



Steps to Become an *NCCAOM® National Board-Certified Acupuncturist™*

All the following information is available on the [NCCAOM website](#)

1. What to know before you begin the *NCCAOM® Application for Certification*:

Three things are required to become an *NCCAOM® National Board-Certified Acupuncturist™*.

1. Graduate transcript
2. Clean Needle Technique (CNT) Certificate
3. Pass required exams

What state do you plan to practice in? _____ The state requirements will determine if you need NCCAOM Certification and what exams you will need to pass. Click here to see the [State Licensure Requirements Interactive Map](#).

What NCCAOM Certification are you applying for? _____

OM: Oriental Medicine – Required exams are FOM, AC, CH, BIO

AC: Acupuncture – Required exams are FOM, AC, BIO

What pictured ID will you use at the testing site? _____

A Federally legal picture ID (i.e., driver's license or government identification) is required to enter the testing site. ***The name on the ID must match the name on your NCCAOM application.***

Know your route to NCCAOM Certification. Route 1: Formal Education: United States Applicant.

Know your educational degree:

Be ready to pay the application fee. _____

OM application fee: \$625

AC application fee: \$525

2. Sixty (60) days (2 months) before you graduate you can begin the application process. First thing to do is create an NCCAOM Certification online account in the NCCAOM website.

Go to [NCCAOM's website](#).

- Select 'Log In' at top right corner.
- Scroll down and select the 'Certification' Portal (left side).
- Select 'New Individual Account'.
- Complete the information and click the 'submit' button.
- You will be emailed your NCCAOM ID number. This number is unique to you forever, regardless of your status with NCCAOM. The system will also email you your username and password which you can change if you wish.



3. Submit an NCCAOM® Certification Application.

Be sure to communicate with your school that you have completed the application because your required documents (graduate transcript and CNT Certificate) must link to your NCCAOM application to show in your Certification account.

- Go to [NCCAOM's website](#) and 'Login' at the upper right corner.
- Select the Certification Portal (left side) and login into your NCCAOM Certification account.
- Select the orange button 'Apply for New Certification' at the top of the page.
- Be prepared to complete the application at one sitting – **you cannot save the application and finish it later.** You will need to answer the following information. Most areas are pull-down menus.
 - Certification type (OM or AC)
 - School attended
 - Health and Legal Questions
 - Attestation – NCCAOM® Code of Ethics (Attachment 1) and the NCCAOM® Grounds for Professional Discipline (Attachment 2). Both documents are available at [Ethics and Disciplinary Review page](#) on the website.
- Submit the application and pay the fee. NCCAOM accepts Visa, MasterCard or American Express.

OM application fee:	\$625
AC application fee:	\$525

You are now an NCCAOM 'Applicant'

4. Request your CNT Certificate from CCAHM.

- Go to the [CCAHM website](#).
- Select 'Certificate/Verification Request' and log-in.
- Click 'I would like verification of my CNT course completion to be sent to NCCAOM'
- Fill in the information and pay the fee. CCAHM will upload your CNT Certificate which will link to your NCCAOM application and show in your Certification account.

5. Graduate Transcript

Once you have submitted your NCCAOM® Certification Application, your school will upload your Official graduate transcript to the NCCAOM website which will link to your NCCAOM application and show in your Certification account.

You are now an NCCAOM 'Candidate'



6. *NCCAOM® Authorization to Test (ATT) Letter*

Once you have submitted your application and NCCAOM has received your CNT Certificate and your official graduate transcript, you will be approved to sit for the exams. An ***NCCAOM® Authorization to Test (ATT) Letter for each exam will be sent to you at the email address on your application.*** The ATT letter is very important because it verifies the exam you are approved to take, provides instructions to schedule your exams, and you must show the letter when entering the testing site. An ATT Letter is provided for each exam you are approved to sit for and is also available for download from your online Certification account at any point during your testing period.

