



College of Traditional Chinese Medicine  
Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario

Ordre des praticiens en médecine traditionnelle  
chinoise et des acupuncteurs de l'Ontario



# CTCMPAO Pan-Canadian Examinations Application Guide

Modified Date: May 2025



## CTCMPO PAN-CANADIAN EXAMINATIONS APPLICATION GUIDE

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Note: This document will be updated as necessary; for the most recent version, please check our [website](#).

## INTRODUCTION

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The College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario (the College) is the governing body established by the government of Ontario, under the [Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991](#) (RHPA) and the [Traditional Chinese Medicine Act, 2006](#) (TCM Act), to regulate the practice of traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture in the public interest.

The law in Ontario requires that any person who does the following must be a registered member of College:

- Performs the following controlled acts authorized to the profession:
  1. Performs a procedure on tissue below the dermis and below the surface of a mucous membrane for the purpose of performing acupuncture.
  2. Communicates a TCM diagnosis identifying a body system disorder as the cause of a person's symptoms using TCM techniques.
- Uses the protected title(s) and/or designation(s) "Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioner" ("R. TCMP") and/or "Acupuncturist" ("R. Ac").
- Holds him/herself out as a member of the College.

The College views unauthorized practice very seriously. Performing the controlled acts, using the protected titles and/or holding oneself out as a member of the College without being registered are significant offences and can result in prosecution and fines.

If you have any questions regarding becoming registered with the College, please forward your questions to Registration staff at:

Telephone:	416.238.7359
Toll-free:	1.866.624.8483
Email:	<a href="mailto:registration@ctcmpao.on.ca">registration@ctcmpao.on.ca</a>
Mail:	705-55 Commerce Valley Drive West Thornhill, ON L3T 7V9

## EXAMINATION APPLICATION PACKAGE

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Please review the Examination Application Package BEFORE completing the Application for the Pan-Canadian Examinations. The following documents are included in the Examination Application Package:

1. The CARB-TCMPA [Candidate Handbook](#)
2. CTCMPAO Pan-Canadian Examinations Application Guide
3. [Entry-Level Occupational Competencies for the Practise of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Canada](#) (2018)
4. [Registration Regulation](#), made under the [TCM Act, 2006](#)

## REGISTRATION EXAMINATIONS – PAN-CANADIAN EXAMINATIONS

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To be considered for General class of registration you must meet the requirements for registration as outlined in [Ontario Regulation 27/13, \(the "Registration Regulation"\)](#), made under the [TCM Act](#). Successful completion of the registration examinations is one of the requirements for registration in the General class.

The Pan-Canadian Examinations are the approved entry-to-practice examinations. **This guide provides information about how to apply to write the Pan-Canadian Examinations by using the online application form available on the [College Portal](#).**

The Pan-Canadian Examinations are administered by the Canadian Alliance of Regulatory Bodies for Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists (CARB-TCMPA).

The College determines who is eligible to sit the Pan-Canadian Examinations. For example, to confirm that you are eligible to write the exam, the College will consider your educational program, supervised clinical experience and whether you have the necessary competencies that meet the requirements of the [Registration Regulation](#). For more information, please see the Eligibility Section.

The Pan-Canadian Examinations include the following two examinations:

1. Pan-Canadian Entry-level Examinations for TCM Practitioners (the “TCM Practitioners Examination”); and
2. Pan-Canadian Entry-level Examinations for Acupuncturists (the “Acupuncturists Examination”).

Each examination consists of two components:

1. Multiple-choice component; and
2. Clinical case-study component.

## **EXAMINATION SCHEDULE**

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The examinations are offered twice a year, in the Spring and Fall. The schedule for each exam administration will be available on the College website approximately four months before the examination date.

## **EXAMINATIONS FEES**

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There is an application fee and an exam fee for the Pan-Canadian examinations. The application fee is non-refundable, and the exam fee is required after your application has been approved. Both fees are subject to change. Please visit our [website](#) for the most up-to-date information.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

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To be eligible to write the Pan-Canadian Examinations you must meet the following eligibility requirements.

