



**The Irish College
of
Traditional Chinese Medicine**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

- ☯ **Professional practice of Acupuncture in Ireland**
- ☯ **The Irish College of Traditional Chinese Medicine (ICTCM) (*founded in 1983*)**
- ☯ **Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)**



**Professional Acupuncture Training
Undergraduate Prospectus Pack**

The Prospectus in a Nutshell

- ❖ The Irish College of Traditional Chinese Medicine (hence ICTCM) is the first and, best established college of Chinese Medicine in Ireland. Its recognised courses meet any requirements currently in place for Acupuncture/TCM training in Ireland.
- ❖ It has over 30 years of unbroken experience in successfully providing a part time – Saturdays and Sundays only – three year intensive course in Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (hence TCM).
- ❖ The main acupuncture training qualification is formally recognised by Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine (hence GUCM) as equivalent to a Bachelor level qualification. It permits entry to the forthcoming Masters in Chinese Medicine Degree, thus enabling students to gain a Masters degree in Chinese Medicine from a world-renown University in only 5 years of part time study, mainly in Ireland.
- ❖ Its professional training programmes are recognised by the Professional Register of TCM (hence PRTCM) and the Professional Register of Chinese Herbal Medicine (the two longest-established professional bodies of TCM and Chinese Herbal Medicine in Ireland).
- ❖ ICTCM graduates can set up in practice in The Irish Republic, Northern Ireland and the British Isles and qualify for entry to the PRTCM which provides full Medical Malpractice and Public Liability insurance cover for its members.
- ❖ Graduates who become PRTCM members are recognised for patient insurance cover by the main insurance providers in Ireland including VHI, Laya Healthcare and Aviva.

The rest of this booklet, and the accompanying Syllabus, fill out the above in more detail.

Information contained in this booklet is correct at the time of printing. However, the College reserves the right to make any changes that may be precipitated by development in the TCM curriculum or unforeseen circumstances, without prior notice.

FAQs

Introduction

The following aims to answer some of the frequently asked questions (FAQs) that people ask when they are thinking of taking up a professional career in Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine.

It gives an overview of the exciting possibilities that are offered when a person decides to enrol as a student at the Irish College of Traditional Chinese Medicine.



Q. How can I become a professional practitioner of Acupuncture TCM?

By becoming a student at the ICTCM on the Licentiate in TCM (Lic.TCM) Course and thereafter successfully completing this part-time three year Licentiate programme. This will enable you to join a professional body and be professionally recognised and insured to set up practice in Ireland or the UK.

Q. What sort of people study Acupuncture at the ICTCM?

All kinds of people study with us, from all walks of life and from many different countries. They generally range in age from 21 to their mid-60s.

Most are tired of working for other people and want a change that offers freedom and challenge, along with job security. All share a desire to enter a caring profession that will allow them independence, interest, and job satisfaction.

No prior knowledge of Western Medicine or Chinese Medicine is required.

Q. How is the course organised?

A new Lic.TCM course begins every year, usually in October. In the first year there are 12 main teaching weekends from October to July with additional workshop meetings from time to time. Classes run from 9.00 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays and are intensive. (See the accompanying Syllabus for details).

Q. What are the main components of the Lic.TCM Course?

This programme provides professional training in Acupuncture TCM. Students are fully grounded in the classical theoretical foundations of Traditional Chinese

Medicine and are trained to diagnose and then treat a client's condition using a wide range of traditional Chinese Medical diagnostic and treatment methods. A detailed Syllabus of the Lic.TCM course is enclosed, and should be read in conjunction with this leaflet.

The course requires hard work and commitment but it is also enjoyable and life-fulfilling - many students describe how it has dramatically changed their lives, providing them with close friends and colleagues and a stimulating, challenging and worthwhile career and lifestyle.

Q. Why should I choose the ICTCM for my training in Acupuncture TCM?

Because it has stood the test of time - it has been running the Lic.TCM course successfully for more than 33 years.

Each year we have commenced a new Acupuncture training course and every year the College produces graduates with the skills, knowledge and confidence to set up and develop a thriving professional practice of Acupuncture TCM.

