



## TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE PRACTITIONERS BOARD

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Dear Sir/Mdm

### **CHANGES TO THE SINGAPORE TCM PHYSICIANS REGISTRATION EXAMINATION**

The TCM Practitioners Board (TCMPB) would like to update the schools on the changes to the current Singapore TCM Physicians Registration Examination (STRE), to place greater emphasis on the assessment of clinical competencies as part of the qualifying examination required by the Board for full registration. These changes do not affect the fundamental requirements for full registration as a TCM physician (TCMP).

#### **Registration Criteria**

2 In accordance with Regulation 6 of TCM Practitioners (Registration of TCM Physicians and Acupuncturists) Regulations, applicants must fulfil the following criteria to be granted full registration:

- a. Obtain an approved local or foreign qualification in TCM
- b. Pass any qualifying examination that the Board requires and
- c. In the opinion of the Board, a fit and proper person to be granted full registration as a TCMP.

3 As a newly registered TCMP, he/she must (a) possess essential and core TCM knowledge (Foundation and Clinical) and be able to apply these knowledge in evaluating and managing patients, (b) have and be able to demonstrate core TCM skills which include clinical, communication, analytical and procedural therapeutic skills, and (c) be ethical, professional and abide by the TCM Practitioners Act and Regulations and health related laws that concern TCM practice..

4 The Board has reviewed and decided that the qualifying examination will de-emphasise knowledge-based assessment and focus more on the assessment of clinical competencies. Thus, the Board is now revamping STRE which will be done in two phases:

- a. In 2025 & 2026: Modified STRE
- b. From 2027: Clinical Competency Assessment (CCA)

**Modified STRE (2025-2026)**

5 The current STRE format consists of Part 1 (Theory components with 4 papers; see Table 1) and Part 2 (Clinical Skill examination component) which are conducted by the Board. In 2025 and 2026, the format will be modified as follows:

- a. *Papers 1 and 2 (Foundation Knowledge and Clinical Knowledge)*

These 2 papers will be conducted by each local TCM school, i.e. Singapore College of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SCTCM), Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Institute of Chinese Medical Studies (ICMS), as part of the school’s assessment. Students must pass this knowledge-based assessment to be eligible for the modified STRE.

- b. *Papers 3 to 7*

These 5 papers will be assessed in one sitting, retaining the current STRE format. The examination will likely be held in August & September

Table 1: Examinable components in Modified STRE Format

Paper	Examinable components in modified STRE in 2025 and 2026	
1	Foundation Knowledge	<b>To be conducted by respective schools as part of school examinations;</b> textbook edition: both 12-5 and 13-5 are acceptable
2	Clinical Knowledge	
3	Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines (ECEG)	<b>To be assessed by the Board in one sitting (i.e. no more Part 1 and 2)</b>
4	Written Case Analysis	
5	TCM Clinical Appraisal	
6	Acupoint Localisation	
7	Acupuncture Techniques	

6 Eligible candidates for modified STRE are:

- 1) Students graduating from local TCM schools in 2025 and 2026
- 2) Candidates who failed Part 1 in 2024 and all previous candidates who failed STRE and have remaining attempts to take STRE
- 3) Candidates who failed Part 2 in 2024 and failed supplementary examination in April 2025
- 4) Candidates with recognised foreign degrees (after completing 403 hours locally)

**Clinical Competency Assessment (CCA) (From 2027)**

7 This CCA will be the new “qualifying examination” that the Board requires, replacing the STRE. All local TCM schools will continue to conduct Foundation Knowledge and Clinical Knowledge assessment, as part of their schools’ internal examinations, while the Board will

conduct Papers/Stations 1 to 9 (see Table 2 below). This CCA will adopt the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) format, in addition to retaining the written format for two papers (see Table 2, Paper 1 and 9).

