AOA Selection Process Overview

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What is the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society?

About

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

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

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

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

https://www.alphaomegaalpha.org/about/

Rules for AOA Selection

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

https://www.alphaomegaalpha.org/about/how-members-are-chosen/

Overview of changes to the selection process

(NOTE: the final process is announced in September of MS3 year)

- Class of 2027:
  - Greater relative emphasis on NBME subject exam performance; lesser relative emphases on Honors Items (Slide 5)
  - Selection process details with 2 campuses (Slide 8)
- Class of 2028-2029:
  - No major changes
- Class of 2030:
  - Plan to limit research submissions for Honors Items to one research product (e.g. peer-reviewed manuscript, presentation, experience)

AOA Selection Process Overview for Graduating Class of 2028:

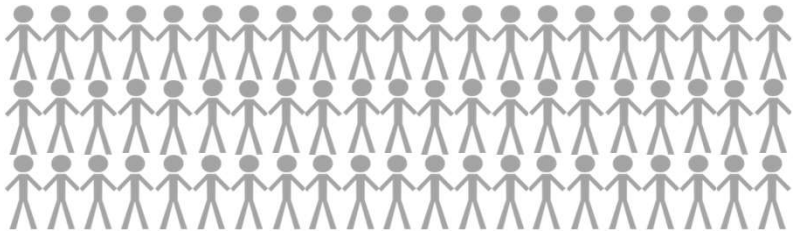


PHASE 1: Jan-Feb 2027

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

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

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



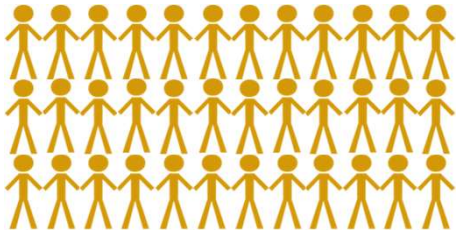
PHASE 2: Feb-March 2027

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

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

April 2027

AOA inductees (up to 20% of class):



*More details on next 2 slides

= top ~15% nominated by **NBME subject exam scores**

Cutoff to be determined by SA/EAR Deans; for Class of 2027, **cutoff = 88.7%ile**

HYPOTHETICAL STUDENT FOR CLASS OF 2028

= takes all 7 Shelf Exams before January 2027 →

	Family	Neuro	Psych	Pedi	OB	Surg	IM
Equated Percent Correct	85	95	76	84	80	83	72
National Percentile	90	98	85	92	85	87	65

Average percentile score from **all but the lowest** exams = 89.5%ile

Hypothetical Cutoff for top 15th percentile for class averages = 88.7%ile

→ Student nominated to submit full portfolio

For **CLASS OF 2028**, you can use tables available on VidaNova to convert your EPC score to a percentile score:

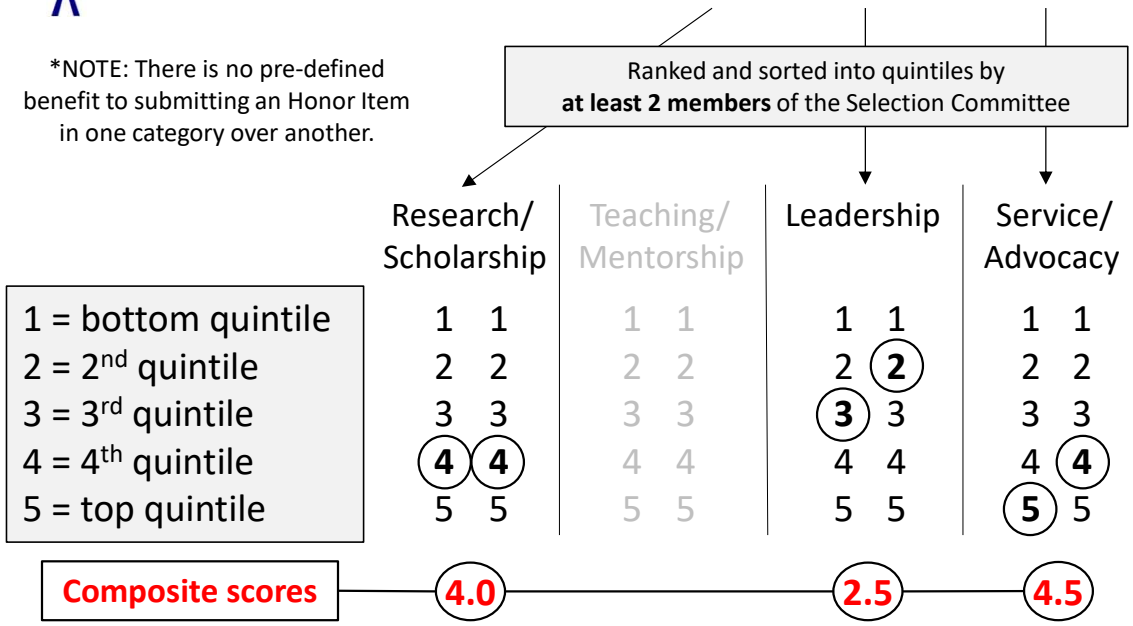
Based on Class of 2027 data	Family	Neuro	Psych	Pedi	OB	Surg	IM
Approximate EPC cutoff for top 15%	84	88	92	87	88	83	84

EXAMPLE STUDENT FOR CLASS OF 2028

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

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

Ranked and sorted into quintiles by **at least 2 members** of the Selection Committee



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

Cutoff calculated to determine additional **~25%** of Nominees = **9.50**/15

Nominated to submit full portfolio

***Historical Cutoffs:**
Class of 2027: 9.50
Class of 2026: 9.00
Class of 2025: 9.58
Class of 2024: 11.07

= for Class of 2028, additional ~20% nominated based on **3 Honors Items**

Approach to BCM as 1 school, 2 campuses

- NBME subject exams (~15% of graduating class): students will be nominated **independent of campus**

- Honors Items (~20% of graduating class): students submit items for review **by campus**; scores will then be consolidated across campuses **with one cutoff score**.

- Similar approach to both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the selection process

Guidance on Honors Items Criteria

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

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

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

- **Quality over quantity**
- Broad representation

Reviewing Members of the AOA Selection Committee (representation from both Houston and Temple campuses)

- Dr. Mahboob Alam
- Dr. Philip Alapat
- Dr. Claire Bocchini
- Dr. Jennifer Bohannan
- Dr. Matthew Bower
- Dr. Danny Chelius
- Dr. Christopher Chiles
- Dr. Eva Clark
- Dr. Geeta Singhal Das
- Dr. Amber Davis
- Dr. Catherine Foster
- Dr. Lauren Fournier
- Dr. Joan Friedland
- Dr. Molly Gordon
- Dr. John Goss
- Dr. Alexander Hanania
- Dr. Timothy Hotze
- Dr. Chris Hovland
- Dr. Yevgeniy Khariton
- Dr. Grace Kim
- Dr. Malvika Juneja
- Dr. Craig Lilie
- Dr. Kimberly Lopez
- Dr. Michelle Lopez
- Dr. Lee Lu
- Dr. Joan Mastrobattista
- Dr. Martha Mims
- Dr. Tamara Ortiz-Perez
- Dr. Akhil Padarti
- Dr. Tyson Pillow
- Dr. Elizabeth Rossman Beel
- Dr. Antonio Saenz
- Dr. Sarah Sartain
- Dr. Beth Scholz
- Dr. Richa Shukla
- Dr. Danielle Takacs
- Dr. Benjamin Vacula
- Dr. Awais Vance
- Dr. Tiphanie Vogel
- Dr. Erica Ward
- Dr. Carina Wasko
- Dr. Christina Weng
- Dr. Jennifer Whitaker
- Dr. LeChauncy Woodard

Other Considerations

- Items performed during a dual degree or a leave of absence (after matriculation) can count toward Honors Items, but the total time spent outside of traditional medical school enrollment must be disclosed
- Students who fail any NBME subject exam (exception: the Jan-Oct 2024 Pediatrics exam) or fail any core clerkship are disqualified from AOA nomination
- Please feel free to reach out to Dr. Maheshwari (atul.maheshwari@bcm.edu) if you have any questions or feedback about the process. You can also provide feedback anonymously using this link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5622TFV.

