

# NCCAOM Foundations Practice Exam (Sample)

## Study Guide



**Everything you need from our exam experts!**

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# Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

**Remember:** successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

# How to Use This Guide

**This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:**

## **1. Start with a Diagnostic Review**

**Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Don't worry about getting everything right, your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.**

## **2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions**

**Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations, and take breaks to retain information better.**

## **3. Learn from the Explanations**

**After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.**

## **4. Track Your Progress**

**Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.**

## **5. Simulate the Real Exam**

**Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.**

## **6. Repeat and Review**

**Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning.**

## **7. Use Other Tools**

**Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.**

**There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly — adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!**

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## Questions

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- 1. At what location does the LI divergent begin?**
  - A. Elbow**
  - B. Hand**
  - C. Shoulder**
  - D. Knee**
  
- 2. A thin, dry, deep red tongue is a sign of which condition?**
  - A. Cold in the body**
  - B. Yin xu**
  - C. Heat due to body fluid consumption**
  - D. Yang deficiency**
  
- 3. Which quality corresponds to the taste of bitter?**
  - A. Metal**
  - B. Earth**
  - C. Wood**
  - D. Fire**
  
- 4. A patient diagnosed with Yin vacuity fire would likely experience which of the following symptoms?**
  - A. Dribbling menstruation**
  - B. Constipation**
  - C. Pale tongue with thick coating**
  - D. Feels cold and weak**
  
- 5. Which organ is primarily associated with controlling Ye?**
  - A. Heart**
  - B. Kidney**
  - C. Spleen**
  - D. Liver**
  
- 6. A patient with a pale red tongue and thin quality of menses likely experiences what kind of abdominal pain?**
  - A. Pain that prefers warmth**
  - B. Lingering dull pain after menstruation**
  - C. Pain and bearing down sensation**
  - D. Distending pain of the abdomen**

- 7. A slow (Chi Mai), weak pulse typically indicates which of the following?**
- A. Excess heat**
  - B. Yang Qi deficiency**
  - C. Blood stasis**
  - D. Yin deficiency**
- 8. Which below is a characteristic of Yin?**
- A. Shallow breathing**
  - B. Flat**
  - C. Space**
  - D. All of the above**
- 9. Which primary meridians pass through all three jiaos?**
- A. ST PM and LI PM**
  - B. PC PM and SJ PM**
  - C. LU PM and SP PM**
  - D. HT PM and GB PM**
- 10. Which pulse type corresponds to Yang within Yang?**
- A. Deep and slow**
  - B. Superficial and rapid**
  - C. Knotted and intermittent**
  - D. Rolling and tense**

## Answers

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1. B
2. C
3. D
4. A
5. C
6. B
7. B
8. D
9. B
10. B

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## **Explanations**

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**1. At what location does the LI divergent begin?**

- A. Elbow
- B. Hand**
- C. Shoulder
- D. Knee

The location where the Large Intestine (LI) divergent channel begins is at the hand. In traditional Chinese medicine, each divergent channel has a specific anatomical starting point that correlates with its function and meridian pathway. The LI divergent channel serves to connect the LI to its related structures and helps to distribute Qi and blood throughout the related regions. Since the divergent channel originates from the primary LI channel, which runs along the arm and hand, this makes the hand the correct initial location for the LI divergent beginning. Understanding this anatomical relationship is essential for practitioners, as it aids in diagnosis and treatment strategies that involve both local and distal points along the meridian pathways.

**2. A thin, dry, deep red tongue is a sign of which condition?**

- A. Cold in the body
- B. Yin xu
- C. Heat due to body fluid consumption**
- D. Yang deficiency

A thin, dry, deep red tongue is indicative of "Heat due to body fluid consumption." In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the tongue's appearance can provide critical insights into a person's internal conditions. When body fluids are consumed, whether due to excessive heat, dehydration, or other factors, the tongue reflects these changes. A deep red coloration signifies the presence of heat, while dryness indicates a deficiency of the nourishing fluids in the body. The combination of being thin and dry suggests that the heat is also intense enough to deplete the body's fluids, resulting in the tongue lacking the moist, healthy appearance it would typically have. This presentation is not consistent with cold conditions or deficiencies associated with yin or yang. Cold in the body might produce a more pallid tongue, while yin deficiency would typically show red with cracks rather than a pronounced deep red hue. Yang deficiency might lead to a pale, swollen tongue as opposed to the thin, dry appearance highlighted in this question. Thus, the signs on the tongue point specifically to a state of heat due to consumption of body fluids.

