

# **NCCAOM Examination Study Guide for the Diplomate in Chinese Herbology Certification for the 2010 Examination Administration**



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## Introduction

This study guide is designed to help prepare candidates for the NCCAOM<sup>®</sup> certification examinations. Passage of the NCCAOM certification examinations is one of the requirements to become a [Diplomate in Chinese Herbology \(NCCAOM\)](#). Academic program officials from ACAOM (Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine) accredited Oriental medicine programs will also benefit from reviewing the content in this guide. The *NCCAOM Examination Study Guide for Diplomate in Chinese Herbology* has all the examination preparation materials and information published by the NCCAOM in one document.

Candidates for NCCAOM Certification in Chinese Herbology are applicants who have met all of the academic and/or training requirements for NCCAOM Certification in Chinese Herbology. Candidates for NCCAOM certification have qualified by one of the established eligibility routes published in the *NCCAOM Candidate Handbook*. The latest edition of this handbook is available on the NCCAOM website at [www.nccaom.org](http://www.nccaom.org).

All candidates for certification have completed a minimum number of hours of academic course work to qualify to take each required examination (see chart below). Completion of these hours of course work qualifies the applicant to sit for the following Chinese Herbology Certification Examinations as a ~~pre~~-graduate+. Additional hours are required for final certification.

Examinations	Matriculation Date	Completed Hours
Acupuncture with Point Location	Matriculating Prior to July 1, 2004	1,350
*Biomedicine		
*Foundations of Oriental Medicine	Matriculating on or after July 1, 2004	1,490
*Chinese Herbology	Matriculating Prior to July 1, 2004	1,700 (includes 350 clinical hours)
	Matriculating on or after July 1, 2004	2,050 (includes 410 clinical hours)

\*Required for the Certification in Chinese Herbology Certification

Once the candidate for certification passes all of the above certification examinations there is one more step to complete the certification process: Notify the academic institution to send the final academic transcripts to the NCCAOM. More information can be found in the *NCCAOM Candidate Handbook*.

## Examination Development

The NCCAOM examination study guides provide background information on the validation of the NCCAOM certification examinations. All NCCAOM certification programs are currently accredited by the National Commission for Certification Agencies (NCCA). The Chinese Herbology Certification Program carries the NCCA seal.



In order for the NCCAOM Certification in Chinese Herbology Program to remain accredited by NCCA, the NCCAOM must adhere to strict national standards for examination development. All certification exams for the NCCAOM Certification in Chinese Herbology Program must meet the examination content validity standards set forth by NCCA. The following contains information on validation of the examination content.

The NCCAOM contracts with Schroeder Measurement Technologies, Inc. (SMT) to develop all NCCAOM certification examinations. SMT is a psychometric consulting group that serves to provide all examination development validation studies and scoring for the NCCAOM examinations.

### **Examination Content Validation**

The foundation of a valid, reliable, and legally defensible professional certification program is first the result of a well-constructed job task analysis study (JTA). A JTA establishes the link between test scores and competencies assessed by the examination and thus the inference that the scores achieved by candidates on the certification examinations are based on valid content. Therefore, all pass+or fail+decisions correlate to competency assessment (performance) as measured by the examination. The JTA is a process by which tasks performed by NCCAOM certified practitioners are examined for importance (which considers criticality of the tasks performed and frequency by which the tasks are performed in practice). A minimum of every five years the NCCAOM conducts a JTA, in order to update the examination content outlines. Content decisions for the examination content outlines are directly linked to the results of the most recent JTA. During the 2008 JTA study, NCCAOM subject matter experts (NCCAOM Diplomates who have expertise and experience as a faculty member or practitioner) provided the list of knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) statements for the NCCAOM Acupuncture, Biomedicine, Foundations of Oriental Medicine, and Chinese Herbology content outlines. A survey instrument was developed by an NCCAOM appointed JTA Taskforce. The survey instrument was provided to currently practicing NCCAOM Diplomates in order to inquire about the relative importance+and frequency+of performing their different job tasks. The survey results were reviewed and interpreted by the JTA Taskforce members and the NCCAOM subject matter experts (SMEs) and, as a result, new content outlines were developed for all NCCAOM certification exams. The 2010 examination content outlines contained in this study guide are based on the 2008 JTA. Interpretation of the JTA results was based on use of systematic decision criteria. The 2008 JTA provides content validity support and linkage to the examination items (i.e., questions on the examinations) for all NCCAOM certification exams for the Chinese Herbology Certification Program.

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This *NCCAOM Examination Study Guide for Diplomate in Chinese Herbology* provides all the content outlines for each examination required for NCCAOM Certification in Chinese Herbology. Each content outline lists the percent weightings for each section (i.e., Domains) within the outline and gives a detailed list of KSAs for each domain and sub-domain. The listing of the KSAs is included to give the candidate more information about the competency expected for each domain.

### **Item Writing**

The second step in developing a defensible examination program occurs after the content outlines (i.e., test blueprints) are constructed. After a test content outline is developed, examination items are written to match the content outline. Each item must be linked to a content area listed on a content outline and written based on the supporting KSA statements.

Item writing events held across the country are conducted to assist the NCCAOM Examination Development Committees (EDCs) in developing new items for the certification examinations. Most recently, the EDCs, composed of a panel of SMEs, representing practitioners and educators from different regions of the United States and from various practice settings convened for the purpose of writing, reviewing, and revising examination items to meet strict content guidelines and test construction standards. NCCAOM test development staff members, and experienced SMEs train the item writers on how to write NCCAOM acceptable multiple-choice items. The goal of the training is to define appropriate item formats, train the SMEs on what is not an appropriate item (e.g., using none or all of the above as a distractor, making the key longer or shorter than the distractors, using negatively worded items), and how to review various item types, including the cognitive complexities associated with items.

### **Item Review**

Once new items are written and edited for format, a panel of SMEs meets with a testing staff liaison to review and edit the new items. Once the items are approved by the SMEs, the test development staff enters the item(s) into the appropriate item bank and codes the items according to the content outline specifications. The NCCAOM EDC meets annually to review the current and new items. Additionally, each question is reviewed for performance statistics (i.e. a psychometric evaluation). The statistical evaluation allows the SMEs to see when the correct answer is found by guessing (there are some very specific flags that help us to see that) or if the answer has more than one (or no) correct answers. This is not to say that all exams are perfect, but the NCCAOM applies very strict standards so that every effort is made to avoid errors in the test item.

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**Exam Administration**

All NCCAOM examinations for the Chinese Herbology Certification Program are given as a computer based administration. The table below gives the examination administration features for the 2010 Chinese Herbology Certification Program Examinations administration at the Pearson VUE Professional Test Centers.

<b>Chinese Herbology Examination Administration Features for 2010</b>		
<b>Examination</b>	<b>Number of Multiple-Choice Items</b>	<b>Time Allowed</b>
<b>Adaptive Exams</b>		
Foundations of Oriental Medicine	100	2.5 Hours
Chinese Herbology	100	2.5 Hours
<b>Linear Exam</b>		
<b>Examination</b>	<b>Number of Multiple-Choice Items</b>	<b>Time Allowed</b>
Biomedicine*	100 items	2.5 hours

**\*During 2010 only - the Biomedicine exam will be administered during the following dates in 2010:**

- ***February 15 through 27,***
- ***June 14 through 30,***
- ***October 18 through 30.***

**Please note that the fee for the Biomedicine Examination is \$300 beginning January 1, 2010.**

**In 2011 the Biomedicine exam will be offered as an adaptive exam administration.**

## 2010 Expanded Content Outlines

Based on the JTA conducted in April 2008, the new content outlines for the Certification in Chinese Herbology are included below. Inclusion of KSA statements are a new feature for the 2010 Content Outlines. The KSAs are designed to help guide the candidates in studying for each examination. The examinations administered in 2010 will be based on these new content outlines. Each KSA statement gives the candidate the level of competency expected for the particular content area listed on the outline.

### The Biomedicine Expanded Content Outline

The following content outline is effective on **January 1, 2010**. Below is the Expanded Content Outline for the Biomedicine examination, which includes the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA) statements.

#### **Domain A: Western Medical Assessment (55% of total exam)**

##### **Sub Domain A1: History-taking (5%)**

- Skill and ability to conduct a medical interview
- Knowledge of relevance of history

##### **A 1 (a): Identifying information**

- Knowledge of information required in a medical file
- Ability to obtain required identifying information (e.g., name, address, age, marital status, etc.)

##### **A 1 (b): Chief complaint and present illness**

- Knowledge of risk factors
- Ability to obtain information regarding chief complaint (e.g., onset, frequency, severity, duration, functional changes, aggravation and amelioration of symptoms, and response to treatment)
- Ability to obtain information on current medications (prescription and non-prescription)
- Ability to obtain information on herbs and supplements
- Ability to utilize patient self-report of medications and supplements to expand on medical history

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- Ability to obtain information on allergy and intolerance (e.g., medications, supplements, food, environmental factors, type of reaction)

**A 1 (c): Past medical history**

- Knowledge of risk factors
- Ability to obtain information regarding past medical history (e.g., previous surgeries, past medical treatments), including risk factors

**A 1 (d): Family history**

- Knowledge of risk factors (e.g., genetics, familial, etc.)
- Ability to obtain pertinent information of immediate family

**A 1 (e): Personal and social history**

- Knowledge of risk factors
- Ability to obtain pertinent information regarding personal and social history, including risk factors
- Ability to obtain information on other treatments (e.g., naturopathic, chiropractic, bodywork, yoga, meditation, acupuncture, physical and occupational therapy, etc.)
- Ability to obtain information on occupational and socio-economic history (e.g., cultural, environmental factors)
- Ability to obtain information regarding past and present lifestyle (e.g., exercise, diet, stress, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), etc.)
- Ability to obtain information regarding the use of tobacco, alcohol, and recreational drugs
- Ability to make appropriate recommendations/referrals regarding lifestyle

**A 1 (f): System review**

- Knowledge of system review
- Ability to obtain information relating to system review (e.g., ear, nose, and throat (ENT), respiratory, gastrointestinal, self exams, etc.)

