



The Foundations of Oriental Medicine Content Outline

Effective January 1, 2020

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.

Domain I: Clinical Examination Methods (35% of Exam)

A. Looking (*Wang*)

1. Spirit (*Shen*)

- a. Identify outward manifestation of Spirit (*Shen*) (e.g., complexion, expression, demeanor, general behavior)
- b. Identify and relate state of Spirit (*Shen*) to clinical significance

2. Face, eyes, nose, ears, mouth, lips, teeth, head, and throat

- a. Identify normal and abnormal conditions and changes of the eyes, nose, ears, mouth, lips, teeth, throat, face, and complexion (including color, moisture, texture, and organ-indicative locations)
- b. Identify and relate the pathological manifestations of the face, including color, moisture, texture, to organ correspondence and to pattern/syndrome differentiation*

3. Tongue

- a. Identify normal and abnormal manifestations, patterns, conditions, and changes of the tongue and sublingual veins
- b. Identify and relate features of the tongue and tongue coating, including color, size, moisture, texture, shape, position, movement, organ correspondence to pattern/syndrome differentiation*

4. Physical characteristics of the body

- a. Identify normal and abnormal form, movement, and physical characteristics (e.g., head, hair, neck, back, chest, abdomen, extremities, nails)
- b. Identify and relate form, movement, and physical characteristics to pattern/syndrome differentiation*



- c. Identify normal and abnormal conditions and changes of the skin
 - d. Identify and relate the pathological significance of conditions and changes of the skin to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
 - e. Identify normal and abnormal excretions (e.g., sputum, saliva, sweat, discharge, stool, urine)
 - f. Identify and relate the pathological significance of excretions to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
- B. Listening and smelling (*Wen*)
- 1. Sounds
 - a. Identify and relate normal and abnormal respiratory sounds to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
 - b. Identify and relate normal and abnormal tonal qualities, voice, and speech to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
 - 2. Odors
 - a. Identify and relate normal and abnormal body, breath/mouth odors to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
 - b. Identify and relate normal and abnormal odors of excretions/secretions (e.g., urine, stool, wound exudates) to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
- C. Asking (*Wen*)
- 1. Chief complaint
 - a. Assess presenting complaint (e.g., onset, location, aggravation)
 - b. Identify and relate chief complaint to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
 - c. Identify appropriate additional questions based on patient's responses and examination findings
 - 2. Current health conditions
 - a. Evaluate a review of systems, including the "Ten Questions" (*Shi Wen*) (e.g., pain, energy level, sweating)
 - b. Identify and relate current health conditions to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
 - c. Identify appropriate additional questions based on patient's responses and examination findings
 - 3. Patient environmental and social history
 - a. Identify and relate internal factors (e.g., emotions, stress) to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
 - b. Identify and relate external factors (e.g., environmental factors) to pattern/syndrome differentiation*



- c. Identify and relate miscellaneous factors (e.g., dietary habits, work habits, occupation) to pattern/syndrome differentiation*

4. Health history

- a. Assess personal health history, including previous symptoms, diagnoses, and treatments
- b. Assess family history
- c. Identify and relate health history to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
- d. Identify appropriate additional questions based on patient's responses and health history

D. Touching/palpation (*Qie*)

1. Pulses

- a. Differentiate radial pulse characteristics (e.g., rate, depth, strength) and relate to pattern/syndrome differentiation*

2. Abdomen

- a. Assess the abdomen (e.g., temperature, texture, shape, and pain) and relate to pattern/syndrome differentiation*
- b. Identify abdominal regions corresponding to organ systems (e.g., abdominal diagnosis)

3. Channels

- a. Identify and correlate findings along the channels (e.g., nodules, tenderness, temperature) to pattern/syndrome differentiation*

4. Other body areas

- a. Identify and correlate body sensations (e.g., pain, numbness, tingling, sensitivity), temperature changes, and quality of tissue (e.g., edema, hardness/softness, tension/flaccidity) to pattern/syndrome differentiation*

*Pattern/Syndrome Differentiation:

- Eight Principles (*Ba Gang*)
- Organs (*Zang Fu*)
- Meridian/Channel (*Jing Luo*)
- Six Stages (*Liu Jing*)
- Four Levels (*Wei, Qi, Ying, Xue*)
- Five Elements (*Wu Xing*)
- Qi, Blood, Body Fluids (*Qi, Xue, Jin Ye*)
- Triple Burner (*San Jiao*)