7. NCCAOM Examinations

- Do not wait to take your exams!!
- Visit the [NCCAOM® Exam Preparation Center](#) to access practice tests.
- The NCCAOM exams are given at a PearsonVUE Testing Center.
- You will receive one ATT Letter for each exam you are approved to sit for.
- The exams may be scheduled at your convenience and taken in any order.
- All required exams must be passed within 4 years from the date you submit your application.
- Select the [PearsonVUE Test Center](#) you plan to go to.

Scheduling Exams Online or By Phone

- Each exam costs \$325 and is paid online directly to Pearson VUE at the time it is scheduled.
- Have your *NCCAOM® Authorization to Test Letter* ready.
- Go to [PearsonVUE Test Center](#) or call Pearson VUE/NCCAOM candidate services at 888-235-7649 (Monday thru Friday, 7:00 am to 7:00 pm CST).
- For online scheduling select ‘Create a Web Account’
- From the ATT Letter, be ready to enter or tell the customer service representative the information below.
 - Name
 - Email address
 - NCCAOM ID number
 - School Code
 - Test center location
 - Testing date and time

You can cancel and reschedule your exams up to 3 times using this process at no cost. More cancellations/reschedules require a new ATT Letter and an additional \$60 fee.



Exam Day

Report Time: The time printed on the *Pearson VUE Admissions Letter* is your required report time. Allow enough time to find the test site and arrive 30 minutes prior to the scheduled time.

If you are late, you will not be admitted to the test site, you will not be able to take the exam and you will forfeit the fee. You will be required to reapply for another exam date and pay the fee again.

Start Time: The time you start the exam. You have 2.5 hours to complete the exam.

Required Identification at the Pearson VUE Test Center

- NCCAOM® Authorization to Test Letter
- Driver's license OR government identification with your photo and signature.
- A second personal ID [school, work, etc.] with your signature.

If the name on the pictured ID and the ATT letter do not match OR your ID is expired, you will not be able to take the exam and you will forfeit the fee. You will be required to reapply for another exam date and pay the fee again.

Personal Property

- ***Do not bring anything to the testing site other than what you can fit into a locker.***
- A ring binder containing five sheets of erasable board and a marker will be provided and collected at the end of the exam.
- If testing staff determines there is evidence of cheating (additional paper, writing on the body, etc.), you will:
 - be removed from the exam and testing site,
 - forfeit all application and exam fees,
 - be barred from applying for NCCAOM certification for up to five years, and
 - be considered a new applicant if you choose to reapply.

Childcare - Childcare services are not provided while a parent/caregiver takes an examination.

Examination Security

Candidates will be audio and videotaped during the examination for security purposes. All candidates will be photographed and have a palm vein test at the test center. Palm Vein Technology ensures:

- each test taker has a single record,
- represents a virtually error-free identification system that is non-intrusive to the user.
- increases accuracy and security around your check-in (and out) process, and
- verifies you as you enter (or exit) the test center.



Entering the Exam Room

- You will be given a checklist of rules to review.
- Additional fingerprints will be taken before you are seated and if you leave the room at any time during the exam.
- ***DO NOT get sidetracked!*** Pay attention to the computer screen. ***You have 5 minutes to:***
 - verify that your identification information and exam category are correct, and
 - accept the terms of the [Non-Disclosure Agreement and General Terms of Use for NCCAOM Exams](#) (Attachment 3).
- ***If you do not complete the 2 steps above in the 5-minute window, the computer will shut down and you will be asked to leave and forfeit the exam fee.***

Exam Results

- Exams are scored pass or fail.
- You will receive a ‘Preliminary’ result at the end of the exam. An ‘Official’ exam result letter will be mailed to you via the United States Postal Service.
- You may track your exam results in your Certification online account. Results are posted 20 to 30 business days after you complete of the exam.

