



# White Crane Academy Of Chinese Herbal Medicine



DIPLOMA COURSE  
Prospectus: September 2024

# Introduction

The White Crane Academy is an exciting new college of Chinese herbal medicine (CHM) offering comprehensive and practical training leading to an independently accredited diploma.

With a highly experienced teaching staff, a clear emphasis on practical learning, an integrated mix of classroom and online education, and a commitment to promoting the very best clinical practice, we are taking CHM education to the next level.

## Chinese herbal medicine

Chinese herbal medicine (CHM) is a traditional system of medicine that has been practised in East Asian countries for thousands of years. Written records stretch back over 2,000 years but these practices are even older and the use of herbal medicines almost certainly originate in the earliest stages of human development.

CHM is a sophisticated and elegant system that has been refined over centuries of clinical experience and more recently has been validated by increasingly rigorous in vitro and in vivo research. In China it is commonly used in over 3,000 hospitals and investigated by 139 research institutes. In the past 50 years CHM has become established in the West and is widely practised in Europe, the US and Australia. The combination of traditional knowledge and its application and scrutiny in a modern care setting is one of the great strengths of CHM.

## Benefits of CHM

CHM offers a comprehensive range of treatments for many ailments. In the West it has built a reputation for the treatment of conditions including:

- skin diseases such as eczema, psoriasis and acne
- respiratory tract disorders such as acute cough and asthma
- genito-urinary conditions including acute and recurrent urinary tract infections

- allergic and auto-immune conditions such as hay fever and Graves disease
- digestive diseases such as IBS, GERD, and ulcerative colitis
- gynaecological disorders such as infertility, endometriosis and PCOS
- mental and emotional conditions such as anxiety and depression
- as a supportive treatment for people living with cancer.

However the potential of CHM extends much further than this and in China most Western medical departments are matched by their CHM equivalents.

## **CHM and acupuncture**

CHM and acupuncture both originate from the traditions of East Asian medicines. Much of the modern system of Traditional Chinese Medicine is based on a diagnostic and therapeutic framework that particularly suits CHM. At the White Crane Academy we see CHM and acupuncture as a kind of Yin-Yang pairing. Acupuncture excels at moving Qi and restoring its harmonious flow through the channel system, whilst CHM works at a more material level to strengthen deficiencies in the body and to expel the pathogenic factors that lead to disease.

Our experience is that using herbs and acupuncture together allows a practitioner to significantly extend the range and the potency of their treatment. Giving a patient herbal medicine to take on a daily basis allows for a regular intervention that reinforces and consolidates the benefits of treatment, enables substantial changes to be made, and a lasting restoration of good health. CHM is in effect like giving an active treatment every day-something that is not practical or affordable using acupuncture alone.

## **Why study at the White Crane Academy?**

Our emphasis at The White Crane Academy is to provide rigorous training that is clinically relevant, leading to confident, competent, and clinically effective CHM practitioners with a deep connection to the herbs they work with. We will:

- Provide thorough training that ensures the fundamental building blocks of CHM are in place that will provide a solid platform for lifelong learning and engender a feeling of professional competence.
- Ensure that the teachers on the course are experienced practitioners and that they teach clinically effective strategies for CHM. This is essential if students are to graduate with a justified sense of confidence.
- Explore the most recent research relating to CHM and discuss appropriate research strategies to rigorously investigate CHM.
- Provide regular online supervision of cases treated with CHM in the student's own clinical setting, as well as advice and guidance on clinical practice generally
- Enable our students to connect with living plants and to develop a deeper appreciation of the natural world.

## **The White Crane Academy approach to teaching**

We are offering a 3-year herbal training with web learning support, additional residential workshops, and online clinical supervision sessions leading to a diploma. All lectures can be attended online but approximately 30% of the lectures will also be open for students to attend in person. The reason for this is that we want to build a sense of community among WCA students to provide a fun and supportive learning atmosphere during the training. We feel, and our previous students have told us, that the opportunity for face to face contact will facilitate this development. And it doesn't stop there. We continue to support our graduates by meeting up online to discuss difficult cases and issues they encounter.

## **Course accreditation**

Our diploma course in Chinese herbal medicine is currently accredited by the EHTPA (The European Herbal & Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association - <http://ehtpa.org/>). Notable benefits of qualifying from an accredited course include wider recognition of your qualification and eligibility for membership of the RCHM (The Register of Chinese Herbal Medicine - <http://rchm.co.uk/>).

## **Year 1: Introduction to CHM**

The first year of the course covers the history and philosophy of Chinese herbal medicine, learning the individual herbs and some of the most important formulae, an introduction to operating a dispensary and processing herbs, as well as plant chemistry, pharmacognosy and pharmacology.

The first year is built around ten weekends of which eight are 3-day (Friday to Sunday) seminar sessions, and two are 2-day seminar sessions. Most of these sessions can be attended online, but some of the practically orientated sessions are best attended in person. If you are unable to attend these in person, please let us know in advance and we will make alternative arrangements.