**Sub Domain A2: Physical assessment, pathology and diagnostics (35%)**

- Knowledge of what constitutes a physical exam

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- Skill in performing a physical exam
- Ability to differentiate abnormal findings from normal findings
- Ability to make appropriate referral

**A 2 (a): Vital signs, weight, and nutritional status**

- Knowledge of normal and abnormal blood pressure readings, pulses, temperature and respiration rates
- Skill and ability to obtain vital signs
- Ability to differentiate normal and abnormal values and make referral when necessary
- Ability to determine abnormal weight (obesity and anorexia)
- Knowledge of morbidity associated with abnormal weight (e.g., cardiology, dermatology, endocrinology (diabetes), reproduction, gastrointestinal, neurology, oncology, psychiatry, orthopedics, urology)
- Skills and ability to address and/or refer complications due to weight

**A 2 (b): Organ assessment and system pathology**

- Knowledge of anatomy and physiology
- Knowledge of terminology associated with common pathologies
- Knowledge of normal and abnormal structures and functions of the respiratory, cardiovascular, urogenital, reproductive, nervous, integumentary, and musculoskeletal systems
- Ability to recognize abnormalities in the above systems (e.g., diarrhea, nausea, bleeding, vomiting)

**A 2 (c): Orthopedic evaluation**

- Knowledge of normal and abnormal structure and function of musculoskeletal system
- Knowledge of the causes of motor dysfunction (e.g., ligament injury, muscle or joint dysfunction)

**A 2 (c) (1): Measurement of strength**

- Knowledge of muscle grading scale
- Ability to assess muscle strength

**A 2 (c) (2):** Reproduction of pain or other signs that reproduces symptoms

- Knowledge of pain patterns (sharp stabbing, dull aching, etc.)
- Ability to discriminate pain patterns (referred pain, local pain)
- Ability to palpate painful structures for patterns of tenderness
- Ability to assess intensity of pain (e.g., visual analog scale, numerical scale)

**A 2 (c) (3):** Trigger and motor points

- Knowledge of the theory of trigger and motor points

**A 2 (c) (4):** Assessment of range of motion

- Knowledge of range of motion associated with each joint
- Ability to recognize normal range of motion and comprehend the implications of an abnormal range of motion

**A 2 (d): Neurological evaluation**

- Knowledge of central and peripheral nervous system (e.g., brain, autonomic, spinal cord, peripheral nerves)
- Ability to distinguish upper from lower motor neuron lesions (e.g., increase or decrease reflexes; flaccid or rigid muscles)
- Knowledge of normal and abnormal neurological functions (e.g., motor, sensory, cognitive functions; reflexes, balance and coordination) and when to make appropriate referrals
- Ability to perform a reflex assessment
- Ability to recognize gross changes in cognitive function (e.g., confusion, disorientation)
- Ability to recognize alterations in balance and coordination
- Ability to recognize altered sensory functions (e.g., light touch and pin-prick sensation)
- Ability to recognize altered motor function (e.g., muscle weakness)

**A 2 (e): Diagnostic testing**

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**A 2 (e) (1):** Imaging studies

- Knowledge of commonly used medical imaging studies (e.g., x-ray, MRI, CT, PET, colonoscopy, cystoscopy, bronchoscopy, etc.)
- Ability to read and understand the impression section of medical imaging reports
- Ability to understand the relevance of imaging findings to the patient's medical condition

**A 2 (e) (2):** \*Laboratory studies

- Knowledge of commonly used medical laboratory studies (complete blood count, basic metabolic panel, urinalysis, liver panel, cardiac panel, thyroid panel, pregnancy test)  
*\*average (reference) ranges will not be tested*
- Ability to understand the relevance of laboratory findings to the patient's medical condition
- Understand the terminology associated with abnormal laboratory values (e.g., anemia, thrombocytopenia, neutropenia, leukocytosis, etc.)

**Sub Domain 3: Ominous signs and patient referral (15%)**

- Knowledge of ominous signs
- Understand the need for emergency referral
- Knowledge of when to refer to a Western medical practitioner

**A 3 (a): Medical**

- Ability to recognize and manage signs and symptoms that require co-management and/or referral (e.g., anaphylaxis, cardiac arrest, fainting, respiratory arrest, bleeding, cancer, etc.)

**A 3 (b): Mental health**

- Ability to recognize symptoms and signs of mental and/or emotional disorders (e.g., suicide, eating disorders, etc.) and make appropriate referral

**A 3 (c): Abuse**

- Ability to recognize potential signs of abuse (e.g., domestic, sexual, elder, child)

and make appropriate referral

**Domain B: Pharmaceuticals and Supplementations (15% of total exam)**

**Sub Domain B1: Pharmaceuticals**

**B 1 (a): Classification of prescription and non-prescription (OTC) medications**

- Knowledge of major classifications and sub-classifications (e.g., anticoagulants, antidepressants, antibiotics, antilipidemic, antihypertensive, diuretics, corticosteroids, hormones, narcotics, drugs of abuse)
- Ability to reference medications according to brand or generic names

**B 1 (b): Common mechanisms of action, action and side effects of prescription and non-prescription (OTC) medications, including drugs of abuse**

- Knowledge of actions and common side effects of major drug categories (e.g., SSRI, beta-blockers, opiates, amphetamines)
- Knowledge of mechanisms of major categories (e.g., SSRI, loop diuretic, beta-blocker)
- Ability to reference common actions, precautions and side effects
- Ability to recognize adverse drug reactions and make appropriate referral
- Knowledge of routes of administration (e.g., intravenous, oral, subcutaneous)
- Knowledge of the effects of the use of tobacco, alcohol, and street drugs

**Sub Domain B2: Supplements**

**B 2 (a): Classification of dietary supplements**

- Knowledge of major classifications (e.g., vitamins, minerals, amino acids, anti-oxidants)
- Ability to reference supplements to a reliable source

**B 2 (b): Known mechanisms of action and side effects of supplements**

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- Knowledge of actions and common side effects of major categories (e.g., fat soluble, water soluble vitamins, phyto-estrogens, minerals)
- Ability to reference common actions and side effects
- Ability to recognize signs and symptoms associated with excess or deficient states
- Ability to recognize adverse reactions to supplements (e.g., diarrhea associated with ascorbic acid, niacin flush)

**Domain C: Safety (15% of total exam)**

**Sub Domain C1: CPR and office emergencies**

- Knowledge of CPR
- Ability to perform CPR
- Ability to manage office emergencies

**Sub Domain C2: Bloodborne pathogens and communicable diseases**

- Knowledge of bloodborne and airborne pathogens (e.g., HBV, HCV, HIV)
- Knowledge of communicable diseases (e.g. airborne, oral-fecal, vector)
- Knowledge of infectious diseases (e.g., Methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, Vancomycin resistant *Enterococci* (VRE))
- Knowledge of universal precautions
- Ability to apply universal precautions
- Knowledge of accidental needle-stick protocol

**Domain D: Practice Management Issues (15% of total exam)**

**Sub Domain D1: Legal and ethical issues**

**D 1 (a): Federal and state regulations**

**D 1 (a) (1): Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)**

- Knowledge of applicable federal and state requirements (e.g., use of biohazard containers)
- Ability to follow rules, regulations and reporting

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**D 1 (a) (2):** Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

- Knowledge of HIPAA compliance requirements

**D 1 (a) (3):** Reporting requirements

- Knowledge of mandated reportable conditions (e.g., elder and child abuse, infectious diseases, bioterrorism)
- Knowledge to report in accordance with state laws

**D 1 (a) (4):** Business operations

- Knowledge of state/city requirements
- Knowledge of the definition and purpose of ICD codes
- Knowledge of the definition and purpose of CPT codes
- Knowledge of insurance requirements (e.g., general liability, malpractice insurance)
- Ability to comply with local, state, and federal laws (e.g., taxation, business license, fire and safety codes)

**D 1 (a) (5):** Maintenance of proper medical records

- Knowledge of the components of various formats of medical records and report writing (e.g., SOAP notes, progress report, etc.)
- Ability to appropriately chart treatments, progress and document adverse events
- Ability to maintain medical records in accordance with the law
- Ability to write medical and legal reports

**D 1 (a) (6):** Licensure requirements

- Knowledge of state laws and rules
- Ability to complete and maintain license and certification requirements

**D 1 (b): Ethical issues**

- Knowledge of NCCAOM Code of Ethics and awareness of other codes of ethics (e.g., professional boundaries, informed consent, advertisement)

**Sub Domain D2: Other practice management issues**

**D 2 (a): Communication with patients and other professionals (e.g., third party payers, other healthcare providers, attorneys, etc.)**

- Knowledge of medical terminology
- Ability to communicate effectively (e.g., use of appropriate language)

**D 2 (b): NCCAOM rules and regulations**

- Knowledge of NCCAOM rules and regulations
- Ability to comply with policies (e.g., self reporting disciplinary action, record update, CEU)

## **The Foundations of Oriental Medicine Expanded Content Outline (Effective January 1, 2010)**

Note to Candidate: This document serves as a guide to assist in examination preparation for candidates who have met NCCAOM eligibility requirements. Below is the content outline for the Foundations of Oriental Medicine examination along with the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA) statements.

### **Domain A: Diagnostic Examination (25% of total exam)**

Using Traditional Oriental Diagnostic Methods to Determine Physiological Status and Pathologies

#### **Sub Domain A1: Looking (observing and examining) (Wang)**

##### **A 1 (a): Spirit (Shen)**

- Knowledge of the concept of Shen (Spirit) including terminology, functions, relations with the organs and meridians and vital substances (Qi, essence, blood, etc.)
- Knowledge of manifestations of pathologies of Shen and associated patterns of disharmony
- Ability to identify patterns of disharmony based on observations of the Shen (Spirit)
- Ability to assess Shen (Spirit) by observing outward manifestation

##### **A 1 (b): Face, complexion, and luster**

- Knowledge of associations of the face with the organs, meridians, Shen (Spirit), and other vital substances (Qi, blood, essence, body fluid)
- Knowledge of pathological manifestations of color, moisture, texture, and organ-indicative locations and their associated patterns of disharmony
- Ability to observe and assess normal and/or abnormal conditions and changes of the face and complexion

##### **A 1 (c): Tongue (body and coating)**

- Knowledge of associations of the tongue with the organs, meridians, and vital

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substances (Qi, blood, essence, body fluid)

- Knowledge of normal and/or abnormal manifestations and patterns of the tongue and sub-lingual area
- Knowledge of pathological manifestations of the tongue and tongue coating including color, size, moisture, texture, shape, position, state of movement, organ-indicative locations, and their associated patterns
- Ability to observe and assess normal and/or abnormal conditions and changes of the tongue

**A 1 (d): Eyes, nose, mouth, lips, teeth, and throat**

- Knowledge of associations of the eyes, nose, mouth, lips, teeth and throat with the organs, meridians, Shen (Spirit), and vital substances (Qi, blood, essence, body fluid)
- Knowledge of pathological manifestations of the eyes including color, moisture, states of movement, and their associated patterns of disharmony
- Knowledge of pathological manifestations of nose, mouth, lips, teeth and throat, including associated patterns of disharmony
- Ability to observe and assess normal and/or abnormal conditions and changes of the eyes, nose, mouth, lips, teeth and throat
- Ability to evaluate Shen of patient by observing outward manifestation

**A 1 (e): Auricular characteristics**

- Knowledge of associations of the auricular characteristics with the organs, meridians, and vital substances (Qi, blood, essence, body fluid, Shen . spirit)
- Knowledge of normal and/or abnormal manifestations and patterns of auricle
- Knowledge and ability to identify clinically significant points on the auricle
- Ability to assess and identify normal and/or abnormal conditions and changes of auricle

**A 1 (f): Physical characteristics (movement, weight, expression/demeanor, and general behavior)**

- Knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) theory regarding physical characteristics (movement, weight, expression/demeanor and general behavior)

