



# Pan-Canadian Examinations Withdrawal and Appeals Policy

Policy Type	Exam administration and delivery policy
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Audience	Candidates, PCE Steering 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. Access to an appeal of such decisions is a vital element of due process, fairness, and accountability.

CARB-TCMPA supports a transparent and equitable appeal mechanism to enhance public confidence in the examination process. Individual appeals serve to maintain accountability, encourage diligence, promote high-quality internal procedures, and reflect a concerted effort to avoid or remedy errors, reducing the likelihood of appeals.

This policy intends to establish a sound and rigorous process for handling inquiries and appeals related to the administration of the examinations. CARB-TCMPA supports a fair and consistent appeals process through an internal administrative review conducted in accordance with policy requirements established and overseen by the Pan-Canadian Examinations Steering Committee.

Candidates are strongly advised to carefully review this policy and other relevant materials, such as the *Pan-Canadian Examinations Candidate Handbook*, before requesting a nullification (appeal) of their examination results. If the procedures and requirements are not followed, the request may not be considered by CARB-TCMPA.

## 2. Scope

This policy is limited to the Pan-Canadian Examinations delivered by CARB-TCMPA and its test administrators. Appealing decisions regarding admission to the profession should be directed to the regulatory body that issued the decision.

Following the exam, CARB-TCMPA engages a psychometric analysis of the questions, removes questions that do not meet psychometric standards, and rescores the exam without those questions. In addition, any questions that have been flagged during the exam administration are reviewed and if these questions are deemed to be defective for any reason they are removed from the exam. This process ensures the integrity of examination content and fairness in the examination scoring process. CARB-TCMPA will not consider complaints regarding the content of the examination or possible responses to examination questions. The content of the examination is not subject to appeal.

The Pan-Canadian Examinations are scored using rigorous methodology that includes matching of examination scores produced by two different statistical packages. Considering the rigour of the scoring process, scoring errors are highly unlikely. An appeal is not a re-grading or re-scoring exercise (see Manual Verification of Results section of this policy).

CARB-TCMPA cannot assume that a Candidate would have passed the examination if it were not for the circumstances of the appeal. Therefore, CARB-TCMPA cannot grant a passing mark to the Candidate, but it may nullify their result and/or attempt.

## 3. Examination Material

As part of the appeal process, Candidates will not be granted access to any information that would undermine the integrity and security of the examination content or process.

## 4. Compassionate Withdrawal

Candidates who experience a medical or personal emergency before or on the day of their examination and who are unable to sit for their examination may apply for a compassionate withdrawal. Compassionate withdrawal is intended to support candidates who are unable to write their examination due to a verifiable medical or personal emergency.

Candidates must submit a *Compassionate Withdrawal Application Form* to CARB-TCMPA before or on examination day and must pay the current withdrawal fee to confirm their request to withdraw from the examination. The Compassionate Withdrawal Application must include supporting documentation verifying the emergency (see sections 6.1 and 6.2 of this policy for information on acceptable documentation).

Approval of a compassionate withdrawal is in the sole discretion of CARB-TCMPA in accordance with this policy. Candidates will receive a decision within five (5) business days after a complete *Compassionate Withdrawal Application* is submitted. If the withdrawal application is approved, CARB-TCMPA will waive the Candidate's examination fees for the current administration. Once a compassionate withdrawal is approved, the Candidate's booking is cancelled, and they will no longer be able to write the examination during the current administration, regardless of a change in medical or personal circumstances.

## **5. Reporting an Issue/Incident on Exam Day**

CARB-TCMPA and its test administrators identify, record, and report any irregularities that occur during the exam that may affect a Candidate's ability to demonstrate their competency. Exam proctors are instructed to record and report every issue/incident encountered on examination day.

At the end of each exam sitting (i.e. multiple-choice and clinical case question components), Candidates should immediately report to CARB-TCMPA any issue (e.g., technical, medical, or environmental) that they believe materially impaired their ability to demonstrate their competence on the exam. CARB-TCMPA reviews incident reports provided by the Candidate's test centre along with any additional evidence submitted by the Candidate when evaluating appeal requests.

## **6. Grounds for an Appeal**

Candidates who experience illness, a personal emergency, or a procedural irregularity while writing their examinations and believe this may have negatively impacted their examination performance, may submit a request for nullification (appeal) of their examination results. CARB-TCMPA will review the Candidate's specific circumstances to determine which of the available remedies, if any, may be provided.