In addition, first year students will join online clinical supervision sessions run for third year students as an observer.

### **Module 1: Materia Medica**

The main part of the first year will involve an introduction to CHM and the meticulous presentation of over 300 herbal medicines. You will learn their names, energetic properties, primary and secondary therapeutic actions, contraindications and dose. Herbs from the same class will be presented in context to enable you to differentiate and learn each herb and to start to build up a herbal map that will inform your future practice. In the first year we will also consider over 40 herbal formulae so you can gain an idea of how the herbs can work together to generate important therapeutic synergies. You will also learn about how to identify and dispense plants safely and effectively and about herbal chemistry and pharmacology.

This module will be summatively assessed by monthly tests to ensure that the herbs are being learned. There will be summative and formative assignments set during this module to allow students to develop their understanding of a specific herb, to

compare and contrast similar herbs, and to investigate how herbs operate together within a herbal formula. There will also be an end of year exam.

## **Module 2: Dispensing and Pharmacognosy**

This is a single weekend spent at the University of Bristol Botanic Garden (although the venue may change if circumstances dictate). The module is designed to provide students with the practical information needed to set up and operate a Chinese herbal dispensary for dried herbs, powders and tinctures. The module covers the clinical choices for the various forms of herbal products, the preparation of tinctures and external skin creams and ointments, as well as the key regulatory and compliance requirements demanded of a practitioner.

In addition to dispensing, this module covers pharmacognosy, including: scientific naming of herbs, pharmaceutical terms, the different methods used to process raw herbs, correctly identifying herbs, as well as the assessment of herb and supplier quality.

Where possible, a guided tour of the botanical gardens allows students to gain a deeper understanding of herbs by connecting with their growing forms.

## **Module 3: Plant Chemistry & Pharmacology**

This is a single weekend seminar session. This intensive module is designed to ensure that practitioners are familiar with the main chemical constituents of the most common herbal and traditional medicines, the effects they have on the human body, and their reactions with orthodox drugs.

## **Module 4: Introduction to Clinical practice**

The provision of professional clinical supervision is a key tenet of the White Crane Academy course, so we incorporate this into the first year to give students the opportunity to start learning early from the experience of others.

Students are divided into groups and assigned to one of our expert teacher-practitioners. The group meets online on a weekly basis usually for about 2 hours (although this is flexible). Each session is highly interactive and involves detailed case reviews for up to four third-year students. First year students attend as observers but are encouraged to interact with the group.

## Year 2: Application of CHM

The second year of the course will consider the treatment of the common conditions that can present in clinical practice. These will include:

- Respiratory diseases
- Digestive diseases
- Musculo-skeletal diseases
- Urinary tract diseases
- Gynaecological and obstetric disorders
- Skin diseases
- Neurological conditions
- EENT disorders
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Mental-emotional problems and
- Paediatrics

A differential diagnosis of each disease will be described and an appropriate guiding herbal formula will be taught with modifications and adjustments described to meet individual presentations. You will graduate from this year with a basic competence in using herbs to treat a wide range of conditions.

The second year is built around nine weekends of which eight are 3-day (Friday to Sunday) seminar sessions, and one is a 2-day seminar session. Most of these sessions can be attended online, but some of the practically orientated sessions are best attended in person. If you are unable to attend these in person, please let us know in advance and we will make alternative arrangements.

In addition, first year students will join online clinical supervision sessions run for third year students as an observer.

Building on the clinical supervision started in year 1, you will be grouped with up to 3 other students and assigned to one of our expert teacher-practitioners. The group meets online on a weekly basis usually for about 2 hours (although this is flexible).



Each session is highly interactive and students will be expected to present their case histories to the group in a concise and precise manner and will be asked to justify their diagnosis of each case and to clarify the treatment principles, treatment plans and selection of formulae and individual herbs they have selected for their herbal formulae.

Students will be required to compile a clinical portfolio and will be assessed formatively on their clinical practice skills with detailed feedback on each case they present from their clinical supervisors. Students will be assessed for their key competencies as a herbal practitioner.

At the end of year 2 you will have the option of attending a herbal summer camp in rural Devon where we will meet, think, and probably drink herbs in an intensive, enjoyable and instructive 5 days.

## **Module 5: Applying herbal formulae**

This module builds on students' knowledge of individual herbs by exploring the way Chinese herbal formulae are constructed, modified and applied in the treatment of a range of common diseases.

During this module we cover the following:

- The dynamics and hierarchy of formula construction; understanding the roles played by herbs (emperor, ministerial, assistant, and envoy herbs), and structuring formulations according to this traditional logic.
- Distinguish appropriate herbal formulae to be used for common diseases and syndromes that occur within the main physiological systems of the body.
- Select different methods of applying herbal formulae including decoctions, granules and powders, tinctures, capsules, enemas, external washes and herbal plasters.
- Modify the selection and dosage of herbal constituents within a formula to address individualised presentations of disease, changing clinical circumstances, and to reduce the risk of any adverse effects occurring.

