applicants must self-identify if they do not meet the VCOM technical standards. Bluefield assures that no adverse view of the application will be made if accommodations are requested. In order for Bluefield University to provide reasonable accommodations, candidates must identify to the Admissions Coordinator all areas where accommodations will be needed in order to be successful in the educational program or where there

is question in meeting these technical standards. Applicants who, with assistance, can meet the VCOM Technical Standards for admission and successfully complete the MABS Program may be considered for admission.

If admitted, students who will require accommodations must provide adequate documentation, including, but not limited to, psychometric testing, medical records, and prior educational records. Students with disabilities must apply for accommodations through the Bluefield Center for Academic and Career Excellence (ACE). Bluefield makes reasonable accommodations including seating arrangement adjustments, visual or auditory aids, and other classroom or learning needs. Examples of assistance include: wireless auditory assists for the classroom; extended test taking times for every exam; and all test taking environments in the MABS Program are monitored so as to minimize distractions and noise. However, to assure accommodations may be made for a disability, the applicant should enquire about the ability of the institution to accommodate their disability through the Center for Academic and Career Excellence.

## **Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program Application Process**

The MABS program utilizes the Post Baccalaureate Centralized Application Service (PostBac CAS) for its primary applications. The application is comprehensive and requires applicant input of multiple essays, demographics, clinical experiences, volunteer experiences, etc. Official transcripts and two letters of recommendation must be submitted directly to PostBac CAS. The cost consists of \$130 for the first application submitted and \$45 for each subsequent application to other programs. A link for the PostBac CAS application is available through the BU website at: <http://www.bluefield.edu/masters-in-biomedical-sciences-degree/>.

The MABS Program also allows AACOMAS and secondary applications to VCOM to be transferred in lieu of a PostBac CAS application. Contact [mabsadmissions@bluefield.edu](mailto:mabsadmissions@bluefield.edu) about the necessary steps for application transfers.

The application deadline is April 15.

## **Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program Selection Process**

The Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Admissions committee reviews applications on a rolling admissions basis so it is best to apply early. Review of completed applications will begin in December. All verified applications received by April 15 will be reviewed. Personal interviews are not conducted.

The more competitive applicants will have shadowing or clinical experience with an M.D. or D.O. with exposure to osteopathic medicine which demonstrates the students understanding of and commitment to the osteopathic profession.

After the Admissions Coordinator receives these materials, the applicant's file is reviewed to determine eligibility based on the established criteria of the Admissions Committee. These areas of review include the applicants personal record of accomplishment, health care experience, rural or underserved orientation, community service, volunteering for compassionate and altruistic care



service, personal goals, and other information that reflects his/her preparedness for professional training and a medical career. The Admissions Committee may make any of the following recommendations: to accept, to deny, or to place the applicant on a wait list.

Intentional misrepresentation or omission of information on any form relevant to admissions or records will subject the student to dismissal. The University reserves the right to deny admission to any applicant for any reason it deems sufficient including academic unprofessional or unethical behavior or failure to comply with the matriculation process. Matriculation will be denied to applicants who failed to maintain a good record of scholastic performance and/or good record of personal conduct between the time of their acceptance and their matriculation at the University. Matriculation may also be denied or rescinded for failure to pay tuition and fees. Students may be offered “conditional acceptances” requiring sustained academic performance or certain behavioral expectations.

In the event you are offered a seat in the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program, you will be notified by email at the address given in the application.

### **International Students**

The BU Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program only accepts U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States into the program.

### **Official Transcripts**

Transcripts submitted through PostBac CAS are considered to be official. In the event that a student has taken additional classes in the time between application submission and matriculation into the MABS program, these classes must be documented with additional official transcripts submitted directly to the Admissions Coordinator. All transcripts must be submitted prior to July 1. If a transcript will not be available by the assigned deadline due to outstanding grades or other reasons, email the Admissions Coordinator well in advance of the deadline to request approval of an appropriate extension.

Transcripts must be sent directly from the Registrar’s Office of the school(s) attended directly to the Office of the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program. Unofficial transcripts or transcripts hand carried by the student (even if in a sealed envelope) are not acceptable.

Failure to submit official transcripts by the due date (or to obtain authorized approval of an extension) may result in the offer of admission to BU being rescinded and forfeiture of your tuition deposit.

Transcripts should be sent and questions addressed to the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program Office:

Bluefield University - VCOM – Virginia Campus  
Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program  
1691 Innovation Drive, Suite 1100  
Blacksburg, VA 24060  
Phone: 540-231-8687  
Email: [sballard@bluefield.edu](mailto:sballard@bluefield.edu)

# **Tuition and Fees**

## Tuition and Fees

### BU Estimated Cost of Attendance

A student's Cost of Attendance (COA) includes tuition, books and educational supplies, room and board expenses while attending school, and other miscellaneous expenses. The COA is the foundation for establishing a student's financial need because it sets the limit on the total aid that a student may receive.

At BU the COA is established for each aid year by using the current year's tuition plus a calculated average of books and educational supplies, room and board expenses while attending school, and other miscellaneous expenses. The COA is computed for each individual class (not for each individual student).

Expenses such as dependent care, loan origination fees, and expenses related to a student's disability, and other specific expenses are handled on an individual basis by means of a Dependent Care & Special Circumstances, or Cost of Attendance appeal.

### Admissions Application Fee

Upon completion of the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program application for admissions to PostBacCAS a nonrefundable fee of \$130.00 for the first application and \$45 for each subsequent application is required prior to application submission. Payments are made directly to PostBacCAS through PayPal or by credit card.

### Acceptance Fee

Upon acceptance into the MABS Program, a non-refundable tuition deposit of \$500.00 is due to BU. The tuition deposit is credited toward your tuition upon matriculation. The tuition deposit is nonrefundable if the student does not attend.

### Tuition and Fees

Tuition is billed in two installments for the academic year, typically in July and December. Bills or invoices are sent by mail and may be viewed electronically through the student's MyBU account. Financial aid, payments in full, or payment plans must be established by the start of the semester, unless special arrangements have been made with Student Accounts in Bluefield Central.

Bluefield University provides students with two monthly payment plan options to assist with paying for education expenses in smaller, more manageable monthly installments. There is no approval required. The cost to participate is a \$55 per semester enrollment fee. For assistance or to receive no-cost affordability counseling you may contact our third party provider, Tuition Management Systems (TMS). TMS may be reached at 800-722-4867. The payment plans options are:

- 5 monthly payments for the Fall semester first payment due July 1
- 4 monthly payments with the Fall first payment due July 20
- 5 monthly payments with the Spring first payment due December 1
- 4 monthly payments with the Spring first payment due January 1

To enroll, visit <http://www.bluefield.afford.com>.

Tuition and fees must be paid with financial aid, personal monies, private loans, and/or scholarships by the due date(s). The due date(s) will be determined by the Business Office, is advertised in the University Catalog and Student Handbook and is included in emails about tuition and fees invoices that are sent to students each fall and spring. A late fee of \$40 will be assessed if amounts owed are not paid in full by the due date. If a student is 45 days late in making their payment their delinquent account is closed with TMS and the student may be administratively withdrawn from the program.

Tuition may be paid in full for the semester directly to BU online through MyBU by credit card or check. Students making full payment to BU may also pay in person with cash or do a wire transfer online. Students who need to utilize a payment plan enroll with TMS through [www.bluefield.afford.com](http://www.bluefield.afford.com). TMS accepts checks, credit card payments and they will set up automatic bank withdrawals.

Students receiving private loans or scholarships which have not arrived by the beginning of the academic year must provide written confirmation from the sponsor that the funds are awarded. This confirmation should be sent to Bluefield Central at [BluefieldCentral@bluefield.edu](mailto:BluefieldCentral@bluefield.edu). Any outstanding tuition and fees must be paid before any refunds to students can be processed.

### **Tuition for 2022-2023**

Tuition is subject to change annually. Tuition for the 2022-2023 academic year is \$800 per credit hour. This equates to \$28,000 for MABS and \$29,600 for OMABS. BU's Board of Trustees reserves the right to change the schedule of tuition and fees annually without advance notice, and to make such changes applicable to present, as well as, future students of BU. The Board also may establish additional fees or changes for special services whenever, in the Board's opinion, such actions are deemed advisable; however, this is not done mid-year. Students who do not pay tuition may not attend class and may not progress. Admission offers may be rescinded for nonpayment of tuition. Late payments will result in additional charges.

### **Returned Checks**

Any checks utilized to pay tuition or any fees that are rejected or returned to BU because of insufficient funds will be assessed a returned check fee of \$30-35, which is subject to change. Thereafter, subsequent payments, plus the returned check fees, must be paid with cashier's checks, money orders, or cash.

### **Tuition Refund Policy**

If students cease academic activities at BU prior to the expiration of 60% of any term, pro-rata tuition refunds will be processed by Student Accounts and Financial Aid. Federal financial aid funds are prorated at the same percentage as the charges, and aid will be adjusted based upon the last day of attendance. No tuition refunds will be calculated for any students after 60% of any term has expired or passed. Students who are dismissed, or accept unofficial involuntary withdrawals from BU, are not eligible for tuition refunds. The pro-rated tuition refund will be applied to the students' accounts and may reduce any balances the students owe BU. After adjustments are made to a withdrawn student's account, they will be provided a refund (if a credit is due) or a statement for balance owed. If payment is not received for the outstanding balance, the student's account will

be turned over to collections which results in an additional 33% collection fee being added to the balance.

## **Campus Contacts for Financial Aid, Registrar and Student Accounts**

Bluefield Central  
3000 University Ave.  
Bluefield, VA 24605  
Phone: 276-326-4215  
Fax: 276-326-4356  
Email: [BluefieldCentral@bluefield.edu](mailto:BluefieldCentral@bluefield.edu)

## **Textbooks and Supplies**

Required and suggested textbooks and supplies and equipment must be purchased by the student. All students are required to have a laptop computer (specifications are available on the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program website and through the Office of Admissions).