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- Knowledge of pathological significance of physical characteristics (movement, weight, expression/demeanor and general behavior)
- Ability to observe and assess physical characteristics

**A 1 (g): Skin, flesh, hair, scalp, and nails**

- Knowledge of associations of the skin condition and characteristics with the organs, meridians, and vital substances (Qi, blood, essence, body fluid, Shen . spirit)
- Knowledge of associations of hair, scalp, and nails with the organs, meridians and vital substances (Qi, blood, essence, body fluid, etc.)
- Knowledge of normal and/or abnormal manifestations and patterns of the skin
- Knowledge of symptoms and signs of hair, scalp, and nails (including color, moisture, texture, growth, strength, etc.)
- Ability to assess and identify normal and/or abnormal conditions and changes of the skin
- Ability to examine and assess the symptoms and signs of the hair, scalp, and nails

**A 1 (h): Head, torso, abdomen, limbs, hands and feet**

- Knowledge of associations of the head, torso, abdomen, limbs, hands and feet with the meridians, organs, bones, muscles, sinews, skin regions of organs
- Knowledge of symptoms and signs of the head, torso, abdomen, limbs, hands and feet concerning pain, sensation, structure, range of motion, muscles, sinews, bones
- Knowledge of the symptoms and signs of the head, torso, abdomen, limbs, hands and feet with patterns
- Ability to examine and assess the head, torso, abdomen, limbs, hands and feet to identify the symptoms and signs
- Knowledge of the association of abdominal symptoms and signs with patterns of disharmony
- Ability to examine and assess the abdomen to identify the symptoms and signs

**A 1 (i): Secretions and excretions (sweat, urine, stool, phlegm, etc.)**

- Knowledge of normal and abnormal secretions and excretions (phlegm, sputum, saliva, sweat, discharge, stool, urine, etc.) and their origin, production, formation, patterns, pathological influences, involved organs and meridians
- Knowledge of the natures and pathological patterns of secretions and excretions (phlegm, sputum, saliva, sweat, discharge, stool, urine, etc.)
- Ability to examine and assess secretions and excretions to determine pathologies

**Sub Domain A2: Listening and smelling (Wen)**

**A 2 (a): Respiratory sounds**

- Knowledge of associations of the respiratory sounds with the organs, meridians, and vital substances (Qi, blood, body fluids, etc.)
- Knowledge of symptoms, pathology and patterns of respiratory sounds
- Ability to listen to and assess respiratory sounds to identify patterns of disharmony

**A 2 (b): Tonal qualities, strength of voice and speech (quality, manner, pattern, contents)**

- Knowledge of associations of the voice with the organs, meridians, and vital substances (Qi, blood, body fluid)
- Knowledge of associations of the speech (quality, manner, pattern, contents), with the organs, meridians, Shen, and vital substances (Qi, essence, blood, body fluid)
- Knowledge of symptoms, pathology and patterns of the tonal quality and strength of the voice, abnormal speech (quality, manner, pattern, contents)
- Ability to listen to and assess disorders of the voice and speech (quality, manner, pattern, themes, contents)
- Ability to evaluate tone and strength of vocal and speech using Five Element theory

**A 2 (c): Abdominal sounds and joint sounds**

- Knowledge of associations of the abdominal sounds with the functions and dysfunctions of the organs and meridians regarding Qi movement, food digestive process, and water metabolism
- Knowledge of association of the joint sounds with the functions and dysfunctions of the organs, meridians, related muscles, sinews, body fluid, essence, and blood
- Knowledge of patterns regarding abnormal abdominal sounds
- Ability to listen to and assess abdominal sounds to identify the patterns
- Ability to assess joint sounds

**A 2 (d): Body, breath and mouth odor**

- Knowledge of associations of body odors with functions and dysfunctions of the organs, meridians, water metabolism, food digestion, and external and internal pathogenic factors
- Ability to assess general body odor to identify patterns of disharmony
- Knowledge of body odor in relation to pathogenic factor according to five element theory
- Knowledge of associations of breath and mouth odor with functions and dysfunctions of the organs, meridians, with Qi movement, food digestion, and with external and internal pathogenic factors
- Ability to assess breath and mouth odors
- Ability to identify pathogenic influence by assessing odor of breath, mouth

**A 2 (e): Odor of secretions and excretions**

- Knowledge of associations of odor of secretions and excretions with the functions and dysfunctions of the organs and meridians, with water metabolism, food digestion, and with external and internal pathogenic factors
- Knowledge of patterns of disharmony in regard to abnormal odors of secretions and excretions
- Ability to assess odors of secretions and excretions to identify patterns of disharmony
- Ability to identify pathogenic influence by assessing odor of secretion/excretions

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- Ability to conduct the Smelling Exam of the Four Examinations
- Knowledge of signs and symptoms that can reveal a disharmony, including those not reported by a patient

**Sub Domain A3: Asking (Wen)**

**A 3 (a): Sensations of hot or cold, chills or fever**

- Knowledge of interrelations, etiologies and pathologies of hot, cold, chills and fever
- Knowledge of associations of hot, cold, chills and fever with patterns of disharmony
- Ability to assess hot, cold, chills and fever to determine patterns of disharmony such as external or internal disharmony
- Knowledge of signs and symptoms that can reveal a disharmony, including those not reported by a patient

**A 3 (b): Patterns and nature of perspiration or sweating**

- Knowledge of perspiration or sweating regarding the patterns, natures, physiologies, and pathologies
- Ability to determine if the symptom may indicate need for immediate emergency care

**A 3 (c): Nature, intensity, and location of pain, discomfort, or sensations (e.g., fatigue, heaviness, dizziness, numbness, tingling, etc.)**

- Knowledge of the identifications and differentiations of various kinds of pain and abnormal sensations
- Knowledge of the pathologies, patterns of disharmonies of pain, discomfort, numbness or tingling
- Ability to determine affected meridians or Zang-Fu
- Ability to determine if the nature of pain or sensation may indicate need for referral or immediate emergency care

**A 3 (d): Secretions and excretions (sweat, mucus, sputum, etc.)**

- Knowledge of secretions and excretions (phlegm, sputum, saliva, etc.)

regarding the origin, production, formation, pathological influence, involved organs and meridians

- Knowledge of the natures and pathological patterns of secretions and excretions (phlegm, sputum, saliva, etc.) according to the color, thickness, odor, combination with blood

**A 3 (e): Sleep patterns and difficulties**

- Knowledge of sleep regarding the physiology, pathology and abnormal patterns

**A 3 (f): Thirst, appetite, digestion, including temperature and taste preference of beverages and foods**

- Knowledge of the physiology, pathology and abnormal patterns of appetite, thirst, and related patterns of disharmony

**A 3 (g): Preferences and cravings for tastes or flavors (e.g., salty, sour, sweet, pungent, bitter, bland, etc.)**

- Knowledge of preferences and cravings for tastes and flavors and their association with physiology, pathology and abnormal patterns

**A 3 (h): Musculoskeletal conditions**

- Knowledge of the physiology and pathology of musculoskeletal system
- Ability to determine affected meridians or Zang-Fu

**A 3 (i): Abdominal conditions and bowel elimination (e.g., difficulty and frequency, gassiness, constipation, diarrhea, etc.) and characteristics of stool**

- Knowledge of the normal process of digestion regarding the functions and cooperation of the organs involved
- Knowledge of common physiology, pathology and patterns of bowel movements
- Knowledge of identifications of abdominal bloating or distress based on the locations and dysfunctions of the organs, and on causative pathogens
- Knowledge of the physiology, pathology and patterns of the stool

characteristics

- Ability to determine if the nature of the abdominal conditions and bowel movements may indicate need for immediate emergency care

**A 3 (j): Urination (e.g., difficulty, frequency, pain, etc.), characteristics of urine and urogenital conditions**

- Knowledge of common physiology, pathology and patterns of urine, urination and urogenital conditions
- Ability to determine if the nature of the symptom may indicate need for referral or immediate emergency care

**A 3 (k): Sexual and reproductive health**

- Knowledge of female and male reproductive systems regarding the related organs, meridians, physiology and pathology
- Knowledge of menstruation, pregnancy and obstetrics regarding the physiology, pathology, symptoms, and patterns of disharmony
- Knowledge of the mechanisms and effects of commonly used birth control methods
- Knowledge of libido and sexual activity; onset, timing, and characteristics of menstruation/menopause; vaginal conditions, gynecological and obstetric history, including birth control methods, pregnancies, births and surgeries
- Knowledge, ability and skill to appropriately inquire about sexual issues
- Knowledge of pregnancy regarding the physiology, pathology, symptoms and patterns of disharmony
- Knowledge of the effect of the different stages of pregnancy on the body and treatment precautions
- Knowledge of concurrent medical treatment relative to pregnancy
- Ability to determine if the nature of the symptom may indicate need for referral or immediate emergency care

**A 3 (l): Pediatric issues and geriatric issues**

- Knowledge of physiology, pathology and symptomology specific to pediatric and geriatric issues

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- Ability to evaluate the development of the child (e.g., standing, walking, speaking, teeth, fontanel)
- Ability to evaluate activities of daily living in geriatric patients
- Ability to evaluate excretions and secretions
- Ability to evaluate unusual behaviors and movements (e.g., seizures, slurred speech)
- Ability to evaluate cognition
- Ability to evaluate support system (e.g., spiritual, social, medical, financial)

**A 3 (m): Respiratory conditions**

- Knowledge of respiratory conditions including breathing and chest constriction regarding the organs and meridians involved, the physiological and pathological factors, and relations with patterns of disharmony
- Ability to determine if the nature of the symptom may indicate need for referral or immediate emergency care

**A 3 (n): Ears, eyes, nose, mouth, lips, throat, and teeth**

- Knowledge of associations of the ear, eyes, nose, mouth, lips, throat, and teeth with organs, meridians, vital materials (Qi, blood, essence, yin and yang, etc.)
- Knowledge of hearing, vision, and functions of nose, mouth, lips, throat, and teeth regarding the physiology, pathology, symptoms and patterns of disharmony
- Knowledge of patterns and pathologies that give rise to tinnitus, vision problems and dysfunctions of nose, mouth, lips, throat, and teeth
- Knowledge of patterns of disharmony of the ears, eyes, nose, mouth, lips, throat, and teeth
- Ability to determine if the nature of the symptom may indicate need for referral or immediate emergency care

**A 3 (o): Skin conditions**

- Knowledge of association of the skin condition with organs, meridians, vital substances (Qi, blood, body fluid, yin, yang, etc.)
- Knowledge of patterns of disharmony that is associated with skin diseases

including etiology and pathology

**A 3 (p): Emotions, cognitive abilities and lifestyles**

- Ability to recognize signs of cognitive difficulties
- Knowledge of the associations of the emotions and spirit with the organs and meridians
- Knowledge of the associations of cognitive processes with the organs, vital substances and meridians
- Ability to recognize potential signs of emotional instability
- Knowledge of and ability to recognize symptoms and signs of mental and/or emotional conditions and discuss the matter with the patient
- Knowledge of appropriate amounts of rest and activity, and the benefits of stress management activities
- Knowledge of influence on health from occupational and recreational activities, living situation, family, community support, etc.
- Skill and ability to organize the patient's medical history in a standard format appropriate for reporting significant medical status details to other healthcare providers
- Knowledge of and ability to recognize potential signs of trauma, domestic violence, sexual abuse, elder abuse, etc.

