

CHINA ARTS COLLEGE

TAOIST ALCHEMICAL STUDIES GUIDE

MASTER OF TAOIST ARTS (MTA) DEGREE STUDIES

TAOIST INTERNAL ALCHEMY



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Important Remarks

- This guide is only meant for regular students who want to obtain the **MASTER OF TAOIST ARTS (MTA) or Taoist PhD (TPhD) degrees**.
- Other students can participate in (almost) all courses without having to take exams.
- It is possible to follow an individual program of studies. Get in touch to see what is possible.
- This guide discusses the conditions and requirements of the MTA and TPhD studies.
- Online courses are available. We intend to increase the number of online courses in the coming years.
- Some courses cannot be done online, because they require direct practical guidance from the teacher(s).

Contact us if you have specific questions: info@taoiststudies.org

INTRODUCTION

The central theme of our *Master of Taoist Arts* studies program is learning Taoist Internal Alchemy.

CHINA ARTS COLLEGE (CAC) is an international, apolitical and financially independent private institute. We offer university and (post)graduate level studies and are also an institute for scientific research (official information about our institute and foundation: Belgisch Staatsblad 13478/90). The institute is part of the China Arts non-profit organization (see [here](#)).

CHINA ARTS COLLEGE is working together with people and organizations that are in one way or another connected with our institute (e.g. former students who teach some of our courses). We also collaborate with other institutes that have similar goals and missions (such as the Embassy of the Free Mind, <https://embassyofthefreemind.com/en/>) and with international scientific and educational institutes.

We are internationally recognized as an important, unique, and authentic institute for the study of Chinese Taoist culture. In 2022, Prof. Dr. Dan KJ Vercammen was appointed Director of the World Council of Sinologists (Beijing), an influential organ that will direct the future development of sinology.

At our CAC you can study for two degrees, namely *Master of Taoist Arts* (MTA) and *Taoist PhD* (TPhD). Students having BA or MA degrees from other institutes can apply for further study at CAC. Because we are apolitical and don't depend on subsidies from the Belgian government(s), our degrees are not officially recognized by the Belgian authorities.

Our method, program, degrees and individual possibilities are unique in the world.

Our program combines Chinese tradition and classical Chinese Taoist science with modern science. Our scientific degrees are called *Master of Taoist Arts* (MTA) and *Doctor of Taoist Philosophy and Arts* (TPhD). We are the only university level institute in Europe to offer highly specialized and practical education in this field of studies.

The goals of our studies program are to provide opportunities to study Taoist Internal Alchemy and related subjects in a responsible, scientifically sound way and to guide the student on his/her way to become a specialist who can pass on this skill and knowledge.

There are three levels, each with specific goals (see [here](#)). These levels are based on the evolution of the student on the way of Taoist Internal Alchemy and the experience and effects of this practice. Because the speed of development is different for each individual it is impossible to calculate exactly how long it takes to become proficient.

Masters are highly qualified experts in their field of studies and should have a good understanding of the Chinese cultural phenomena that they study and should be able to give accurate advice. They should also be able to teach fundamental and specialized courses.

China Arts College keeps a list of qualified Masters. Contact us if you want to know if one of our degree holders is active in your region.

China Arts College is closely connected with our scientific research organ: Taoist Alchemical Studies Center TASC. We also have an extensive scientific Chinese library and an archive of photographs, films, etc. about our fields of studies, acquired during 4 decades of research and fieldwork in China and Taiwan. Of course, specialized Western works are also part of our collection.

Furthermore, we publish our own books about Chinese and Taoist subjects.

CONDITIONS

Candidates for the MTA studies program should have an official diploma of a Belgian or other country's secondary school. Students possessing a higher degree can of course study at China Arts College.

Taoist PhD candidates should first obtain the *Master of Taoist Arts* diploma.

How to register:

- fill out the registration form [here](#)
- pay the student registration fee (€ 100,00 per year) before the start of the academic year (starts in September/October) and pay the fees for the courses at least 2 weeks before the start of the courses (see [here](#) for fees and practical information about the courses); for private sessions you can pay cash at the beginning of the session or transfer the fee into our bank account 1 week before the session
- pass the entrance exam (see the "Exams" section below).

Notice: if you register for classes or private sessions we expect you to actually participate! Read our conditions [here](#).

EXAMS



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Only regular MTA or TPhD students can participate in the exams. Other students don't need to pass exams and don't qualify for a diploma. Students who want to obtain a document stating that they participated in a course, are required to register as a regular student (i.e. pay the € 100,00 fee) to compensate for the extra administrative work. They don't need to take exams.

Entrance exam: candidates for the regular student program (MTA student) should first pass an entrance exam. This consists of an interview about motivation and possibilities and (possibly) some practical tests. We inform the candidate beforehand about the actual content of this exam. If the candidate passes, (s)he can be a regular student. Students with a BA or MA diploma from another institute can contact us to see if they need to take the entrance exam.

Exams: a student can take exams after finishing a course at a moment when both (s)he and the examiner are available. The two fixed exam periods are May - July and August - October (exact dates are determined yearly). There are oral and written exams, theoretical tests and practical ones. Each time a student wishes to take an exam or a series of exams, (s)he needs to pay the exam participation fee. It is therefore wise to take the exams one after the other during an exam period, so that the student only needs to pay the fee once. The examiner(s) discuss(es) the timing, conditions, and content of the exams with the student once the student is registered for the exams.