AOA Selection Process Timeline for Class of 2028

- **September 2026** – Official guidelines for selection process announced
- **November 2026** – Virtual meeting with AOA Councilor to review AOA selection process
- **~Wed, 1/13/27** – Top ~15% based on NBME shelf exams are notified of nomination to submit full portfolios; all other students are invited to submit "3 Honors Items" for consideration for nomination – due 1/27/27 (2 weeks to submit)
- **~Wed, 1/27/27** – AOA Selection Committee reviews Honors Items for determination of student nominations (up to an additional ~25% of the class), ~2 weeks to review
- **~Wed, 2/17/27** – Portfolio requests sent out to all AOA nominees (up to 35% of the class); students have ~3 weeks to prepare portfolios
- **~Wed, 3/17/27** – Portfolios due for all MS3s/Class of 2028 (gives Selection Committee ~3 weeks to review portfolios)
- **~Monday, 4/19/27** – Class of 2028 inductees notified (gives MS4 AOA students 2 months to orient the new class to AOA activities before the MS4s leave for residency)

Phase 1 (nomination)

Phase 2 (selection)

High-Scoring Items from Prior Classes (Houston):
Leadership [+ extra time (e.g. LOA, dual degree)]

- i. Founder of Creative Companions/President of HeARTs in Medicine. Created new service partnership for ~40 BCM and McGovern students to provide age-appropriate enrichment to long-term stay and critical care TCH patients. I integrated the program within TCH Volunteer Services/Child Life, managed visit scheduling, and created enrichment materials (2 years, yearlong). [N/A]
- Albert Schweitzer Fellowship (250+ hours): leading Nourish, a 6th-12th grade nutrition/cooking program, impacting 20-30 underserved students/week (cumulative 100+), created curriculum as a Registered Dietitian to be used for 2+ years. Established Nourish as BCM Service-Learning site, leading as site coordinator of both Nourish and Saturday Morning Science, overseeing 60+ volunteers. [N/A]
- Created a interprofessional seminar series across all programs at BCM, leading a team of students from each program. Continuing ongoing endeavors with faculty to enhance interprofessional education at BCM. As class vice president, created process guides distributed to the entire class. Nominated by the AMA for a national LCME appointment. [N/A]
- Founding Deputy Editor (2023-2025)/Editor-in-Chief (2025-2026) of BMSR (peer-reviewed student journal). Ophthalmology Interest Group (OIG) officer (2023-2026), current Vice-President. Launched first OIG-wide collaborative research project in 5 years (30 co-authors). Reestablished OIG-resident mentorship program (2+ years). AMWA officer (2023-2026), current President; co-hosted faculty-student mentorship roundtables (2+ years). Admissions Committee Member/Interviewer (2024-2026). [N/A]

High-Scoring Items from Prior Classes (Houston):
Research-Scholarship [+ extra time (e.g. LOA, dual degree)]