**A 3 (q): Weight loss/gain**

- Knowledge of the clinical significance of weight gain or loss

**Sub Domain A4: Touching (palpation) (Qie)**

**A 4 (a): Radial pulses, using traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) practice**

- Knowledge of locations and association of radial pulses with organs, meridians, and vital substances (Qi, blood, essence, Shen, etc.)
- Knowledge of qualities of radial pulse (including speed, depth, strength, and shape) as indicators of patterns of disharmony and of normal and abnormal states of organ and meridian function

**A 4 (b): Areas of tenderness**

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- Knowledge of patterns of pathology/disharmony and patterns of disharmony indicated by pain, body sensations (e.g., numbness, tingling, sensitivity), temperature changes, or quality of tissue (e.g., hard/soft, supple/brittle)
- Ability to conduct the Touching Exam of the Four Examinations

**A 4 (c): Abdomen according to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and/or Japanese practices**

- Knowledge of the abdominal location of zones or divisions representing organs and meridians
- Knowledge of the normal condition of the abdomen
- Knowledge of symptoms and signs of the abdominal zones or divisions indicative of etiological factors (six pathogenic factors, Qi and blood stagnation, food retention, phlegm, emotions, trauma), dysfunctions of the organs and meridians, and neoplasm
- Knowledge of the normal condition of the abdomen
- Knowledge of traditional Japanese practice of hara diagnosis
- Ability to conduct the Touching Exam of the Four Examinations
- Knowledge of the symptomatic patterns of abdomen concerning the locations and meridians/organs, deficiency and excess (kyo and jitsu), yin and yang, according to traditional Japanese practice (hara diagnosis)

**A 4 (d): Acupuncture channels and points (e.g., pathway, mu, shu, xi, ashi)**

- Knowledge of acupuncture points regarding normal and abnormal levels of the presence of Qi and blood, and the diagnostic indications of specific points regarding the related meridians and organs
- Knowledge of sensations of acupuncture points regarding etiology, pathology and indications of patterns of disharmony
- Skill and ability to palpate the points at the appropriate levels to assess the patient's condition
- Ability to distinguish qualities in the points (e.g., temperature, Qi level, empty or full, and the different levels in appropriate points)
- Knowledge of the anatomical locations of the pathways of meridians, related meridians and organs, normal and abnormal levels of the presence of Qi and blood

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- Ability to assess the condition of the meridians with regard to tenderness, pain and abnormal sensation (e.g., numbness, tingling, sensitivity), quality of tissue (e.g., hard/soft, supple/brittle) and temperature

**Domain B: Assessment and Analysis - Differentiation and Diagnosis**  
(40% of total exam)

**Sub Domain B1: Fundamental theory of traditional Chinese medicine**

**B 1 (a): Yin Yang**

- Knowledge of the principles of Yin and Yang including definitions, associations and applications
- Knowledge of Yin and Yang pathologies and their manifestations
- Ability to recognize and categorize symptoms according to Yin Yang theory
- Ability to organize the patient's signs and symptoms into distinct patterns
- Ability to identify the disease pattern or category that most accurately encompasses and explains the patient's signs and symptoms

**B 1 (b): Five Elements (Five Phases/Wu Xing)**

- Knowledge of Five Element theory including correspondences, cycles, applications to physiology and relations to organs and meridians
- Knowledge of Five Element pathologies and their manifestations
- Ability to evaluate signs and symptoms based upon to Five Elements theory

**B 1 (c): Essential substances (Qi, Blood/Xue, Fluids/Jin-Ye, Essence/Jing)**

- Knowledge of the theory of Essential substances (Qi, Blood, Fluids/Jin-Ye, Essence/Jing) including, patterns, physiological functions, formation, interrelationships and relationships with organs and meridians
- Ability to recognize and categorize symptoms according to Essential substance patterns and theory

**B 1 (d): Spirit/Shen**

- Knowledge of the theory of Spirit/Shen including, patterns, functions, formation, interrelationships and relationships with organs and meridians

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- Ability to recognize and categorize symptoms according to patterns and theory

**B 1 (e): Channel theory**

- Knowledge of channel theory (Jing-luo) (including Extraordinary channels, Luo-connecting channels, divergent channels, muscle channels, skin regions), including functions, location, and corresponding organs
- Knowledge and ability to recognize and categorize symptoms according to channel theory

**B 1 (f): Organ theory (Zang Fu)**

- Knowledge of Zang-Fu Organ theory including patterns, physiological functions of organs, interrelationships, and correspondences with tissues, fluids, sense organs, emotions, and areas of the body
- Ability to recognize and categorize signs and symptoms according to Zang-Fu theory

**B 1 (g): Pathogenic Factors**

- Knowledge of pathogenic factors (e.g., wind, heat, phlegm, anger, improper diet, etc.) including terminologies, definitions, characteristics, manifestations, interrelationships, and effects on organs, meridians and vital substances
- Ability to recognize and categorize symptoms according to pathogenic factors

**B 1 (h): Mechanisms of disorders (Bing Ji)**

- Knowledge of the theories of the mechanism of disorders (Bing Ji) including the basic pathologic mechanism (Yin and Yang, Evil Qi and Genuine Qi, Qi and Blood, and Body Fluids), the pathological mechanism of exogenous febrile diseases (Six stages, Four Levels, Triple Heater), the pathological mechanism of the five endogenous evils, and the pathological mechanism of the Zang-Fu organs
- Ability to configure the patients' signs and symptoms into patterns and explain their mechanisms

**B 1 (i): Eight Principles (Ba Gang)**

- Knowledge of the Eight Principles including terminology, definitions and characteristics
- Knowledge of Eight Principle pathologies including signs and symptoms and tongue and pulse manifestations
- Ability to evaluate signs and symptoms based upon Eight Principles (Ba Gang) (Yin and Yang, Excess (Shi) and Deficiency (Xu), Interior and Exterior, Heat and Cold)

**B 1 (j): Four Levels (Wei, Qi, Ying, Xue)**

- Knowledge of Four Levels differentiation in relationship to meridians and organs, and interrelationships among Four Levels
- Knowledge of Four Levels pathologies and manifestations
- Ability to recognize and categorize patient symptoms according to Four Levels patterns and theory
- Knowledge of appropriate application of Four Levels differentiation

**B 1 (k): Six Stages differentiation (Shang Han Lun)**

- Knowledge of the theory of Six Stages differentiation (Shang Han Lun) including relationship of six stages to meridians and organs, and interrelationships of the stages
- Knowledge of Six Stage pathologies and manifestations
- Ability to recognize and categorize patient symptoms according to Six Stage patterns and theory
- Knowledge of appropriate application of Six Stage differentiation

**B 1 (l): Triple Heater (San Jiao) differentiation**

- Knowledge of San Jiao differentiation in relationship to meridians and organs, and interrelationships among San Jiao
- Knowledge of San Jiao pathologies and manifestations
- Ability to recognize and categorize patient symptoms according to San Jiao patterns and theory

**B 1 (m): Circadian rhythms (body clock) and/or time of day**

- Knowledge of associations of the time of day and the circadian rhythms with the dominance and weakness of the organs, meridians and acupuncture points as they affect the circulation of Qi and blood, and the balance of yin and yang
- Knowledge of impacts of the time of day and the circadian rhythms on the body, diseases and treatment

**Sub Domain B2: Identification of patient's chief complaint(s) (Zhu Su)**

- Ability to prioritize signs and symptoms
- Knowledge of the distinctions among the patient's chief complaint, general symptoms and the key syndrome (Zhu Zheng)

**Sub Domain B3: Identification of key syndrome (Zhu Zheng) and Pattern**

**Differentiation (Bian Zheng)**

- Ability to prioritize signs and symptoms
- Knowledge of the distinctions among the patient's chief complaint, general symptoms and the key syndrome (Zhu Zheng)
- Knowledge of the pattern differentiation (e.g., Eight Principle, Zang-Fu, Five Element, Vital Substance, Pathogenic Factor and Channel Patterns)
- Knowledge of signs and symptoms and their associated patterns

**Sub Domain B4: Disease diagnosis according to Oriental medicine (Bian Bing)**

- Knowledge of disease categories of Chinese Medicine (cough, asthma, bi syndrome, lin bing, etc.)
- Ability to form a diagnostic impression of disease based upon signs and symptoms

**Domain C: Treatment Principle, Treatment Strategy, Disease Prevention, and Patient Education (35% of total exam)**

**Sub Domain C1: Formulate treatment principle and strategy based upon:**

- Knowledge and ability to formulate treatment principle
- Knowledge of when to use which therapeutic approach
- Knowledge of the contraindications of various modalities

**C 1 (a): Oriental medicine disease diagnosis (Bian Bing) and pattern differentiation (Bian Zheng)**

- Knowledge of Eight Principles theory
- Ability to determine and formulate treatment principle based upon Eight Principles theory
- Knowledge of Five Elements theory
- Ability to determine and formulate treatment principle based upon Five Elements theory

**C 1 (b): Constitutional strength and weakness**

- Knowledge of impact of constitutional strength/weakness on diseases and treatment

**C 1 (c): Emotional/spiritual factors**

- Ability to consider patient's emotional/spiritual focus in formulating treatment strategy
- Knowledge of emotional/spiritual correlations with physical manifestations

**C 1 (d): Seasonal/environmental factors**

- Knowledge of impacts of seasonal and environmental factors on diseases and treatment
- Knowledge of the relevance of seasonal and environmental factors to health

**C 1 (e): Root and branch theory**

- Ability to distinguish between root symptoms and branch symptoms
- Knowledge of root and branch theory relative to treatment principle

**Sub Domain C2: Adjustment of treatment strategy, including consideration of patient's (also applies to C2a – C2e)**

- Knowledge of adverse effects, allergies and therapeutic contraindications associated with medications
- Knowledge of the healing process

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- Ability to recognize positive and negative changes after treatment, and to understand their mechanisms
- Ability to make appropriate modifications to treatment plan based upon variations in patient's progress

**C 2 (a): Concurrent therapies and use of medications and supplements**

- Knowledge of drug, drug-herb, and drug-food interactions
- Knowledge of impact of patient's age (for example, neonates, geriatrics) in evaluating drug and no-drug therapy
- Ability to determine how medication and supplement use may impact patient's treatment compliance
- Ability to determine how medication and supplement use may impact patient's response to treatment

**C 2 (b): Substance use, including smoking, alcohol, and recreational drugs**

- Knowledge of the physiological effects of smoking, alcohol and substance abuse
- Knowledge of the challenges and strategies of treatment for substance abuse
- Knowledge of the effect of alcohol, tobacco and recreational drugs on the body according to Chinese medical principles
- Ability to determine how substance use may impact patient's treatment compliance
- Ability to determine how substance use may impact patient's response to treatment