Failing an Exam

- If you fail the exam you must wait 45 days to retake the exam with PearsonVUE. You can schedule the retake exam at any time.
- An official letter will be mailed to you outlining the areas of weakness.
- Each attempt requires you to pay the exam \$325 fee.
- After 5 unsuccessful exam attempts, the NCCAOM will offer additional test attempts to those who meet the specific criteria (continuing education) and who have petitioned the NCCAOM with their request. More details are available at [NCCAOM Exam Retake Policy](#).

8. NCCAOM Certification

Once you have passed all the required exams, you will be certified as an NCCAOM Diplomat.

Congratulations! You are now an ***NCCAOM® National Board-Certified Acupuncturist™***.

- Your NCCAOM Certification will be processed within 1 to 2 weeks.
- In approximately 6 weeks you will receive via United States Postal Service:
 - The NCCAOM® Official Congratulatory Letter with a wallet sized NCCAOM ID Card.
 - The NCCAOM® Diploma to frame for your office or home.



When you leave school and begin your practice, be sure to ***update your NCCAOM Certification online account*** with your new address, phone, and email. *Find A Practitioner* is the most visited section of the NCCAOM website, and you will want your colleagues, peers, and the public to be able to find you and/or refer patients.

[NCCAOM Diplomate Benefits](#): (Attachment 4).

[NCCAOM Digital Badge and Credentials](#)

Digital Badges and credentials are the mark of excellence in the AOM profession. Distinguish yourself from other practitioners and explore the opportunity to be at the center of the action. It is for this reason that the NCCAOM encourages you to use your digital badge and credentials after your name.



Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM)[®] Dipl. C.H. (NCCAOM)[®] Dipl. ABT (NCCAOM)[®] Dipl. O.M. (NCCAOM)[®]

[NCCAOM Advocacy](#)

The NCCAOM advocacy team is committed to advancing NCCAOM National Board-Certified Acupuncturists™ and the practice of acupuncture at the federal, state, and local levels. NCCAOM advocates for Diplomates and the profession to build awareness of acupuncture as a mainstream, evidence-based methodology, expand patient access to certified acupuncturists nationwide, and develop relationships with legislators, regulators, and stakeholders across the healthcare industry on behalf of our members.

[NCCAOM Marketing Materials](#)

Promote your business with personalized marketing materials. These versatile marketing solutions get the word out in person or by mail.

[Volunteering for NCCAOM](#)

After 5 years of practical experience in the AHM profession, you qualify to volunteer as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) on one of the 4 NCCAOM[®] Exam Development Committees. You will be trained to write the exam questions and work with your peers to develop the exams.

9. When applying for State Licensure
 - Login into your online Certification account.
 - Click the ‘Request State Verification’ link (orange button at top of page).
 - Select your state(s).
 - Pay the \$50 fee online for each state verification.



- The NCCAOM will email your test scores (pass/fail) and certification (if required) directly to the state acupuncture board.

How to write your credentials for your resume: Jane Doe, MSOM, Dipl. O.M. (NCCAOM)[®], L.Ac.

10. NCCAOM Recertification

- To maintain your Active status with NCCAOM, you must recertify every 4 years.
- 60 hours/PDA points and a CPR Certificate are required to meet recertification within the 4-year cycle.
- Find PDA approved courses on the [NCCAOM[®] PDA Search Engine](#).
- Track your PDAs/CEUs on your online educational record. CE Banking is where PDA points are automatically loaded to your *NCCAOM Recertification Transcript* for PDA approved courses.
- If you do not recertify, you will be moved to ‘Lapsed’ status and lose your NCCAOM Diplomate Benefits. You have up to 3 years to return to ‘Active’ status. If you do not, you will be terminated and must meet reinstatement requirements to return to Active status.