### 3. Which quality corresponds to the taste of bitter?

- A. Metal
- B. Earth
- C. Wood
- D. Fire**

The taste of bitter is primarily associated with the Fire element in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Each of the five elements—Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water—corresponds to specific qualities, emotions, and flavors, playing a significant role in ensuring balance within the body and its systems. The Fire element is linked with the heart and its functions, as well as the concept of transformation and dynamic processes in both physiological and emotional contexts. Bitter taste is thought to help clear excess heat, drain dampness, and promote digestive health, particularly within the functioning of the heart and small intestine. In contrast, the other elements correspond with different tastes. For example, Wood is traditionally associated with sour, Earth aligns with sweet, Metal is tied to pungent and spicy flavors, and Water corresponds to salty. Understanding these associations is crucial in TCM for diagnosis and treatment, reflecting the philosophy that the balance of tastes contributes to overall health and well-being.

### 4. A patient diagnosed with Yin vacuity fire would likely experience which of the following symptoms?

- A. Dribbling menstruation**
- B. Constipation
- C. Pale tongue with thick coating
- D. Feels cold and weak

A patient diagnosed with Yin vacuity fire typically presents with specific symptoms related to a deficiency in Yin, which results in an upward surge of Yang energy. This condition often manifests as heat symptoms, due to the lack of cooling, moistening qualities of Yin. In terms of symptoms, patients with Yin vacuity fire commonly experience signs such as night sweats, a feeling of heat, dry throat, and often irregularities in menstruation, like dribbling or spotting instead of a normal menstrual flow. This reflects a systematic imbalance where the heat generated from vacuity fire disrupts normal blood flow. The other symptoms listed, while they might be relevant in different contexts, do not specifically align with Yin vacuity fire. Constipation can occur in various other conditions but is not a defining characteristic of Yin vacuity fire. A pale tongue with a thick coating generally indicates a different issue, such as Qi deficiency or cold conditions, rather than the heat state present in Yin vacuity fire. Feeling cold and weak aligns more with a Yang deficiency, where the body lacks warmth and energy due to insufficient Yang rather than excess heat from Yin vacuity. Thus, the symptom of dribbling menstruation aligns with the characteristics of Yin vacuity fire, showcasing

**5. Which organ is primarily associated with controlling Ye?**

- A. Heart
- B. Kidney
- C. Spleen**
- D. Liver

The Spleen is primarily associated with controlling Ye, which refers to the nourishing and moistening substances in the body, particularly those related to fluids and blood. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the Spleen plays a crucial role in the generation and regulation of Qi and Blood, as it is responsible for the transformation and transportation of nutrients from food and fluids. The Spleen is integral to the production of postnatal Qi and influences how the body manages fluids, making it vital for the balance of Yin and Yang. When the Spleen is functioning optimally, it effectively keeps the Ye in balance, nourishing tissues and maintaining overall body moisture. Understanding the Spleen's role helps to recognize its importance in conditions like dampness or dryness in the body, which can arise from Spleen deficiencies. This connection to Ye is foundational in TCM, as it emphasizes the Spleen's essential function in maintaining bodily fluids and humors.

**6. A patient with a pale red tongue and thin quality of menses likely experiences what kind of abdominal pain?**

- A. Pain that prefers warmth
- B. Lingered dull pain after menstruation**
- C. Pain and bearing down sensation
- D. Distending pain of the abdomen

The presentation of a pale red tongue and thin quality of menses suggests a condition of blood deficiency, particularly an insufficient amount of blood to nourish the body. In traditional Chinese medicine, such symptoms often correlate with a lingering, dull pain that may be experienced in the abdomen, especially following menstruation. This type of pain reflects the body's struggle with an inadequate supply of nourishing blood, leading to discomfort that feels persistent but not acute or severe. Dull pain is often associated with deficiencies because it indicates a lack of sufficient energy and substance within the body, as opposed to sharp or acute pain that is generally linked to excess conditions or blockages. The lingering nature of the pain following menstruation signals a failure to appropriately replenish the body's blood after the loss during the menstrual cycle, which is consistent with blood deficiency patterns.

