

NCCAOM Herbal Board 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. 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.

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. 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!

Questions

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1. Which statement is true about the ratio in Gui Zhi Shao Yao Zhi Mu Tang?
 - A. Gui Zhi 8g and Bai Shao 6g
 - B. 12g and 9g
 - C. 2g and 1g
 - D. Gui Zhi 12g and Bai Shao 9g

2. Which herb preparation requires cheesecloth to prepare?
 - A. Gou Teng
 - B. Xuan Fu Hua
 - C. Ma Huang
 - D. Da Huang

3. Which herb is for Liver and Kidney yin deficiency with edema?
 - A. Gou Qi Zi
 - B. Wu Jia Pi
 - C. Shan Yao
 - D. Bai He

4. Da Huang enters which channels?
 - A. Deng Xin Cao
 - B. Ban Xia
 - C. Da Huang
 - D. Tian Men Dong

5. Which of the following is NOT one of the eight methods in herbal prescription strategies?
 - A. Warming
 - B. Draining
 - C. Astringing
 - D. Dispersing

- 6. Which herb is associated with cooking Gou Teng for a specific time?**
- A. Gou Teng**
 - B. Da Huang**
 - C. Ma Huang**
 - D. Xuan Fu Hua**
- 7. In Si Jun Zi Tang, what is the dosage range for Fu Ling?**
- A. 3-6 g**
 - B. 6-9 g**
 - C. 9-12 g**
 - D. 12-18 g**
- 8. Deng Xin Cao enters which channels?**
- A. Deng Xin Cao**
 - B. Gan Jiang**
 - C. Sang Piao Xiao**
 - D. Bai Guo**
- 9. Which statement is NOT a listed action of the Bitter flavor?**
- A. Drains, dries, clears heat, descends Qi**
 - B. Relaxes bowels**
 - C. Tonifies qi**
 - D. Descends Qi**
- 10. Which wind-damp herb treats skin sores, wind rash, and itching due to Damp Toxin?**
- A. Qiang Huo**
 - B. Wu Wei Zi**
 - C. Fang Feng**
 - D. Xi Xian Cao**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which statement is true about the ratio in Gui Zhi Shao Yao Zhi Mu Tang?

- A. Gui Zhi 8g and Bai Shao 6g**
- B. 12g and 9g**
- C. 2g and 1g**
- D. Gui Zhi 12g and Bai Shao 9g**

The ratio reflects balancing exterior release with interior nourishment. Gui Zhi is warming and dispersing, helping to push out the exterior pathogens, while Bai Shao nourishes the yin and moderates the movement, preventing over-dispersal from injuring the interior. In Gui Zhi Shao Yao Zhi Mu Tang, the classic combination uses a 4:3 relationship between these two herbs, with Gui Zhi at 12 g and Bai Shao at 9 g. This arrangement keeps the exterior-dispelling action strong enough to address the surface symptoms, while the Bai Shao (along with Zhi Mu) provides enough yin-nourishing and damp-heat-countering effect to harmonize and protect the interior.

2. Which herb preparation requires cheesecloth to prepare?

- A. Gou Teng**
- B. Xuan Fu Hua**
- C. Ma Huang**
- D. Da Huang**

Cheesecloth is used in herb prep to form a decoction bag for coarse or fibrous herbs, so the liquid can extract the constituents while the solid material stays contained and easier to strain. Gou Teng is a coarse, fibrous vine. When prepared in formulas, it's often placed in a cheesecloth bag and decocted as a bundle. This keeps the fibers out of the final liquid, prevents clogging, and yields a cleaner, easier-to-filter decoction. The other herbs listed are typically decocted directly and strained afterward, without the need to bag them in cheesecloth.

3. Which herb is for Liver and Kidney yin deficiency with edema?

- A. Gou Qi Zi**
- B. Wu Jia Pi**
- C. Shan Yao**
- D. Bai He**

In this scenario the goal is to address both yin deficiency of the liver and kidneys and the dampness that causes edema. Wu Jia Pi fits best because it does two crucial things at once: it tonifies the liver and kidney to replenish yin fluids, and it also promotes urination to remove dampness. That combination targets the root of edema arising from yin deficiency with fluid regulation problems, helping to restore proper water metabolism while supporting the yin that's been depleted. Other herbs here are strong yin-nourishing tonics, but they don't address dampness and fluid movement as directly. Gou Qi Zi nourishes liver and kidney yin, which is helpful for dryness and vision issues but doesn't readily emphasize removing dampness. Shan Yao tonifies kidney and spleen, supporting overall deficiency but again is less focused on dampness elimination. Bai He nourishes lung and heart yin and isn't specific to kidney yin deficiency with edema.