**Table 2: Examinable components in the CCA**

Paper/Station	Examinable components in CCA by the Board	
1	Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines	Written (MCQ)
2	Clinical Appraisal 1	OSCE
3	Clinical Appraisal 2	
4	Clinical Appraisal 3	
5	Acupoints Localization	
6	Acupuncture Techniques	
7	Skill in Taking Medical History	
8	Skill in Communication with Patients, Family and/or caregivers	
9	Skill in Medical documentation / Case Notes Recording	Written

8 Eligible candidates for CCA are:

- 1) The last 2 batches of double degree NTU-BUCM students graduating in 2027 and 2028
- 2) First and subsequent batches of single NTU TCM degree graduating in 2028 and beyond
- 3) All students graduating from SCTCM and ICMS in 2027 and beyond
- 4) Candidates who failed supplementary modified STRE in March 2027
- 5) Candidates with recognised foreign degrees (after completing 403 hours locally)
- 6) All previous candidates who failed STRE and have remaining attempts to take the examination

9 The implementation timeline and comprehensive details for this new CCA will be determined and announced in due course, considering the diverse needs of different categories of CCA-eligible candidates. This approach ensures a fair and thorough assessment process, maintaining high standards while accommodating the varied backgrounds of TCM candidates.

### **Re-attempts and Supplementary Examination**

10 Starting in 2025, a new supplementary examination system will be implemented for candidates who did not pass the STRE Part 2 in 2024. This supplementary examination, scheduled for April 2025, will allow candidates to re-attempt only the specific paper(s) they did not pass in their 2024 STRE Part 2 examination.

11 For those who fail in the modified STRE in 2025 and 2026, a similar opportunity will be available in March 2026 and 2027, respectively. If candidates choose not to take, or do not pass the supplementary examination in March 2027, they will be required to take all components of the CCA in August/September 2027. From 2027 onwards, candidates who do not pass the CCA will also have the chance to re-attempt the supplementary examination in the CCA format.

12 Candidates should note that they are permitted a maximum of four attempts within six years from their graduation year. Taking a supplementary examination will be counted as one of the 4 attempts. Should a candidate choose not to take the supplementary examination, they will need to retake all papers/stations under the modified STRE or CCA, in the following year.

### **Refresher Course**

13 If candidates use up all their 4 attempts within 6 years and have not yet passed the examination, and are still keen to practise TCM, they can consider taking a 1-year refresher course conducted by the SCTCM. After successful completion of the course, they will be eligible to retake the qualifying examination again, with another 4 attempts in 6 years. No more attempts will be allowed if they still do not pass after a total of 8 attempts.

14 The SCTCM's 1-year refresher course in 2025-2026 will be conducted to prepare candidates to take the modified STRE in 2026. The refresher course from 2026 onwards will prepare candidates to take CCA.

### **New 4-Year Bachelor of Chinese Medicine Programme at Nanyang Technological University (NTU)**

15 The Board had earlier informed NTU that graduates of the new NTU 4-year Bachelor of Chinese Medicine programme are exempted from the STRE from 2028. Due to the above-planned changes in the examination structure from 2025 onwards, these NTU graduates will also need to take and pass the CCA, the new qualifying examination, before being given full registration.

### **Oversight of TCM courses and Schools Examinations**

16 Schools are required to review and align their curricula with the new examination structures.

17 The Board will maintain oversight of the TCM courses and the schools' examinations to ensure the requirements are met for the modified STRE and CCA. This balanced approach aims to uphold the high standards of TCM practice while acknowledging the quality of education provided by the local TCM schools.

18 The Board is committed to ensuring a smooth transition and will provide further updates to all stakeholders. We seek your cooperation as we work together to enhance the examination.

19 Please disseminate the changes to the examination structure to teachers and students to ensure smooth transition and optimal preparation for the modified STRE and CCA. For further clarification, please contact the Board's secretariat at [tcmpb@spb.gov.sg](mailto:tcmpb@spb.gov.sg).

Thank you.

Yours faithfully



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