

**Bluefield University**

**Virginia VCOM - Campus**

**Master of Arts in Biomedical  
Sciences**

**Student Handbook**

**2022-23**

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**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.**

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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**, 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 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**

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. Therefore, the remainder of the Technical Standards section is taken directly from the VCOM Student Handbook:

The requirements to succeed at VCOM are those required to successfully complete the medical school curriculum and to safely practice osteopathic medicine with full practice rights. VCOM supports students with disabilities who can be reasonably accommodated and who can meet the technical standards that will be required to be licensed to practice osteopathic medicine.

Patient safety and well-being are considered by VCOM when accepting students or continuing the enrollment of students. Students must be able to function in a variety of learning and clinical settings, including lecture halls, laboratories (biomedical and clinical), and patient care environments. Education in the classroom and laboratories in the first two years of medical school, prepare students for education in the clinical setting.

As such, students must be able to quickly, accurately, and consistently learn and process large amounts of information and report that data quickly and accurately and perform their duties in the clinical setting without restriction and in a manner that provides a safe environment for the patients entrusted to their care. These abilities are necessary in order to succeed in the medical school curriculum and to meet the technical standards for acquiring the medical knowledge needed to safely practice osteopathic medicine as a physician.

Further, the mission of the college embraces primary care medicine and requires all students to gain the medical knowledge and clinical skills necessary to enter a primary care residency. Recognizing that medical school is as a career path in which students often accumulate great debt, all technical standards are considered in relationship to the student's ability to meet the educational competencies that culminate in the career of the practice of osteopathic medicine when accepting students or continuing their enrollment.

The applicant must possess the abilities and skills in the following seven areas to be a successful student while at VCOM and to be a successful physician in the future:

### **I. Sensory and Motor**

**Touch:** Osteopathic medicine requires a physician to utilize the sense of touch for examination. The education of the osteopathic student; therefore, requires a student to perform and have the ability to touch a human being, both female and male, as part of learning the osteopathic approach to diagnosis and treatment and to be touched by both female and male students and faculty as a part of the physical examination and osteopathic manipulation education. The sense of touch required includes being able to discriminate through palpation of warm, cold, and normal temperatures; and normal soft and supple tissue from tissue with spasm or other restriction. Students must be able to discern between bone, muscle, fascia, and skin, and be able to detect any abnormalities. Students must also be able to palpate the abdomen and judge for acute conditions as well as to palpate the size of internal organs and a soft abdomen from an acute and guarded abdomen. Students must also be able to palpate pulses. Therefore, students who attend VCOM agree to touch others and to be touched in order to acquire the skills necessary for palpation and examination of peers (classmates) in these laboratories. Students must sign a waiver whereby they agree to touch other students in the process of examination and to be touched, and to participate as both provider and patient in the student practice sessions for osteopathic manipulative medicine skills under the supervision of faculty. Acquiring the skills to palpate and examine patients requires examination of disrobed patients of both genders; therefore, examination of fellow students of both genders, and to be examined by fellow students of both genders who may be partially disrobed, is required. Students must also participate in the examination of genitalia of both male and female patients. These are requirements for all students, regardless of cultural or religious beliefs, in order for students to acquire the skills necessary to safely practice osteopathic medicine. Students who have

questions regarding the accommodations made for cultural or religious beliefs may inquire with the Admissions Office or when visiting for interview.

**Vision:** Osteopathic physicians utilize the sense of vision to examine the position and balance of the musculoskeletal system, including, but not limited to, gait and symmetry. Vision is also required to identify tissue texture changes; skin lesions and rash types; skin color changes such as cyanosis or erythema; and skin, nail, and mucus membrane color. Vision is also required to perform examination of the eyes (including skilled fundoscopic exams), ears, nose, throat, genitalia and other areas of the human body in the process of diagnosis. Vision is also required to master fine skills such as suturing or using a scalpel, 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 in formulating an accurate diagnosis. Students must also 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. Students must be able to visually and accurately observe physical signs of a patient used in diagnosis and management without the assistance of an untrained eye. The use of an intermediary to perform these basic competencies does not result in the same level of competency as a physician, as it is mediated by another individual's power of selection and observation without the same level of knowledge or experience. Therefore, correctable vision to a reasonable level is required for students to meet technical standards for admission and continued enrollment.

