

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE (TCM) PRACTITIONER

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Unlike western medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) utilises different methodologies and practices in its treatment of medical problems. Western medicine usually concentrates on treatment of a medical problem only after symptoms of a condition occur whereas TCM advocates prevention of medical disorders and conditions, in conjunction with treatment of any medical symptoms. Additionally, western medicine involves treatment of an affected area in isolation. Traditional Chinese Medicine views the affected area in relation to the rest of the body in order to determine an overall picture of imbalance and to prescribe appropriate treatment. TCM encompasses many techniques including herbal medicine (phytotherapy), acupuncture, massage, moxibustion and Qigong (a system of health promotion through physical exercise). TCM is acknowledged as being effective in treating eczema, digestive disorders and gynaecological problems. Most practitioners work in small private practices or health clinics. A number of hospitals, clinics and GP practices now offer TCM as a complementary form of treatment.

REQUIREMENTS TO DO THE JOB

In China, doctors are normally trained at university in both TCM and western medicine. However, they are not allowed to practice western medicine in the UK unless they undertake conversion training for registration with the General Medical Council (GMC). Training opportunities in TCM are available in the UK and Europe, although training institutions are not commonplace. Many institutions offering training in TCM provide graduates with eligibility for membership of the International Register of Oriental Medicine. It is becoming far more frequent for western medical practitioners to possess a practical knowledge of some aspects of TCM, particularly acupuncture. Such complimentary knowledge is frequently utilised in physiotherapy and related areas.

REGISTRATION WITH A PROFESSIONAL BODY

Currently, there are no registration requirements for individual practitioners of TCM. Chinese doctors who wish to practice western medicine in addition to TCM must be GMC registered. Many TCM practitioners register with one of the professional bodies below on a voluntary basis. The British Register of Complementary Practitioners (BRCP) is currently working toward statutory regulation for all complementary practitioners including TCM doctors. Registration with the BRCP involves meeting specific entry requirements and passing examinations.

CASEWORKER TREATMENT

Business and Commercial

The job meets the skills criteria. Most doctors of TCM who come to the UK are highly qualified and experienced. Typical applicants equate to Senior Registrar or Consultant level in UK terms. However, because registration is not compulsory and there may be unqualified people in the field, caseworkers should, where concerns exist over the qualifications held by an applicant, contact one of the organisations below and seek

clarification. Where applicants claim membership of a UK professional body this should be confirmed by contacting the organisation concerned.

TWES

TWES training is not applicable. Applications made under the work experience aspect of TWES may be approved provided the post is additional to the normal staffing requirements of the company and the work experience programme is of a standard at or above NVQ level 3.

SALARY

TCM practitioners at the lowest salary level can expect to receive an annual salary of £12,000 per annum or above. With greater experience or working in larger more established practices salaries will often be paid at considerably higher levels.

ADVERTISING

The following journals are the main sources of advertising for Doctors of TCM:

Journal of Chinese Medicine
22 Cromwell Road, Hove, East Sussex BN3 3EB
Tel: 01273 777760

The Journal of Alternative & Complementary Medicine
Green Library Ltd. Mariner House, 53a High Street, Bagshot, Surrey, GU19 5AH.
Tel – 01276 451 522

FURTHER INFORMATION

British Register of Complementary Practitioners (Chinese Medicine)
Institute for Complementary Medicine Unit 25, Tavern Quay Business Centre, Sweden Gate,
London SE16 7TX
Tel: 020 7231 5855
Fax: 020 7237 5175
Contact: Roger Teal (Registrar)
Website: <http://www.i-c-m.org.uk/practitioners>

International Register of Oriental Medicine
4 Manor House, Colley Lane, Reigate, Surrey RH2 9JW
Tel: 01737 242104

Register of Traditional Chinese Medicine
19 Trinity Road, London N2 8JJ
Tel: 0181 883 8431

Register of Chinese Herbal Medicine
RCHM, Office 5, Ferndale Business Centre, 1 Exeter Street, Norwich, NR2 4QB
Tel : 01603 623 994
Fax: 01603 667 557

Internal Caseworker Guidance

Website: www.rchm.co.uk