The student gets credits for passing the exams (a minimum of 12/20 points for each course) and these are necessary for the final exam and the diploma. MTA students need also write papers about subjects mentioned in the [program](#). These papers count as exams and are judged by the examiner. The final exam of the MTA program includes the writing of an MTA thesis (minimum 50 pages) that proves the student's expertise and his/her scientific skills. The jury consists of two experts (one or two members with a Master/PhD/Professor degree and/or the Head of the China Arts College) who read the thesis thoroughly and write a report about the scientific value of the thesis, as the student's work should be of scientific value and contribute to the progress of scientific research in the field of the chosen subject.

A TPhD thesis (at least 300 pages) needs to be defended before a jury. This jury consists of three experts (two members of PhD/Professor level and a representative of the Southern Tradition of Taoist Internal Alchemy). They read the thesis thoroughly and write a report about it. If they find the student qualifies for the defense of his/her thesis, (s)he can defend it before this same jury.

COSTS

Although we are a non-subsidized institute, we try to keep the cost of our high quality and specialized education as low as possible. In general, studying at an officially recognized, subsidized institute costs a lot more than studying with us. We strive to make studying as accessible as possible, also for those who don't have the money to pay a fortune for an official piece of paper.

A regular student pays the fee for the entrance exam, the registration, and the courses and when (s)he takes exams (s)he pays the exam participation fee and the exam(s) fee. We calculate these costs on the basis of the actual time we spend and the administrative costs. If external members of a jury are required, we charge the student very reasonable fees to compensate the costs in time and effort that these jury members need to spend. China Arts College then pays this fee to the external member. If the member of the jury works for China Arts College, we invest the money in CAC and TASC. Therefore, the student actually invests his/her money directly in the quality of his/her own and his/her fellow students' education.

Exam participation fee per period

(or per exam if the student doesn't wish to combine exams):	€ 100,00
Exam fee (per exam):	€ 30,00
Exam fee (per paper):	€ 60,00
Entrance exam:	€ 60,00
Jury fee for the MTA thesis:	€ 500,00
Jury fee for the TPhD thesis:	€ 5.000,00

The candidate should register for the exams by contacting the administration office (info@taoiststudies.org) before participating in the exams. The teaching staff advises the student if it is opportune to take exams and informs the student about the content of the exam(s). If the teaching staff and/or the Head of China Arts College doesn't/don't give permission to participate in the exams, the student cannot take exams. They will only do so if they think the student is not ready for the exam(s) yet.

After the exam period the student shall receive a result form by e-mail and also a paper version of this form. During the diploma and proclamation ceremony the student who succeeded in the final exam shall receive the MTA diploma (in English and Chinese).

SUPPORT

If you wish to support us and our social work and/or if you appreciate what we do, you can make a donation. In that case please contact our secretary at: info@taoiststudies.org. We and our students are much obliged.

SUBJECTS AND CLASSES

We offer an extensive program of courses, seminars, workshops, lectures, summer classes, etc. Regular students can take exams and/or write papers about all the subjects we teach in order to obtain credits for the final exam.

The program of the MTA studies can be found [here](#). [Here](#) you can find all the necessary information about the studies. Master and PhD/postgraduate studies can be individualized, but the student needs to consult on all matters concerned with the staff.

MASTER OF TAOIST ARTS (MTA) CONDITIONS

Studying for the MTA degree takes at least four years. The student needs to pass through three levels in order to qualify for the final exam. Ask advice from the teaching staff about how to achieve this. Group classes, master classes, self study, papers, practical assignments, private sessions, and the writing of a scientific thesis are all part of the process.

The student determines what courses (s)he will take during the academic year (consult the staff if you need advice). By writing papers the student can gain theoretical knowledge. The teaching staff usually assigns the subjects of the papers, but students do have a say in this.

Succeeding for the exams requires sufficient self study. Practices need to be practiced and memorized. Each academic year the student can participate in the exams. By passing the exams the student obtains credits for the final exam (after a minimum of four years). Passing the first two levels opens up opportunities for the student to start teaching a limited number of subjects. The staff decides on what subjects can be taught by the student. A professional, qualified jury decides about the MTA thesis and the final exam. If the student passes, (s)he obtains the *Master of Taoist Arts* diploma. The new Master can then ask permission to teach.

The MTA thesis is a scientific thesis or an extensive report about a practical assignment. The student chooses the subject of his/her thesis, but needs permission from the promotor to start the research. The student regularly consults with the promotor during private sessions to check whether (s)he is on the right course. The thesis must be submitted during one of the official exam periods of the year in which the student wishes to take the final exam.

DOCTOR OF TAOIST ARTS (TPhD) AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Masters can engage in a research program with the view of obtaining the scientific degree of *Doctor of Taoist Philosophy and Arts* (TPhD). A minimum of two years of research is required. The candidate chooses the subject, but needs permission from the promotor to start the research. The student regularly consults with the promotor during private sessions to check whether (s)he is on the right course. The PhD thesis must be defended before a scientific jury during one of the official exam periods of the year in which the thesis was submitted. The thesis should prove that the candidate is fully capable of performing scientific research. The thesis is an original and valuable piece of work that contributes to the advancement of the chosen field of studies. For Masters or Doctors with a diploma from other institutes we can advise on individualized and specialized programs of research

For all questions about this guide and the studies you can contact us here: info@taoiststudies.org.