**Hearing:** The sense of hearing is required in osteopathic medicine including the necessity of hearing during patient interviews; recognizing inflections in voice that occur with pain, illness, or injury; and hearing bodily functions such as heartbeat, murmurs, blood pressure, lung sounds, bowel sounds, the flow of blood through vessels, and other sounds associated with normal and abnormal findings of medical conditions. Osteopathic physicians practice patient-centered care with a focus on how any illness or injury to one area of the body impacts the person as a whole. Therefore, the sense of hearing is required to directly communicate with a patient and is used in primary care to communicate with greater than 20 patients daily to be successful in practice. Hearing cannot be readily or efficiently provided through an interpreter that does not have the appropriate medical knowledge. VCOM provides reasonable accommodations for students who have difficulty with hearing but can independently meet these standards with accommodations. Reasonable accommodations provided while at VCOM include specialized stethoscopes and specialized noise cancelling or amplifying headsets/earbuds for the classroom. VCOM also provides accommodations through the recording of all lectures so they may be viewed by students in a separate room where they are able to listen at an increased volumes and sped up, slowed, or repeated as needed. Students who are unable to hear all parts of the lecture are provided with the opportunity to listen to the recorded lectures outside of the classroom in order to keep pace with their classmates. Students should be aware that these services are provided in lieu of CART services, which are not as efficient or reasonable in accommodating a student with hearing deficits. Applicants that have questions regarding the use of recorded lectures or headsets in lieu of CART services may visit VCOM in advance to sample them prior to enrollment.

**Smell:** An osteopathic physician also uses the sense of smell, and although not considered an essential sense, it is one that cannot be accommodated.

## II. Communication

Students must be able to communicate orally and effectively in English as the curriculum, testing, and clinical training experiences are only offered in English. Student 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 provided in English. VCOM requires the functional ability to speak, hear, and observe patients in order to elicit accurate medical information. Students must learn and demonstrate the ability to gather medical information in a humanistic manner and must be able to recognize, describe and address changes in patient mood, activity, posture, and other physical characteristics; perceiving the patient's nonverbal communication, which are skills required in delivering patient centered medical care. Students must be able to communicate through written, typed, and verbal conversation to effectively and efficiently communicate with the patient and all members of the health care team. Students must be able to demonstrate effective communication in a taped video exam setting with standardized patients in the first two years and demonstrate competency in communication in the clinical setting during the OMS 3 and 4 years. These requirements are essential to safe and high-quality patient care.

**Reading:** Students, as well as physicians, are required to read large volumes of medical literature in order to learn the required information for practicing medicine and to maintain up to date knowledge throughout their medical career. This requires a proficiency in reading and comprehension to complete and acquire medical knowledge presented in all coursework in the given timeframe.

### III. Motor and Physical

Students must have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, percussion, and other diagnostic measures. Students must have sufficient motor function to carry out maneuvers of general medical care and emergency care, to perform osteopathic manipulation, and to deliver basic surgical and emergency care. Examples of the use of motor function 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 and the delivery of osteopathic manipulation. This requires the use of extremities in palpation, positioning, and carrying out maneuvers of manipulation and resuscitation. These actions require fine and gross motor and sensory function. Students must be able to perform these maneuvers.

Physical strength and stamina is required in the medical training environment. Applicants 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 to perform osteopathic examination and treatment and to stand and walk for long hours in the clinical setting during clinical training (as well as residency and practice) when applying.

VCOM seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for students with motor and physical disabilities. As an example, prior VCOM students have been accommodated who required wheelchair assistance and who have had limited use of one upper extremity.