### **1. Education Requirements**

The examinations applicant must have successfully completed a post-secondary program in traditional Chinese medicine that,

- in the case of a traditional Chinese medicine program, consists of at least four years of full-time education, or education that is of equivalent duration, and
- in the case of a traditional Chinese medicine acupuncture program, consists of at least three years of full-time education, or education that is of equivalent duration. (s. 9(1) [Registration Regulation](#))

### Full-Time Education

The Registration Regulation further defines the full-time education program as a program that consists of:

- At least 480 hours per year of classroom theoretical instruction; or
- At least 620 hours per year of practical instruction; or
- Some combination of the two where, for every hour of classroom theoretical instruction that is less than 480 hours, there must be a corresponding increase of 1.3 hours in the number of hours of practical instruction.

For example:

Year	Completed Theory (Hours)	Completed Practical (Hours)	Required practical hours to make up the gap of theory hours
1	300	200	$(480-300) \times 1.3 = 234$

Year 1 would not qualify as a full-time education program. This is due to the fact that when 180 (the amount by which the theory component is deficient) is multiplied by 1.3 it amounts to 234. Therefore, in order to qualify as a full-time education program, the practical hours must amount to at least 234 hours. However, there were only 200 practical hours; as such, Year 1 does not qualify as full-time education.

**Classroom theoretical instruction** refers to education/learning which takes place in a classroom or through guided independent study, in which students develop knowledge and thinking skills, beliefs and values, which enable them to demonstrate relevant entry-level competencies as listed in the Entry-Level Occupational Competency Profile.

**Practical instruction** refers to education, in which students work directly with an experienced practitioner and a simulated patient, to develop hands-on abilities which enable them to demonstrate relevant entry-level competencies as listed in the Entry-Level Occupational Competency Profile.

## 2. Supervised Clinical Experience

The examinations applicant must have successfully completed a program of clinical experience in the profession that,

*is structured, comprehensive, supervised and evaluated and which consists of at least 45 weeks of clinical experience involving 500 hours of direct patient contact. (s. 9(1) [Registration Regulation](#))*

The supervised clinical experience can be obtained either as a part of an applicant's formal education program or separately, so long as it meets the requirements outlined above. However, if the supervised clinical experience is obtained as a part of an applicant's formal education, the hours of instruction must be in addition to those hours counted towards meeting the educational requirement. In other words, one cannot use the same hours of instruction to satisfy the formal education requirement and the supervised clinical experience requirement.

The supervised clinical experience must involve 500 hours of direct patient contact with the individual communicating a traditional Chinese medicine diagnosis and performing acupuncture pursuant to the [TCM Act](#). A program of clinical experience in the profession must be structured, comprehensive, supervised and evaluated.

Direct patient contact experience refers to shared supervised clinical activities or solo supervised clinical activities involving direct patient contact. In supervised clinical training, students work directly with patients in a setting designed to provide patient care. Students must be supervised throughout their clinical education, in a manner that facilitates their development of clinical abilities while ensuring that patient care is safe, effective and ethical.

Observation hours and simulated practice hours **may not** be included toward meeting the supervised clinical experience requirement. Clinical observation hours refer to activities where applicants have no active involvement. Simulated practice refers to activities using standardized or simulated patients and case conferences with clinical supervisors. Case conferences refer to discussions between the applicant and the applicant's clinical supervisor related to a specific patient.

Applicants are required to ensure that supervision is performed by qualified members of the College. For more information, please refer to the [College's Supervision Policy](#).

### 3. Competency Assessment

The competency assessment is used to determine whether applicants have the necessary knowledge, skills and judgment to safely practise the profession as members of the College.

Unlike approval of an education program, the competency assessment focuses on the cumulative competencies applicants have obtained through formal education and post-graduate and continuing education studies.

To assist you with understanding of the competency assessment process, the College has developed the [Guidelines for Evaluation of Applicant's Traditional Chinese Medicine and/or Acupuncture Education or a Substantially Equivalent Education Program and Assessment of Competency](#). These guidelines will be used to assess whether you are able to demonstrate through your completed learning/educational program, that you have the required entry to practice competencies (listed in the Entry-Level Occupational Competency Profile).