- First-author manuscript accepted to JAMA Otolaryngology; 5 publications; 2 under review; 11 conference presentations (4 national posters, 1 oral); founded basic-science project identifying effects of e-cigarettes on cisplatin resistance in head-and-neck cancer (cell-culture, western blots, metabolomics); discovered less immunosuppression than conventional cigarettes; project secured additional VA/NIH funding; AAO-HNS Scholarship recipient. [N/A]
- 7 peer-reviewed publications (2 first-author, IF 3.4), 2 first-author under review; 2 first-author ophthalmology textbook chapters (Elsevier, Springer Nature); Space Medicine Pathway (2025): built novel computational simulation of ocular fluid dynamics; 3 podium, 7 poster presentations (national & regional conferences); authored IRB proposal and leading ongoing community-based ophthalmology screening research. [N/A]
- Manuscripts: 2 1st author, 1 8th, 1 11th (IF: 3.8, 3.8, 6.3, 4.4); Manuscripts under review: 3 1st author, 1 2nd, 2 8th; 13 1st author abstracts, 9 co-authored abstracts, 2 oral presentations, poster presentations at local, national, and international conferences; Awarded Henry J. N. Taub Young Investigator Award (2023). [2 months during LOA]
- James Lupski Publication Award (2024) given to MSTP student with best publication; Outstanding Student Oral Presentation (2024) at the international IEEE MEMS conference; Janet Butel Training Award (2022); 9 peer-reviewed publications focused on nanoparticle-based diagnostics, including 5 first-author papers (highest impact factor 5.7, 205 citations), and 2 additional under review. [5 years]

High-Scoring Items from Prior Classes (Houston):
Service-Advocacy [+ extra time (e.g. LOA, dual degree)]

- Head of Curriculum Development for Justice-InvolvEd (2.5 years). I wrote or co-wrote all courses-Mental Health, General Health, Women's Health, and Healthy Relationships (70+ hrs). Each course includes four 1-hour classes and has been taught to over 500 incarcerated individuals. I've presented my courses at 1 local and 3 national conferences. [N/A]
- Albert Schweitzer Fellow (2024-2025); M2M Volunteer (2023-2025): Led "Moms to Moms" (M2M) to deliver postpartum education at Ben Taub and LBJ (500+ patients); managed 85 volunteers; created training protocol and expanded curriculum to include prenatal resource for HHS; presented program at local/national conferences; SLP Dean's Distinction (x3 years); (160+ hours) [4 months]
- HOMES Clinic Manager (3 years) and Pre-Clinical/Clinical Volunteer (3 years), received Certificate in Clinical Management and Dean's Distinction in Service Learning; 100 hours. Lead project and created bilingual educational pamphlet regarding epilepsy and pregnancy for Smith Clinic patients, designed IRB approved research protocol to evaluate pamphlet's educational effectiveness; 50 hours. [N/A]
- Court Appointed Guardian ad Litem, Child Advocates (Aug 2023-present, ~175 hours): Advocate for abused and neglected children in foster care. Conducted multidisciplinary evaluations, authored 9 formal court reports, and delivered sworn court testimony. Directly influenced judicial decisions that ensured safe, long-term placement for 3 children in 3 CPS cases. [N/A]

High-Scoring Items from Prior Classes (Houston):
Teaching-Mentorship [+ extra time (e.g. LOA, dual degree)]

- First Gen Mentorship VP (2023-2025): Created new program connecting 700 undergrad mentees with 300 medical student mentors across 6 med schools and 5 undergrad institutions in Texas. BLS/ACLS Instructor (2022-2025): Taught hundreds of students and professionals. Co-created Medical Arabic elective at Baylor. Co-authored the new Gray Matter clinical curriculum guide. [N/A]
- Competitively selected to design and teach "AI in Neurosurgery Course" at international conference (250+ attendees, 6 months), Co-author of Gray Matter clinical curriculum guide, "Big Sib" longitudinal mentoring program for BS/MD Students (3 years), Anatomy Buddies Tutor (1 year), PEER Research Mentor (chosen to educate MS1s with individualized research guidance) [2 months during LOA]
- Japanese Medical Society of America National Scholarship Recipient: Founded pediatric Japanese-cuisine nutrition program, educating hundreds of providers/community groups; JMSA Mentorship Chair (2023-present): Coordinated 45 student-physician mentorships; PRN Leader (2023-present): mentored inaugural Temple class, specially-selected; PARTAKE Committee (2023-2024): MS1 SDoH education. Inquiry Committee/PEER Co-Coordinator (2023-present): Co-authored research guide, co-founded peer-to-peer mentorship-programme. [N/A]
- Received the MSTP Sharon E. Plon Mentorship Award for my work as a Curriculum Committee member, MSTP Student Operating Committee member, Histology TA, Topics in LGBTQA Health elective TA, Kidney Coach (dialysis unit tutor), Saturday Morning Science facilitator, research mentor, and peer mentor in the MSTP. [5 years]