### IV. Intellectual

Students must have the ability to reason, calculate, analyze, measure, and synthesize information in order to critically evaluate the patient; and access, synthesize, and utilize the most recent evidence-based information for treatment. Students must be able to comprehend, memorize, synthesize, and recall a large amount of information without assistance to successfully complete the curriculum and to safely and successfully practice osteopathic medicine. Students 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 college and to administer safe medical care.

In order to pass all requirements of medical school and to complete residency training, students and graduates will be 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 clinical settings without accommodation. This type of demonstrated intellectual ability must be performed in a rapid and time-efficient manner so as not to place patients with emergent conditions at risk. Emergent situations, as well as busy clinical environments, produce visually distracting and noisy environments. Examples of emergent situations in which students must perform include, but are not limited to, cardiopulmonary compromise, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, obstetrical and neonatal emergencies, trauma presentations, poisonings and toxic exposures, shock, and hemorrhage.

The intellectual abilities described above are necessary for the practice of osteopathic medicine. As such, students must be able to gain knowledge through the use of all of the types of learning materials that the VCOM curriculum offers. These abilities must also be applied to emergent situations; therefore, the VCOM curriculum requires students to examine patients, calculate and make medical decisions in timed testing situations and in the presence of noise and distraction, all of which a physician faces daily wherever medicine is practiced.

Students with intellectual disabilities who qualify for Section 504 accommodations may be granted reasonable accommodations in the classroom on written examinations. Such accommodations are not possible in clinical situations or in simulated clinical situations when preparing and testing students to be practice ready. See the section on eligibility for accommodations in this handbook for more information.

**Ability in Standardized Test Taking:** VCOM's accreditor, the COCA, requires students to pass COMLEX Level I and Level 2 CE exams prior to graduation; therefore, students must be able to perform satisfactorily on timed, computerized, multiple-choice standardized exams and on clinical standardized patient exams. NBOME determines the student's ability to receive accommodations (or not) for these exams and; therefore, the student's ability to pass board exams with the accommodations awarded by NBOME is the technical standard. Students may ask for accommodations by the NBOME; however, these are not guaranteed.

## **V. Behavioral and Mental Health Requirements (including conditions that reduce tolerance to stressful environments and conditions related to addiction)**

Students must have the appropriate mental health that allows for full use of his/her intellectual capabilities at all times. This is important for the health of the patient, for whom the student will care for while a student and as a future physician. Mental health stability is required for effective communication and for professional, ethical, mature, sensitive, and compassionate patient care. Students must have the mental health stability to function effectively under the high degree of stress that is required to complete the curriculum, be successful during testing situations in medical school and in national board testing, and to be board certified after graduation.

Students who have serious mental health disorders that impair their ability to function in stressful situations are not generally able to be successful in the curriculum or in the responsibilities required for safe and effective patient care. Students must be able to tolerate mentally taxing and emotionally taxing workloads. Applicants who have conditions that do not allow mentally taxing workloads must consider the long hours of study, the hours required in the classroom and laboratories, and the stress of test performance when applying.

Students must have the mental and emotional stability to be able to safely and effectively care for patients without medication known to adversely affect intellectual abilities and clinical judgment. Students 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 required.

Applicants or students who have mental impairments that cannot be resolved with treatment and result in significant mental impairment that renders the student to be lacking in the required mental capacity to maintain safety, without substantial supervision, for patient care, are not eligible for admission or continued enrollment. The student must have cognitive, interpersonal and social capacity for the vocational effectiveness required for medical practice.

VCOM considers impairment from addiction to be a serious mental illness. Impaired physicians from substance abuse have unpredictable incapacitation of mental judgement, alertness, and emotional stability, resulting in a risk to patients for receiving unsafe medical care. Substance abuse that effects mental capacity and reasoning are cause for not accepting and/or dismissing a student in order to protect patients. Students found to be using illegal or illicit drugs will be dismissed for unprofessional behavior. Any evidence of addiction to prescription, illicit, or illegal drugs will be considered a risk to patients and the student will be required to be evaluated immediately and be subject to any or all of the following: suspension, dismissal, or unplanned leave for treatment at the discretion of the Campus Dean.