If the request is not based on illness, personal emergency, or procedural irregularity as defined in this policy, the request will not be considered.

## 6.1 Illness on Examination Day

If a Candidate was ill on examination day and believes this affected their performance, they may submit a *Request for Nullification Form* together with an original, signed medical report from a qualified physician or medical professional, registered to practise in their province, who examined the Candidate within five (5) calendar days of the examination date. The medical report must be on clinic letterhead, include the clinic's official stamp, and clearly indicate the healthcare provider's professional registration/licensure information.

## 6.2 Personal Emergency

If a Candidate experienced a personal emergency, such as the death or serious illness of an immediate family member, during their examination, and believes this negatively affected their performance, the Candidate may submit a *Request for Nullification Form* along with appropriate supporting documents (e.g. death certificate, obituary notice). The documentation provided must be objective and official evidence to verify the personal emergency.

## 6.3 Procedural Irregularity

If a Candidate perceived a procedural irregularity during their examination and believes this negatively affected their performance, they may submit a *Request for Nullification Form*. Procedural irregularities include significant deviations from standard testing conditions (e.g., computer-system failure or extended test centre evacuation) which must be corroborated by the examination proctor's incident report. CARB-TCMPA will investigate all incidents on examination day reported by test centres and Candidates.

## 7. Request for Nullification (Appeal) Process

Candidates must submit a *Request for Nullification Form* and pay the current appeal fee no later than thirty (30) calendar days following the release of their examination results to demonstrate their grounds for an appeal. CARB-TCMPA will only consider requests for nullification after this period in the case of incapacitation or a similar circumstance.

The *Request for Nullification* application must contain all information, facts, and supporting documents upon which the Candidate intends to rely. Failure to provide the required documentation under the applicable circumstance(s) may cause the Candidate's request to be denied.

CARB-TCMPA will acknowledge receipt of a Candidate's *Request for Nullification* within five (5) business days. CARB-TCMPA will review the request along with all supporting documentation and will issue a decision within thirty (30) business days. Once CARB-TCMPA has rendered a decision, the decision will be sent to the Candidate and the Candidate's regulatory body via email.

A request for nullification (appeal) decision issued by CARB-TCMPA is final. Candidates who have concerns as to how the appeal decision will affect their registration application process should contact their regulatory body for further information.

## 8. Possible Appeal Outcomes

CARB-TCMPA, in its sole discretion, will decide to either deny or grant the Candidate's request for nullification (appeal).

### 7.1 Deny the Request

Should CARB-TCMPA decide to deny the Candidate's request, the Candidate will receive a rationale for the decision in accordance with the Withdrawal and Appeals Policy. CARB-TCMPA's decision to deny the request is final.

### 7.2 Grant the Request

In granting an appeal, CARB-TCMPA has the authority to make the following decisions based on one or more of the specified grounds for an appeal:

- To nullify the Candidate's examination attempt
- To waive the Candidate's current exam fees to re-write the examination at a future date
- To impose reasonable conditions necessary for the integrity of the exam

## 9. Manual Verification of Results

Candidates who do not meet the grounds for appeal and have concerns about their examination results may request a Manual Verification of Results, which is a quality assurance review conducted by CARB-TCMPA's psychometric service provider. Manual Verification of Results is subject to an administration fee.

Candidates must submit a *Request for Manual Verification of Results Form* and pay the current fee within thirty (30) calendar days following the release of their examination results. Candidates will receive the results of the psychometric service provider's review

within thirty (30) business days after a complete *Request for Manual Verification of Results* application is submitted. The results of this review are final.

## 10. Privacy

Candidates must sign a consent acknowledgement on their *Compassionate Withdrawal Application Form, Request for Manual Verification of Results Form, and Request for Nullification Form* 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 application solely for the purpose of addressing the Candidate's request. This information is reviewed only by CARB-TCMPA staff 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 may be shared with Candidate regulatory bodies for the purpose of processing the Candidate's request: Candidate name, Candidate email address, and CARB-TCMPA's decision on the request.

Candidates are not required to provide sensitive personal information about their situation or a specific diagnosis when providing supporting documentation for their compassionate withdrawal or 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, subsequent investigation, and decision do not result in any discriminatory actions against the Candidate.