Applications must be approved for a candidate to be deemed eligible to take the registration examinations. The eligibility criteria are subject to change. **The candidate's eligibility to sit for an examination does not guarantee that:**

- the candidate will be eligible to sit subsequent examinations; or
- the candidate will be eligible to register with the CTCMPO (when applying for registration with CTCMPO, the Candidate will be asked to meet additional registration requirements, and may be asked to submit additional documentation. For more information, please see the [CTCMPO website](#)).

## EXAMINATION POLICIES

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### Incomplete Applications

Applications submitted without all required information and supporting documentation prior to the application deadline cannot be processed. If your application is incomplete, you will not be eligible to write the exam and your examination application file will be closed. To take a subsequent examination, you will be required to re-apply. Your eligibility to take a subsequent examination will be evaluated against the criteria that are in place at the time the new application is submitted.

### Accommodation for Special Needs or Medical Requests

The CARB-TCMPA will provide reasonable special accommodations for candidates with special needs, a religious reason that prevents them from writing on the scheduled examination date, or for other medical situations deemed appropriate by the organization.

If you have medical needs that require you to bring special materials into the examination room (e.g., medication or an asthma inhaler), you must seek approval prior to the examination.

If you require an accommodation, or have special medical needs in order to take the examination, please complete the [Request for Accommodation Form](#). Once completed, **submit the form directly to CARB** at [accommodations@carb-tcmpa.org](mailto:accommodations@carb-tcmpa.org) by the given deadline. Do NOT submit your request for accommodation to the CTCMPO, as it will not be processed.

### Withdrawal from the Examinations

Requests to withdraw from the examinations must be made in writing and be received by the College before the withdrawal deadline, to obtain a partial refund of the Examination Fee. The Application Fee is non-refundable. If withdrawal requests are NOT received by the withdrawal deadline, no portion of the examination fee will be refunded. **Applications will not be held or deferred to a future examination session.**

For more information, please review CARB's [Withdrawal and Appeals Policy](#).

If you withdraw from the examination or you do not attend the examination you applied for, you will NOT be automatically eligible to take subsequent examinations. You will be required to re-apply. Your eligibility to take subsequent examinations will be evaluated against the criteria that are in place at the time the new application is submitted.

### Absence from an Examination

Candidates who do not arrive on time to take the examination, and who do not cancel or withdraw their registration are considered a 'no-show' and will forfeit the examination fee. Should they wish to take the examination at a later date, they will be required to re-apply and pay the application and examination fees again.

### Examination Results

Approximately eight weeks after the examinations, results will be sent to candidates by mail and/or via the College's secured online Portal. Examination results will NOT be communicated over the telephone or through any other channel.

### Examination Rewrites

Candidates have a maximum of four attempts to successfully complete the Pan-Canadian Examinations. To retake the examinations, a candidate who has failed an attempt will be required to complete and submit a new application that will be evaluated according to any policies that may be in place at that time.

Candidates who fail the examination three times will not be permitted a fourth and final attempt until they complete a program of further education or training, or combination of education and training, as required by a panel of the Registration Committee.

Each attempt at the Pan-Canadian Examination is counted toward the maximum number of permitted attempts, regardless of whether it is the Acupuncturists or TCM Practitioners examination. For example, if a candidate is unsuccessful in the Acupuncturists examination and subsequently applies to write the TCM Practitioners examination, the TCM Practitioners examination will be considered as their second attempt.

A candidate who wishes to take their fourth and final attempt at the examinations must:

- Submit the details of his or her proposed learning activities, in conjunction with a description of the teacher/mentor/supervisor's qualifications, to the College for approval before starting further education or training.
- Upon receiving approval, successfully complete the proposed program and submit proof of completion before applying for their final attempt.
- Complete the examination application process within the relevant application timeframe.

For more information, please review our [Fourth Exam Attempt Policy](#).

### Examination Appeals

An appeal is a request by an examination candidate for reconsideration of the candidate's examination result. If a candidate believes a failed result of an examination was due to an illness on examination day, personal emergency, or procedural irregularities they may appeal their result. For more information, please refer to the [Withdrawal and Appeals Policy](#).

