



The Chinese Herbology Examination Expanded Content Outline (Effective in January 2012)

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 total exam)

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
- 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 patient's 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 patient's 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
- 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
- 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 A12: 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 A13: 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 total exam)

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
- 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 total exam)

Sub Domain C1: Evaluation and modification of Chinese herbal treatment

- 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 healthcare providers to explain the function and safety of Chinese herbal treatment
- Skills to communicate with patients and other healthcare 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 healthcare 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 healthcare providers and explain the function and safety of Chinese herbal treatment
- Ability to communicate with patients and other healthcare 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
- 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)



- 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)



- 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-Shelled 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)
- 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)
- Xiao 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)
- 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)



Chinese Herbology Examination Bibliography

The Content Outline is the primary resource for studying for this examination. The purpose of this Bibliography is only to provide the candidate with suggested resources to utilize in preparation for the examination. Candidates should feel free to consider other resources that cover the material in the Content Outline.

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.

Primary Sources

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