**C 2 (c): Mental and/or emotional factors and significant life events**

- Knowledge of emotional/spiritual correlations with physical manifestations
- Ability to determine how mental/emotional factors use may impact patient's treatment compliance
- Ability to determine how mental/emotional factors may impact patient's response to treatment

**C 2 (d): Living circumstances, and family and social or other support systems**

- Knowledge of information to be obtained from patient's representative (for example demographic information, allergies, etc.)
- Ability to determine how living circumstances and support systems (or lack thereof) may impact patient's treatment compliance
- Ability to determine how living circumstances and support systems (or lack thereof) may impact patient's response to treatment

**C 2 (e): Progress or response to treatment**

- Knowledge of normal and abnormal progression of healing process
- Ability to adjust treatment based on progression of healing process
- Ability to obtain appropriate information regarding onset, frequency, severity, duration and functional changes, aggravation and amelioration, and response to the treatment including both conventional and alternative medicine
- Knowledge of oriental medical treatments for health conditions and expected changes in symptoms

**Sub Domain C3: Disease prevention and patient education**

**C 3 (a): Oriental medicine theory**

- Knowledge of theories of Chinese medicine
- Ability to communicate appropriate information for the patient's level of understanding and experience

**C 3 (b): Healing process and progression**

- Ability to summarize the healing process in terms of the patient's condition
- Knowledge of the healing process for the patient's condition
- Ability to assess the progress of the patient's condition
- Knowledge of the changes to be expected in the healing process and how to evaluate them
- Ability to communicate information appropriate to the patient's condition and level of understanding and experience, including any important changes in health status

**C 3 (c): Dietary principles (Oriental and Western)**

- Knowledge of Oriental medicine and/or Western medicine dietary principles
- Ability to communicate information appropriate to the patient's condition and level of understanding

**C 3 (d): Relaxation, breathing, meditation, exercise, and body mechanics**

- Knowledge of relaxation, meditation and/or breathing techniques, TaiJi, Qigong including precautions
- Ability to demonstrate and facilitate relaxation, meditation and/or breathing techniques appropriate to the patient's condition
- Ability to instruct the patients in relaxation, meditation and/or breathing techniques, TaiJi, Qigong appropriate to their condition

**C 3 (e): Lifestyle recommendations and self-treatment techniques**

- Knowledge of the effects of lifestyle on the patient's condition
- Ability to communicate appropriate information for the patient's level of understanding and experience
- Knowledge of self-acupressure, self-massage and other self-help techniques
- Ability to demonstrate self-acupressure, self-massage and other self-help techniques appropriate to the patient's condition

## **The Chinese Herbology Examination Expanded Content Outline (Effective in 2010)**

Note to Candidate: This document serves as a guide to assist in examination preparation for candidates who have met NCCAOM eligibility requirements. Below is the content outline for the Chinese Herbology examination, along with the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA) statements.

### **Domain A: Herbal Safety And Professional Preparations (10% of Examination)**

#### **Sub Domain A1: Safe practices of Chinese herbal medicine**

##### **A 1 (a): Identify precautions and contraindications**

- Knowledge of Chinese herbs
- Knowledge of safe practice of Chinese herbal medicine
- Skills to prescribe Chinese herbal medicine
- Skills to prepare, handle Chinese herbal medicine
- Ability to prescribe Chinese herbal medicine

##### **A 1 (b): Side effects of herbal medicines**

- Knowledge of basic side effects of medications
- Skills to recognize basic side effects of herbal medicines
- Ability to assess interactions of legal vs. illegal drugs
- Ability to prevent side effects of basic herbal medicines

##### **A 1 (c): Herb-drug interactions**

- Knowledge of herb-drug interactions
- Knowledge of patient herb and drug use
- Skills to identify herb-drug interactions
- Ability to recognize, diagnosis, and prevent herb-drug interactions

#### **Sub Domain A2: Maintain an herbal dispensary of raw herbs and/or granules**

- Knowledge of common dosages for granules/powders
- Knowledge of granules/powders

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- Skills to maintain storage of granules/powders
- Skills to understand concentration ratio of granules/powders
- Skills to assess GMP standards concerning formulas
- Ability to properly dose granules/powders for individual patients
- Ability to equate measurements with ratio of ingredients and dosage

**Sub Domain A3: Maintain patent medicine herbal dispensary**

- Knowledge of how to prescribe indications and ingredients of commonly used patent medicines
- Knowledge of storage procedures for patent medicines
- Skills to diagnosis patients condition according to TCM theory
- Ability to prescribe patent medicine for individual patient

**Sub Domain A4: Manage inventory of herbal products**

- Knowledge of laws and regulations concerning storage of herbal products
- Knowledge of basic inventory management
- Skills to manage inventory
- Ability to keep inventory products fresh and in good quality

**Sub Domain A5: Maintain medical records of patients, including medications**

- Knowledge of patients medical history, medication use and/or illegal drug usage
- Knowledge of toxicity of Chinese Herbs
- Knowledge to create herbal medical records, including returned products, side effects, and communications
- Skills to maintain herbal medical records
- Skills to maintain patient profiles
- Ability to maintain patient profiles
- Ability to assess interactions of legal vs. illegal drugs
- Ability to maintain good herbal medical records

**Sub Domain A6: Identification of herbal products**

- Knowledge of the quality and medicinal characteristics of herbal products (e.g., aroma, flavor, preparation)
- Knowledge of standard species of herbs

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- Skills to assess characteristics of herbal products
- Ability to identify characteristics of herbal products

**Sub Domain A7: Evaluation of quality of herbs and herbal products**

- Knowledge of GMP standards and products manufactured with GMP standards
- Knowledge of contaminants
- Knowledge of testing procedures for contaminants
- Knowledge of Certificates of Analysis from herbal suppliers
- Knowledge to evaluate purchased herbs for quality including GMP standards
- Skills to assess quality of herbal products
- Skills to assess the quality of purchased herbs
- Ability to identify and use quality herbals
- Ability to identify products manufactured with GMP standards
- Ability to obtain information about testing procedures for contaminants from herb suppliers
- Ability to request a Certificate of Analysis from herbal suppliers
- Ability to prevent using contaminated herbs

**Sub Domain A8: Identify products containing endangered species**

- Knowledge of endangered species
- Knowledge of products containing endangered species
- Knowledge of substitutions for individual endangered species
- Knowledge of what to substitute for products containing endangered species
- Skills to avoid products containing endangered species
- Ability to identify products containing endangered species

**Sub Domain A9: Maintain herbal dispensary supplies and environment (e.g., tools, scales, etc.)**

- Knowledge of use of scales in preparation of herbal formulas
- Knowledge of recording dates for scale calibration
- Knowledge of scale calibrations
- Knowledge of regulations/laws related to scale calibrations
- Knowledge of bowls used to prepare herbal formulas

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- Knowledge of different types of bowls for herbal formula use (e.g., plastic, glass, marble, etc)
- Knowledge of bowl preparation (pre) for herbal formulas
- Knowledge of sanitation rules and regulations
- Skills to maintain bowls for herbal preparations
- Skills to keep office records
- Skills to prepare scale for measurements
- Ability to measure herbs accurately
- Ability to maintain good business management
- Ability to maintain bowls for herbal preparations

### **Sub Domain A10: Monitor stored herbs for contamination**

- Knowledge of monitoring herbs for contamination (e.g., mold, rancidity, infestation, etc.)
- Skills to assess the contamination of herbs
- Ability to monitor herbs for contamination
- Ability to prevent contamination

### **Sub Domain A11: Monitor herbs and herbal products for expiration dates**

- Knowledge to monitor herbs and prepared products for expiration dates
- Skills to monitor herbal supply for freshness
- Ability to monitor herbal supply for freshness

### **Sub Domain 12A: Storage of herbs and herbal products**

- Knowledge of herbs and herbal products storage techniques
- Skills to provide the proper storage of herbs
- Ability to provide proper storage for herbs

### **Sub Domain 13A: Maintain records of discarded products**

- Knowledge of maintaining records/reports of discards of herbs
- Knowledge of business management
- Knowledge to create records/reports of discards
- Skills to maintain medical records
- Skills to create records/reports of discards

- Ability to maintain good medical/business management

**Domain B: Herbs, Herbal Formulas and Prescriptions (75% of Examination)**

**Sub Domain B1: Prescribe and dispense Chinese herbs for individual patients**

**B 1 (a): Tastes, properties, direction, and channels entered of individual Chinese herbs**

- Knowledge of tastes, properties, direction, and channels entered of individual Chinese herbs
- Knowledge to understand implications of disease states in the prescribing of Chinese herbs
- Skills to prescribe and dispense herbal formulations
- Skills to apply precautions and contraindications to each individual situation
- Skills to modify formulas for individual patients
- Ability to prescribe an herbal formula based on TCM diagnosis
- Ability to modify prescriptions based on the condition of the individual patient

**B 1 (b): Functions and indications of individual Chinese herbs**

- Knowledge of function, indications, precautions and contraindications of individual Chinese herbs
- Knowledge to understand implications of disease states in the prescribing of Chinese herbs
- Skills to prescribe and dispense herbal formulations
- Skills to apply precautions and contraindications to each individual situation
- Skills to modify formulas for individual patients
- Ability to prescribe an herbal formula based on TCM diagnosis
- Ability to modify prescriptions based on the condition of the individual patient

**B 1 (c): Functions and indications of combinations of Chinese herbs**

- Knowledge of function, indications, precautions and contraindications of combinations of Chinese herbs
- Knowledge to understand implications of disease states in the prescribing of Chinese herbs
- Skills to prescribe and dispense herbal formulations

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- Skills to apply precautions and contraindications to each individual situation
- Skills to modify formulas for individual patients
- Ability to prescribe an herbal formula based on TCM diagnosis
- Ability to modify prescriptions based on the condition of the individual patient

**B 1 (d): Treatment strategies (Ba Fa) of Chinese herbal medicine**

- Knowledge of function, indications, precautions and contraindications treatment strategies (Ba Fa) of Chinese herbal medicine
- Skills to modify, provide patient with treatment strategies (Ba Fa) of Chinese herbal medicine
- Ability to utilize treatment strategies (Ba Fa) of Chinese herbal medicine

**B 1 (e): Dynamics of Chinese herbal formulas**

- Knowledge of traditional formula composition in TCM
- Skills to prescribe and dispense herbal formulations
- Skills to apply precautions and contraindications to each individual situation
- Skills to modify formulas for individual patients
- Ability to prescribe an herbal formula based on TCM diagnosis
- Ability to modify prescriptions based on the condition of the individual patient

**B 1 (f): Functions, indications and ingredients of Chinese herbal formulas (see Appendix of Formulas - Reference of common Chinese herbal formulas at end of file)**

- Knowledge of function, indications, precautions and contraindications of Chinese herbal formulas
- Knowledge to understand implications of disease states in the prescribing of Chinese herbs
- Skills to prescribe and dispense herbal formulations
- Skills to apply precautions and contraindications to each individual situation
- Skills to modify formulas for individual patients
- Ability to prescribe an herbal formula based on TCM diagnosis
- Ability to modify prescriptions based on the condition of the individual patient

