



# Pan-Canadian Examinations Accommodation Policy

<b>Policy name</b>	Pan-Canadian Examinations Accommodation Policy
<b>Type</b>	Exam administration and delivery policy
<b>Effective date</b>	May 28, 2024
<b>Revision date</b>	
<b>Audience</b>	Candidates, Appeals and Accommodations Committee, CARB-TCMPA members, CARB-TCMPA staff

## 1. Purpose

The Canadian Alliance of Regulatory Bodies of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists (CARB-TCMPA) develops and administers credentialing exams for Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists (TCM/A) in Canada. The results of the examination are used by regulatory bodies to make several important decisions including whether candidates for admission (“Candidates”) are permitted to practise a profession or hold themselves out as members of the profession.

Accessibility is an important element of fairness and all candidates writing the examinations should have an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and competency in the examination setting. CARB-TCMPA commits to creating an equitable examination experience that meets the needs of a diverse profession, while still upholding the standards and requirements of a high-stakes national licensing examination program.

This policy intends to establish a sound and rigorous process and practice for addressing candidate requests for accommodation based on needs or limitations pertaining to protected grounds as stipulated in relevant human rights legislation. CARB-TCMPA supports a fair and transparent accommodation process through an internal Appeals and Accommodations Committee that is structured to ensure that conflicts of interest are avoided.

Candidates are strongly advised to review this policy and any other relevant materials, such as the *Pan-Canadian Examinations Candidate Handbook*, before requesting an examination accommodation. If the procedures and requirements are not followed, the request may not be considered by the Appeals and Accommodations Committee.

## 2. Scope and Definition

This policy is limited to the Pan-Canadian Examinations delivered by CARB-TCMPA and its test administrators. Accommodation requests related to other examinations, such as provincial jurisprudence examinations, should be directed to the regulatory body to which the candidate has applied for registration.

Accommodation refers to the process of altering the delivery of the examinations so that it becomes accessible to more people, including persons with disabilities. CARB-TCMPA considers a range of environmental, instructional, and assessment conditions when developing the examinations. In addition, reasonable exam accommodation requests, substantiated by objective evidence indicating the necessity for such accommodations, will be granted to candidates up to the point of undue hardship.

It is essential to understand that the purpose of exam accommodations is not to ensure a favorable outcome or enhance a candidate's performance. Rather, exam accommodations are provided to mitigate the impact of any needs or limitations associated with a protected ground on a candidate's ability to participate equally in an examination alongside individuals who do not have such needs or limitations.

## 3. Categories of Accommodation

CARB-TCMPA strives to ensure that the Pan-Canadian Examinations are accessible and is sensitive to the fact that the exam administration may present unintended challenges for some candidates. CARB-TCMPA extends accommodations to mitigate such barriers.

Examples of individual circumstances that, in combination with the examinations' design, might limit a candidate's full and equal participation in the examination include:

- Neurological and Cognitive Conditions
- Mental Health Conditions
- Sensory Impairments
- Physical Disabilities
- Other Disabilities and Support Needs

Additionally, candidates may face challenges related to non-disability circumstances, such as:

- Pregnancy or maternity-related needs
- Religious conviction

## 4. Types of Accommodations

### 4.1 Assessment Modifications

Potential accommodations may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. **Modifications in the testing environment:** This category includes all changes made to the test setting and are subject to the policies and procedures of CARB-TCMPA's test centres. For example, CARB-TCMPA may allow candidates to have increased opportunity for movement or be assessed separately from others or in a smaller group setting.
- b. **Modifications to the test format:** This category includes all changes made to the format used to present the test instructions or questions. For example, CARB-TCMPA may provide or facilitate use of a scribe, sign language interpreter, or assistive technology, such as text-to-speech software.
- c. **Modifications to the response format:** CARB-TCMPA may adjust the way in which a candidate responds to the test questions. For example, CARB-TCMPA may allow candidates to use text-to-speech software, write a paper-based exam, or receive the support of a scribe.
- d. **Modifications in scheduling/timing:** CARB-TCMPA may accommodate changes in timing or scheduling. For example, CARB-TCMPA may allow candidates to have extended time or take additional breaks.

### 4.2 Time Limits

While there are time limits associated with all Pan-Canadian Examinations, these limits serve different purposes. In some cases, these limits are to foster a successful practice or for administrative convenience. In other cases, these time limits go to the core of tested competencies.

CARB-TCMPA must carefully review accommodation requests that might alter these evaluation conditions. This includes careful review of requests for added minutes or hours for the PCE multiple-choice question and/or clinical case question components.

Up to 1 additional hour is typically provided per examination component to candidates requesting additional time, subject to verification from the candidate's healthcare provider and the availability of CARB-TCMPA's test centres to accommodate the request. If a candidate requires more than 1 hour of additional time due to a substantiated medical condition or disability, additional time up to a maximum of 2 times the length of each examination component may be approved.

### 4.3 Undue Hardship

CARB-TCMPA recognizes that those requesting necessary accommodation are not requesting relief from their core responsibilities. To protect both individuals and the integrity of the credentialing exams, it is important that, despite any accommodation, candidates still meet all exam requirements.

CARB-TCMPA cannot extend an accommodation that would cause the organization undue hardship or would require CARB-TCMPA to sacrifice its legitimate objectives.

## 5. Process and Timelines

### 5.1 Application Timeline

Candidates must register with the governing body of their regulating province to be eligible to write a Pan-Canadian Examination. Furthermore, those requesting testing accommodation must submit their application directly to CARB-TCMPA by the assigned deadline for approval.