The college maintains the right to convene an Individual Assessment Committee to determine whether the applicant or student meets these technical standards and/or poses a potential danger to self or others. Such an evaluation may require an independent forensic evaluation of the student by a psychiatrist and other psychological health providers.

Mental health capacity must be such that an emotional support animal is not needed in order to participate in the curriculum or provide medical care.

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



Students must demonstrate the capacity to make professional and ethical decisions expected of a medical professional at all times to be successful in the curriculum and to effectively and safely care for patients. This requires students 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. Professional and ethical attributes are those expected of a physician by all of society and are generally required by state medical licensing boards. These attributes are those that instill a sense of trust by patients in the medical community. Students who perform in an unethical or unprofessional manner are subject to dismissal.

## **VII. Physical Health and Chronic Disease**

Students must be in reasonable health to complete the physical requirements of the curriculum, including the physical requirements required to participate in the anatomy laboratory, microbiology laboratory, osteopathic manipulative medicine laboratories, simulation laboratories, in all patient care environments, and other environments required to complete the curriculum. The safety of the patients cared for by students must take priority over the student's priorities, just as the health of patients cared for by a physician takes priority.

Students with communicable diseases, such as Hepatitis C and HIV, will be restricted from certain learning environments. The college follows the CDC guidelines for patient care in making these determinations. Students with any chronic medical conditions should be aware that they may not be accommodated to participate in all clinical settings if such accommodations are believed to place the patient at risk. Students should also be aware that information regarding their immunization and health status and communicable diseases will be provided to the clinical sites where they will participate in patient care. The clinical sites will keep the student's health information as confidential as possible while protecting the health of the patient. Requirements for students with communicable diseases are provided by the Office of Clinical Affairs and are updated annually according to CDC guidelines.

VCOM does not own or operate the hospitals and clinics in which students receive their clinical training; therefore, students must follow the rules of each hospital and/or clinic in order to participate in the clinical environments. Placement of students in the clinical setting, to assure safety and the best learning environment, is the decision of the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, the Associate Dean for OMS 4 and GME, and the clinical education administrator of the clinical site. Students should request information from the college as to whether their condition meets technical standards.

VCOM is also concerned with the health of students and considers this when determining their ability to participate in clinical learning environments. VCOM reserves the right to restrict students to certain clinical environments in order to protect students from adverse physical/medical risks. This includes students who are or may become immunosuppressed, pregnant, or have other acute and chronic illnesses that would endanger their health. These students may be restricted from certain clinical environments, including, but not limited to, international rotations and mission trips in developing countries, infectious disease rotations, and other at-risk environments.

Students who become pregnant must inform the Associate Dean for Pre-Clinical Education or the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs of the pregnancy before participating in at-risk environments such as anatomy laboratories, or environments where infectious diseases pose a risk.

As new technology exists, students who use service animals for healthcare issues are generally required to transition to an alternate method of monitoring using that technology. In general, now that this technology exists, service animals are not used to support medical staff as the use of such animals may place an increased risk to the patient and/or do not meet the hospital requirements.

### **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 to VCOM.

If admitted to the MABS program, 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 MABS Director of Student Success. Bluefield makes reasonable accommodations including seating arrangement adjustments, 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 MABS Director of Student Success.

## **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 \$139 for the first application submitted and \$54 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 October. 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 \$139.00 for the first application and \$54 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 2024-2025**

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 and Legal Requirements

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires documentation of specific vaccinations prior to the first day of classes. For the protection of students and the university community, the MABS program recommends certain additional immunizations. The MABS Immunization Form can be found on the Accepted Students webpage. The purpose of this policy is to provide a healthy environment in which students can be in close proximity as they learn. Immunization documentation is not required for OMABS students.