**Sub Domain B2: Proper administration of herbal prescriptions**

**B 2 (a): Dosage of herbs and formulas**

- Knowledge of the proper dosage for herbs and formulas
- Knowledge of theories and concepts of herbal formulations
- Ability to administer herb and herbal formula preparations
- Skills to teach the patient about correct herbal use and administration
- Skills to provide herbs and herbal formulas to patients

**B 2 (b): Appropriate form of administration**

- Knowledge of appropriate form of administration (e.g., decoction, powder, pills, tinctures, external applications)
- Ability to provide patient with accepted methods to take herbal preparations
- Skills to teach the patient about correct herbal use and administration
- Skills to administer herb and herbal formula preparations

**B 2 (c): Preparation of herbs and herbal formulas**

- Knowledge of preparation of herbs and herbal formulas
- Ability to select proper herbs and herbal formulas
- Skills to prepare herbs and herbal formulas

**Sub Domain B3: Understand expected treatment outcomes and reactions to treatment for individual patients**

- Knowledge to anticipate treatment outcomes and reactions to treatment
- Skills to assess treatment outcomes and reactions to treatment
- Ability to assess treatment outcomes and reactions to treatment

**Sub Domain B4: Differentiate characteristics of Western vs. Chinese medicinal herbs**

- Knowledge of difference between Western herbs and Chinese herbs
- Skills to explain the difference between Western and Chinese herbs for the patient
- Ability to explain the difference between Western and Chinese herbs for the patient

**Domain C: Evaluation And Modification Of Treatment (15% Of Examination)**

**Sub Domain C1: Evaluation and modification of Chinese herbal treatment**

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- Knowledge of safety of herbal treatment
- Knowledge of patient's condition in the on-going course of Chinese herbal treatment
- Knowledge of functions and indications of TCM herbal prescriptions
- Knowledge of concepts and theories of Chinese herbal medicine
- Ability to re-evaluate patient's condition in determining future treatment outcomes
- Ability to modify Chinese herbal treatment based on re-assessment of patient's condition
- Ability to communicate with patients and other health care providers to explain the function and safety of Chinese herbal treatment
- Skills to communicate with patients and other health care providers and explain the function and safety of Chinese herbal treatment
- Skills to re-evaluate patient's condition and modify herbal formulations

**Sub Domain C2: Consult with patient on additional areas of concern**

- Knowledge of additional areas of concern for patients
- Skills to identify and respond to additional areas of concern
- Ability to analyze patient's history
- Ability to adjust treatment after additional areas of concern are noted

**Sub Domain C3: Communicate with patients and other health care providers about Chinese herbal treatment**

- Knowledge of safety of herbal treatment
- Knowledge of concepts and theories of Chinese herbal medicine
- Skills to communicate with patients and other health care providers and explain the function and safety of Chinese herbal treatment
- Ability to communicate with patients and other health care providers to explain the function and safety of Chinese herbal treatment

**Sub Domain C4: Advise patients of potential side-effects, precautions and interactions (e.g., foods, supplements and/or medications)**

- Knowledge of herbs, medications (over the counter and prescribed), and foods
- Knowledge of potential side-effects, precautions and interactions of herbs with other medications (over the counter and prescribed) and foods

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- Skills to teach patients about potential side-effects and interactions between herbs, medications and foods
- Ability to prescribe herbs that also belong to food for patient
- Ability to identify potential side-effects and interactions between herbs, medications and foods

**Sub Domain C5: Use of herbs in dietary therapy and dietary recommendations based on Traditional Chinese Medicine**

- Knowledge to provide patient education about the use of herbs in dietary therapy and dietary recommendations based on TCM
- Knowledge of dietary therapy, including the use of herbs, based on TCM
- Skills to teach the patient about dietary therapy and the use of herbs in dietary therapy based on TCM
- Ability to provide recommendations on dietary therapy and use of herbs in dietary therapy based on TCM

**Sub Domain C6: Use of external herbal applications**

- Knowledge of different forms of external herbal applications
- Knowledge of actions, indications and contraindications for external herbal applications
- Skills to choose the proper external herbal applications for the individual patient
- Skills to educate patients in the use of external herbal applications
- Ability to advise patients in the use of external herbal applications

**Sub Domain C7: Provide patient with copy of the herbal formula prescription**

- Knowledge to prepare an herbal formula prescription
- Knowledge to explain herbal formula prescription to patient
- Skills to provide herbal formula prescription to patient
- Ability to provide herbal formula prescription to patient
- Ability to explain herbal formula prescription to patient

**Appendix of Formulas: Reference of Common Chinese Herbal Formulas**

- Ba Zhen Tang (Eight-Treasure Decoction)
- Ba Zheng San (Eight-Herb Powder for Rectification)
- Bai He Gu Jin Tang (Lily Bulb Decoction to Preserve the Metal)
- Bai Hu Tang (White Tiger Decoction)
- Bai Tou Weng Tang (Pulsatilla Decoction)
- Ban Xia Bai Zhu Tian Ma Tang (Pinellia, Atractylodis Macrocephalae, and Gastrodia Decoction)
- Ban Xia Hou Po Tang (Pinellia and Magnolia Bark Decoction)
- Ban Xia Xie Xin Tang (Pinellia Decoction to Drain the Epigastrium)
- Bao He Wan (Preserve Harmony Pill)
- Bu Yang Huan Wu Tang (Tonify the Yang to Restore Five (Tenths) Decoction)
- Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang (Tonify the Middle and Augment the Qi Decoction)
- Cang Er Zi San (Xanthium Powder)
- Chai Ge Jie Ji Tang (Bupleurum and Kudzu Decoction)
- Chai Hu Shu Gan San (Bupleurum Powder to Spread the Liver)
- Chuan Xiong Cha Tiao San (Ligusticum Chuanxiong Powder to be Taken with Green Tea)
- Da Bu Yin Wan (Great Tonify the Yin Pill)
- Da Chai Hu Tang (Major Bupleurum Decoction)
- Da Cheng Qi Tang (Major Order the Qi Decoction)
- Da Jian Zhong Tang (Major Construct the Middle Decoction)
- Dang Gui Bu Xue Tang (Tangkuei Decoction to Tonify the Blood)
- Dang Gui Liu Huang Tang (Tangkuei and Six-Yellow Decoction)
- Dao Chi San (Guide Out the Red Powder)
- Ding Chuan Tang (Arrest Wheezing Decoction)
- Du Huo Ji Sheng Tang (Angelica Pubescens and Sangjisheng Decoction)
- Du Qi Wan (Capital Qi Pill)
- Er Chen Tang (Two-Cured Decoction)
- Er Miao San (Two-Marvel Powder)
- Er Xian Tang (Two-Immortal Decoction)
- Er Zhi Wan (Two-Ultimate Pill)

NCCAOM EXAMINATION STUDY GUIDE FOR DIPLOMATE IN  
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- Fu Yuan Huo Xue Tang (Revive Health by Invigorating the Blood Decoction)
- Gan Mai Da Zao Tang (Licorice, Wheat, and Jujube Decoction)
- Ge Gen Huang Lian Huang Qin Tang (Kudzu, Coptis, and Scutellaria Decoction)
- Ge Gen Tang (Kudzu Decoction)
- Ge Xia Zhu Yu Tang (Drive Out Blood Stasis Below the Diaphragm Decoction)
- Gui Pi Tang (Restore the Spleen Decoction)
- Gui Zhi Fu Ling Wan (Cinnamon Twig and Poria Pill)
- Gui Zhi Shao Yao Zhi Mu Tang (Cinnamon Twig, Peony, and Anemarrhena Decoction)
- Gui Zhi Tang (Cinnamon Twig Decoction)
- Huang Lian E Jiao Tang (Coptis and Ass-Hide Gelatin Decoction)
- Huang Lian Jie Du Tang (Coptis Decoction to Relieve Toxicity)
- Huo Xiang Zheng Qi San (Agastache Powder to Rectify the Qi)
- Ji Chuan Jian (Benefit the River (Flow) Decoction)
- Juan Bi Tang (Remove Painful Obstruction Decoction from Medical Revelations)
- Jiao Ai Tang (Ass-Hide Gelatin and Mugwort Decoction)
- Jin Gui Shen Qi Wan (Kidney Qi Pill from the Golden Cabinet)
- Jin Suo Gu Jing Wan (Metal Lock Pill to Stabilize the Essence)
- Ju Pi Zhu Ru Tang (Tangerine Peel and Bamboo Shaving Decoction)
- Li Zhong Wan (Regulate the Middle Pill)
- Ling Gui Zhu Gan Tang (Poria, Cinnamon Twig, Atractylodis Macrocephalae and Licorice Decoction)
- Ling Jiao Gou Teng Tang (Antelope Horn and Uncaria Decoction)
- Liu Wei Di Huang Wan (Six-Ingredient Pill with Rehmannia)
- Long Dan Xie Gan Tang (Gentiana Longdancao Decoction to Drain the Liver)
- Ma Huang Tang (Ephedra Decoction)
- Ma Xing Shi Gan Tang (Ephedra, Apricot Kernel, Gypsum and Licorice Decoction)
- Ma Zi Ren Wan (Hemp Seed Pill)
- Mai Men Dong Tang (Ophiopogonis Decoction)
- Mu Li San (Oyster Shell Powder)
- Nuan Gan Jian (Warm the Liver Decoction)
- Ping Wei San (Calm the Stomach Powder)
- Pu Ji Xiao Du Yin (Universal Benefit Decoction to Eliminate Toxin)

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- Qi Ju Di Huang Wan (Lycium Fruit, Chrysanthemum and Rehmannia Pill)
- Qiang Huo Sheng Shi Tang (Notopterygium Decoction to Overcome Dampness)
- Qing Wei San (Clear the Stomach Powder)
- Qing Gu San (Cool the Bones Powder)
- Qing Hao Bie Jia Tang (Artemisia Annuua and Soft-Shellled Turtle Shell Decoction)
- Qing Qi Hua Tan Wan (Clear the Qi and Transform Phlegm Pill)
- Qing Ying Tang (Clear the Nutritive Level Decoction)
- Qing Zao Jiu Fei Tang (Eliminate Dryness and Rescue the Lungs Decoction)
- Ren Shen Bai Du San (Ginseng Powder to Overcome Pathogenic Influences)
- San Zi Yang Qin Tang (Three-Seed Decoction to Nourish One's Parents)
- Sang Ju Yin (Mulberry Leaf and Chrysanthemum Decoction)
- Sang Piao Xiao San (Mantis Egg-Case Powder)
- Sang Xing Tang (Mulberry Leaf and Apricot Kernel Decoction)
- Shao Fu Zhu Yu Tang (Drive-Out Blood Stasis in the Lower Abdomen Decoction)
- Shao Yao Gan Cao Tang (Peony and Licorice Decoction)
- Shao Yao Tang (Peony Decoction)
- Shen Ling Bai Zhu San (Ginseng, Poria and Atractylodes Macrocephala Powder)
- Shen Tong Zhu Yu Tang (Drive Out Blood Stasis from a Painful Body Decoction)
- Sheng Hua Tang (Generation and Transformation Decoction)
- Sheng Mai San (Generate the Pulse Powder)
- Shi Quan Da Bu Tang (All Inclusive Great Tonifying Decoction)
- Shi Xiao San (Sudden Smile Powder)
- Shou Tai Wan (Fetus Longevity Pill)
- Si Jun Zi Tang (Four-Gentleman Decoction)
- Si Ni San (Frigid Extremities Powder)
- Si Ni Tang (Frigid Extremities Decoction)
- Si Shen Wan (Four-Miracle Pill)
- Si Wu Tang (Four-Substance Decoction)
- Su Zi Jiang Qi Tang (Perilla Fruit Decoction for Directing Qi Downward)
- Suan Zao Ren Tang (Sour Jujube Decoction)
- Tai Shan Pan Shi San (Powder that Gives the Stability of Mount Tai)
- Tian Ma Gou Teng Yin (Gastrodia and Uncaria Decoction)
- Tian Tai Wu Yao San (Top-quality Lindera Powder)