### Registration with the College

Candidates who successfully complete the Pan-Canadian Examinations, **are not automatically registered with the College**. Successful completion of the registration examinations is only one of the requirements for registration with the College. Candidates must also submit a [General class application](#) and meet other registration requirements listed in the Registration Regulation, including successfully completing the [Safety Program Test](#) and the [Jurisprudence Course Test](#). For more information about the registration process, please see our [website](#).

## HOW TO APPLY FOR THE PAN-CANADIAN EXAMINATIONS

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### 1. Register for College Portal

To complete the online application form, you will first need to setup an account on the College's Portal. To do this, click "Click here to Register" on the [Sign In](#) section of the College website, then complete and submit the Portal Access Registration Form. Within two business days you will receive an email with an invitation code and instructions on how to redeem the invitation code.

### 2. Complete the Application Form

Once you have access to the Portal you can begin your examination application. All application forms can be found under "My Applications" on the registration dropdown menu. From there, you will click on "Pan-Canadian Examination" and then choose either the R. Ac or R. TCMP application.

### 3. Personal / Contact Information

As part of your application, you will be required to provide your name, date of birth, address, email address and phone contact information. The name used to register for an examination must match the name on the valid ID that will be presented at the examination center.

CTCMPAO will use your email address to communicate with you electronically during the examination process (for example, to provide you with updates on your examination application and to advise you when your examination results are available).

Your email must be a unique email address and cannot be shared with another applicant or member of CTCMPAO. To ensure that you receive College updates, please provide an email address that you check on a regular basis.

#### **Changes to Contact Information**

Candidates must inform the College of any changes to their name and address information.

### 4. Examination Location

You will need to select your first and second choice from among the list of available test centre locations. The final location for your exam will be based on preference and availability, and details will be communicated to you after you have been approved to sit the exam.

### 5. Education Program

#### ***Name of Program, Program Start and Graduation Date, and Level of Education***

The information you enter must be consistent with the information listed on your education documents. If the information on your education documents is inconsistent or incorrect, please contact your school to have them correct your documents.

#### ***Institution***

If you completed your TCM education outside of Canada, please select "Other".

#### ***Yearly Education Breakdown***

Please provide the number of hours spent each year in theoretical training, practical training, and clinical training. It is recommended that you contact your school for this information before you begin the application process.

## 6. Supervised Clinical Experience

Click “Add Experience” and enter the required information relating to your supervised clinical experience. The clinical experience must not have taken place before the start of your post-secondary education related to TCM or TCM acupuncture. Applicants who complete formal education in Ontario are required to ensure that supervision is provided by qualified members of the College as per the [College’s Supervision Policy](#).

As part of your application, your educational institution/supervisor must provide an original letter confirming successful completion of:

- at least 45 weeks of clinical experience in the TCM profession; and
- at least 500 hours of direct patient contact

The letter must include a detailed description of the supervised clinical experience, showing the number of clock hours in direct patient contact and number of weeks spent in clinical training/experience. The letter must include the name and the registration number of the supervisor (if applicable).

## 7. Additional Education Programs

This section will provide a summary of the education you have entered so far. If you have completed multiple education programs, click “yes” to add additional education programs. You will then be asked to provide detailed information (see step 5 above) for your additional programs.

## 8. Assessment of Competency

To complete this section, click “Add Competencies” and enter the courses from your academic record/transcripts that correspond to the selected competency area. You will also need to indicate the total hours of practical instruction and/or theoretical instruction spent in each competency area. You should reference your detailed course curriculum to determine which courses corresponded to each competency and the hours of each course. If applicable, you may list courses under more than one competency area.

For more information on the entry level competencies, please refer to the *Entry-Level Occupational Competencies for the Practise of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Canada*.

Please ensure the information provided in this section matches your education documents. The College will refer to the [Education Equivalency Guideline](#) to assess your learning/education program and supervised clinical experience. You may add a course into more than one competency area.

**For example:**

Core Competencies	Name of courses that specifically addressed the competencies identified in each area	Total hours
<b>TCM FOUNDATIONS</b> ▪ Apply fundamental knowledge of Traditional Chinese Medicine principles in diagnosis and treatment	TCM Theory of Introduction 102 (300 hours) Course 2 (200 hours) Course 3 (244 hours)	744 hours

## 9. Application Documentation

Upload all the supporting documentation listed in the checklist below. Documents that have already been submitted to the College will not need to be submitted again.