Requests for test accommodations must be submitted directly to CARB-TCMPA to fairly identify and allocate necessary resources, consider potential limitations, and assign candidates to suitable examination locations equipped to meet their specific needs.

The deadline for both the Pan-Canadian Examination application and testing accommodation requests is the same. Failure to provide necessary supporting documents within this timeframe will result in no accommodations being granted on examination day. Applications with incomplete paperwork will not be considered, rendering the testing accommodation request inadmissible.

### 5.2 Decision Timeline

The Appeals and Accommodations Committee strives to meet within 5 business days of the examination application deadline to review accommodation applications. CARB-TCMPA staff issue the Committee's decisions within 1 to 3 business days of each meeting.

## 6. Documentation Requirements

### 6.1 Accommodation Request Form

Candidates must sign and submit a fully completed Accommodations Request Form, which must include:

- a. The candidate's contact information, examination name and date, the candidate's regulatory college, and the grounds for accommodation.
- b. Any additional details related to the selected ground(s) for accommodation.
- c. A description of the specific test accommodation requested (for example, the type of adaptive technology/software needed or the amount of additional time requested).

## 6.2 Supporting Evidence

Candidates must supply objective evidence to verify the need for accommodation, as outlined below. Supporting documentation will not be accepted from a relative, spouse, or friend of the candidate.

- a. **Candidates seeking accommodation related to a disability, illness, injury, medical condition, or pregnancy- or maternity-related need:**
  - A Verification of Candidate's Condition Form. Candidates must complete the consent section of this form and have the remainder of the form completed by the registered professional responsible for the candidate's care/treatment (e.g., family physician, psychiatrist, social worker, etc.).
  - While CARB-TCMPA does not mandate a specific diagnosis, if one exists, the Verification of Candidate's Condition Form must present a clear description of the candidate's functional impairment and how the requested modification to the testing environment mitigates this impairment.
- b. **Candidates seeking accommodation on the basis of religious considerations:**
  - An original, signed letter on official letterhead from a senior member of the candidate's faith. The letter must identify and verify the necessity of the requested accommodation.
- c. **Candidates seeking accommodation on the basis of family status:**
  - An original, signed letter on official letterhead from a registered professional (e.g., social worker) with knowledge of the candidate's family status. The letter must identify and verify the necessity of the requested accommodation.
- d. **Candidates seeking accommodation for other reasons:**
  - Candidates must provide objective, documentary evidence to identify and verify the necessity of the requested accommodation.

Unsubstantiated applications for accommodation will not be considered. In general, CARB-TCMPA will only consider accommodation applications based on protected grounds under relevant human rights legislation. Candidates with other exceptional circumstances may contact CARB-TCMPA to discuss their individual case.

### **6.3 Proof of Prior Accommodation**

Proof of prior accommodation is not a guarantee that the same accommodation will be provided to write the Pan-Canadian Examination(s), as all requests are assessed on a case-by-case basis with reference to the specific conditions and requirements of the licensing examinations. However, information regarding any prior accommodation a candidate has received for a disability from another organization or institution may assist CARB-TCMPA with determining the most appropriate accommodation.

### **6.4 Currency of Documentation**

Test accommodation arrangements approved by CARB-TCMPA are not automatically applicable to subsequent examinations. For each Pan-Canadian Examination application, candidates must submit a new request and confirm that their circumstances remain unchanged. Additionally, outdated documentation must be updated before resubmitting the request. The Appeals and Accommodations Committee requires supporting documentation to be current within one year of the date of accommodation request.

## **7. Possible Outcomes**

The Appeals and Accommodations Committee, in its sole discretion, will decide to either deny or grant a candidate's request for accommodation. CARB-TCMPA staff are responsible for ensuring applications are complete prior to Committee review.

### **7.1 Application Returned to Candidate**

CARB-TCMPA staff will notify the candidate if the application is incomplete or invalid (e.g., no supporting documentation provided). Candidates must address any deficiencies in the application before the application will be referred to the Committee for review. Staff will also verify the registration status of candidates with their respective regulatory bodies before processing applications.

## 7.2 Application Denied

Should the Committee decide to deny the Candidate's request, the Committee will provide a rationale for the decision in accordance with the Accommodation Policy. The Committee's decision to deny the request is final.

## 7.3 Application Granted

Should the Committee decide to grant the Candidate's request, the Committee has the authority to make the following decisions:

- Grant the request in full
- Grant the request with modification

## 8. Privacy

Candidates must sign a consent acknowledgement on their *Request for Accommodation and Verification of Candidate's Condition* forms for the collection, use, and disclosure of their personal information for the purpose of processing their request.

CARB-TCMPA uses information provided by Candidates as part of their accommodation application solely for the purpose of addressing the request. This information is reviewed only by CARB-TCMPA staff and members of the CARB-TCMPA Appeals and Accommodations Committee who are required to ensure Candidate confidentiality.

CARB-TCMPA does not share sensitive Candidate personal information with other parties, including the regulatory bodies responsible for Candidate registration in each province. The following basic information is shared with CARB-TCMPA's test centres for the purpose of processing the accommodation request: Candidate name, Candidate email address, and the test accommodation(s) approved by the Appeals and Accommodations Committee.

Candidates are not required to provide sensitive personal information about their situation or a specific diagnosis when providing supporting documentation for their appeal request. Instead, Candidates should attach documentation as outlined in section 6 of this policy with sufficient information to verify the request.

CARB-TCMPA also takes steps to safeguard Candidate personal information as outlined in the CARB-TCMPA [Privacy Policy](#) and ensures that a Candidate's request and decision do not result in any discriminatory actions against the Candidate.