- Plan treatment programmes to address the changing clinical circumstances of a condition.
- Appraise research relating to herbal medicines and integrate these data in their selection of appropriate herbs and formulae.

## **Module 6: Developing Clinical practice**

This module aims to actively develop knowledgeable, skilful and compassionate herbal practitioners who graduate with the required competence and confidence for professional entry and with the desire and ability to develop and progress their skills throughout their working lives.

This module covers:

- The correct use of Clinical Record Forms and their role in making an accurate TCM diagnosis.
- The definition of appropriate treatment principles which will then inform the herbal formula.
- The selection of appropriate herbs at the correct dosage to achieve defined therapeutic aims.
- The writing of formulae that meet the aims of the treatment principles and are, in the opinion of the clinical supervisor, therapeutically plausible interventions.
- The construction of herbal formulae based on a number of models taught during the course.
- The adjustment of a formula and treatment plan programme according to the changing clinical circumstances of the patient.
- The selection of different methods of applying herbal formulae including decoctions, granules and powders, tinctures, capsules, enemas, external washes and herbal plasters.
- The appraisal of in vitro and in vivo research relevant to the patients' condition and integrate these data in the selection of appropriate herbs and formulae.

- Reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the herbal intervention and the development of alternative treatment strategies if required.
- Advising and supporting patients while they are taking their herbal medicines.
- Awareness of potential adverse effects from herbal medicines and the ability to manage them adequately if they occur in practice.
- Recommendation of appropriate lifestyle changes including diet, relaxation, etc., to complement the herbal formulae being prescribed.
- Awareness of the limits of competence of CHM.

## Year 3: Advancing Practice

In the third year of the course students focus on advanced treatments, independent diagnosis and practice.

During year 3, a series of workshops / seminars is organised all of which are open to the graduate students and professional herbalists as CPD (Continuing Professional Development) qualifying events. All students on the course must select at least 5 of these weekend modules. Topics covered may include:

- Advanced dermatology
- Research methods for CHM
- Advanced paediatrics
- Introduction to oncology and providing supportive treatment for people living with cancer
- A historical survey of CHM
- Treating autoimmune disease including rheumatoid arthritis and Graves disease
- Diseases of the Liver-hepatitis, jaundice, fatty liver
- Metabolic diseases including diabetes and metabolic syndrome
- Using external applications
- Plant spirit medicine
- Chinese dietary therapy
- Advanced respiratory diseases: COPD and asthma
- Practical pharmacology of herbs including drug-herb interactions and action of primary and secondary metabolites related to real world case studies
- Advanced digestive diseases including treating ulcerative colitis, gut dysbiosis, and Crohn's disease
- Advanced gynaecology including PCOS, immune related infertility, cervical dysplasia and endometriosis

These workshops / seminars may be online or hybrid online / face to face and allow students to develop more advanced knowledge in the areas they are most interested in as well as to network with practitioners.

You will also continue with the regular online supervised clinical practice started in year 2 to continue building and deepening your understanding of CHM and clinical practice.

## **Module 7: Advanced workshops / seminars**

This module aims to deepen students' existing understanding and knowledge in key areas of herbal medicine, in particular:

- Key differential diagnoses, treatment principles and guiding formulae to manage common presentations of conditions
- The herbal management of more specialist areas of disease such as oncology, some endocrine disorders, and more advanced treatments in dermatology and gynaecology
- Some of the more esoteric aspects of herbal medicine such as the use of herbs in shamanic practices
- Understanding of non-clinical aspects of herbal medicine including botany, the history of chinese medicine, and research methodology
- Devising individualised treatment programmes for more complex presentation of disease
- Critical appraisal of existing research and extraction of appropriate data to guide treatment plans and to inform students' research projects
- Formulation and planning of student research projects
- The evaluation and synthesis of data from diverse sources to further your understanding of CHM and to enable this to be applied in the treatment of a particular disease

# Final year assessment

The final assessment for each student is divided into a clinical assessment (80%) and a dissertation (20%). All students are required to pass each 6 month clinical rotation and the final rotation is used to provide a final score for clinical practise. At the WCA we are predominantly interested in providing a practical herbal training that enables a student to effectively treat a wide variety of presentations. We prioritise these skills during the course and that is why the assessment of this ability constitutes 80% of your Year 3 mark.

In addition to this you will be required to prepare a dissertation in which you will have the opportunity to explore an area of interest to you. The dissertation will be developed in conjunction with the module leader and can take any form as long as it demonstrates a rigorous investigation of the subject matter. It may, for example, involve the development of a range of herbal creams/ointments, a historical exploration of a particular school of herbal medicine, a piece of clinical research, or a new way of representing individual herbs and formulae using various creative media.