# **Student Health, Insurance and Legal Requirements**

# Health and Insurance Requirements and Policies for Applicants and Students

## Health Requirements

Applicants accepted for admission are required to obtain and to provide the required documentation indicating that they do not have conditions that would endanger the health and well-being of their future patients. In order to protect the health and well-being of our students and patients, BU requires that all students meet the University's basic student health requirements on acceptance prior to matriculation and annually while a BU student.

As many immunizations and proofs of immunity are required by the future clinical training sites and are recommended for work with the public in a health environment, BU does not waive these requirements for religious reasons or personal preferences. Students who do not have proof of immunity or are not engaged in immunizations to meet proof of immunity, will not be allowed to enroll or participate in any patient care activities, including but not limited to: early clinical experiences, health outreach events, international mission trips, and clinical rotations, until all immunization requirements have been met. Inability to participate in clinical experiences due to noncompliance with BU immunization policies may result in failure of a course/rotation, academic probation, promotion board hearing, delay in graduation, or even dismissal from the program.

Required laboratory tests and immunizations may change annually based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the United States Prevention Task Force (USPTF), and healthcare facilities. Students will be notified of any change. Health and immunization requirements are updated annually according to national guidelines and the clinical teaching hospital requirements.

Students who have certain communicable diseases such as Chronic Hepatitis may require treatment prior to clinical participation or with such diseases as HIV may have an altered clinical educational experience according to the guidelines provided by the CDC. Students in this category should discuss any concerns with VCOM's Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs for clarification. BU seeks to provide the best student experience while also maintaining consideration of the health of the patient and CDC guidelines.

Also, each applicant must have his/her own health insurance policy and provide evidence of such.

Prior to matriculation, students must submit their medical history and physical examination and documentation of the listed laboratory tests and immunizations on the following BU forms: Personal Medical History, Immunization Form, and Tuberculosis Screening/Testing Form. These forms can be found under Health and Immunization Forms on the BU website at: [www.bluefield.edu/mabs-student/](http://www.bluefield.edu/mabs-student/). These forms must be completed, signed, and dated by a licensed physician and returned to the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program Office by the dates specified in BU admissions policies in order to maintain acceptance status.

Students must maintain these health requirements throughout enrollment. Incomplete or unsigned forms will not be accepted and failure to meet the required deadlines could affect your ability to matriculate or engage in BU educational experiences.

## History and Physical Examination Requirement

Each student must have a comprehensive history and physical examination performed by a licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant. This exam must be completed after the date of acceptance and before matriculation into BU. This examination must establish, and the examining physician must verify that the student's health status is adequate to meet the demands of the curriculum as defined by the health and technical requirements for admission, education, and graduation detailed in this Catalog and Handbook. Students must return the BU Physical Exam Form, signed by a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant, to the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program Office by the dates specified in BU admission policies in order to maintain acceptance status. The form can be found on the BU website at: [www.bluefield.edu/mabs-student/](http://www.bluefield.edu/mabs-student/).

## Immunization Requirements

Regulatory and legislative authorities require that students demonstrate immunization, immunity or protection from multiple contagious diseases before being allowed to participate in clinical experiences at the institutions utilized by BU for the education of its students. BU requires that students meet all immunization requirements prior to matriculation and must maintain compliance with these requirements throughout their tenure here at BU.

Students must return the BU Immunization Form and Tuberculosis Screening/Testing Form, signed by the physician, to the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program Office by the dates specified in BU admission policies in order to maintain acceptance status. The form can be found on the BU website at: [www.bluefield.edu/mabs-student/](http://www.bluefield.edu/mabs-student/).

BU requires the following laboratory tests and immunizations:

- Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus
- Annual Tuberculosis (TB) test
- Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) immunization and titers
- Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) test
- Measles (Rubeola), Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)
- Varicella
- Influenza

Descriptions of BU immunization requirements can be found on the BU website at: [www.bluefield.edu/mabs-student/](http://www.bluefield.edu/mabs-student/).

Required laboratory tests and immunizations may change annually based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the United States Prevention Task Force (USPTF) other public health agencies, and healthcare facilities. Students will be notified of any changes and will be required to comply with any mandated changes upon receipt of notice from BU.

## Optional Laboratory Tests and Immunizations

- HIV testing – Although not required, BU encourages all students to obtain HIV testing prior to matriculation. Testing prior to matriculation provides students with their baseline status in regards to the presence of HIV infection which will be valuable in the event that a student



has an exposure incident during subsequent clinical activities. Students are not required to report the results of their testing to BU.

- The following vaccines are considered optional; however, BU strongly advises all students to discuss the appropriateness of each of the following vaccinations with their primary physician, taking into account their personal medical history, risk factors for contracting these diseases and potential for international travel. Students who have obtained the below optional vaccinations should document the dates and provide verification (physician signature or vaccination records) on the BU immunization form in the space provided.
  - Polio
  - Hepatitis A
  - Meningococcal Disease
  - Yellow Fever
  - Typhoid Fever

### **Students' Interaction with Patients**

There will be field experiences required for completion of the program, and some of these experiences may involve patient interaction. Upon admission, students must obtain and provide the required documentation indicating that they do not have conditions that would endanger the health and well-being of patients. The documentation includes immunizations and titers for immunity, verification from a physician who has performed a medical history and physical examination as to the health of the student and background checks for a legal history. Students must also be able to demonstrate that their health and abilities will enable them to meet the technical standards of the program. See Technical Standards for Admission to VCOM and Continued Enrollment and Health Requirements, Screening and Occupational Exposure of Students, and Alcohol and Drug Testing in this Handbook.

### **Screening and Occupational Exposure of Students**

Prior to matriculation students must submit documentation regarding screening exams including but not limited to: TB, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Rubella, Rubeola and Varicella immunity. These requirements are subject to change annually according to national health standards and clinical site requirements. BU adheres to recommendations by the CDC for involvement in healthcare standards.

Screening is required in the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program because students may participate in field experiences that involve exposure to patients in long term care. Students who are concerned about caring for patients at risk should consider the program requirements and should seek an alternate profession if they believe they cannot provide hands-on care to patients without causing risk to patients or themselves. Students who develop a concern after beginning classes should seek counseling so they may determine how best to successfully complete their training program while protecting themselves and the patient.

While BU does not require HIV and Hepatitis C testing for admission, BU recommends that students have such testing prior to matriculation for their personal information. Students are exposed to many infectious diseases if accepted to medical school, and though most infections can be prevented through the use of universal precautions, having this information prior to such exposures can prove invaluable if the student does develop the disease. Students, as future physicians, should consider the safety of the patient first and foremost and act accordingly. Again,

this information should not be submitted to the University and is for the student's personal use only.

## **Hepatitis B Non-Immunity and Risk of Infection**

Hepatitis B is a serious infection that is spread by infected blood and body fluids and can lead to serious health risks including liver failure, cancer and death. Protection from the disease can often be obtained from a series of vaccinations and is recommended for all health care professionals. A small number of people can fail to develop immunity despite adequate vaccination and thus remain at increased risk of infection during the course of their education and occupation in the health care field.

For vaccine non-responders (those without immunity after vaccination), it is critical they understand potential sources of hepatitis B infection, methods of transmission and the importance of seeking immediate medical attention if accidental exposure occurs. Meticulous adherence to blood and body fluid precautions is critical to preventing the spread of the disease and non-responders must use these and all other available methods of prevention to protect themselves. In addition, if a potential infectious exposure does occur, non-responders must seek immediate medical attention as protection may still be provided with the administration of hepatitis B immunoglobulin immediately following exposure. The availability of post-exposure prophylaxis and immunoglobulin does not in any way alleviate the need to practice universal precautions and hand hygiene.

Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences students who are not immune to hepatitis B after appropriate vaccination are at increased risk for infection if exposed to infectious blood or body fluids. As a non-immune student it is important for you to understand that you may be exposed to potential infected patients and material, that the transmission rate of hepatitis B with an accident percutaneous exposure is high and that the consequences of infection may be severe. These students are required to have a counseling session with VCOM's Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs for the most recent CDC ruling on clinical training and experiences for medical students.

## **Pregnancy, Allergies, and Student Participation in Special Environments**

Education at BU takes place in special environments, such as visits to the anatomy lab and long term care facilities that may contain hazardous physical and chemical environments. Working and studying in these special environments may require the student to make an informed decision concerning continued participation because failure to participate in required classes could result in dismissal. Examples may include, but are not limited to: students who believe they are allergic or sensitive to certain chemicals, students who are pregnant and are concerned about potential hazards to a developing fetus, or students who believe they are immuno-compromised or have increased susceptibility to disease. The student must decide upon their ability to participate prior to beginning school. For a student who develops problems or becomes pregnant after starting, their program may be delayed until the student has seen an allergist and has taken appropriate precautions to successfully complete the program, or the pregnancy is completed. If the student is unable to attend, he/she should seek a medical withdrawal from BU.

# Insurance Requirements

## Medical Insurance

Medical insurance is mandatory for all BU Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences students. Students must present proof of health insurance at registration at the time of matriculation. Students face disciplinary actions if they fail to carry health insurance throughout their entire enrollment at BU. You may select the carrier of your choice as long as you meet the minimum health insurance requirements below. Students may opt-in to the health insurance plan provided through Bluefield University.

The minimum requirements for medical insurance are:

- Deductible Maximum: \$2,500
- Lifetime Maximum (suggested): \$1,000,000
- Co-Pay: Students should seek no higher than 30% co-pay with insurance covering at least 70% up to \$5,000 maximum and 100% payment by insurance after \$5,000 is met.