A short history of the ICTCM is given below.

Q. What is the difference between Acupuncture and TCM?

TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) is the name given to the whole field of Chinese Medicine which has a history of more than two thousand years.

Acupuncture is one of the best known treatment options within the wider field of TCM and is now well established in the West. Other TCM treatment specialisms (some of which are taught at the ICTCM at Postgraduate level) include Chinese Herbal Medicine, Medical Qigong and Tuina (Chinese therapeutic Massage).

Q. Does an Acupuncture TCM practitioner use Chinese Herbal Medicine?

No, they use TCM diagnostic methods to work out what is wrong with the patient and a TCM theoretical framework to determine the treatment principle. If their treatment specialism is Acupuncture they will employ TRADITIONAL acupuncture treatment methods (including two other techniques called Moxibustion and Cupping) to achieve therapeutic effect. They will also give TCM medical advice and guidance to their patients to help resolve the problem and help ensure that it does not reoccur. We could call these "Practitioners of Acupuncture TCM".

Q. What is distinctive about the whole field of TCM?

It is an entire medical system which, through the use of Acupuncture and other classical medical therapies, aims to establish energetic harmony in the whole person and thereby not only treat illness but also promote active health and vitality. In this way it strives to increase resistance to disease.

From its very ancient origins such medicine has been at once both preventative and curative, the ideal being to so augment the person's overall health and

well-being that they do not get sick in the first place, or if they do fall ill, to speed their recovery.

Q. What can Acupuncture TCM be used to treat?

The scope and range of ailments amenable to TCM care is enormous. An indication of their type and variety can be gleaned from the enclosed leaflet *Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine*.

All ages of client can be catered to, from the tiny infant to the very old. Pregnant women are prime candidates for TCM treatment and much can be done to promote both ante and post natal care of mother and baby.

Those appropriately qualified as Vets can treat animals with TCM therapy.

Q. Is all Acupuncture the same?

No. The word “Acupuncture” just means inserting fine needles for therapeutic purposes. This could be done by someone who was not trained in TCM.

Also some practitioners who call themselves Acupuncturists actually use non-traditional techniques such as laser treatment and electro-acupuncture.

These are not *traditional* methods of TCM and are not taught at the ICTCM.

Q. Can Acupuncture TCM be used with other forms of Medicine?

Yes. TCM in general and Acupuncture TCM in particular can be safely used alongside other medical therapies and disciplines, such as western medicine, physiotherapy, osteopathy and counselling.

Q. Is there career potential in the Acupuncture Profession in Ireland?

Yes, there is a great, and still growing, demand for fully trained, fully qualified, fully insured, professional practitioners of Acupuncture TCM.

Q. Where can I practice?

Some people practice from home on either a full or part time basis, others work in a joint practice with other Health Care providers or Doctors, while others work from separate Clinical premises or work within a Hospital setting.



Q. What is the PRTCM?



The Professional Register of Traditional Chinese Medicine (PRTCM), established since 1983, is the first Register of its kind in Ireland. It is a professional body regulating the practice of Acupuncture TCM in Ireland which safeguards the wellbeing of the public and promotes and protects the professional interests of its members.

Lic.TCM graduates are eligible for membership.

Members are recognised by VHI Healthcare, Laya Healthcare (formerly Quinn), Aviva and other main health insurance providers in Ireland. This means that clients attending practitioner members of the PRTCM can get some refund of their treatment fees if they belong to one of the requisite Insurance schemes.

Q. Is the practice of Acupuncture regulated in Ireland?

In 2006, having reviewed the regulatory status of Complementary and Alternative Medical practice in Ireland, the Minister for Health and Children decided not to impose statutory regulation on this field of medicine but to support voluntary self-regulation.

The PRTCM is now one of a number of self-regulatory bodies of Acupuncture and TCM in Ireland. It is an independent self-regulatory professional body representing and regulating members who work in the field of Traditional Chinese Acupuncture and TCM, and in many cases, the broader range of TCM therapies including Chinese Herbal Medicine and Medical Qigong.

Where is the ICTCM College and Teaching Clinic located?