High-Scoring Items from Class of 2027 (Temple):
Leadership [+ extra time (e.g. LOA, dual degree)]

- MCSD Co-chair (2024-present): organized educational lectures and 60-80+ volunteers across 5-6 sites annually, received special recognition by Mayor; DIG Service Chair (2023-25), Co-President (2025-present): founding member, organized volunteers at free dermatology clinic, skin cancer screenings, initiated Girl Scouts partnership for educational workshops; RIG Co-President(2023-25): hosted career pathway panels, neuroradiology reviews. [N/A]
- Lone Star Survival (LSS): Branch Chair, National Financial Director, National Associate Director, National Executive Director (progression from 2024-present). Established Temple LSS chapter, provided tourniquet education to local schools and organizations (570+ trained in Temple). Oversaw and co-established medical school LSS chapters across Texas (13 schools, 1400+ Texans trained). [N/A]
- Pediatric Student Association Founder/President (2023-current, 150+ hours): Connected 50+ students to pediatrics opportunities, organized volunteers for free clinics and elementary STEM programs. Pediatric Chief Medical Student (2025-present; 50+ hours): Student liaison for MS2s on their pediatrics rotation; presented bi-weekly lectures. Student Ambassador (2023-current, 60+ hours): Represented BCM to prospective students. [N/A]

High-Scoring Items from Class of 2027 (Temple):
Research-Scholarship [+ extra time (e.g. LOA, dual degree)]

- 3 1st author manuscripts under review; 8 1st author abstracts, 3 co-authored abstracts, 2 podium presentations, 6 poster presentations at local, regional, and national conferences; 2024 Professional Diversity Mentor Grant recipient from American Society of Anesthesiologists ($1500) [N/A]
- Cardiology Research (2023-present): led investigations in predictive capability of cardiac catheterization measurements on bypass surgery outcomes. Produced 2 first-author peer-reviewed abstracts published in JACC (IF 22.3). Two national presentations (one poster, one moderated oral session) 1 first-author manuscript in process. 6 co-authored abstracts for other projects (2 under review) [N/A]
- 2 1st author and 1 2nd author manuscripts (IF 6.8, 2.3, 0.9). 4 co-authored abstracts; 2 poster presentations, 1 oral presentation at national conferences (ACS x2); Accepted oral and poster presentation at international conference (SOAP 2026). Developed a basic science project investigating genetically induced mitochondrial dysfunction in breast cancer cells. [N/A]

High-Scoring Items from Class of 2027 (Temple):
Service-Advocacy [+ extra time (e.g. LOA, dual degree)]

- Service Learning Program Chair (2023-current, 250+ hours): Launched Service Learning Program at BCM Temple; coordinated volunteer opportunities for 190 students across 11 sites addressing social determinants of health; recognized with a City of Temple mayoral proclamation for organizing 2,500+ service hours for underserved populations. SLP Dean's Distinction (x2 years). [N/A]
- Volunteer Deputy Registrar (2023-present): Registered 120 voters; MSFC (president 2023-present, founder of Temple chapter): Secured 1200 Plan B donations for undergraduate/graduate students; CoUP Project: Developed resource database for Temple Community Clinic, identifying 47 local aid organizations for SDoH; Meals on Wheels volunteer for SLP Dean's Distinction (x3 years; 55hrs) [N/A]
- Founded SLP site (2024-2026) at Amy's House, a hospitality house for organ transplant/leukemia patients and their caregivers. Led interactive medical student-run educational workshops, impacting 120+ patients and families; developed post-transplant nutrition guide adopted into BSW patient materials. Volunteered at Family Promise, Ralph Wilson Youth Center; SLP Dean's Distinction (x3 years). [N/A]