***\* If you are eligible to be covered under your parent's insurance plan and the deductible exceeds \$2,500, a copy of the insurance coverage is required to be attached to the "Requirements of Health Insurance" form along with a signed statement by the parent that he/she will guarantee the costs of care up to the deductible amount.***

For new students, insurance must become effective July 15<sup>th</sup> (verification of proof must be submitted to BU by July 1). **All students must maintain coverage throughout enrollment.**

## Information for Vendors BU Students Use:

Students are responsible for their own personal health insurance coverage. These companies have worked with BU and/or VCOM students in the past to meet student needs. You may use a different carrier if you wish; these are provided as a convenience.

Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield  
[www.anthem.com](http://www.anthem.com) or 1-800-385-2035 or 1-800-334-7676

Assurant Health Insurance  
[www.assuranthealth.com](http://www.assuranthealth.com) or 1-800-800-2412

# **Academic Program of Study**

## Academic Program of Study

The MABS degree can be earned in two formats: an in-person classroom-based format (the MABS program) and an online asynchronous format (the OMABS program). All lectures and presentations are made available to students through the MyBU, Canvas system. The computer-based materials are placed on Canvas in order to augment student learning requiring minimal note taking and easy access to materials for continued study. Valuable classroom time is then used for faculty/student interaction and active learning. The Curriculum is divided into the semester system. There are two semesters per year. The curriculum differs slightly between the MABS and online MABS (OMABS) programs.

### Mandatory Courses for MABS

The following courses are considered mandatory and include mandatory attendance. BU reserves the right to modify/substitute courses within this list.

<b>Fall Semester</b>		
<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Class Name</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
BMS 5220	Immunology	3
BMS 5104	Biochemistry	3
BMS 5920	Research and Biostatistics	3
BMS 5312	Genetics	2
BMS 5718	Cell Physiology	3
BMS 5719	Neuroscience	2
BMA 5401	Introduction to Community Health	1
<b>Fall Total Credit Hours:</b>		<b>17</b>

<b>Spring Semester</b>		
<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Class Name</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
BMS 5616	Medical Anatomy	3
BMS 5308	Health Policy and Social Determinants of Health	3
BMS 5410	Histology/Embryology	4
BMS 5512	Field Seminar	2; P/F
BMS 5818	Microbiology	3
BMS 5240	Human Nutrition	3
<b>Spring Total Credit Hours:</b>		<b>18</b>

## Mandatory Courses for OMABS

The following courses are considered mandatory. BU reserves the right to modify/substitute courses within this list.

Fall Semester		
Course Number	Class Name	Credit Hours
BMS 5308	Health Policy and Social Determinants of Health	3
BMS 5104	Biochemistry	3
BMS 5616	Medical Anatomy	3
BMS 5240	Human Nutrition	3
BMS 5313	Genetics with Clinical Correlations	3
BMS 5713	Neuroscience with Clinical Correlations	3
	<b>Fall Total Credit Hours:</b>	<b>18</b>

Spring Semester		
Course Number	Class Name	Credit Hours
BMS 5410	Histology/Embryology	4
BMS 5920	Research and Biostatistics	3
BMS 5220	Immunology	3
BMS 5220	Clinical Prevention and Public Health	3
BMS 5818	Microbiology	3
BMS 5718	Cell Physiology	3
	<b>Spring Total Credit Hours:</b>	<b>19</b>

## Courses and Course Descriptions

**Course Title: Health Policy and Social Determinants of Health**

**Course Number: BMS 5012**

**Credit Hours: 3**

This three credit hour course provides students an understanding of the components of the United States' healthcare system and how current and proposed policies may impact the costs, quality and accessibility of health care services. The students will be introduced to how health care is organized, delivered and reimbursed. Topics for discussion will include, but not necessarily be limited to the uninsured, health care disparities, health care cost, the role of public health, the health care workforce, and prevention. All topics, where applicable, will be discussed in the context of the

*Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA)* and the intended and potential unintended consequences of the legislation.

**Course Title: Biochemistry**

**Course Number: BMS 5104**

**Credit Hours: 3**

This course emphasizes biochemical compounds, processes and systems, designed to provide the student with sufficient coverage of biochemical principles to facilitate learning and understanding in other biomedical and clinical science courses studied in a medical school environment to include the following topics:

1. Protein Structure and Function
2. Metabolic basis of disease
3. Macromolecular synthesis (DNA, RNA, Protein, and Lipid)
4. Energy generation, storage, and retrieval by the body
5. Use biochemical concepts in the process of clinical problem solving
6. Correlate biochemical concepts with clinical presentations of (clinical) cases
7. Develop collegiality through teamwork with other students

**Course Title: Clinical Prevention and Public Health**

**Course Number: BMS 5220**

**Credit Hours: 3**

The content of this course is derived from the *Healthy People Curriculum Task Force* convened by the Association for Prevention Teaching and Research (APTR). The task force included representatives of seven health professional education associations representing allopathic and osteopathic medicine, nursing and nurse practitioners, dentistry, pharmacy, and physician assistants. All topics within this course fall under the following three framework components as defined by the task force:

1. Foundations of Population Health
2. Clinical Preventive Services and Health Promotion
3. Clinical Practice and Population Health

**Course Title: Human Nutrition**

**Course Number: BMS 5240**

**Credit Hours: 3**

This course includes advanced principles of the biochemistry, anatomy and physiology related to nutrition and focuses on the role of nutrition science in an individual's diet and health. Topics include macro- and micronutrients; digestion, absorption, and metabolism; body composition and weight management; vegetarianism; chronic disease; life cycle nutritional needs; food safety; and environmental issues. An evaluation of personal dietary habits using current dietary guidelines and nutritional assessment methods will also be completed to help students assess their own nutritional health.

**Course Title: Immunology**

**Course Number: BMS 5308**

**Credit Hours: 3**

This course emphasizes the principles and concepts of immunology as they pertain to clinical

medicine, with a combination of didactic lectures and case-based and problem-based scenarios. Topics include cells and organs of the immune system, B and T cell development and activation, major histocompatibility complex, antigen processing and presentation, antibody diversity, tolerance, complement, cytokines, inflammation, hypersensitivity, vaccines, autoimmunity and immunodeficiency diseases, and host-pathogen interactions.

**Course Title: Genetics**

**Course Number: BMS 531**

**Credit Hours: 2**

This course will focus on the basic aspects of human genetics. Topics will include Mendelian genetics, non-Mendelian genetics, cytogenetics, multifactorial inheritance, population genetics, genetic counseling and genetic testing. A portion of the course will be devoted to the future of medical genetics through multiple topics related to precision medicine.

**Course Title: Genetics with Clinical Correlations**

**Course Number: BMS 5313**

**Credit Hours: 3**

This course focuses on the underlying basic principles of human genetics as they apply to clinical medicine. The course contains basic concepts in genetics, including concepts of genes, traits, and inheritance; molecular aspects of gene expression, including DNA, RNA, and protein metabolism; the overall organization of the human genome, including gene organization, repetitive elements, and human variation; inheritance patterns for disease, including complicating factors; and clinical aspects of epigenetics, cancer, population genetics, pharmacogenetics, gene therapy and genetic screening programs. The student will be introduced to a number of genetic diseases with a focus on the genetic principles underlying those diseases. This course is taught in a lecture-based format and the student is tested through written or computer examinations.

**Course Title: Histology/Embryology**

**Course Number: BMS 5410**

**Credit Hours: 4**

The course will focus on the two sub-disciplines of anatomy not covered in the Anatomy course – histology (microscopic anatomy) and embryology (developmental anatomy). Both disciplines will be covered with emphasis on general principles and concepts as they pertain to clinical medicine, with a combination of didactic lectures and laboratory exercises.

**Course Title: Special Topics in Biomedical Sciences**

**Course Number: BMS 5501, 5502, and 5503**

**Credit Hours: 1, 2, and 3, respectively**

The student will engage in course instruction, research and analysis of specific topics under the direction of a faculty member. Credit will be determined by course content.

**Course Title: Field Seminar**

**Course Number: BMS 5512**

**Credit Hours: 2; Pass/Fail**

Students will be placed in an Appalachian setting and spend 20+ hours interacting with populations who have limited access to basic health care due to remote site location, poverty, or other factors. Students will typically be involved in public health education for children, adult



health education and/or other activities. Journal reflections and case study reports will comprise a portion of this course.

**Course Title: Medical Anatomy**

**Course Number: BMS 5616**

**Credit Hours: 3**

This course focuses on the gross anatomy of the human body with special emphasis on anatomical relationships, form/function relationships and how changes in anatomical forms can lead to disease states. Material is presented in a systems-based format, similar to what is used in the VCOM D.O. Program. Surface anatomy, cross-sectional anatomy and various imaging modalities are utilized with laboratories. Plastinated cadaveric material and digital anatomical models may also be used.

**Course Title: Cell Physiology**

**Course Number: BMS 5718**

**Credit Hours: 3**

This course is designed to provide essential concepts in medical physiology for future career in medicine and medical research. This information will be categorized into seven sections within one semester. Cell and muscle physiology, autonomic and endocrine regulation of body systems, cardiovascular, pulmonary, gastrointestinal, renal, and reproductive physiology will be covered. We will focus on normal physiological function of the major human organ systems and will discuss pathophysiology when it reinforces or highlights a particular physiological mechanism. Various approaches will be utilized including lectures, lecture notes, learning objectives, recommended readings from textbooks and primary sources, large and small group conferences, clinical case examples, and formal self-studies.

