



## The Foundations of Oriental Medicine Content Outline

Effective as of 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



## Foundations of Oriental Medicine 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<sup>®</sup>. All NCCAOM<sup>®</sup> modules and examinations reflect practice in the United States as determined by the most recent job analysis.*

*NCCAOM<sup>®</sup>'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<sup>®</sup> does not endorse any third-party study/preparation guide.*

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