**7. A slow (Chi Mai), weak pulse typically indicates which of the following?**

- A. Excess heat**
- B. Yang Qi deficiency**
- C. Blood stasis**
- D. Yin deficiency**

A slow and weak pulse, often referred to as Chi Mai, is a classic indicator of Yang Qi deficiency in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). In TCM, Yang Qi is associated with warmth, movement, and activity in the body, essentially representing the functional energy that supports vital processes including circulation and organ function. When Yang Qi is deficient, it can lead to various symptoms such as fatigue, cold extremities, and a lack of warmth throughout the body, which correlate with the slow and weak nature of the pulse. Additionally, the qualities of the pulse provide vital insights into the state of Qi and blood circulation. A pulse that is both weak and slow suggests not only a deficiency in Yang energy but also points to poor circulation, which may result from inadequate Qi support for the heart and blood vessels. In this context, recognizing and addressing Yang Qi deficiency is critical for restoring balance and promoting overall health. The other options, while relevant concepts in TCM, do not adequately explain the specific characteristics of a slow and weak pulse. For instance, excess heat would typically result in a rapid pulse, while blood stasis usually presents as a wiry or choppy pulse. Yin deficiency might involve feelings of heat or dryness, which do not align with the slow

**8. Which below is a characteristic of Yin?**

- A. Shallow breathing**
- B. Flat**
- C. Space**
- D. All of the above**

In the context of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and the concept of Yin, it is essential to understand that Yin embodies qualities that are considered passive, cool, and nourishing. Each of the listed characteristics aligns with Yin's nature. Shallow breathing is typically associated with a state of relaxation and calm, which are qualities tied to Yin. In contrast, deep and forceful breathing is often linked to Yang qualities, representing activity and stimulation. Therefore, shallow breathing is consistent with the Yin characteristic of being more subdued and tranquil. The term "flat" can refer to a flat or level quality, which is often descriptive of Yin. This can be understood in various contexts, such as a flat landscape or a flat emotional state, both of which can convey a sense of stillness and lack of movement, characteristic of Yin. "Space" is another attribute associated with Yin. In TCM, Yin provides the foundation or the container within which things exist and can develop. This idea relates to the concept of softness, receptivity, and a nurturing environment, all indicative of Yin characteristics. Thus, when considering these traits collectively, they all reflect different dimensions of Yin, indicating its nature as encompassing elements of calmness, stability, and the foundational aspects of existence

## 9. Which primary meridians pass through all three jiaos?

- A. ST PM and LI PM
- B. PC PM and SJ PM**
- C. LU PM and SP PM
- D. HT PM and GB PM

The primary meridians that pass through all three jiaos—upper, middle, and lower—are the pericardium and the san jiao meridians. The pericardium (PC) meridian is associated with the heart and circulatory functions, while the san jiao (SJ) meridian is linked to the regulation of the body's fluids and the distribution of qi throughout the body. Both of these meridians have pathways that traverse the various jiaos, reflecting their integral roles in connecting and influencing the upper, middle, and lower parts of the body. This characteristic is crucial in traditional Chinese medicine because it highlights the holistic approach to treating conditions. By understanding how these meridians interact with all three jiaos, practitioners can address issues that may arise in different body areas stemming from a singular imbalance or blockage along these channels.

## 10. Which pulse type corresponds to Yang within Yang?

- A. Deep and slow
- B. Superficial and rapid**
- C. Knotted and intermittent
- D. Rolling and tense

The pulse type that corresponds to Yang within Yang is characterized as superficial and rapid. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Yang represents active, warm, and energizing qualities. A superficial pulse indicates a strong presence of Yang energy at the exterior level, while a rapid pulse suggests an overflow of Yang, indicating excess energy, heat, or agitation. In this context, a superficial and rapid pulse signifies a state of abundant Yang energy. This may reflect conditions such as an acute inflammatory response, excess heat, or a quickened physiological state. Understanding this pulse type is crucial for practitioners as it helps in diagnosing states of excess Yang that might require intervention to restore balance. The other pulse types do not reflect Yang within Yang effectively. For instance, a deep and slow pulse usually indicates a condition of deficiency or a cold state, neither of which aligns with the characteristics of Yang. Knotted and intermittent pulses suggest stagnation or disharmony, indicative of Yin deficiencies or pathological conditions. A rolling and tense pulse, while it has some Yang qualities, typically points to conditions associated with phlegm or dampness rather than a pure representation of Yang within Yang. Therefore, the superficial and rapid pulse is distinctively aligned with the energetic qualities of Yang, making it the correct

## Next Steps

**Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.**

**As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.**

**If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at [hello@examzify.com](mailto:hello@examzify.com).**

**Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:**

**<https://nccaomfoundations.examzify.com>**

**We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!**