

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **For Examinations:**

**1. After taking an exam can a candidate discuss the question items with their teachers and other students?**

No, a candidate cannot discuss or communicate any information about the content of the exam to others, either immediately following the exam or at any time later. Communicating exam question items is considered a form of cheating and is dealt with accordingly.

**2. What process does CTCMA use to issue written exam results?**

In issuing results, most examination programs use one of three reporting scales: raw scores, standardized scores and calibrated scores. CTCMA uses raw scores.

**3. How is the raw score pass mark decided?**

This is done through the development and selection of items with ranges of difficulty. To ensure that test items are psychometrically sound, the examination committee reviews test item statistics. Any test items that do not meet established guidelines are dropped from the analysis prior to producing candidate scores. This improves test reliability and produces more accurate results for candidates.

**4. How is the written examination standard established?**

The standards, or required score, was established for each examination by a committee of experts who undertook a standard setting process that reflected a consensus, based on their expertise and experience. These committees used a standard setting approach called the modified Angoff Method of Standard Setting. It involves a consensus-building model and is the most widely used standard setting technique reported in the literature.

**5. How accurate are the written exam results?**

To ensure that candidates are accurately assessed, the standard error of measure (SEM) is calculated for each test and incorporated into the final pass mark.

**6. How are the written exam question items decided?**

The examination is designed to measure entry level competencies. These competencies reflected the knowledge and skills necessary for safe and effective practice. A table of specifications is used to guide test developers in ensuring that appropriate weightings are assigned to each area of importance. The table can be found in the candidate's handbook.

**7. How many questions does the acupuncture written exam have?**

There are a total of 200 multiple-choice test items on the exam that reflected both the content weightings described in the Table of Specification and a range of cognitive behavior levels.

**8. What is the process for deciding the question items to use on an exam?**

Each test item undergoes an extensive review by item developers prior to appearing on a draft of the examination. A technical edit of the items is undertaken next. At this stage, items are checked for clarity of language and adherence to a set of conventions on formatting, grammar and punctuation. Finally a timing pilot is undertaken in which experts, who were not members of the examination development team, determined whether administration time was sufficient and whether any of the items required further edits.

**9. What happens after the exam papers have been collected?**

After administration and prior to the production of candidate scores, the psychometric properties of each item are reviewed. Based on this, decisions are made by content experts on whether or not they should remain in the test for further analysis and the production of candidate scores.

**10. How are the bubble sheet marked?**

Responses to items are scanned by the Applied Research and Evaluation Services of the University of B.C. As a result, item statistics are produced for the initial stage of a analysis. Based on these results, items undergo a further review by content experts prior to calculating final scores and producing final test statistics. Those items not meeting appropriate psychometric properties are examined for clarity and accuracy of content. As a result of this process, items may be dropped and key adjustments made before the final test run is undertaken.

**11. How are the final scores decided?**

Following the above procedure, results are run on computer by the Applied Research and Evaluation Services a second time, and candidates' scores and the corresponding test properties are calculated and reported to the College.

**12. What is meant by the term 'statistical properties' of the written exam?**

The statistical properties of the exam includes the maximum possible, highest, and lowest scores; raw and percent mean; standard deviation; the reliability coefficient (KR20); and the standard error of measure (SEM). It should be noted that the maximum possible score will correspond to the original number of items less the items that were dropped prior to the final analysis.

The SEM statistic is used to develop a confidence interval around each candidate's score. When the pass rate is determined the SEM is taken into account.

**13. Does the candidate have an opportunity to make comments about the exam?**

Yes, at the end of all exams candidates are invited to complete a Candidate Response form including comments. Candidates are asked to record their perceptions of the examination on a rating form that deals with several important features of the examination. Results from the candidates' response provide one of the measures of the examination's face validity as well as feedback to the Examination Committee for future examinations. While response to the feedback form is voluntary, candidates are encouraged to participate.

**14. What questions are asked in the candidate's response form?**

Candidates are asked to rate the following aspects of the examination: clarity of content, usage of language, relevance to studies as a practitioner, amount of time provided, and fairness. In addition, candidates are invited to provide written comments. A four-point scale is used for rating, consisting of the following categories: *Strongly Disagree*, *Disagree*, *Agree*, and *Strongly Agree*.

**15. On what basis does CTCMA base exam policy?**

Development procedures, administration, and the analysis and reporting of results follow best test practices as established by the senior health regulatory organizations and other professional regulatory bodies.