NCCAOM EXAMINATION STUDY GUIDE FOR DIPLOMATE IN  
CHINESE HERBOLOGY CERTIFICATION

- Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan (Emperor of Heaven's Special Pill to Tonify the Heart)
- Tiao Wei Cheng Qi Tang (Regulate the Stomach and Order the Qi Decoction)
- Tong Xie Yao Fang (Important Formula for Painful Diarrhea)
- Wan Dai Tang (End Discharge Decoction)
- Wen Dan Tang (Warm the Gallbladder Decoction)
- Wen Jing Tang (Warm the Menses Decoction)
- Wu Ling San (Five-Ingredient Powder with Poria)
- Wu Pi San (Five-Peel Powder)
- Wu Wei Xiao Du Yin (Five-Ingredient Decoction to Eliminate Toxin)
- Wu Zhu Yu Tang (Evodia Decoction)
- Xi Jiao Di Huang Tang (Rhinoceros Horn and Rehmannia Decoction)
- Xiao Chai Hu Tang (Minor Bupleurum Decoction)
- Xian Cheng Qi Tang (Minor Order the Qi Decoction)
- Xiao Feng San (Eliminate Wind Powder from True Lineage)
- Xiao Jian Zhong Tang (Minor Construct the Middle Decoction)
- Xiao Qing Long Tang (Minor Blue-Green Dragon Decoction)
- Xiao Yao San (Rambling Powder)
- Xie Bai San (Drain the White Powder)
- Xie Xin Tang (Drain the Epigastrium Decoction)
- Xing Su San (Apricot Kernel and Perilla Leaf Powder)
- Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang (Drive Out Stasis in the Mansion of Blood Decoction)
- Yi Guan Jian (Linking Decoction)
- Yin Chen Hao Tang (Artemisia Yinchenhao Decoction)
- Yin Qiao San (Honeysuckle and Forsythia Powder)
- You Gui Wan (Restore the Right (Kidney) Pill)
- You Gui Yin (Restore the Right (Kidney) Decoction)
- Yu Nu Jian (Jade Woman Decoction)
- Yu Ping Feng San (Jade Windscreen Powder)
- Yue Ju Wan (Escape Restraint Pill)
- Zhen Gan Xi Feng Tang (Sedate the Liver and Extinguish Wind Decoction)
- Zhen Wu Tang (True Warrior Decoction)
- Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan (Anemarrhena Phellodendron and Rehmannia Pill)
- Zhi Gan Cao Tang (Honey-Fried Licorice Decoction)
- Zhi Sou San (Stop Coughing Powder)

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- Zhu Ling Tang (Polyporus Decoction)
- Zhu Ye Shi Gao Tang (Lophatherus and Gypsum Decoction)
- Zuo Gui Wan (Restore the Left (Kidney) Pill)
- Zuo Gui Yin (Restore the Left (Kidney) Decoction)
- Zuo Jin Wan (Left Metal Pill)

## Bibliographies

In addition to the new NCCAOM content outlines, the suggested bibliographies have also been updated. Attached are the new bibliographies for the certification in Chinese Herbology examinations. The new bibliographies will be effective beginning in 2010.

### Biomedicine Examination Bibliography

*There is no single text recommended by NCCAOM. All NCCAOM modules and examinations reflect practice in the United States as determined by the most recent job analysis.*

*NCCAOM's item writers and examination development committee members frequently use the following texts as resources; however, the sources used are not limited to the books listed here. The NCCAOM does not endorse any third-party study/preparation guide.*

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NCCAOM Candidate Handbook

**Websites:**

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[www.osha.gov/](http://www.osha.gov/)

## Foundations of Oriental Medicine Examination Bibliography

*There is no single text recommended by NCCAOM. All NCCAOM modules and examinations reflect practice in the United States as determined by the most recent job analysis.*

*NCCAOM's item writers and examination development committee members frequently use the following texts as resources; however, the sources used are not limited to the books listed here. The NCCAOM does not endorse any third-party study/preparation guide.*

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## Chinese Herbology Examination Bibliography

*There is no single text recommended by NCCAOM. All NCCAOM modules and examinations reflect practice in the United States as determined by the most recent job analysis.*

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*The NCCAOM does not endorse any third-party study/preparation guide(s).*

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## Examination Nomenclature Cross-Reference

There are differences in the English language literature regarding pulses and other terminology in Oriental medicine. A cross-reference of terms that are frequently used in English language literature is provided below to assist you; however, this list is not intended to be all-inclusive. It is also provided in the form of a glossary in the English language version of Foundations of Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture, Chinese Herbology, and Asian Bodywork Therapy modules/examinations. The official reference for the names of typical pulses is *The Web That Has No Weaver*.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Theory

Wu Xing = Five Phases = Five Elements  
Sheng Cycle = interpromoting cycle = generation cycle  
Ke Cycle = Ko Cycle = interacting cycle = control cycle  
Qi = Chi = Ki = energy

### 2. Physiology

Qi = Chi = Ki = (vital) energy  
Yuan Qi = primary Qi = original energy  
Zong Qi = pectoral Qi  
Ying Qi = nourishing energy  
Wei Qi = protective (defensive) energy  
Jing = essence  
Shen = spirit  
Xue = Blood  
Jin Ye = Ching Ye = body fluids  
Zang Fu = the organs = Yin and Yang organs  
Zang = viscera = Yin organs  
Fu = bowels = Yang organs

### 3. Pathology and Diagnosis

Xu = deficient = empty  
Shi = Shih = excess = full  
Sheng Cycle = Overacting = excessive action on the interacting (Ke) Cycle  
Wu Cycle = Counteracting = insult cycle  
Nei Yin = Endogenous = internal factors  
Wai Yin = Exogenous = external factors  
Wai Xie = External pathogenic factor = outside evil  
She Tai = Tongue fur = moss or coating  
She Ti = Tongue proper = tongue body  
She Pang Da = Flabby tongue = swollen, or enlarged tongue

Pulse locations:

Cun (tsun) = inch = distal location  
Guan (Kuan) = gate/bar = middle location  
Chi (chih) = cubit or foot = proximal location

#### 4. Technique

Bu = supplement = tonify

Xie = reduce = drain = sedate = disperse

#### 5. Channels and Points

Channels = Meridians = Jing = usually Primary channels = Main (Principal, Regular) meridians

Muscle channels = tendino-muscular meridians = Jing Jin

Divergent meridians = distinct channels = Jing Pieh

Luo = connecting channels = Collaterals

Extra channels = Miscellaneous (Odd, Curious, Extraordinary, Ancestral) meridians or vessels:

Du Mai (Mo) = Governing Vessel or Meridian or Channel = GV

Ren Mai (Mo) = Conception Vessel = CV

Dai (Tai) Mai (Mo) = Belt (Girdle) Vessel

San Jiao = Triple Warmer = Triple burning Space

Cun = tsun = inch = A.C.I.

Yuan point = source point

Luo point = connecting or Junction point = Lo point

Xi point = Cleft or Accumulating point

5 Shu points = 5 Transporting, %Antique+or %Command+points of the Primary channels = Five

Element Points:

Well = Jing = Ting

Spring = Ying = Yuong or Rong = Gushing

Stream = Shu or Yu = Transporting

River = Jing = King = Ching = Traversing

Sea = He = Ho = Uniting

Back-Shu points = Associated or Associated Effect points = A.E.P. = yu point = shu point

Front-Mu = Mo = Alarm point = Bo

Reinforcing point = (mother point) = tonification point

Reducing point = (son point) = sedation, dispersing or draining point

Confluent points = Master (and coupled) or Key or Opening points of the Eight Extra Channels

Coalescent points = points of intersection between two or more channels = Crossing or Intersection points

Influential points = Eight Meeting (or Assembling) points of Energy, Blood and certain organs and tissues

Remote points = distal points

Zi Wu Liu Zhu = Horary Cycle = 24 hour circulation of energy through the channels = midday/midnight cycle = organ clock

#### Reference:

1. Kaptchuk, T. J. (2000). *The web that has no weaver: understanding Chinese medicine*. McGraw-Hill Professional.

## The Official NCCAOM Online Practice Tests

The NCCAOM offers the following online practice tests subscriptions:

- [Acupuncture](#)
- [Chinese Herbology](#)
- [Foundations of Oriental Medicine](#)
- [Comprehensive for Oriental Medicine](#)
- [Comprehensive for Acupuncture](#)

The Acupuncture, Chinese Herbology, and Foundations of Oriental Medicine *Online Practice Tests* each contain five (5) individual practice tests consisting of 50 multiple-choice questions specifically for that examination. **The Acupuncture Online Practice Test does not contain any point location images; however, the Comprehensive Online Practice Test for Oriental Medicine and the Comprehensive Online Practice Test for Acupuncture both contain biomedicine questions.** The Comprehensive Online Practice Tests, each contain five (5) individual practice tests consisting of 50 multiple choice questions which have a combination of Foundations, Acupuncture, Biomedicine, and Chinese Herbology questions (example: Practice Test 1 may have 15 Foundations items, 15 Acupuncture items, 10 Biomedicine items, and 10 Chinese Herbs items and Practice Test 2 may have 10 Foundations items, 10 Acupuncture items, 15 Biomedicine, and 15 Chinese herbs, etc.).

All of the online practice test subscriptions are valid for 90 days of unlimited use.

The practice tests are designed to demonstrate the types of questions that are included in the exam and by no means are these practice tests as extensive or inclusive as the actual exams. Performance on the practice tests is not necessarily an indicator for performance on the actual exam.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Examination Administration Frequently Asked Questions and Answers (Q&A)

In an effort to assist our candidates and school representatives to better understand our examination processes, we have created a list of questions and answers that explain in detail our examination administration policies and procedures. NCCAOM has a high level of commitment to upholding the integrity of the NCCAOM certifications as a meaningful measure of entry-level competency in order to protect the public safety. This commitment cannot be overstated; it is a requirement of our mission, which is *to establish, assess, and promote recognized standards of competence and safety in acupuncture and Oriental medicine for the protection and benefit of the public.*

A majority of the questions and answers listed below relate to the Acupuncture with Point Location, Biomedicine, Chinese Herbology, and Foundations of Oriental Medicine examinations. A separate Asian Bodywork Therapy Frequently Asked Questions and Answers document is available on the NCCAOM website.