**Course Title: Neuroscience**

**Course Number: BMS 5719**

**Credit Hours: 2**

Neuroscience will begin with a foundation of cellular physiology including the topics of membrane physiology, the ionic and molecular basis of resting and action potentials, synaptic transmission, the physiology of neurotransmitters, and post-synaptic response and cellular signaling. This will build to the topics of motor, sensory and cognitive pathways with an emphasis on the associated anatomy and physiology. Finally, organs of special senses and their associated pathways will be discussed. Throughout the course, particular emphasis will be placed on topics of clinical relevance.

**Course Title: Neuroscience with Clinical Correlations**

**Course Number: BMS 5713**

**Credit Hours: 3**

The Neuroscience with Clinical Correlations course provides an interdisciplinary approach to the understanding of the nervous system. It integrates various disciplines such as neurophysiology, neuroanatomy, and neuroendocrinology. The ultimate objectives and goals of the Neuroscience Course are to provide an understanding of the structure, function and dysfunction of the nervous system. This course also establishes a foundation for further clinical evaluation of normal and pathological functioning of the nervous system. Within the lectures, emphasis will be placed on

teaching those aspects that are of particular use in the clinical environment and that will help to understand the pathophysiological mechanisms of the neurological syndromes. Correlations will be made to illustrate the relevance of the knowledge to the practice of medicine.

**Course Title: Microbiology**

**Course Number: BMS 5818**

**Credit Hours: 3**

Students will learn the structure, morphology, classification, isolation, identification, physiology, and life cycle of viruses, bacteria, fungi, and parasites. The course will focus on cell biology, genetics, virology, bacteriology, mycology, parasitology, and interactions with mammalian hosts. Examples will be given from medically important organisms with reference to the diseases they cause, their epidemiology and laboratory diagnosis. Minimal detail will be given to the clinical aspect of microbial or parasitic diseases or to the host's immune response during an infection.

**Course Title: Research and Biostatistics**

**Course Number: BMS 5920**

**Credit Hours: 3**

Students will learn research techniques and biostatistics routinely used in clinical, biomedical and epidemiological research. Background material on the methods will be presented in lectures, and class will break up to work in groups for discussion and group report preparation. Data from the international component of the Field Seminar experience will be utilized for analysis and generation of a poster worthy of presentation at a national professional meeting.

**Master of Arts in Education (MAED)**

Through a cross listing of courses, MABS and OMABS students who delay their graduation can take four additional online graduate courses through the BU College of Education and graduate with two masters degrees – a Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences and a Master of Arts in Education. Additionally, the MAED offers two tracks, one for secondary education and the other for college education. See the Bluefield University Graduate Academic Catalog for more information or contact the Director of the MABS Program.

# **Academic Assistance**

## **Academic Assistance**

### **Academic Advising**

The BU College of Sciences and Health Sciences Dean and Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program Director serve as the primary academic faculty advisors. Additional faculty members may also be designated to act as MABS faculty advisors. The academic advisor serves as a mentor, role model, and guide for the student. The advisor has no responsibility in advising the student as to BU policies and procedures and acts as an academic mentor only; students should see members of BU administration for questions on BU policy.

Members of the administration can typically be reached in their offices Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and walk-ins are welcome; however, to assure sufficient time with the administrator, students are encouraged to make an appointment.

### **Academic Counseling**

Academic Counseling services are provided free of charge on the BU-VCOM campus. The Director for Counseling Services hired by VCOM has a degree in Educational Counseling, Ph.D., or a Psy.D. Academic counseling services are provided for students who are experiencing academic difficulty but services are also available to advise those students who are experiencing challenges in their personal life that may be affecting their academic performance.

The Director for Counseling Services provides counseling for students who are struggling with academics, relationship issues, anxiety, life transitions, organizational skills, and stress management. These are the most common issues that MABS students tend to encounter; however, this list may include anything else that surfaces as a barrier to success in the program like substance use, grief, and perfectionism. Sometimes students just feel overwhelmed and are unsure of the next best steps to take. The Directors for Academic and Counseling Services can assist with problem solving and provide recommendations for any outside services that may be beneficial. No issue is too big or too small, so do not hesitate to reach out to them; their doors are always open!

Appointments may be conducted as in-person meetings or via SKYPE if a student is located away from campus. To schedule an appointment, students should call or email the Academic Counselor or contact the Student Services Department or The Center for Institutional, Faculty, and Student Success for assistance.

Academic Counseling is confidential and information is not shared with administration, faculty, staff, or other students unless the safety of a student or others is in question. Students are informed prior to the Academic Counselor sharing student information.

# **Academic Grading, Promotion and Completion**

## Grading and Grade Point Averages (GPAs)

Grading Scale		
A	90-100	4.0
B+	85-89	3.5
B	80-84	3.0
C+	75-79	2.5
C	70-74	2.0
D	67-69	1.0
F	66 and below	0.0

The GPA is the sum of earned grade points divided by the sum of credits attempted (both passed and failed). Students may be able to repeat courses, but doing so negates the ability to meet benchmark for admission to the VCOM D.O. program.

### Degree Requirements for the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences

A master's degree is granted to and conferred upon candidates who:

1. Have an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale.
2. Have satisfied all academic requirements with a grade of C or higher for each course.
3. Have settled all financial obligations with Bluefield University.

Professional and ethical competence is required of students in the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences program. Students must demonstrate the ethical and professional qualities deemed necessary for professional school.

Students must complete all required coursework and course evaluations to receive a diploma and transcript.

### Applying to Medical and Professional School Programs

**VCOM's D.O. Program** - Students in the BU Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences program are granted special pathways for acceptance into VCOM's D.O. program.

### Benchmarks for Acceptance to VCOM from the MABS Program

GPA	MCAT Score	MABS-to-DO Interview Committee recommendation
3.75 – 4.0	496 or above	Positive
3.60 – 3.74	498 or above	Positive

Benchmarks will be reviewed in December, March, and May. Students accepted from the December review will be offered a seat at one of the VCOM campuses for the following academic year, thereby eliminating the lag or glide year involved in other similar programs.

The December review is for students who achieve a 3.6 or greater GPA during the fall semester and have an MCAT of 498 or above. The MABS-to-D.O. committee meets in December, has a mini-interview with each candidate, and provides anonymous recommendations (positive/negative) as to acceptance of the student. The MABS-to-D.O. committee is composed of MABS administrators, faculty and staff and VCOM administrators or their designees.

The March review is for students who achieved a 3.6 or higher in the Fall Semester, but did not have a benchmark MCAT score. By taking the January MCAT, such students could become eligible for the March review. All seats in the D.O. program are filled by March; therefore, students accepted in the March review are placed on the waitlist at one of the VCOM campuses. In the event that such a student does not matriculate from the waitlist for the following August, they may be offered a seat in the subsequent D.O. class. It should be noted that all acceptances from the December or March reviews are provisional and contingent upon maintaining a 3.60 GPA and a positive MABS-to-D.O. committee evaluation in the spring semester of the MABS program.

The final review is conducted at the end of the program in May for those students who did not meet earlier benchmarks. All seats in the D.O. program are filled by May; therefore, students accepted via the May benchmarks are placed on the waitlist at one of the VCOM campuses and may be offered admission the following year in the event that they do not matriculate from the waitlist.

While the BU Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program is only offered on the Virginia VCOM campus, students who meet the benchmarks to earn acceptance into the osteopathic program will be offered seats at one of the four VCOM campuses. Procedures for applying to the VCOM Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine program will be explained in the fall semester and deadlines will be posted within the classroom. If granted admission, campus preference will be considered but not guaranteed. The student's permanent address and the location of their undergraduate institution are the primary factors determining to which VCOM campus a student will be accepted. In addition, due to logistics and space availability, applicants will be placed at all four campuses.

If granted admission, students must meet the matriculation requirements of all new students entering the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine program including making the required tuition deposit. Students must maintain health insurance and current immunizations; certify that they continue to meet all technical standards (including clinical standards); provide proof of basic cardiac life support (BULS) certification; have no reportable criminal activities on their background check and must meet all other requirements for matriculation.

Students who do not meet the GPA or MCAT requirements set forth above may apply to VCOM's Doctor of Osteopathic Medical School program, along with all other applicants, utilizing the centralized application service, AACOMAS. Applications must be submitted no later than February 1 for consideration. While these students will be considered for admission, they will not matriculate via the benchmarks to VCOM's Doctor of Osteopathic Medical School program.

It should be noted that many criteria play a role in the admissions process to professional schools and to be competitive, students must have grades significantly higher than a “C” while in the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program.

This program provides an opportunity for the student to demonstrate academic capability. It does not assure admission to a professional school.

### **Benchmarks for the OMABS Program to Earn an Interview**

<b>GPA</b>	<b>MCAT Score</b>
3.75 – 4.0	496 or above
3.60 – 3.74	498 or above

Rather than a professional and ethical evaluation from the MABS-to-D.O. Interview Committee, OMABS students who obtain the GPA and MCAT benchmarks are eligible to earn an Admissions interview at one of the four VCOM campuses. Benchmarks will be evaluated upon 50% completion of the program, upon 100% completion of the program, and 90 days post-completion of the program for those who previously met the GPA benchmark but need to obtain the MCAT benchmark.

Unlike the MABS program which must be completed in a single academic year to be benchmark eligible, OMABS students can opt to take one versus two courses per term, and remain benchmark eligible when requiring two academic years to complete the degree.

### **Other Medical School or Professional Degree Programs**

Students applying to other medical or professional school programs should note the deadlines and procedures for applying. Requests for transcripts should be made to the BU Office of the Registrar; requests for letters of recommendation should be made to the Director of the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program.



# **Student Policies and Professional and Ethical Expectations**

## General Student Policies

### Cell Phones, Beepers, iPads and Computer Usage

Students must have their own cell phones and BU email for communication. These are mandatory tools for communication for all students. Students must turn off their cell phones during lectures and labs. Cell phones should be turned off during all academic activities.