The following are required immunizations or screenings:

- Polio Series (IPV/OPV)
- Measles/ Mumps/Rubella (MMR) Series
- Tdap Series
- Tetanus booster within the last 10 years (not required if Tdap was within last 10 years)
- Tuberculosis – TB screening determines if TB testing needed

The following immunizations are highly recommended:

- Meningococcal Meningitis
- Hepatitis B
- Varicella
- COVID 19
- Influenza

Additionally, students must have, at one year prior to matriculation, a physical exam and a personal medical history performed by a physician. The form for this can also be found on the Accepted Students webpage.



# 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 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.

Fall Semester		
Course Number	Class Name	Credit Hours
BMS 5220	Immunology	3
BMS 5104	Biochemistry	3
BMS 5920	Research and Biostatistics	3
BMS 5313	Genetics with Clinical Correlations	3
BMS 5718	Cell Physiology	3
BMS 5719	Neuroscience	2
<b>Fall Total Credit Hours:</b>		<b>17</b>

Spring Semester		
Course Number	Class Name	Credit Hours
BMS 5616	Medical Anatomy	3
BMS 5308	Health Policy and the Business of Medicine	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 the Business of Medicine	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 and 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 breakup 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 eight 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

The MABS and OMABS programs share an Academic Counselor with the Bluefield Anesthesiologist Assistant program. The Academic Counselor is a specialist in educational theory, not in individual course content, and is available for Zoom appointments. This specialist can help students by determining their strengths and weaknesses, aiding in designing individual study plans, providing different study strategies, or providing referrals to other resources. The Academic Counselor has access to student exam grades and will continually work with students throughout their program.

### Short-Term Mental Health Counseling

Beyond being an often overlooked yet essential component of one's overall health, mental health is essential to optimal academic performance. Additionally, intensive programs such as MABS and OMABS can activate previously treated mental health conditions,

Free limited, external, professional, and confidential counseling services are provided for both MABS and OMABS students. While the MABS program provides in-person counseling in Blacksburg, the OMABS program provides telehealth counseling services. These programs are discussed during orientation for each program. Additionally, this information is maintained on the bulletin board in the back of the MABS classroom or in the Orientation course on Canvas (first semester) or in the Histology/Embryology course on Canvas (second semester) for OMABS students.

# 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 2.8 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

MCAT	minimum GPA	MABS-to-DO Interview Committee recommendation
496 or higher	3.50	Positive
case-by case	3.75 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 3.5 or greater GPA during the fall semester and have an MCAT of 496 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 3.5 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 3.50 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 on a case-by-case basis 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, VCOM wishes to equally distribute students from the MABS program among its 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 provide documentation of immunizations/titers required by VCOM; 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>MCAT</b>	<b>Minimum GPA</b>
496 or higher	3.5 or higher
case-by-case	3.75 or higher

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 program 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.

### 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 MABS and OMABS 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: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Classification of Honor Code Violations**

In order to maintain consistency, honor code violations are classified as follows:

A. Class I Offenses are considered minor offences and do not include cheating. Educational requirements, sanctions, community services or other activities may be imposed by the Program Director as he or she deems appropriate.

B. Class II Offenses are considered significant and can include but are not limited to cheating, unprofessional behavior in the classroom, unprofessional behavior toward faculty/staff/administration, and/or significant unprofessional behavior toward a fellow student or colleagues that warrants concerns over the integrity and trust of the individual as a future healthcare provider.

C. Class III Offenses are major offenses of unethical, illegal, or professional misconduct. This category may also include an elevation of a prior offense after multiple or repeated Class I or II offenses occur following education and/or sanctions

Class I Offenses will be handled between the Program Director and the student. If deemed necessary by the Program Director or the student, an *ad hoc* Honor Code Committee (HCC) may be convened. Class II and II Offenses are typically elevated to an HCC.