11. Support your profession by joining your State Acupuncture Association.

Questions? Contact Ruosi Lee, Manager of Education and Professional Development at rlee@thenccaom.org



Attachment 1

NCCAOM

CODE OF ETHICS

As an NCCAOM® Certified Diplomate, I hereby pledge my aspiration and on-going commitment to the following principles to maintain the highest level of competency and ethical standards of my profession:

- Respect the rights and privacy of my patients by maintaining confidentiality and professional boundaries at all times.*
- Respect my colleagues, employees, students and mentees by maintaining appropriate boundaries.*
- Treat within my lawful scope of my practice and training and only if I am able to safely, competently and effectively do so.*
- Assist those seeking my services in a fair, nondiscriminatory and unbiased manner.*
- Allow my patients to fully participate in decisions related to their healthcare by documenting and keeping them informed of my treatments and outcomes.*
- Render the highest quality of care and make timely referrals to other health care professionals as may be appropriate.*
- Continue to advance my knowledge through education, training and collaboration with my colleagues.*
- Participate in activities that contribute to the betterment and wellness of my community.*
- Support in the care and access of my medicine to underserved populations.*
- Promote my profession's access to all people and its growth in the broad spectrum of health care.*

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Attachment 2

NCCAOM® Grounds for Professional Discipline

Protection of the public is the highest responsibility and priority of the NCCAOM. This protection of the public also extends to those within the profession, including practitioners, students, and mentees. To fulfill this mission, the NCCAOM reserves the right to initiate and investigate complaints and publish disciplinary actions taken against Respondents, [as defined by Section 1 of the [Procedures for Upholding Professional Conduct \(PDF\)](#)], in accordance with its Procedures for Upholding Professional Conduct for violations of the following:

1. Failing to cooperate with a disciplinary investigation.
2. Withholding information or providing false or deceptive information on an application for NCCAOM certification, recertification, PDA Providership, or disciplinary investigation.
3. Failing to notify the NCCAOM within thirty (30) calendar days of any of the following:
 - a. Notice of a disciplinary investigation in any jurisdiction pertaining to a healthcare practice.
 - b. Any order (including private or confidential) issued by any jurisdiction pertaining to a healthcare practice.
 - c. Violent felony charges.
 - d. Violent or non-violent felony convictions.
 - e. Misdemeanor criminal convictions related to a healthcare practice.
4. Being convicted of a serious or violent felony. (Note: Pursuant to Section 3, #10 of the *Procedures for Upholding Professional Conduct*, serious violent felonies may deem a candidate permanently ineligible for NCCAOM certification, recertification, or PDA Providership).
5. Being convicted of a misdemeanor related to a healthcare practice.
6. Being the subject of disciplinary or administrative action taken by a licensing board or health-related regulatory agency or school.
7. Violating NCCAOM policies, regulations, or procedures, including but not limited to complying with testing security protocols and continuing education requirements.
8. Misrepresenting professional credentials or titles.
9. Advertising false or misleading information.



10. Exceeding the scope of practice as defined by state or federal statute or regulation.
11. Obtaining or attempting to obtain compensation or reimbursement for services not rendered or via deception or fraud.
12. Failing to maintain proper records as required by state or federal statute or regulation.
13. Performing services without informed consent as required by state or federal statute or regulation.
14. Failing to maintain patient/practitioner confidentiality.
15. Failing to maintain professional boundaries in relationships with patients, or in any way exploiting the practitioner/patient trust.
16. Engaging in sexual contact with a current patient if the contact commences after the practitioner/patient relationship is established.
17. Engaging in sexual contact with a former patient unless a period of six (6) months has elapsed since the date that the professional relationship ended.
18. Failing to maintain professional and/or appropriate boundaries in relationships with colleagues, employees, students, interns, apprentices.
19. Gross negligence or a pattern of negligence in your practice or under your supervision.
20. Being unable to safely and effectively engage in practice due to substance abuse, physical or psychological impairment.*

***(Summary of PEDC Substance Abuse Policy Statement:** A Respondent whose capacity to safely and effectively treat patients has been diminished as a result of drug or alcohol abuse which has not resulted in harm to a patient, may temporarily and voluntarily surrender NCCAOM certification by contacting the [Professional Ethics and Disciplinary Review team](#) and temporarily withdrawing from practicing in order to complete an agreed upon treatment plan as decided by the PEDC. Upon the PEDC's receipt of a certificate of disposition from the pre-approved treatment facility, Respondent shall be allowed to return to certified status and resume practice. A surrender of certification under this provision shall be confidential and shall not be considered an admission of abuse, disability, or a violation of the Ground for Professional Discipline # 21. However, this surrender shall not confer immunity upon



Respondent with respect to any other Grounds for Professional Discipline and is unilaterally revocable by PEDC in the event the agreed treatment was not completed or harm to a patient has occurred.)