Use of iPads, computers, and other electronic devices in the classroom, laboratory, and small group room settings must be for academic purposes only.

### Consensual Relationships Policy

Consensual relationships between student and faculty are not allowed. Consensual relationships between students and staff members who are in a position of authority or who have access to student or testing information are not allowed. Sexual activity is not permitted on the VCOM campus.

### Diversity

Bluefield University recognizes, values, and affirms that diversity contributes richness to the University and enhances the quality of education. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators are valued for their diversity. BU is committed to providing an academic and employment environment in which students and employees are treated with courtesy, respect, and dignity. It is the policy of BU that no student or employee shall be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program sponsored by BU.

BU's commitment to the principles of non-discrimination includes and extends far beyond the federally protected classes of age, gender, sex, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, ancestry, marital status, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or status as a protected veteran. BU has a commitment to nondiscrimination against any individual or group of individuals. BU has zero tolerance for inappropriate behavior exhibited as an act of discrimination.

Students, who may have a question or concern, should contact the Vice President for Enrollment and Student Development or the Director for the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program. Students not finding resolution should follow the grievance procedures in this *Handbook*.

### Dress Code for Students

The Bluefield University Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program is a professional program; therefore, students are expected to dress and conduct themselves in a professional manner. The dress of a student in the classroom, laboratory, or small group should be one that demonstrates use of good hygiene, appearing clean, and without unpleasant body odor. See further information below.

### Dress Code in the Classroom

Students should dress in a non-provocative manner and one that demonstrates respect for fellow students and faculty. Business casual dress is acceptable and is typically: crisp, neat, and should look appropriate even for a chance meeting with a President/Dean. Males should wear shirts with collars and long pants. Females should wear shirts that are not considered T-shirts or tank tops

with skirts or pants or an appropriate dress. It should not look like cocktail or party or picnic attire. Students should avoid provocative, tight or baggy clothing; business casual is classic rather than trendy.

Business casual at BU does not allow denim-jeans, of any color; t-shirts; sweatshirts; men's shirts without a collar; shirts or sweatshirts with unprofessional writing; shorts; tank tops or halter tops; or other such casual dress. Dress shoes should be worn (no sneakers, flip flops or the like). Women may only wear open toed shoes which are considered dress shoes, but not flip-flops. Hats are not to be worn in the classroom or labs.

### Dress Code for the Anatomy Lab, Field Experiences, and While in Other Settings

Students will be provided with details from the Office of the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program on the attire appropriate for all non-classroom settings.

Students dressing inappropriately may be sent home with an unexcused absence. Repeated episodes may be viewed as an issue which can require disciplinary proceedings.

### Student Professional Conduct

BU students are expected to dress and conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner at all times. High professional standards are expected to be consistent with those of the osteopathic medical profession. Honesty and integrity are expected in all situations. In addition, compliance with institutional rules and regulations, city, state, and federal laws is required. Inappropriate conduct will be handled by the means described in the Code of Conduct and the Code of Behavioral Standards in this *Catalog/Handbook*.

### Tattoos and Piercings

At the request of certain sites for the Field Experience course, clothing must be worn that covers tattoos. In addition, piercing jewelry may be limited to the ear and not be considered excessive.

### Email

Students must use the email address/system provided by BU. **Email is the main line of communication between campus administrative offices and students.** Students must check email daily; it is an expectation that students will have read all notices within 24 hours.

### Fundraising

All fundraising endeavors for student organizations or for any other purpose organized by a student(s) must have prior approval by the VCOM Vice President for Enrollment and Student Development and/or the Director for the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program. No student may sign any contract or make any commitment on behalf of BU or VCOM. Students may not use the BU name, logo, or likeness in any official capacity or on printed merchandise or documents without approval from the Office of Student Services. Permission to use the VCOM logo must be approved through the Director of the MABS Program.

### Improper Relationships

Relationships between a student and a faculty/staff member entrusted to oversee the student or who have access to student information, which extend beyond the educational requirements or beyond BU activities, are not allowed. If a student, faculty, or staff member has access to

information that is considered confidential through a relationship outside the academic setting, this is considered unethical behavior and a violation of FERPA. Students having questions regarding such relationships should direct them to the Office of the Provost.

## **Professional and Ethical Expectations**

Upon Acceptance, BU students are held to the professional and ethical expectations of a physician. Current or accepted students are held to the highest standards of society. Society must hold a certain confidence in the biomedical sciences and medical students and physicians to feel assured they are receiving the best possible medical care, free from physician (or medical student) error, and made in the best interest of the patient. Students at BU are held to certain standards to become a student and to remain a student in the University.

### **MABS/OMABS Student Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct**

During orientation, MABS and OMABS students agree, by signing the below statement, to abide by the MABS Student Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct throughout their time within the program.

#### **Honor Code Agreement**

As a student of Bluefield University at the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine, I accept the responsibility for my conduct and expect the highest standards of myself. I will also support others in upholding these standards. I commit to the following:

##### **Honesty and Integrity**

- I will demonstrate truthfulness in academic and clinical activities, including examinations, evaluations and any other representation of my work.
- I will not participate in or be a party to unfair advancement of academic standing.
- I will be truthful in all interactions with administration, faculty, staff and peers.
- I will always be honest in the collection, interpretation, and reporting of data pertinent to academic work.

##### **Respect for Others**

- I will demonstrate the highest standard of ethical and professional behavior in the academic setting.
- I will not discriminate based on age, gender, sex, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, ancestry, marital status, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or status as a protected veteran.
- I will display and expect non-discriminatory behavior toward and from my administration, faculty, staff and peers.
- I will protect confidentiality and uphold the dignity of all.

##### **Reliability and Responsibility**

- I will acknowledge my strengths as well as my limitation, offering assistance when I am able and seeking assistance when necessary.

- I will not be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs while performing academic responsibilities.
- I will not exhibit alcohol or drug related misconduct including addiction, driving under the influence, or other illegal or unethical acts.
- I will not use illicit drugs or misuse prescription drugs in order to maintain the highest levels of competencies and skills when learning.
- I will be dutiful in carrying out all academic responsibilities, arriving on time as expected and not leaving until all tasks assigned to me are completed.

### **Commitment to Self-Improvement**

- I will continue to strive to attain the highest level of knowledge, skills, and competence.
- I will assess my progress and identify areas for improvement and issues for continued learning.
- I will demonstrate a willingness to share and participate in the learning process with peers, faculty, and staff and promote the student-teacher relationship.
- I will seek assistance from colleagues or professionals for any problems that adversely affect my education.

I understand the expectations above, and I am choosing to enter the Master of Art in Biomedical Sciences Program and committing myself to the professional and ethical duties described above, in preparation for a future in medicine.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Background Checks**

All incoming students are required to submit (directly to PreCheck) an application for a criminal background check. No other service will be accepted. A monetary fee (payable to PreCheck) must accompany the PreCheck application which is to be submitted by the tuition deposit date. An offer of admission and continued enrollment is contingent upon acceptable results from an accepted student's Pre-Check report. Bluefield University/VCOM reserves the right to put restrictions on or rescind an offer of admission based on information received on a background check. Also, note that should any charge or arrest occur after acceptance, whether or not the accepted student was convicted, the student is required to inform Bluefield University/VCOM immediately when it occurs. Failure to report such charges or arrests, whether guilty or not, and/or failure to report immediately, within 24 hours, can result in the student's offer of admission being rescinded. Upon review of the charge, Bluefield University/VCOM reserves the right to rescind the offer of admission prior to matriculation.

### **Sexual Misconduct**

Membership in a University community carries with it the responsibility for mutual trust and respect and adherence to the standards of conduct established by the community.

Bluefield University prohibits sexual misconduct by students. Student sexual misconduct is defined as unwelcome acts of a sexual nature committed by a student against another individual without consent including, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and/or other verbal or physical

conduct, including written communications of an intimidating, hostile or offensive nature, or action taken in retaliation for the reporting of such behavior.

## **BU Response to Sexual Misconduct**

The University reserves the right to take whatever measures it deems necessary in response to allegations of sexual misconduct in order to protect students' rights and personal safety. Such measures include, but are not limited to, modification of living arrangements, interim suspension from campus pending a hearing, and reporting to the local police.

The University is obligated under federal law (Title IX, 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a)) to investigate reports of sexual misconduct, to take action to eliminate sexual harassment and sexual assault, prevent its reoccurrence and its adverse effects. To file a complaint visit <http://www.bluefield.edu/about/title-ix/file-a-complaint/>.

## **Disciplinary Process**

The disciplinary process at Bluefield University is designed to hold students accountable in a manner that is respectful, developmental, and redemptive. Therefore, all alleged violations of community standards are reviewed through “discipline meetings” with students, and not through efforts intended in any way to mimic court legal proceedings. Decisions made regarding an alleged violation are ultimately based upon what the University considers to be a “reasonable belief” of what occurred, and not upon “rules of evidence” similar to that of a court legal system.

The disciplinary process at Bluefield University consists of three components: 1) investigation; 2) hearing, if necessary; and 3) the imposing of any applicable sanctions, if found responsible for an offense. At times, the investigation and hearing can occur simultaneously. The Title IX Coordinator reviews all initial complaints that may constitute a possible Title IX violation and, if determined that misconduct may have occurred, forwards the case for investigation. The Vice President for Admissions & Student Development will typically conduct investigations.

Students going through the discipline process are permitted to have an advisor of their choosing. The person may accompany the student at any stage of the student conduct process, including their hearing, but may not actively participate in the investigation or hearing (posing questions, speaking on behalf of accused, etc.). The hearing officer or body reserves the right to dismiss the advisor from the process at any time and reschedule the meeting, if necessary.