The College's main academic premises, ICTCM House, are centrally located in Dublin 3 and comprise a suite of lecture rooms and a well established TCM Clinic which also serves as a Teaching Clinic for students. Kitchen facilities are also provided and there are shops and places to eat in the immediate area.

The main teaching and training sessions are held at the College in Dublin.

The College is near the East Link Bridge and the Dublin Port Tunnel entrance is only 1 minute away. There are good bus and Dart links to other parts of Dublin. The Airport and main train stations, and thus the rest of Ireland and Europe, are all within easy reach. The LUAS line runs directly to The 3Arena (The Point Depot) which is only a few minutes' walk from the ICTCM, and it runs every five to six minutes from 6am to midnight. Airport buses also run from the 3Arena and there is a Dublin city bus stop almost outside the college.

Additionally, free on-street car parking is usually available on Merchants Road.

Q. What is the history of the ICTCM?

It is the first College of Acupuncture TCM in Ireland, founded in 1983.

It offers professional training in Acupuncture and TCM (and post graduate courses in Chinese Herbal Medicine and Medical Qigong) according to the theories and practice employed in major medical teaching centres in China. As in contemporary China, all teaching material in the College is based upon clearly documented classical Chinese medical texts, which provide the theoretically secure base for establishing sound Clinical practice.

It ensures that its courses meet the training requirements of the leading professional bodies of Acupuncture and TCM and its Lic.TCM qualification is recognised and validated by both the PRTCM and Guangzhou University of TCM.

Since its inception the College has had close links with the Minister for Health and Children and the Chinese Ambassadors to Ireland and it has a formal affiliation with Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine in China (see below).

It's Director, Tom Shanahan, is a leading expert in his field with more than 30 years of clinical experience in the field of TCM with specialism in Acupuncture, Chinese Herbal Medicine and Medical Qigong, and a background in education having studied and trained at Oxford University, Cambridge University, Nanjing University of TCM and Guangzhou University of TCM.

He was awarded a Visiting Professorship from Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine in 2004, the term of which was again extended in 2012.

Q. What are the requirements for entry to ICTCM courses?

The Irish College of TCM selects applicants on an equal opportunities basis. Although no specific formal educational qualifications are required, applicants must demonstrate, at interview, that they are fully competent to meet the educational and other demands of the course.

Prospective undergraduate level students must:-

Show themselves to be academically and personally able to successfully undertake professional TCM training; be fully committed to a highly intensive and demanding course of theoretical and practical study; display personal attributes suited, in the opinion of the College Director and interviewers, to a caring profession; be of mature disposition; present a wholly professional and sober demeanour.

There is no upper age limit but applicants must normally be at least 21 years old. No prior western medical training, nor knowledge of Acupuncture TCM, is required. Good written and spoken English is essential.

It is the policy of the College to accept applicants who will thrive on the academic and practical aspects of the course and who seem suited and committed to

following a profession within TCM when they graduate.

The College specializes in turning out fully-rounded professional practitioners, not mere theoreticians. Applicants who already have significant commitments in terms of work or family will need to be able to establish that they have the resources and support to sustain them through the course. Each applicant will be considered on his or her own merits.

Q. Do students have to go to China to complete their undergraduate training?

No. All the theoretical and clinical training is carried out in Ireland. Students do NOT have to go to China to graduate from the College. The College has its own established Teaching Clinic within the College buildings.

Q. Is the qualification recognised in China?

Yes. Since 2005, the ICTCM has enjoyed formal affiliation with Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine (GUCM), one of the four major Universities of Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine in China, thus ensuring that the standards of training are professional and rigorous and that graduates can, if they wish, be accepted on to appropriate post-graduate training in Guangzhou.

GUCM and ICTCM have recently launched recruitment to a part-time, 2 year, Masters Degree in Chinese Medicine and a part-time, 3 year Doctoral Degree. The Lic.TCM is recognised as equivalent to a Bachelors degree and enables direct entry to the Masters Degree, which is mainly run in Dublin.



Thomas Shanahan with the President of Guangzhou University of TCM, in Guangzhou, China, signing the Masters Degree collaboration agreement.

For more information on the College and its programmes see www.ictcm.ie