



Pan-Canadian Examinations Score Report

Frequently Asked Questions

This document is designed to help candidates better understand their Pan-Canadian Examinations (PCE) score report. For additional information or inquiries, please contact the provincial regulatory body that you have registered with.

1. How are the multiple-choice and clinical case components' scores combined?

The PCE is scored according to the procedures accepted by the American Psychological Association, the American Educational Research Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education. Quality control checks are done during and after scoring to ensure score accuracy. For each examination component, the candidate's score is derived from the number of questions answered correctly. All questions are worth a maximum of one mark. There is no penalty for incorrect responses or missed questions. Partial marks are awarded for multiple-select and reorder questions. For example, you will obtain partial marks for selecting the correct options or putting the options in the correct order. To obtain one full mark for a multiple-select question, the required number of correct responses need to be selected. To obtain one full mark for a reorder question, *all* the responses need to be ordered correctly. Each component is worth 50% of the examination marks.

2. How are scaled scores determined?

The overall score is shown using a scaled score. The scaled score is a conversion of the overall examination raw score to a common scale.

3. How is the passing score set?

The PCEs are criterion referenced. This means in order to pass the examination, the candidate must obtain a score that is at least equal to the minimum passing score. The minimum passing score represents an absolute standard and does not depend on the performance of other candidates taking the same examination.

To establish the minimum passing score for the PCE, CARB-TCMPA uses a widely accepted criterion-referenced procedure (the "modified Angoff technique"). The passing score for the examination is set by the Examination Committee using the modified Angoff technique. This technique is one of the most widely used and accepted ways of establishing a passing score on a credentialing examination.

As the PCE is modified on a regular basis (e.g. addition of new questions), the minimum passing score is adjusted for the difficulty of the examination questions. The statistical performance of questions is also evaluated regularly to ensure that the PCE adheres to the highest testing standards.



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4. How reliable is the overall examination result?

For exams, reliability means consistency and repeatability from one examination administration to the next. The PCE is scored by using rigorous methodology that includes matching of examination scores produced by two different statistical packages. We use the widely known and accepted Cronbach's alpha to statistically assess the reliability of the PCE. Across the PCEs, the reliability is very good.

5. How are questions developed for the PCE?

CARB-TCMPA annually recruits subject matter experts to develop new questions for the PCE. Subject matter experts comprise TCM Practitioners, Acupuncturists, and TCM Herbalists representative of the profession in terms of practice experience, geographic regions, gender, and ethnicity. This group of subject matter experts is known as the Item Writing Committee. After the questions are developed, they undergo several rigorous subject matter committee reviews designed to validate that the knowledge, skills, and abilities measured align to the competencies, are clearly referenced, meet best practice standards for item writing, and confirm that each question meets generally accepted fairness guidelines (e.g. editing questions for issues of bias and stereotyping). The questions also undergo editorial review including spelling, grammar, and style.

6. How is content for the questions and exams selected?

CARB-TCMPA recruits a representative group of subject matter experts, known as the Examination Committee, whose role includes developing an examination blueprint that specifies examination length and duration, question type and presentation, and a breakdown of exam questions by practice area of the national competency profile and cognitive type.

The examinations are assembled in accordance with examination blueprint specifications and then the examination is reviewed by the Examination Committee and approved by the Steering Committee. There can be up to 10% of experimental questions in each exam component. Questions deemed "experimental" are not scored and do not count towards a candidate's total score.

The Appeals and Accommodations Committee will not consider complaints regarding the content of the examination or possible responses to examination questions. As a result, the content of the examination is NOT subject to appeal.

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7. Is the PCE valid?

Validity is a judgment of the degree to which there is evidence to support the appropriateness of the decisions that are based upon test scores or other modes of assessment.¹ CARB-TCMPA follows best practices at each stage of the assessment lifecycle to ensure that the competency decisions based upon the exam results are valid (e.g. designing the examination blueprints, developing content, administration, scoring, continuous quality improvement).

8. Can I appeal my result?

Yes, candidates have the right to appeal their examination result. The appeal must be submitted in writing following the procedures outlined in the [Examination Appeals Policy](#). The candidate's request for an appeal must be supported by documentation that verifies the circumstance that a candidate believes affected their performance on the examination (e.g. doctor's note, incident filed with the proctor at the time). Failure to provide the required documentation under each circumstance may cause the candidate's appeal not to be granted.

Candidates must send their [Request for Nullification](#) and supporting documentation to appeals@carb-tcmpa.org no later than 30 calendar days after receiving their results.

9. When can I attempt the exam again?

Attempting the examination again depends on a candidate's eligibility. The provincial regulatory body is responsible for determining an applicant's eligibility. Candidates should contact their regulatory body to determine if, and when, they are eligible to attempt the exam again:

- College and Association of Acupuncturists of Alberta: <http://acupuncturealberta.ca/>
- College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of British Columbia: <https://www.ctcma.bc.ca/>
- College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Newfoundland and Labrador: <https://ctcmpanl.ca/>
- College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario: <https://www.ctcmpao.on.ca/>
- Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec : <https://www.o-a-q.org/>

¹ Messick, S. (1989). "Validity.". In R. L. Linn (Ed.), Educational Measurement (3rd ed., pp. 13-103). New York: American Council on Education/Macmillan.