The Vice President for Admissions & Student Development serves as the chief student conduct officer for the University, often working with the Title IX Coordinator or other University personnel, and all hearing and appellate officers and bodies to resolve all disciplinary matters.

## **Attendance at Hearings**

Any accused person may choose not to attend her/his hearing. If the accused does not attend, the hearing will be held in her/his absence. Failure to appear will not be construed as an admission of responsibility for the violation. Rather, a decision will be made based on the available information. Discipline proceedings will occur even if a student has withdrawn from the institution. If the student is found responsible for a violation, sanctions will still be assessed. A hold will be placed

on the student's account and sanctions must be completed before the student can be eligible for reenrollment or receive academic transcripts.

### **Standard of Proof**

Student conduct hearings at institutions of higher education do not follow the same processes as a criminal or civil court. While criminal courts must prove responsibility beyond a reasonable doubt, universities typically use a simple preponderance of the available evidence. Students will be held responsible for a violation if the hearing officer or hearing body, based on their professional judgment, believes that it is more likely than not that a violation has occurred.

### **Imposing of Sanctions**

The purpose of sanctions is to help students understand their actions in the context of the University and in the context of the profession of medicine, and to encourage appropriate behavior in the future. Disciplinary personnel are encouraged to decide sanctions that are commensurate with the misconduct and are, when appropriate, developmental, and redemptive in nature. Some sanctions may need to be more punitive due to the seriousness of the offense. As a Christian higher education institution, the practices of repentance and forgiveness are essential and necessary to living out our values, particularly as a grace-based community. The student conduct system, by design, recognizes the importance of these values in the reconciliation process. Therefore, two students can experience different resolutions for similar violations, by virtue of their attitude and response throughout the disciplinary process, as determined by the wisdom and professional judgment of the adjudicating person or committee. The following sanctions, or combination of sanctions, may be imposed upon any student found to have violated the Code of Conduct (not listed in prescribed order):

*Warning:* verbal or written warning to the student that s/he has violated the Code of Conduct.

*Loss of privileges:* denial of specific privileges (including leadership positions) for a designated period of time.

*Fines:* financial penalty imposed. In most but not all cases, specific fine amounts are published. Fines that are not published are assessed at the discretion of the hearing officer/body.

*Restitution:* compensation for damages, loss and/or injuries. This may take the form of appropriate service and/or monetary or material replacement.

*Community Service:* an assignment of appropriate community service that is both beneficial to the community and likely to assist the individual in understanding the harm caused by his or her misconduct.

*Discretionary Sanctions:* participation in classes or assignments designed to address decision-making and consequences of behavioral choices within a Christian educational community; mandatory drug or alcohol assessments, or other related discretionary assignments.

*Disciplinary Probation:* designated for a specific period of time and includes the probability of suspension or expulsion if the student is found to be in violation of any University policies during the probationary period.

*Disciplinary Suspension:* complete separation of the student from the University for a specified period of time (conditions for readmission may be required), including from all coursework.

*Provisional suspension:* imposed immediately when the seriousness of the offense is such that the members of the community, including the accused student, may be threatened by his/her continued presence (this suspension will be for a stated period of time and followed by a student hearing). Every effort will be made to assist the student in continuing her or his studies as possible during the course of a provisional suspension.

*Expulsion:* permanent separation of the student from the University.

*Withholding or Revocation of Degree:* withholding conferral of a degree typically occurs when a student has not completed all requirements for graduation, including the completion of disciplinary sanctions. Revocation of a degree can occur when misrepresentation or fraud was used to complete requirements for graduation from a course of study.

### **Interim Suspension**

Whenever there is evidence to support the reasonable belief that 1) a student's behavior poses a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of any part of the campus community, 2) a student's behavior poses a threat of disruption or interference with the normal operations of the University, or 3) the student's own physical or emotional safety or well-being is at serious risk, the student may be placed on interim suspension until a hearing can be arranged. The Vice President for Admissions & Student Development will chair an ad-hoc committee to review the available information and determine if a student should be placed on interim suspension. A student placed on this interim suspension will be restricted from all University locations and events unless given specific prior approval by the Vice President for Admissions & Student Development. An interim suspension does not replace the regular investigation and hearing process. Reasonable accommodations will be made for a student placed on interim suspension to fully participate in the investigation and hearing process, as outlined in this handbook. A student may appeal an interim suspension at any time by submitting a letter outlining the reasons for rescinding an interim suspension, and any supporting information, to the Vice President for Admissions & Student Development.

### **Non-Disciplinary Resolution**

Students are encouraged to seek help from all appropriate offices, including the Office of Student Development, for behavior that may constitute a violation of the Code of Conduct without fear of reprisal. Students who seek help on their own volition before an incident is discovered will often be supported through a non-disciplinary process of support and accountability, except when prohibited by federal or state law. Often referred to as "amnesty," non-disciplinary resolution does not mean that a student will avoid any consequences for their behavior, but the approach taken in cases of non-disciplinary resolution is intended to be more flexible in design, educative, and restorative, rather than strictly punitive in nature.



### **Sanctions – Appellate Process**

Students wishing to appeal a disciplinary decision or sanctions from a sanctioning body must do so in writing within two class days of the date of the decision. Students may appeal for one or more of the following reasons:

1. To determine whether all hearing processes were conducted in conformity with prescribed procedures, or that deviations from the prescribed procedures did not significantly alter the outcome of the case,
2. To consider new information, not available at the time of the original hearing, sufficient to alter a decision, or
3. To determine if sanctions assessed were appropriate or disproportionate to the violation. Student conduct cases are not dismissed due to procedural errors. Rather, students may request an appeal if they believe a procedural error substantially altered the outcome of their case.

Appeal requests should be submitted in writing to the Vice President for Admissions & Student Development, describing the reason for requesting the appeal and outlining any information supporting the request. The Vice President for Admissions & Student Development hears all appeal requests and may choose to either uphold, modify, or overturn a decision by a hearing officer/body.

# **Attendance Policies, Excused Absences and Leaves**

## **Attendance Policies, Excused Absences and Leaves**

Class attendance is required unless an excused absence has been approved through the appropriate processes. Only students may attend classes or laboratories unless guests or others are invited by the instructor or approved through the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program Medical Education Office.

### **Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Excused Holidays**

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- Martin Luther King Day

### **Attendance Policy**

The MABS offers many required academic activities that cannot be adequately captured via audio recordings. Such activities include class discussions, interactive sessions, group discussions, laboratory experiences and their preparation, and skills development. Participation in these activities; therefore, requires regular attendance in order to benefit from the full academic program. These are the academic reasons for the MABS attendance requirement.

Since most students enter the MABS as a gateway into VCOM's medical program, MABS seeks to emulate VCOM's modeling of professionalism. Duty and professional interaction with colleagues; faculty, including medical professionals; and the public is required to develop a dutiful attitude and commitment to the medical profession. These attributes are also required to be successful in a medical residency program and subsequent medical practice. The attention to a culture of duty, professionalism, integrity, and medical knowledge is just one reason for the success of VCOM students who have come before and who will follow. VCOM is among the top medical schools for students receiving first choice of residency and the commitment to duty and work ethic are among the top attributes that distinguish VCOM students and graduates. These are the professional reasons for the MABS attendance requirement.

Students in the MABS are expected to attend all lectures and presentations with a minimum of acceptable attendance of 80% in each semester. For lecture or presentation attendance, the 20% of allowable absences is calculated by multiplying .20 by the number of days in the semester. If a student misses greater than 3 consecutive days, an excused absence is required. All absences (excused and unexcused) are included in the 20% of allowable absences. In addition, there are individual requirements that exist for certain classes, lectures or symposiums that are marked as mandatory. The MABS-to-D.O. Interview Committee is made aware of any students who miss greater than 20% of classes or have any other attendance issues.

### **Mandatory Classes/Labs**

The following are considered mandatory and require prior notification to the Director of the MABS program if an absence must occur:

- All testing
- Any class time devoted to student presentations

- Any class time devoted to student group work or projects

### **Mechanism to Verify Attendance**

To assure attendance, the MABS program will assign seats for each student and utilize the cameras located in the classroom to take at least one random picture of the classroom during each half day of class time. The MABS staff will then take attendance one time in each half day. The student's presence verifies that he or she was in attendance for that half day. Students must be in their assigned seat to receive credit for attendance, if they are not present in their seat at the time the picture is taken, they will be marked as absent. The MABS may at times utilize different forms of attendance including sign in sheets, check offs, and other attendance measures especially for laboratory experiences.

### **Tardiness**

Tardiness is defined as more than 5 minutes after the scheduled time the class or other educational activity begins. Tardiness or late arrival is disruptive to other students who arrived on time and who are already engaged in the academic activity. Repeated tardiness can be considered an Honor Code violation. Students must be in their assigned seat to receive credit for attendance, if they are not present in their seat at the time the picture is taken, they will be marked as absent.

### **Excused Absence Procedure**

Students must complete a "Request for an Excused Absence" form available from the MABS office. Excused absences will not be granted after the fact, except in emergencies as verified by the Program Director. All absences, including excused absences, are included in the 20% of allowable absences.

Students who receive an excused absence will not be penalized for missing a class or exam but will be required to make up any exams or laboratory experience. Faculty and students are expected to make reasonable accommodations for make-up exams, assignments, etc. where excused absences have been granted.

### **Unplanned Excused Absences – Sudden Illness or Emergency**

The MABS administration recognizes that absences related to sudden medical illness or an emergency do occur. If the student has a medical illness or emergency where he or she is physically able to call or email, the student must contact via phone or email the Program Director or Assistant Director by 8:00 AM of the day they will be absent to notify them of the illness or emergency. If the student is physically unable to notify the University of the illness or emergency, they must call or email as soon as they are able. The student must then complete the "Request for Excused Absence" form on the first day the student returns to class. A physician's written excuse will be required if the student requests an excused absence of 3 or more consecutive days due to illness or medical emergency.