4. Da Huang enters which channels?

- A. Deng Xin Cao
- B. Ban Xia
- C. Da Huang**
- D. Tian Men Dong

Channel entry shows which meridians an herb primarily travels through to exert its effects. Da Huang is known to enter the Large Intestine and Stomach channels, which aligns with its strong purgative action and heat-dissolving effects in those organs. That connection to LI and ST explains why it's the best match for a purge-inducing herb. The other herbs listed have different channel affinities (entering channels other than LI and ST), so they don't align with Da Huang's primary action.

5. Which of the following is NOT one of the eight methods in herbal prescription strategies?

- A. Warming
- B. Draining
- C. Astringing**
- D. Dispersing

The eight methods describe broad actions used to shape an herbal formula's overall effect on a pattern. Warming, draining, and dispersing are all classic actions you'll see as core prescription strategies: warming reinforces interior yang to treat cold/deficiency, draining clears excess heat or fluids, and dispersing moves stagnation or exterior pathogenic factors. Astringing, by contrast, is not one of these overarching methods. It's a specific binding effect produced by certain herbs to stabilize tissues or stop leakage, not a primary strategic action used to modify a pattern in the same way as the eight methods. So astringing isn't counted among the eight methods, while the other options fit as recognized strategies.

6. Which herb is associated with cooking Gou Teng for a specific time?

- A. Gou Teng**
- B. Da Huang
- C. Ma Huang
- D. Xuan Fu Hua

Understanding decoction timing helps explain why this herb is singled out. In traditional herbal prep, some ingredients are heat-sensitive, so their active constituents are best preserved by adding them late in the cooking or by boiling them only briefly. Gou Teng is one of those herbs that is commonly added toward the end of decoction or decocted for a shorter period to maintain its effect of pacifying liver wind. That makes Gou Teng the herb associated with cooking Gou Teng for a specific time. The other herbs have their own preparation guidelines, but they are not the ones linked to this particular timing instruction.

7. In Si Jun Zi Tang, what is the dosage range for Fu Ling?

- A. 3-6 g
- B. 6-9 g**
- C. 9-12 g
- D. 12-18 g

The key idea here is balancing qi tonification with dampness regulation in Si Jun Zi Tang. Fu Ling acts to transform dampness and support the spleen, while the other two main tonifying herbs provide the strong qi support. Using a moderate amount of Fu Ling, specifically 6-9 g, achieves this balance: enough dampness regulation to prevent buildup but not so much that it over-drains or unsettles the formula's gentle tonification. If Fu Ling were used at a lower dose like 3-6 g, the dampness-transforming action might be too weak to support the qi-tonifying herbs. At higher doses such as 9-12 g or more, the dampness removal could become too strong, risking over-drying and potential side effects like loose stools or fatigue, which would undermine the formula's purpose. Therefore, 6-9 g is the best fit for harmonizing dampness with qi tonification in this decoction.

8. Deng Xin Cao enters which channels?

- A. Deng Xin Cao**
- B. Gan Jiang
- C. Sang Piao Xiao
- D. Bai Guo

Deng Xin Cao is known for entering the Heart and Lung channels. This channel affinity matches its clinical use: it clears heat from the Heart and helps calm the Shen, addressing symptoms like irritability, restlessness, and insomnia that stem from Heat in the upper burner. Because it is cool in nature and soothing in effect, it both drains Heart Heat and supports calm, making it helpful for palpitations with agitation or disturbed sleep due to Heart Fire. The Lung entry complements its ability to ease throat or cough symptoms that may accompany heat in the chest, aligning with its overall purpose of soothing the mind while clearing excess heat.

9. Which statement is NOT a listed action of the Bitter flavor?

- A. Drains, dries, clears heat, descends Qi
- B. Relaxes bowels
- C. Tonifies qi**
- D. Descends Qi

Bitter herbs are known for clearing heat and drying dampness, and for moving qi downward, which includes descending rebellious qi. They tend to drain excess heat and damp conditions rather than nourish or strengthen the body's qi. Tonifying qi, on the other hand, is a function more associated with the Sweet flavor, which nourishes and supports the body's energy. Therefore the statement about tonifying qi does not fit Bitter flavor actions, making it the one that is not listed as a bitter action. The other ideas align with bitter effects—draining heat and dampness and directing Qi downward—so they fit the expected profile of the Bitter flavor.

10. Which wind-damp herb treats skin sores, wind rash, and itching due to Damp Toxin?

- A. Qiang Huo**
- B. Wu Wei Zi**
- C. Fang Feng**
- D. Xi Xian Cao**

Wind-damp skin conditions caused by Damp Toxin respond best to herbs that clear damp-heat and resolve toxins in the skin. Xi Xian Cao (Herba Siegesbeckiae) is specifically known to clear damp-heat and toxins, relieve itching, and help with sores and wind rashes. This direct action on damp-toxin skin pathology makes it the most fitting choice for treating skin sores, wind rash, and itching due to Damp Toxin. Other wind-damp herbs may address exterior wind or general itching, but they don't target Damp Toxin in the skin as effectively.

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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.

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

<https://nccaomherbalboard.examzify.com>

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

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