#### ***Question #1: When can I take the next examination as I do not see a schedule of exams on the website?***

**Answer:** NCCAOM is pleased to be providing year-round testing for all our certification exams except for Asian Bodywork Therapy ([See ABT FAQs](#)) and foreign language exams, which means that ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> approved to Test+candidates (who have received an approval letter in the mail from NCCAOM) can now register for the NCCAOM examination(s) throughout the year, pending availability at their desired Pearson VUE test center locations.

Please note: the Biomedicine exam will be administered during three, two-week time periods in 2010:

- February 15-27
- June 14-30
- October 18-30

Candidates can register for the examination(s) by calling Pearson VUE directly or registering online (The ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> approved to Test+letter will have detailed registration information and instructions). Candidates can now register for their exams according to their own schedule and at their own convenience. Pearson VUE offers more than 230 Pearson Professional Test Centers around the world. When candidates register, they pay Pearson VUE directly for their exams using Visa, MasterCard or American Express credit cards. Please note that the fee for the Biomedicine examination has increased to \$300 effective January 1, 2010.

#### ***Question #2: What does open registration mean and why is there no application or registration deadlines announcement?***

**Answer:** Open registration means that candidates no longer have to wait for the NCCAOM examinations to be announced (*except Asian Bodywork Therapy and foreign language examinations*). Once candidates are approved to test, they can register and schedule their

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exam for any time that is available at a Pearson VUE Professional testing center. This means that candidates can test and be finished with the examination cycles quicker and test at a time more convenient for them.

Year-round examinations will allow candidates to become certified and licensed to practice much faster than in the years past. One of the great benefits of year-round testing is that there is no need to for the NCCAOM to enforce application or registration deadlines. Candidates can send in their application when they have completed their education and will be able to test after they receive an approval to Test+letter from NCCAOM. This also means that candidates no longer have to wait for the next examination cycle to register and test. Thus, candidates do not need to wait for the next application cycle if they have missed an application deadline, or to rush to send in their application for the upcoming examination administration. With year-round testing, candidates can test at their own pace.

Please remember that candidates must still allow 10-12 weeks for processing of their application before they are approved to test. It is also important to remember that candidates have four years from the date that NCCAOM receives their application to test and become certified. Candidates who need to retake an examination must wait **45 days** from the previous recorded test. Candidates will not be allowed to re-schedule their previously failed examination prior to the 45 day waiting period for any reason. The 45-day waiting period allows for the candidate to receive their score report (diagnostic) and review before the exam is repeated.

### **Question #3: Which exams are offered year-round?**

**Answer:** The NCCAOM offers the following examinations throughout the year for 2010:

- Acupuncture with Point Location
- Chinese Herbology
- Foundations of Oriental Medicine

*Due to the increase in the Biomedicine exam questions, the Biomedicine Examination will only be offered in linear format during three (3) test administration periods that will each be two (2) weeks in duration in 2010. These dates are **February 15-27, June 14-30, and October 18-30, 2010.** It will not be offered throughout the year in 2010.*

### **Question #4: What about those who want to take the test in Chinese or Korean?**

**Answer:** The foreign language examinations are typically offered every **other** year usually in the fall.

The last foreign language examination administration was administered in October 2009; therefore, the foreign language examinations will not be offered until 2011.

### **Question #5: Are you planning on combining any other exams or making any changes with any of the exams?**

**Answer:** At this time, the NCCAOM is not planning to combine any exams. Effective in 2010, the number of exam questions for the Biomedicine Examination will increase from 50 to 100

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CHINESE HERBOLOGY CERTIFICATION

multiple-choice questions in an allotted time of 2 ½ hours for completion, similar to the other exams. Due to this change, the Biomedicine Examination will only be offered in linear format during three (3) test administration periods that will each be two (2) weeks in duration. *These dates are February 15-27, June 14-30, and October 18-30, 2010.* The fee for the Biomedicine examination is \$300 effective January 1, 2010.

**Question #6: What does year-round testing mean for scoring? Does this mean that I will receive my exam results faster?**

**Answer:** Yes! Year-round testing made possible by adaptive testing (see Questions 7 and 8 for information about adaptive testing) will enable NCCAOM to provide you with immediate on screen Preliminary Pass or Fail status. This means that candidates will receive a **preliminary** pass/fail screen immediately after they submit their answers, while at the Pearson Professional Test Center. *This does not apply for the linear examinations, Asian Bodywork Therapy or foreign language examinations, or 2010 Biomedicine examination.*

The **official score report will be mailed within 20 business days** from completion of the examination. The state licensing boards will also receive your examination results at a much quicker rate, which means that the time passed before receiving your license will be greatly reduced.

**Question #7: What is the format of the examinations?**

**Answer:** The Acupuncture with Point Location, Chinese Herbology and Foundations of Oriental Medicine examinations each have 100 multiple-choice questions with a 2 ½ hour time limit. The \*Biomedicine examination consists of 100 multiple-choice questions with 2 ½ hours allotted for completion of the exam. Please note that the fee for the Biomedicine Examination is \$300 beginning January 1, 2010. *\*Note: The Biomedicine Examination is only offered in a linear format for 2010.*

Adaptive Exams		
Examinations	Number of Multiple-Choice Questions	Allotted Time
Acupuncture with Point Location	100	2.5 hours
Chinese Herbology	100	2.5 hours
Foundations of Oriental Medicine	100	2.5 hours
Linear Exams		
Examinations	Number of Multiple-Choice Questions	Allotted Time
Biomedicine ( <i>effective in 2010 only</i> )	100	2.5 hours

In order for NCCAOM to be able to provide you with year-round testing and to provide an immediate preliminary pass/fail screen, we are offering candidates a form of testing called **adaptive testing**. What this means to the candidates is that each examination is different and is

geared towards the ability of the candidate. If a question is answered correctly, the next question is slightly more difficult. If a question is answered incorrectly, the next question will be slightly easier. One feature that is required for this format is the inability to review exam questions once you have finished answering the questions. As adaptive testing measures your content knowledge with each question, you will be **unable to go back** to a question once you have moved onto the next question. Adaptive testing has been used for certification testing in other healthcare areas for more than 18 years and offers one of the most reliable measures of competency.

***Question #8: Can you explain adaptive testing in more detail and what this means to us as candidates?***

**Answer:** An internet search will help you to find many different descriptions Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT). The easiest explanation we have is that it is a computerized test in which the computer selects the examination questions based on the individual candidate's ability. Some have compared it to jumping a high bar . if you get over the bar, the next time the bar is higher, but if you miss, the bar is lowered. Of course, in this example, if the bar is too low you cannot pass the examination. Another analogy is to that of an interview. When someone is being interviewed, the interviewer will adjust the difficulty of the questions based on previous responses.

The objective of adaptive testing is to determine the candidate's ability with the least amount of measurement error. It is not the number of correct or incorrect questions, but the overall score based on the difficulty of the questions, the overall examination and the ability of the candidate. One aspect of adaptive testing that is difficult to explain is that the best candidates feel as if they have just taken the most challenging exam of their academic career. This is, unfortunately, the nature of this exam type. In trying to determine the candidate's ability, the exam will continue to get more and more difficult. The candidate should not panic as this is a direct result of doing very well on the exam.

***Question #9: What are the benefits of taking the CAT or adaptive format of the exam?***

**Answer:** There are many benefits that candidates will enjoy with adaptive and year-round testing as outlined above. These include no eligibility deadlines and a preliminary pass/fail screen immediately following the exam. Your examination can be scheduled at your convenience at over 230 Pearson Professional Test Centers around the world; your application materials can be submitted at any time (please allow 10-12 weeks for processing); and, finally, at the end of the examination you will be able to see your preliminary pass/fail status. Final score reports also go to the state licensing boards much more quickly. The other most obvious positive changes are that of shorter examinations and lowest possible overall costs to candidates.

***Question #10: If I fail the exam, can I immediately sign up for the exam again?***

**Answer:** No. Candidates who need to retake an NCCAOM examination must wait 45 days from the previous recorded test. Candidates will not be allowed to reschedule their examination prior to the 45 day waiting period for any reason.

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NCCAOM recommends that you give yourself sufficient time to prepare for the retake of the examination that you failed. Remember that after three attempts, you must submit 15 Professional Development Activity points in the content area of weakness in order to sit a fourth time. Also, you are only allowed a total of five (5) opportunities to take an examination.

**Question #11: Do I have to answer all of the questions on the exam or can I leave some answers blank?**

**Answer:** You must answer all of the questions on the exam in order for your examination to be scored. **Note: If you do not answer all of the questions, you will not receive a preliminary pass or fail status while at the test center. You must wait until you receive the official score report via mail.**

**Question #12: Does the NCCAOM publish a list of single herbs and formulas that will be tested in the Chinese Herbology Examination ?**

**Answer:** Yes. A list of formulas is made available with the new Chinese Herbology content outline on the NCCAOM website.

**Question #13: Does the NCCAOM publish a list of the terminology for the channels and other terms?**

**Answer:** Yes. The NCCAOM currently provides a nomenclature list, which is a cross-reference of terms that are frequently used in the English language literature.

**Question #14: I am not certain what is covered in the Foundations of Oriental Medicine Examination compared to the Acupuncture with Point Location Examination.**

**Answer:** Please refer to Site Map on the NCCAOM website, and enter the %[Exam Content](#)+link.

**Question #15: How many questions do I have to answer correctly in order to pass an examination?**

**Answer:** With the examinations being adaptive (see Questions 7 and 8 for information about adaptive testing); there is **NO predetermined** correct number of questions that have to be answered correctly in order for a candidate to pass. It is not the number of correct or incorrect questions, but the **overall score** based on the difficulty of the questions, the overall examination and the ability of the candidate.

**Question #16: I failed the exam and received my score report, what areas do I need to focus on for the next examination?**

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**Answer:** Using your score report, areas where you scored below 70 units are areas to focus your studies as well as taking into consideration the content percentage of that section on the content outline.

**Question #17: I failed the exam for the first time, how many candidates pass the exam during their first attempt?**

**Answer:** The pass rate for first time test takers (FTTT) is actually high. Please refer to the pass rate comparison report for 2006-2009 below.

**Pass Rate: First Time Test Takes for 2006 to 2008**

Exam Modules	2006	2007	2008	2009
AC/APLA**	77.8	82.7	84.1	85.3
BIO	81.8	84.8	92.0	89.0
CH	76.5	75.2	82.3	79.8
FOM	88.1	92.9	95.5	94.1
PL	81.8	75.0		

\*\* Acupuncture and Point Location were combined into one examination in 2008

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