### **Honor Code Committee**

The HCC is composed of five members consisting of the Program Director (or his/her designee), at least one program staff member, and at least two program faculty. Upon the determination that an HCC is needed, the Program Director will commence the following:

1. Gathering of evidence for the meeting, including written statements from proposed witnesses.
2. Solicitation of staff and faculty to serve on the HCC.
3. Notify the accused and any witnesses of the meeting date.
4. Solicit a written Statement of Defense (SOD) from the accused.
5. Notify the accused of his/her obligation to not converse or interfere with any witnesses or the interference shall be deemed as evidence of guilt.

The accused student is mandated to be present for the HCC meeting. If the accused does not attend, the meeting 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.

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 HCC members, based on their professional judgment, believe that it is more likely than not that a violation has occurred.

The HCC meeting will commence with the introduction of all parties, and a reading of the official accusation by either the Program Director or the Reporter of the accusation. The accused will then be given the opportunity to present an opening statement to explain his/her actions. The facts/evidence obtained by the Program Director will then be presented, followed by the accused given the opportunity to present any additional or counter evidence. The presentation of evidence may include the calling of Announced Witnesses, who are not a part of the proceedings beyond their own testimony and questioning. There shall be an open time in which all parties may ask questions to clarify the facts presented. After the presentation of all evidence and subsequent discussion, the Program Director will read the original accusation and summarize the evidence presented, and the accused will be allowed to present a closing statement. Everyone is then dismissed, other than the HCC members, who will then enter deliberations, which will continue until all HCC members are content that the case is fully vetted.

At that time the committee will vote based on each member's professional opinion of the preponderance of the reasonable evidence presented. A verdict requires a simple majority vote and the options are:

- A. No. The accused is not guilty of the suspected violation. No offense has occurred, and no action is recommended.
- B. Not enough evidence exists for the HCC to make the determination of guilty or not guilty.
- C. Yes, a preponderance of reasonable evidence supports that a violation of the Honor Code has occurred as presented in the Accusation.

If the HCC finds the accused guilty of an Honor code violation, it then it begins deliberations on sanction to impose. Such sanctions range from a written warning to expulsion, and may include a recommendation to VCOM toward acceptance to the D.O. program. All sanctions require a



simple majority vote by the committee. The Program Director will notify the accused of the HCC verdict and sanctions within seven (7) calendar days of the committee's decisions.

The opening of the HCC meeting until the deliberations will be recorded, with the recording used to form the written minutes after the meeting. The minutes will then be signed by the Program Director and one staff member of the committee, at which time the audio recording will be destroyed. The minutes signed minutes will be maintained by the Program Director for a period not less than five years.

## **Appeals Process**

Students may appeal a ruling of an Honor Code Committee to the Dean of the College of Sciences on one or more of the following grounds: (1) violation of rights granted by the HCC; (2) new, relevant, and material information not available at the time of the administrative panel; (3) arbitrary or capricious treatment by the HCC; or (4) other extenuating circumstances. All appeals must be submitted in writing within seven (7) calendar days of receiving official notification from the HCC. After speaking with the student, the Dean shall determine whether to follow the recommendations of the HCC or make a different decision. The Dean will notify the student, in writing, within 14 working days of receiving the appeal. Students may appeal, in writing, the Dean's decision within seven (7) calendar days of notification to the BU Provost. The Provost has discretionary power to affirm, modify, or remand the decision. The Provost reserves the right to obtain outside legal opinions on the review and the decisions that have been made, and to delay decision until such time that Counsel has responded. The student will generally receive written notice of the decision of the President within 14 calendar days of submitting the appeal. The Provost's decision is final.