Domain II: Assessment, Analysis, and Differential Diagnosis Based Upon Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Theory (35% of Exam)

- A. Differential diagnosis based upon chief complaint, prioritization of major signs and symptoms, knowledge of acupuncture and Chinese medicine diseases, and pattern identification
1. Yin/Yang Theory
 - a. Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to yin/yang theory
 - b. Identify and apply yin/yang theory to formulate a pattern/syndrome differentiation
 2. Five Elements Theory (Five Phases/*Wu Xing*)
 - a. Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to Five Elements theory
 - b. Identify and apply Five Elements theory to formulate a pattern/syndrome differentiation
 3. Eight Principles (*Ba Gang*) (e.g., interior/exterior, heat/cold)
 - a. Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to the Eight Principles
 - b. Identify and apply the Eight Principles to formulate a pattern/syndrome differentiation
 4. Qi, Blood, Body Fluids Theory (*Qi, Xue, Jin Ye*)
 - a. Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to Qi, Blood, body fluids theory
 - b. Identify and apply Qi, Blood, body fluids theory to formulate a pattern/syndrome differentiation
 5. Channel Theory (*Jing Luo*) (e.g., Twelve primary channels, Eight Extraordinary channels, Luo-connecting channels)
 - a. Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to channel theory
 - b. Identify and apply channel theory to formulate a pattern/syndrome differentiation
 6. Organ Theory (*Zang Fu*)
 - a. Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to organ theory
 - b. Identify and apply organ theory to formulate a pattern/syndrome differentiation
 7. Six Stages Theory (e.g., *Tai Yang, Yang Ming, Jue Yin*)
 - a. Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to Six Stages theory
 - b. Identify and apply Six Stages theory to formulate a pattern/syndrome differentiation



8. Four Levels Theory (*Wei, Qi, Ying, Xue*)
 - a. Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to Four Levels theory
 - b. Identify and apply Four Levels theory to formulate a pattern/syndrome differentiation
9. Triple Burner Theory (*San Jiao*)
 - a. Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to Triple Burner theory
 - b. Identify and apply Triple Burner theory to formulate a pattern/syndrome differentiation
10. Etiology Theory: External, Internal, and Miscellaneous (neither External nor Internal)
 - a. External (e.g., Wind, Damp, Cold, Pestilential Qi [*Li Qi*])
 - i. Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to external etiology
 - ii. Identify and apply external etiology theory to formulate a pattern/syndrome differentiation
 - b. Internal (e.g., anger, joy, stress)
 - i. Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to internal etiology
 - ii. Identify and apply internal etiology theory to formulate a pattern/syndrome differentiation
 - c. Miscellaneous (e.g., diet, lifestyle, trauma, Phlegm, Blood Stasis)
 - i. Assess and analyze signs and symptoms according to miscellaneous etiology

Domain III: Treatment Principle and Strategy (30% of Exam)

A. Treatment principle and strategies

1. Formulate treatment principle and strategies based upon
 - a. Yin/Yang Theory
 - b. Five Elements Theory (Five Phases/*Wu Xing*)
 - c. Eight Principles (*Ba Gang*) (e.g., interior/exterior, heat/cold)
 - d. Qi, Blood, Body Fluids Theory (*Qi, Xue, Jin Ye*)
 - e. Channel Theory (*Jing Luo*) (e.g., Primary channels, Extraordinary channels, Luo-connecting channels)
 - f. Organ Theory (*Zang Fu*)
 - g. Six Stages Theory (e.g., *Tai Yang, Yang Ming, Jue Yin*)



- h. Four Levels Theory (*Wei, Qi, Ying, Xue*)
 - i. Triple Burner Theory (*San Jiao*)
 - j. Etiology Theory: External, Internal, and Miscellaneous (neither External nor Internal)
 - 2. Prioritize treatment strategies based on acupuncture and Chinese medicine principles (e.g., Root and Branch, constitutional, seasonal)
 - 3. Modify treatment principle and/or strategy based on patient's response, disease progression, and lifestyle factors
- B. Lifestyle changes and self-care modalities
- 1. Recommend lifestyle changes and self-care modalities
 - a. Exercise (e.g., Qi Gong, Tai Ji)
 - b. Meditation, relaxation, and breathing techniques
 - c. Dietary guidance