21. Discrimination, bias, or harassment on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, color, sex and/or sexual orientation, disability, national origin, or age
 - a. Harassment may include racial or other slurs, offensive or derogatory remarks about one of the aforementioned criteria, racially offensive symbols. Some individual actions may not singly rise to the level of harassment; however, behavior that rises to the standard of disciplinary action occurs when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile, unsafe, or offensive school or work environment.
22. Engagement in human trafficking of any kind, including sex or forced labor trafficking, or retaliation against individuals who report trafficking. Forced labor violations may include threats to withhold or manipulate documentation that may affect visa status, employment compensation, or other similar unlawful practices as determined by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA).
 - a. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) makes it illegal for an employer to discriminate with respect to hiring, firing, or recruitment or referral for a fee, based upon an individual's citizenship or immigration status.
23. Violating any federal or state statute, regulation or code relating to a healthcare practice
24. Violating any other standard of reasonable and appropriate care as determined by the Professional Ethics and Disciplinary Committee.



Attachment 3

Non-Disclosure Agreement and General Terms of Use for NCCAOM Exams

“I have read and understand the Examination Instructions. I have agreed to abide by the *NCCAOM® Grounds for Professional Discipline* and acknowledge that if I am caught cheating on this examination, including the sharing of information after the examination is complete, I will be subject to review by the Professional Ethics and Discipline Committee of NCCAOM. If I am found to have violated the *NCCAOM® Grounds for Professional Discipline*, I understand that my scores will be canceled, and I may not have the opportunity to test again.

Additionally, I understand that this examination is confidential and is protected by trade secret law. It is made available solely for the purpose of becoming certified by NCCAOM. I am expressly prohibited from disclosing, publishing, reproducing, or transmitting this examination, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, verbal or written, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose.

I am the candidate whose name appears on the initial screen, and as an affirmation to the *NCCAOM® Statement of Acknowledgement* I signed when submitting my application, I acknowledge that I am prohibited from transmitting information about NCCAOM examination questions or content in any form to any person or entity. I also acknowledge that if I suspect a violation on the part of others, it is my responsibility to report these actions to the NCCAOM.”



Attachment 4

NCCAOM® Diplomate Benefits

- 🕒 Proudly designate yourself as an *NCCAOM National Board-Certified Acupuncturist™*.
- 🕒 Have consumers and professionals find you in the *NCCAOM® Find a Practitioner Directory* and *NCCAOM® Registry*.
- 🕒 Utilize your *Diplomate Digital Badge* to promote your NCCAOM Certification on your resume, email, and social media platforms.
- 🕒 Be promoted by the *NCCAOM® Advocacy Team* advancing NCCAOM certification at the federal and state levels.
- 🕒 Join NCCAOM as a *Volunteer* & serve on a committee, panel or taskforce with your peers.
- 🕒 Sign up for a *FREE website* from ChiOnline.
- 🕒 Have access to discounted *wall-mounted frames* for displaying your *NCCAOM® Diploma*.
- 🕒 Receive the NCCAOM newsletter *The Diplomate: E-news You Can Use* and the *NCCAOM® Advocacy Updates*.
- 🕒 Be eligible for *reduced fees* for services offered by NCCAOM, as an NCCAOM PDA Provider, and our strategic partners.
- 🕒 Serve as a volunteer on an *NCCAOM Exam Committee* and/or the *Board of Commissioner*.