## **Rights and Obligations of the Accused**

Any member of the student body who is accused of an Honor Code violation and brought before the HCC shall be granted these rights and shall be bound by these obligations:

### **A. Rights of the Accused:**

1. To decline to speak about the suspected violation outside the HCC.
2. To be treated as if no violation has occurred until determined otherwise, unless the Provost is reasonably concerned that the presence of the alleged offender would be disruptive to the school or would endanger the institution and any of its members or the public.
3. To speak on his/her own behalf and to refrain from serving as a witness against himself/herself.
4. To be advised by a class officer or any faculty the accused chooses (aside from HCC members) and who agrees to advise the student, and to expect confidentiality.
5. To receive written notice of initiation of investigation proceedings.
6. To recommend Announced Witnesses who can testify directly to the case at hand.
7. To hear all the evidence to be presented to the Honor Code Committee, to be present for the presentation of the evidence, and to have the decision of the HCC be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing and not hearsay.
8. To present questions to the reporter to be asked of any witnesses at the time of the hearing.
9. To receive written notice of the recommendations of the HCC.
10. To receive no retaliation from any involved party at any time.

B. Obligations of the Accused:

1. To cooperate with the HCC.
2. To remain confidential and refrain from approaching any involved party or witness about the suspected violation or such action shall be considered as suspicion of interference based upon guilt.
3. To be present at the hearing
4. To refrain from retaliation or speaking to any witness regarding testimony before or after the hearing.

## **Rights and Obligations of the Reporter**

Any member of the faculty, staff or student body who submits an accusation to the HCC shall be granted the following rights and agrees to be bound by the following obligations.

A. Rights of the Reporter:

1. To remain anonymous until or unless an Honor Code Committee is convened.
2. To decline to speak about the suspected violation outside the HCC.
3. To be kept informed of the HCC progress on the suspected violation.
4. To have the issue resolved in a timely fashion.
5. To be advised by any administrative member of the Program who agrees to advise the student.
6. To receive no retaliation from any involved party at any time.

B. Obligations of the Reporter:

1. To keep the matter confidential and discuss it only with appropriate HCC personnel.
2. To cooperate with HCC.
3. To be present at the hearing, and to face the accused at the panel.
4. To treat the accused as if no violation has occurred until determined otherwise.
5. To refrain from retaliation against any involved party at any time.

## **Rights and Obligations of an Advisor**

Any member of the faculty, administration, or class officer who agrees to advise the student, with the exception that HCC members who may not serve as advisors, shall be granted the following rights, and agrees to be bound by the following obligations:

A. Rights of an Advisor:

1. To decline to speak about the suspected violation outside the HCC.
2. To decline advice or terminate advising at any time.
3. To receive no retaliation from any involved party at any time.
4. To be present at the HCC meeting, but not to engage in any way with members of the committee.

B. Obligations of an Advisor:

1. To keep the matter confidential and discuss only with advisee and HCC personnel if requested by the advisee.
2. To refrain from retaliation against any involved party at any time.

## **Rights and Obligations of an Announced Witness**

Any member of the faculty, staff or student body who appears as an announced witness shall be granted the following rights and shall be bound by the following obligations.

A. Rights of an Announced Witness:

1. To decline to speak about the suspected violation outside the HCC.
2. To speak on his/her own behalf and to refrain from serving as a witness against himself/herself.
3. To receive no retaliation from any involved party at any time.

B. Obligations of an Announced Witness:

1. To keep the matter confidential and discuss it only with appropriate HCC personnel.
2. To be truthful and cooperate with the HCC.
3. to provide a written statement of their testimony prior to the HCC meeting if requested by the Program Director. This statement will largely determine if the HCC calls the witness to testify.
4. To be present during the HCC meeting if called by the committee to appear.
5. To refrain from retaliation against any involved party at any time.

## Definitions

A. Accused: The student accused of a suspected violation of the Honor Code with all the rights and obligations thereof.

B. Reporter: The member of the faculty, staff, or student body who reports a suspected violation of the Honor Code with all the rights and obligations thereof.

