



College of  
TRADITIONAL  
CHINESE MEDICINE  
PRACTITIONERS +  
ACUPUNCTURISTS  
of British Columbia

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## **Communication to Student Registrants Regarding their Studies During the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic**

### **Date: March 27 ,2020**

The Covid-19 outbreak has impacted the daily life of BC residents in all walks of life, including students who are studying in health professional programs. Educational programs have stopped in-person classroom training. School meetings, trips, and clinical trainings which involve people gathering and socializing in close distance were cancelled under the recommendation of the Provincial Health Officer and the BC Government.

The restriction of in-person visits and the provision of clinical training is a directive of the Provincial Health Officer. The College's primary responsibility during this crisis is the health and well-being of all our stakeholders, including student registrants, practitioners, registrants who are educators and their patients. The College must stress the focus of these measures is for the safety of the whole community.

CTCMA has recently received an increasing number of enquiries from students regarding the possibility of change in requirements for clinical training during this pandemic.

On March 14, 2020, CTCMA sent a letter to all TCM schools in BC in response to the Coronavirus outbreak outlining the updated temporary policy for TCM education programs (see Appendix A). The Education and Examination Committee supports online virtual classrooms during the pandemic and confirmed acceptance of courses that use virtual delivery methods for the purpose of meeting the College's entry-level competency requirement. Virtual clinical training would not be recognized. This means that schools will have the discretion of offering online instruction as an option during the pandemic. At the same time, the importance of having hands-on experience in clinical training can be maintained.

Please be reminded that school administration and student accreditation is regulated under the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training through its Private Training Institution Branch; it is not a function of CTCMA, a regulatory college of a health profession that regulates the practitioners who work in the profession. The schools are required to ensure that their programs continue to meet the legislative requirements of the Ministry regardless of which instructional method and technology is used.

The College is responsible for identifying schools whose programs meet the pan-Canadian entry-level competency requirements and recognizing those programs under Schedule H of its Bylaws. This authority is established under Section 19 (m.1) of the *Health Professions Act*, which states that the College's Bylaw "(can) specify academic or technical programs that are recognized by the college as meeting a standard established under paragraph (m) (i)". The standards of academic or technical achievement are established as conditions—or requirements—for registration as a member of the College. The purpose of the temporary policy is to ensure that courses a TCM program offers during this pandemic continue to maintain the same quality and standards as previously expected.

Any schools which would like to modify their program with changes that affect the learning outcomes and the occupational competencies that are accessed within a course will need to submit an education program

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review request. This is to ensure that the learning outcomes and the integrity of the TCM program would be maintained.

The College recognizes that the displacement affects students' learning schedule. While the College regrets that there is disruption in students' studies, all members of the community must acknowledge that this may be a displacement that could affect all for months. The College is making every effort to minimize any inconvenience and at the same time ensure that its regulatory responsibilities are not jeopardized.

Students in clinical placement in other colleges and university programs are also being impacted. Their clinical training is also on hold indefinitely. While programs in some parts of the world have been expedited in order to have more nurses and doctors available, there is currently no need to augment TCM and acupuncture graduates in BC.

It is important to receive sufficient training and complete all the credentials required for taking the registration examinations in order to pass the examinations and be able to get registered to practice in this province. While the College understands that the uncertainty of the situation can be stressful, please, in return, understand that the College wants nothing else but for all student registrants to have the benefit of a comprehensive education during their time at school.

The College is continuing to closely monitor the extraordinary circumstances and will provide updates to schools and its registrants when available. CTCMA is working to support all registrants in this difficult time and will continue to work collectively with registrants, all levels of governments, and the public health officials in response to the current COVID-19 situation.



## URGENT & IMPORTANT

March 14, 2020

VIA EMAIL to all TCM schools

Dear TCM Principals/Administrators

### Re: Temporary Policy on Online Classroom Instruction

The Education and Examination Committee recently convened to review current policies and have updated the policy preparing to consider a recognized TCM training program in Schedule H to include components of instruction offered through distance learning partially in a course or fully in a course, when the school can provide evidence that the distance learning components adhere to the same standard and assessment as for the same regular in-classroom course(s).

With the Coronavirus (COVID-19) as a pandemic global situation and the need to practise “social distancing”, the College has been asked if some classroom instruction can be changed to be offered by online virtual instruction at this extraordinary time.

The committee issued the following policy and guideline in response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 today (March 14, 2020).

### Temporary Policy

TCM schools in Schedule H have discretion how to respond to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak as individual institutions. The College approves online classroom instruction during this extraordinary time so that schools can have one more option for their response to this health situation.

Current approved courses in a Schedule H TCM recognized program can include using online virtual classroom technology for course material delivery with the sole intention of avoiding crowd gathering purpose *on a temporary basis*. The guideline is effective immediately to April 30, 2020 or end of term for currently running courses (whichever is later). The committee will assess the situation in mid-April and will keep the schools informed of any further updates.

### Policy Guideline

1. The TCM schools in Schedule H have discretion how to respond to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. It is their responsibility to decide how to meet the students' learning need for quality instruction during this extraordinary time.
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2. The courses must follow all guidelines from the Ministry of Advanced Education and the Private Training Institutions Branch (PTIB) for online course instruction to ensure the change in delivery format does not affect instruction quality, course content, and learning outcomes. There might be requirements to log student's attendance and participation during the online instruction for school administration purpose.
3. The courses must be taught by the same instructors (or instructors with the same qualifications), using the same course reference materials, following the same course outlines with the same learning outcomes as in the approved curriculum previously reviewed and approved by the Education Program Review team. This change only involves using an online technology to substitute in-person classroom instruction to deliver the course materials. The scheduled time, course content and course duration should not be changed.
4. When the public health risk associated with the virus deems to be "low" in Canada by Public Health authority and there is no public health directive to close a specific school or to lockdown all schools / educational institutions, schools can consider to offer courses by online delivery method for students who cannot attend classes in person due to self-isolation. When there is any school(s) closure by the Public Health authority, the school(s) can consider offering courses solely by online delivery method due to students not able to attend in person in the classrooms. Offering online instruction is an option and each school will make its own decision for its arrangement for currently running classes, which might include postponement and/or cancellation of classes.
5. This guideline is only for didactic courses. When clinical portions of the programs will need to be re-scheduled or cancelled, schools should try to offer the clinical courses at a later appropriate time as soon as possible. Virtual delivery of clinical training is **NOT** permitted.

Sincerely,

The Education and Examination Committee  
College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners & Acupuncturists of BC