Students who have repeated requests for unplanned excused absences of less than 3 days that exceed the total number of days allowed will be required to meet with the Program Director. If the dates are determined to always fall on test days or during other required academic functions the student may be evaluated for an Honor Code violation.

Unplanned excused absences for non-medical related emergencies (i.e. death in family) must be approved through the Program Director and will require verification, regardless of the number of excused absence days requested. The student and Program Director will agree upon the number of excused absence days needed.

In cases where a student misses an exam or an academic function that cannot easily be repeated, a physician's written excuse will be required and is at the discretion of the Program Director.

### **Planned Excused Absences**

For absences not related to sudden medical illness or an emergency (i.e. conference attendance, court appearance, medical procedures known in advance, and other qualifying excused absences), the student must receive prior approval for the absence. Students must complete the "Request for Excused Absence" form a minimum of 30 days prior to the requested absence, which includes signatures/approvals from the Program Director for classes/labs that will be missed. Verification may be required. A physician's written excuse or other documentation will be required if the student requests an excused absence of 3 or more consecutive days out, or if the students had previously had an excused absence from an exam or other required activity.

### **Consequences for Not Meeting the Requirements of the Attendance Policy**

Students will receive a warning from the Office of Medical Education once they are nearing their 20% absence allowance. If the student exceeds the number of days, the violation can be brought before the MABS-to-D.O. Interview Committee. This could potentially affect the committee's decision to accept the student to VCOM or could result in a previously offered seat being revoked if the student was previously accepted.

## **Withdrawal and Transfer Procedures**

### **Withdrawal**

It should be noted that students enrolled in the MABS program are enrolled in the program as a whole; this is necessary to simulate a medical school like environment. The program is broken down into two semesters of course work. All classes offered in a given semester must be taken together in order to qualify for the benchmarks necessary to obtain acceptance to VCOM. In other words, students may not choose to take some but not other courses in a given semester.

While a student can withdraw from a course, repeat it at a later date, and earn their MABS degree, course withdrawal can have a negative impact toward obtaining program benchmarks toward acceptance to VCOM. In the MABS program, a course withdrawal automatically negates eligibility toward the program benchmarks. In the OMABS program, benchmarks eligibility is negated if a student withdraws from a course after completing an exam or graded assignment. In both withdrawal cases, a student may still apply to VCOM but only outside of the special MABS enabled admissions pipeline. It should also be noted that a course withdrawal can negatively affect a conditional acceptance to VCOM obtained through the benchmarks.

## **Transfer Credits**

Courses may be transferred into the MABS or OMABS programs; however, the transfer of any coursework into either program negates the ability to achieve benchmarks toward acceptance to VCOM. Individuals transferring in courses may still apply to VCOM through the normal admissions pathway, but will not be considered through the MABS or OMABS enabled admissions processes. Transfer courses will, of course, count toward obtaining a MABS degree.

A MABS or OMABS student who does not successfully pass a required course at Bluefield University may take or retake the OMABS course to complete the degree requirement. Alternatively, the student may choose to transfer an equivalent course from another institution to meet the graduation requirements of the degree. Transfer credits will only be considered if a student makes a petition to the Dean of the College of Sciences and Health Sciences and/or Director of the MABS program and demonstrates that he/she will completed the program with an overall GPA of 3.0 and no grade below a “C” in any other course (beyond the one(s) in question). Repeating a course negates benchmark eligibility.

Any such transfer work requested by the student must be approved by the Dean of the College of Sciences and Health Sciences and/or Director of the MABS program and must be completed at a regionally accredited institution. The student must submit an official transcript, and if requested, a course syllabus and/or course description. Bluefield University reserve the right to evaluate all transfer credit in terms of its institutional standards. A minimum of a B (3.00) is required for all transfer work.

# **Student Services**

## **Student Services**

### **Counseling Services**

#### **VCOM Internal Counseling Services**

Academic Counseling services are provided free of charge on the VCOM campus (see Academic Counseling section of this catalog). The Academic Counselors hired by VCOM have a degree in Educational Counseling, Ph.D., or a Psy.D. degree. Academic counseling services are provided for students who are experiencing academic difficulty but are also available to advise those students who are experiencing challenges in their personal life that may be affecting their academic performance. Academic Counseling is confidential and information is not shared with administration, faculty, staff, or other students unless the safety of a student is in question. Avenues for additional options for confidential counseling are listed below.

#### **External Counseling Services**

BU, through VCOM, contracts with mental health providers in the campus community for student counseling services. Students are provided with contact information at the time of orientation. Mental health counseling provides behavioral healthcare services to VCOM for the benefits of its students and their immediate families (e.g., spouse and children) who reside with the students. Upon the request of a student and/or their immediate family, these agencies will provide each participant with the necessary number of sessions per year. The fee for the first four visits, per issue, is covered by the agreement between VCOM and these agencies and is free to students and their immediate families. Visits beyond this will be at the expense of the student (or the student's family member). The purpose of the sessions will be: (1) to provide crisis intervention and counseling services; (2) to determine the participant's need for assistance, counseling, and treatment; or, (3) if appropriate, to refer the participant to one or more resources for assistance or treatment.

Counseling is confidential between the student and counselor. Only in cases where the student is required by the Promotion Board or the Professional and Ethics Standards Board to seek counseling for the purpose of student safety or patient safety is communication required between the counselor and administration.

#### **Food Services**

The MABS classroom provides a microwave and coffee machine for student use. Food and drink are allowed in the classroom. Per VCOM policy, all drinks must be in bottles with a screw-top lid, in a travel type tumbler with a lid, or in a disposable cup with a secure lid.

Additional food services and vending machines are available on the second floor of the VCOM Main Campus building adjacent to the student lounge. Several microwaves are available for student use. Within the main VCOM building, students can eat in the vending area, student lounge/dining area, or outside at the picnic tables. Additional vending machines can be found in VCOM II. Bottled drinks with secure lids only, or cups with leak proof secured lids are allowed in Lecture Hall 1, Lecture Hall 2, MABS classroom, as well as in all common areas of the VCOM building. Food/snacks are only allowed in the second/third floor student lounges, and cafeteria. No canned drinks or food/snacks are allowed in Lecture Hall 1, Lecture Hall 2, Quiet Study rooms, Computer



Lab, Anatomy Lab, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Small Group Rooms, OMM Lab, or SIM Rooms. Students are responsible to dispose of their own containers.

### **Campus Food Services**

Limited food services are provided on campus. VCOM contracts with various vendors to provide food services as a supplement. Students should prepare their own breakfast prior to coming to campus and be prepared to bring their own lunch. The food services that are available are only considered as a supplement or convenience to the student and may change from time to time.

### **Housing**

Students attending BU at the VCOM campus must secure their own housing and transportation. Housing information is available through the MABS Admissions Coordinator.

### **VCOM Passport**

The VCOM Passport provides MABS students with access to the main VCOM building, including its library, classrooms and quiet study rooms. It also provides MABS students with full access to VCOM's electronic library, which constitutes the vast majority of the library's holdings. Furthermore, the passport allows free bus fares on all Blacksburg Transit routes.

### **Appointed, Elected, and Other Extracurricular Positions**

Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program students are at BU first and foremost to gain the academic and professional skills to become superior osteopathic physicians. Participation in events outside of the academic requirements are a privilege and students should participate in them to complement their prescribed academic program. Four leadership positions are available in the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program: two class representatives and two Pre-SOMA representatives. Students are provided with the opportunity to nominate themselves or fellow classmates for these positions and selection is made from among the nominees by the BU and VCOM administration. Students must be in good academic standing (no failing grades) and good behavioral standing to hold an officer position with the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program committee. Students not making good progress or who are found guilty of an honor code issue are not eligible to hold an officer position. Students may be asked or required to remove themselves from these roles by the Director if they are seen to interfere with the student's academic success, if the student has exhibited poor professionalism, or for other related reasons at the discretion of the Director.

### **Outside Shadowing**

Outside shadowing, medical volunteering, and participating in outside preceptorships in a medical setting must be approved by the Director for the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program.

## **Resolution and Grievance Procedures**

### **Policy on Complaint Resolution**

Students have the right to appeal policy decisions or procedures. Various appeal procedures are to be followed depending on the nature of the appeal. Course grade appeals begin with the instructor. Admission appeals are directed to the Admission Appeals Committee. Contact the Office of Enrollment Management for the complete process. Complaints related to sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, and sexual assault are handled by the University's Title IX Coordinator, and the

policies and procedures are published on the University website. Important note: In all cases, the student must follow the proper procedure or the appeal will be invalid. (Academic Catalog, pg. 70)

## **Academic Resolutions and Appeals**

### **Grade Appeal Procedure**

A student has the right to contest the grade given in any Bluefield University course. The following procedure will be followed:

1. The student must first attempt to resolve the situation directly with the instructor by explaining his or her view and allowing the faculty member ample opportunity to respond. It is expected that most complaints will be resolved at this level. (If the instructor is no longer employed by the University, the student should take the complaint directly to the instructor's Department chair who will attempt to contact the instructor's University dean and resolve the situation as described in #2.)
2. If the complaint is not resolved to the student's satisfaction by conversation with the instructor, the student may appeal to the department chair. Such appeals must be made in writing by the end of the fourth week of the next regular semester (fall or spring) following the completion of the course. The department chair shall notify the instructor, who will present his or her view in writing. The department chair shall meet with both student and instructor to hear both sides of the complaint and attempt reach a settlement. The department chair shall keep a written record of all proceedings, including the recommended solution. (If the complaint is against a department chair, the Dean of the respective University or School shall hear the complaint.) A copy of the solution will be provided to the student and the instructor.
3. The student may further appeal the case to an ad hoc committee composed of the Provost and four faculty members selected by the Provost. The desire to appeal must be expressed by the student in writing to the Provost within two weeks after receipt of the department chair's recommendation. The Provost is responsible for gathering and providing copies of all materials previously submitted, any additional materials the student or instructor wishes to submit, and a summary of the chair's findings to the committee. Both parties will be given time, upon request, to present their argument to the committee. The student and/or faculty member may be present during fact-finding only. Deliberation based upon presentations and written records shall be closed to all except committee members.
4. The committee's decision will be determined by majority vote and shall be binding upon both parties. Within three weeks of receipt of a complaint, the committee will communicate its findings in writing to both parties, and a copy will be filed in the Academic Affairs Office. The Provost will be responsible for enforcing the committee's decision.
5. The ad hoc committee shall serve as the academic appeals committee for the remainder of the academic year. Should a member have a conflict of interest with a subsequent case, the Provost will appoint an alternate. (Academic Catalog, pgs. 67-68)

## **Academic Appeal Provision**

Students have the right to appeal any action placing them on Academic Suspension. A decision to readmit is made only when a student presents compelling evidence that he or she can perform academically at a level needed to graduate from Bluefield University. An appeal must be made by the student in writing by using the academic appeal form and directing it to the Academic Appeals Committee. The form is available online in MyBU under the Academic Jeopardy section on the Academic and Career Excellence Center page. The academic appeal form should be emailed to: [academics@bluefield.edu](mailto:academics@bluefield.edu). The Academic Appeals Committee will review the student's appeal and make a recommendation to the Provost. The Provost will render a decision in consultation with pertinent faculty and/or administrative offices.

## **Non-Academic Resolutions and Appeals**

### **Student Complaints**

When a student wishes to register dissatisfaction/complaints/grievances of a non-academic (non-grade or non-instructional) matter, the following procedure should be initiated:

- File a written complaint/grievance with the Office of Student Development. The Vice President for Admissions and Student Development will review the complaint/grievance and follow-up as needed, or will direct the individual(s) registering the complaint to the appropriate person to address the matter.
- If further review is requested, the individual(s) may request a hearing before the President whose review is final.
- The Vice President for Admissions and Student Development will retain any documents related to the filing of a complaint/grievance.

### **State Council of Higher Education for Virginia**

Students with grievances or complaints against BU for which they do not believe they have received resolution, may file a complaint, as a last resort, to the:

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)  
James Monroe Building 101 N. 14th Street, 9th floor  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Phone: (804) 225-2600 Fax: (804) 225-2604 Website: [www.schev.edu](http://www.schev.edu)

### **Formal Federal Agency Grievance Procedures**

Students with grievances or complaints against the University based upon violations of Section 504 or the ADA also have the right to file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights by:

(1) Mailing the grievance or complaint to the:

Washington DC (Metro) Office for Civil Rights (OCR)  
U.S. Department of Education  
P.O. 400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-1475; or

(2) Faxing it to this office at (202) 453-6021; or

(3) Filing it electronically at: [www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintprocess.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintprocess.html).

For more information students can contact the Office for Civil Rights via phone: (202) 453-6020 (voice) and (877) 521-2172 (TDD) or via e-mail at: [ORC.DC@ed.gov](mailto:ORC.DC@ed.gov).

# **Campus Facilities Policies and Procedures**

# **Campus Facilities Policies and Procedures**

## **Safety Mission**

Both Bluefield University and The Edward Via University of Osteopathic Medicine strives to create an atmosphere of safety and comfort which allow faculty, staff, and students to concentrate on their mission of providing academics, student services, and learning. The goal of the VCOM operations department is to oversee the campus facilities and to assist those in charge of each facility in providing a safe and secure environment. The following policies and procedures outline each individual's role in maintaining a safe and secure environment for all.

## **Building Etiquette**

When the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program classroom is not used for formal instruction, BU and VCOM encourage students to use the room for quiet study. Periodically, the classroom will be used for other events. Students are requested to pick up their personal possessions daily. Items left behind will be picked up and turned into Facilities. Items not accounted for within 30 days will be donated to charity. Small Group Rooms are located in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor library. These rooms are not reserved. Students are asked to be considerate of others and refrain from placing personal effects in these rooms in an attempt to occupy the room for future use. Concerns should be brought before student leadership and the Honor Council.

## **Campus Access**

The campus is available for student access during announced times. The MABS Building is open Monday – Friday, 8a.m. – 5 p.m. The use of the VCOM Passport is needed for early morning, evening, and weekends during approved hours for access to the Main Campus building. In the event of an emergency, courtesy phones, which are located at the front entrance and throughout the building, may be used to contact “911.”

## **Campus Etiquette**

While on campus it is important for each individual to consider the immense effort it takes to keep the landscapes in order. For your safety, please refrain from walking on plant beds and entering restricted areas including the ponds. VCOM and BU encourage students to take advantage of the campus and enjoy the atmosphere. While we encourage outdoor activities, certain sports are not permitted on the grounds including Golf, Volleyball, and any other sport that may have a direct and immediate impact on the lawns. Please contact VCOM Facilities if you have any questions about what sports may be in question.

## **Campus Safety and Fire Safety**

A copy of the fire safety code is given to all new employees and new students annually during orientation week. In 2010, VCOM instituted an annual fire drill. This drill assures VCOM's administration that all building occupants understand the emergency exit processes. Students receive maps showing features of the building, which include exits and stairway locations. In the event the fire alarm sounds, students will proceed immediately to the nearest exit or stairwell leading to an exit to leave the building. Students should become familiar with the site specific fire plans. Students will proceed at a walking (not running) pace and use caution to avoid injury to other persons while exiting.

If you need assistance, please call the security number posted throughout the building or report to the front desk. The security and safety officer provided will also contact the local police if needed. The outside security hours extend beyond the inside safety hours listed above.

The VCOM academic buildings on each campus have been inspected by the local fire marshal and are periodically reviewed. No fires have been reported in VCOM facilities in the past five years. The Safety Policies & Procedures consisting of "Campus Safety", "Fire and Safety Procedures", and VCOM building Evacuation Plan Maps can be found on the VCOM website at:

- [Virginia Campus Fire and Safety Policies & Procedures](#)

## **Cancellation of Classes**

Since the MABS program is offered on the VCOM campus, it will follow VCOM's lead for class cancellations or delays. VCOM's official information line: (540) 231-1694

This line is one of the official sources used to report school closings, delays, or any other important announcements; students can also access their BU email for this information. The VCOM information line will handle approximately five calls at once, so students are asked to clear the line as soon as the message is heard. We will make every effort to have the information line updated by 7:00 a.m. so you will know if your 8:00 a.m. class has been cancelled or delayed. We also ask that you use your own best judgment of whether to travel on snow covered or icy roads, as well as the VCOM parking lots and sidewalks.

Class rescheduling due to closings or delays will be announced via BU email. Students are responsible for checking their email and for making sure their email account does not exceed the space allotted so that they receive all official emails. Any time BU-VCOM is listed as closed, students will not have access to the building.

## **Classrooms**

Students are not allowed to bring furniture or large items into the classroom and are expected to use the chairs provided. If there is a medical reason why a different chair or related accommodation is needed, the student must contact the Director of the Master of Arts of Biomedical Sciences Program to request the accommodation. Bottled drinks with secure lids only, or cups with leak proof secured lids are allowed in the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences classroom, as well as, in all common areas of the VCOM buildings. No canned drinks or food/snacks are allowed in Lecture Hall 1, Lecture Hall 2, Library, Quiet Study rooms, Computer Lab, Anatomy Lab, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Small Group Rooms, OMM Lab, or SIM Rooms. Students are responsible to dispose of their own containers and trash.

## **Crime Log**

Each year, VCOM participates in the reporting of significant crimes against persons and personal property.

For the most recent events, you may check with the VCOM Associate Vice President of Operations, where the monthly log is housed. Monthly logs are kept on all campuses. You may see the U.S.D.E. report on campus safety by visiting <http://ope.ed.gov/campussafety/#/institution/list>. For the past several years, VCOM has received an "A" rating with no significant crime problems. All faculty,

staff, and students should report any incidence of crime against a person or personal property to the operations department immediately.

### **Firearms and Weapons**

BU and VCOM students are prohibited from carrying, maintaining, or storing a firearm or weapon on any VCOM or BU property, and all surrounding parking lots and space owned or leased by the VCOM or BU. Any visitor or other third party attending an event, or visiting an academic or administrative office is prohibited from carrying, maintaining, or storing a firearm or weapon on any University facility, even if the owner has a valid permit. This prohibition also applies to all events on campus where people congregate in any public or outdoor areas. Students who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or dismissal.

### **Parking**

Each student will receive one free parking tag for parking in VCOM designated student lots, adjacent to the building. Tags must be visible.

### **Pets**

No pets including, but not limited to dogs, cats, birds, other animals, reptiles or fish are permitted in any of the campus buildings.

### **Photocopying and Printing**

Photocopying is available in the library and the MABS classroom, free of charge to MABS students. BU and VCOM permit no copyright violations or other violations of the law.

### **Posting of Notices**

The posting of all notices on school property requires a signature of approval on the notice by the Associate Vice President for Student Services (for postings in the main building) or the Director of Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program (for postings in the MABS Building).

Generally, community and general announcements should be communicated via e-mail and sent to the class communications coordinator versus using fliers or written notices.

### **VCOM Passport Cards and IDs**

VCOM Passports are issued at the beginning of the year and are used for identification and access to the main campus building. VCOM passports should be retained and displayed by the student on their person at all times when on the VCOM and Virginia Tech campuses and during field experiences. Lost VCOM Passports must be reported to the MABS Director and must also be replaced at the student's expense.