- Proof of Identification (e.g., driver's licence, passport, or a validation of identity signed by legal counsel)

For Graduates of a TCM or TCM Acupuncture program in Canada, the following documents must be sent directly from the education institution to the College:

- An official, final transcript of academic record
- A program completion letter or a copy of degree or certificate
- An original letter from the education institution/supervisor confirming successful completion of 500 hours of direct patient contact within 45 weeks of clinical experience in the TCM.
- Detailed curriculum or courses outlines of the TCM program, certified by the program, including a detailed list of courses and a description of the content of each course completed, and the total number of hours for each course completed.

For Graduates of a TCM or Acupuncture program outside of Canada

- In addition to the documents listed above, internationally educated applicants must submit a credential evaluation and authentication report with a course-by-course evaluation from the [World Education Service](#).

## 10. Application Declaration

Check the box to indicate that you have read and understand the declaration. Once you click the next button, you will not be able to go back and edit the information, so please be sure you have entered all required information.

## 11. Examination Application Fee Payment

The final step will ask for payment of the application fee. Your application will be complete and submitted to the College once this fee is processed. You will be asked for payment of the examination fee once College staff reviews your application and confirms you are eligible for the exam.

## NEXT STEPS

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There are a limited number of candidates who can be seated at each examination location, as capacity varies. You are not guaranteed a seat at your preferred examination centre by submitting your examination application prior to the deadline date. Please check your confirmation letter for details about time, date and location of your examination.

1. Once your application has been submitted, College staff will review your information. You will be advised of your eligibility via email after the review has been completed.
2. Approximately 2 to 3 weeks prior to the examination date, eligible exam candidates will be emailed a booking confirmation.
3. After writing the exam, candidates will be notified of their results approximately eight weeks from the date of the exam.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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### Access to Records

In accordance with the [Health Professions Procedural Code](#), Schedule 2 to the [RHPA](#), upon written request, the College will provide you with a photocopy of your application materials. You must submit the following service fee with your written request:

- \$50.00 per request, which includes copies of the first twenty-five pages, and
- \$1.00 per page thereafter.

For more information, please review our [Access to Records Policy](#).

### Application Documents that are not in English or French

Documents submitted for registration examination purposes that are not in English or French must be accompanied by a certified translation. To find a certified translator in Ontario, contact:

Mail: Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario  
1 Nicholas St. Suite 1202  
Ottawa, ON K1N 7B7

Telephone: 613.241.2846                      Toll-free: 1.800.234.5030

Email: [info@atio.on.ca](mailto:info@atio.on.ca)                      Website: [www.atio.on.ca](http://www.atio.on.ca)

If you are outside of Ontario, please contact your local directory for certified translators. For those outside of Canada or the USA, you may also find assistance at a Consulate or Embassy. For more information, please review our [Translation Policy](#).

### Inability to Provide the Requested Documentation

While in some cases this may pose a challenge, in the majority of cases applicants will be able to obtain the requested documentation. If you believe that the documentation is unobtainable, please review the [Alternative Documentation Policy](#).

### Privacy

The personal information collected on the exam application form is used by the College for its regulatory purposes (e.g., the registration and identification of the College registrants and for the administration of the College programs) and to develop and provide aggregate or de-identified statistical information for human resource planning and demographic and research studies. It is collected under the authority of the [RHPA](#), the [Health Professions Procedural Code](#), the [TCM Act](#) and the regulations and by-laws made under the authority of these statutes. The College does not sell this information, nor does it provide the information to commercial entities in a format that facilitates mass marketing.

### Questions

If you have any questions regarding the exam application process, please forward your questions to Registration Staff at:

Telephone: 416.238.7359                      Toll-free: 1.866.624.8483

Email: [registration@ctcmpao.on.ca](mailto:registration@ctcmpao.on.ca)

Mail: 55 Commerce Valley Drive West Suite 705 Thornhill ON L3T 7V9