High-Scoring Items from Class of 2027 (Temple):
Teaching-Mentorship [+ extra time (e.g. LOA, dual degree)]

- Black Men in White Coats (2023-present): Founded Temple chapter; established a mentorship program with Baylor University supporting underrepresented medical school applicants. Coordinated mentor-mentee pairings and mentored eight students. PARTAKE Committee (Summer 2025): Co-authored and facilitated an MS1 SDOH discussion. Green Squad Leader (2025-present): Facilitated MS2 clinical handoff and cross-class cohesion. [N/A]
- DISCO Tutor (2024-current, 100+ hours): Delivered 1:1 academic support, led bi-monthly review sessions averaging 80-90 attendees, founded an in-person group tutoring initiative. PRN Leader (2024-current, 100+ hours): Longitudinally mentored 8 MS1s. TA for Community-Based Learning (2023-2024, 50+ hours): Adapted and implemented elective at Temple; organized volunteering and SDoH education. [N/A]
- Teach case-based-lessons addressing homelessness, immigration, and bias within TTM course. Created student/facilitator guides linking SDOH to clinical care. JAMP mentor to MS1-MS2s across Texas, providing first-generational guidance, financial insight, and physician-mentor connections. COUP representative, provide support to pathway students, track progress of capstone projects, advocate for Temple electives and Sub-Is. [N/A]

Frequently Asked Questions (Page 1 of 2)

1. **Is anyone checking to make sure students are submitting Honors Items correctly?** We are placing a lot of trust in students, but the submissions will be scanned for accuracy by the Student Affairs Deans.

2. **Who can I go to for help with determining my Honors Items?** Other students, Learning Community Advisors, Student Affairs Deans, Specialty Specific Mentors (all of these individuals are not allowed to be reviewing members of the Selection Committee).

3. **Who will make up the Selection Committee?** The goal is to have the committee comprised of BCM faculty who are knowledgeable about student activities/honors and representative of the larger BCM community. At least 50% of the committee are required to be current AOA members. The final membership is determined by the AOA Councilor in consultation with the Student Affairs Deans.

4. **I was treasurer for an organization one year, president the following year, and founder of another organization – can I enter those as 3 separate "Honors Items"?** Yes. Alternatively, you can choose to lump them into one entry which may have more of an impact (e.g. Leadership: "xxx organization", Treasurer: 21-22, President: 22-23; "yyy organization", Founder, both raised HIV awareness in children). Please note that the selection committee has been asked to reward quality over quantity, so conveying the impact of one high-impact item may be better received than trying to convey the impact of 2 or more low-impact items within the word limit.

Frequently Asked Questions (Page 2 of 2)

5. **I was originally in a class with tiered clerkship grading, but I am graduating with the current class with pass/fail grading – how will the selection process work for me?** The subject exam component of your grades will be considered for nomination.

6. **I worked on my first author paper in the *New England Journal of Medicine* while I was in college, but it was published during my time as a medical student – does that count as an Honor Item?** No. While this is certainly an item that should be highlighted on one's CV for residency, Honors Items all must have taken place after matriculation into medical school. This allows all students to come into the process on a more equal footing.

7. **As a traditional MD/PhD student, I have ~6 months less time in medical school than my traditional MD classmates. Can I use activities during my PhD training toward an Honors Item?** All items that occurred after matriculation to medical school, but during a dual degree or Leave of Absence, can be used toward an Honors Item submission. The amount of time spent outside of the traditional medical school curriculum must be disclosed. The Selection Committee will take into account the relative impact based on the extra time allotted when determining relative ranking of Honors Items.

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