

# Support for First Professional Doctorate Increasing

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There seems to be no doubt that one of the major issues facing the acupuncture and Oriental medicine profession is that of first professional doctorate (FPD), which would be a doctorate degree that prepares a graduate for working in the AOM field, by emphasizing competency skills along with theory and analysis. A new survey conducted by the American Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (AAAOM) has found the scales tipping toward favoring the first professional doctorate degree for AOM.

The AAAOM Education & Credentialing Committee received 904 responses between Nov. 21, 2008 and May 13, 2009, including 662 AOM practitioners, 208 students and 34 AOM college administrators. The survey asked for opinions both on an acupuncture first professional doctorate, and an Oriental medicine first professional doctorate.

## Acupuncture FPD

The acupuncture FPD survey question read: "Please indicate the degree to which you would support the offering of a first professional doctorate in acupuncture." Of the total responses, 65 percent were supportive of an acupuncture FPD and 35 percent were not. In breaking these down, 55 percent strongly agreed or agreed; 15 percent had no opinion; and 30 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Among AOM practitioners, 57 percent supported the statement and 43 percent did not. Of these, 48 percent strongly agreed or agreed; 16 percent had no opinion; and 36 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Among students, 83 percent supported the statement and 17 percent did not. Of these, 74 percent strongly agreed or agreed; 11 percent had no opinion; and 15 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Among college administrators, 86 percent supported the statement and 14 percent did not. Of these, 74 percent strongly agreed or agreed; 15 percent had no opinion; and 12 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

## Oriental Medicine FPD

The Oriental medicine FPD survey question read: "Please indicate the degree to which you would support the offering of a first professional doctorate in Oriental medicine." Of the total responses, 70 percent were supportive of an Oriental medicine FPD and 30 percent were not. Of these, 61 percent strongly agreed or agreed; 13 percent had no opinion; and 26 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Among AOM practitioners, 64 percent supported the statement and 36 percent did not. Of these, 54 percent strongly agreed or agreed; 15 percent had no opinion; and 31 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Among AOM students, 86 percent supported the statement and 14 percent did not. Of these, 78 percent strongly agreed or agreed; 9 percent had no opinion; and 13 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Among college administrators, 94 percent supported the statement and 6 percent did not. Of these, 83 percent strongly agreed or agreed; 11 percent had no opinion; and 6 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

### Support Higher Among AAAOM Members

In breaking down support levels for FPD between AAAOM members and nonmembers, results showed a higher level of support among student members (86 percent) as compared to nonmembers (14 percent). Furthermore, this trend also appeared to hold true for AAAOM-member practitioners versus nonmember practitioners. For the acupuncture FPD, members were slightly more supportive than nonmembers (59 percent versus 56 percent), and for the Oriental medicine FPD, 67 percent of members were supportive, as compared to 61 percent among nonmembers.

The results of this survey would appear to indicate a strong shift toward support for first professional doctorates, as compared to a 2003 survey conducted by the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM). In its [Summer 2003 newsletter](#), the ACAOM reported the results of its survey: "Of the 935 valid surveys received, 454 indicated support or strong support for the proposal (48.5%), while 459 indicated opposition or strong opposition (49.1%), with 22 remaining neutral (2.4%)."

In conclusion the AAAOM survey noted, "This survey suggests majority support for FPDs by the AOM profession in the United States. In contrast to an earlier survey by ACAOM where the results were just about evenly split, these results signify a shift in the AOM profession towards support of a FPD."

The survey may be accessed online at [www.aaaomonline.info/FPD\\_Survey\\_Report\\_Results.pdf](http://www.aaaomonline.info/FPD_Survey_Report_Results.pdf).

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