C. Advisor: Any member of the faculty, staff, or a class officer who agrees to give advice with all the rights and obligations thereof. The advisor serves as a third party that an accused student, or a reporter can go to for confidential counsel. The advisor may come to panel to serve as support and guidance but shall not answer for other parties.

D. Announced Witnesses: Any person who accepts an invitation to address a meeting of the HCC to speak about the case at hand with all the rights and obligations thereof. Members of the faculty, staff, and student body may be required to serve as announced witnesses. All announced witnesses must be arranged prior to the meeting and may be required to submit a written statement into evidence. The HCC believes all students are inherently trustworthy, and character witnesses are neither necessary, nor allowed.

E. Classification Alteration: the possible but not mandatory alteration of the classification of an offense.

1. Premeditation: Planning to do an act before the act is carried out. Premeditation assumes persistence in carrying out a plan decided upon before the act began. The ability to correct a spontaneous violation but a failure to do so does not indicate premeditation because premeditation requires intent before the act.
2. Recruiting: Convincing another student to violate the Honor Code when it is reasonable that the other student would not have violated the Honor Code if not convinced.
3. Unauthorized Entry: Entering the possessions of a member of the faculty, staff, or student body without permission. Possessions may include but are not limited to notebooks, computers, filing cabinets, offices, vehicles, and homes. It is not necessary to

prove permission was required, only that it was reasonable to assume permission should have been obtained.

4. Endangering or Threatening: Endangering or threatening harm either physically or professionally.

F. Abstain: To refrain from voting. To abstain does not count as a vote. In the context of a vote by simple majority, the member abstaining is not counted as a voting member.

G. Arbitrary or Capricious: That which is impulsive, unpredictable, unaccountable, illogical, or without reason.

H. Date of Discovery or Suspicion: The first date on which a violation of the Honor Code was suspected or discovered.

I. Date of Violation: The date on which the violation of the Honor Code was committed.

J. Majority: Greater than one half. Less than or equal to one half is not a majority. A tie vote does not have a majority either way and requires a final “tie-breaker” vote to determine a majority.

K. Preponderance: Superiority in numbers or having greater weight; greater than 50%.

L. Recuse: To disqualify oneself from proceedings to avoid any perceived bias.

***M. Retaliate: To take revenge for a perceived wrong. Retaliation is considered unethical behavior and constitutes a separate violation of th***

## **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 the Program Director within 24 hours of the occurrence. 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, 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 recurrence and its adverse effects. To file a complaint, visit:

<http://www.bluefield.edu/about/title-ix/file-a-complaint/>.

## **Disciplinary Process for Sexual Misconduct**

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 Bluefield and VCOM 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 MAB program 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 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.

While a student can withdraw from a course, repeat it at a later date, and earn their MABS degree, course withdrawal will 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 2.8 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, and grades from transferred courses will not impact the program GPA.

# **Student Services**

# Student Services

## Counseling Services

### Mental Health 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 Honor Code Committee or an Administrator to seek counseling for the purpose of student 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, 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 healthcare providers. Participation in events outside of the academic requirements are a privilege and students should participate in them to complement their prescribed academic program. Two leadership positions as class representatives are available in the Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences Program. 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 Program Director. 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. (See BU Academic Catalog)

## **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 Program Director by explaining his or her view and allowing the Director ample opportunity to respond. It is expected that most complaints will be resolved at this level.
2. If the complaint is not resolved to the student's satisfaction by conversation with the Program Director, 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) or the next OMABS term following the completion of the course. The department chair shall notify the Program Director, 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 Program Director 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. (see Academic Catalog)

### **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, 8 a.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 VCOM 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. 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 will proceed at a walking (not running) pace and use caution to avoid injury to other persons while exiting. The picnic pavilion near the soccer field is the MABS rendezvous point in case of fire drill or an actual fire.

The MABS building is managed by the Corporate Research Center, and they may periodically hold fire drills.

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, which includes the Blacksburg campus, 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. Decisions regarding delays or cancellations on the Bluefield University main campus do not affect the MABS program.

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.