

Alternative Clinic One Year Residency Training Course

2026
Program

OVERVIEW OF COURSE

This is a one-year, full time intensive residency program at the Alternative Clinic training under Andrew and JulieAnn Nugent-Head. A highly selective program, it is open to the brightest licensed practitioners who have already demonstrated their commitment to Chinese medicine. The Alternative Clinic is now accepting applications for 2026.

This program is designed for practitioners who have already taken in person and online programs with us and are committed to practicing and teaching Chinese medicine as their personal and professional calling. It builds the foundations of an exceptional, clinically focused practitioner with the explicit expectation they become a future educator and voice in the field of Chinese medicine.

Participants are immersed in clinical and theoretical training. Residents learn through online lectures, in person discussions, hands on training, and clinical work with patients of all types of conditions and severities at our clinic. The focus of the residency is clinical bodywork, needling techniques, development of a foundation in formula writing, patient management and clinic business operations.

COURSE DESIGN

The course is divided into four quarters of sequential training to develop a sophisticated clinician in diagnosis and treatment. The first quarter begins with a 60-day Trial Residency Period followed by performance review. Participants moving forward in the program are awarded a training stipend to offset expenses during the rest of their training. Each quarter finishes with a performance review to ensure participants are meeting program expectations every step of the way.

FIRST QUARTER FOCUS: *Chinese Bodywork for Clinical Practice*

Skilled touch is the most important tool of clinically focused Chinese medicine, be it for diagnosis or treatment. Participants learn bodywork techniques for physical injuries, internal medicine and wellness protocols. Participants begin with online study of the Chinese Bodywork for Clinical Practice course to understand theory, followed by extensive partnered work. Once proficiency is achieved, residents are assigned patients to develop confidence on different body types and personalities. After completion of this process and obtaining positive feedback from the practice

patient base, participants are given treatment shifts to work on their skills as clinic practitioners. In addition, residents have pharmacy shifts and study single herbs and formula combinations through online study, clinical observation, discussion and herb tasting.

SECOND QUARTER FOCUS: *Orthopedic Focused Tangible Acupuncture*

The second quarter focuses on acupuncture techniques and strategies for muscular skeletal injuries. Building on the hand skills developed in the first quarter, participants learn Sun Simiao's theory of Ashi point treatments as the foundation for treating orthopedic injuries. This includes needling techniques of Sparrow Pecking, Spreading, Channel Traveling, and Point Riding to achieve muscle and Sinew Channel release. Participants begin the second semester with online study of the Tangible Acupuncture for Orthopedic Injuries course for theory, followed by protocols practiced through extensive partnered work. Once proficiency is achieved, participants are assigned specific patients to develop confidence on different body types. After completion of this process and obtaining positive feedback, residents begin to see patients in the Community Clinic. Based on patient feedback, residents will be able to expand their clinical shifts to include orthopedic acupuncture patients. Residents continue pharmacy shifts as well as learn 'front of house' clinical management skills to understand how to run a successful, multi-practitioner teaching clinic modeled on the Alternative Clinic.

THIRD QUARTER FOCUS: *Internal Medicine Focused Tangible Acupuncture*

Building on the needling confidence developed over the second quarter, residents shift their focus to more subtle acupuncture techniques and strategies required for internal medicine and deficient patients. Participants study the online course, Tangible Acupuncture for Internal Medicine and have extensive partnered work. Once proficiency has been achieved, residents practice on specific patients in a teaching clinic environment. Based on positive patient feedback, residents expand their shifts to include all patient types at the clinic. Residents continue pharmacy shifts as well as training in 'front of house' clinical management skills to understand how to run a successful, multi-practitioner teaching clinic modeled on the Alternative Clinic.

FOURTH QUARTER FOCUS: *Full Immersion Practice*

The final quarter of the program focuses on building the resident into a confident, well rounded clinical practitioner through the Community Clinic, clinical shifts, and intensive question/answer training and discussion sessions. Learning to handle difficult patients, challenging cases and clinical failures are also important parts of the fourth quarter residency. An increased focus on discussing herbs and formulas happens as residents gain a greater understanding of when acupuncture is simply not enough for the level or severity of illness they encounter. Residents continue pharmacy and 'front of house' shifts to prepare them for running their own future teaching clinic.

COST OF TRIAL RESIDENCY PORTION OF PROGRAM

The cost of the 60-day Trial Residency is \$3,500 and is non-refundable should the resident need to leave the program, be asked to leave the program for professional reasons, or not have their residency extended to the full year training program after performance review.

RESIDENCY STIPEND

Upon a successful performance review after the trial period, the Alternative Clinic provides a \$100 per clinic day learning stipend to offset living costs while completing their training in Asheville. Residents should expect to have 4 to 5 clinic days per week.

APPLICATION

This program is open to Chinese Medicine practitioners who are able to be licensed in North Carolina. An excellent academic record is required, letters of recommendation will be requested. This is a full time, full immersion training program, and participants must have the ability to relocate to Asheville for the duration of the program. Please see end of document for application process.

PROGRAM START

- 2026 program begins in April of 2026, ending March 2027.
- Actual calendar TBA factoring in holidays et al.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE APPLICATION

This is a hands-on treatment focused program. Participants are expected to give up to 8 treatments a day in which bodywork/massage/tuina will be the dominant treatment tool. If a participant has any concerns about their hands, fingers or body handling this level of intensity, they should not apply to this program. ATS offers many other in person and online training programs which would be a better fit for them.

This program is not an opportunity to come to the clinic and have personal health conditions treated while training. The program does not provide space for treatments to participants, nor can our practitioners make time outside of their schedule to address health concerns of participants. By applying, participants are explicitly stating they are in good enough physical, mental and emotional health to complete this rigorous program. Participants should be aware that they will be needled and massaged frequently in partnered training. If being needled or touched at this level of intensity/frequency is not appropriate, please consider a different ATS program.

This program is focused on teaching through demonstration, practice, and correction. Participants should be able to handle constructive criticism, welcoming corrections and feedback as the most valuable tool in progressing to a higher level of skill. Participants should be absolutely sure they will thrive in this style of learning before applying. If that is not the case, ATS offers many in person and online programs which follow a more student support focused learning methodology.

Please respect our application requirements. If you do not meet the criteria, please do not apply. People learn in many different ways, and we understand not everyone is suited to the rigid structures of this program. ATS offers many programs which are more flexible, and there are many ways to learn clinically focused medicine with ATS aside from the residency program.

APPLICATION PROCESS

This program is open to Chinese Medicine practitioners who are able to be licensed in North Carolina. An excellent academic record is expected, ATS will ask for letters of recommendation. Participants must have the ability to relocate to Asheville for the duration of the program.

Step 01: after being sure you meet the requirements of being able to be licensed in North Carolina, send ats@traditionalstudies.org a cover letter stating:

- Why you are interested in this program
- Why ATS should consider you for this program
- What your current practice is like—type of patients, number of patients per week, etc.
- Confirmation of your ability to relocate to Asheville and ability to attend a full time program
- What you plan to do with the knowledge you will have learned during this residency upon completion

Upon receipt, ATS will review your preliminary application. If you are asked to continue to step 02, THIS DOES NOT MEAN YOU HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED INTO THE PROGRAM.

Step 02: We will only contact you for references if you are a final round applicant. This does not mean you have been accepted into the program.

Step 03: Provisional Acceptance. If accepted, you will receive a letter stating you have been provisionally accepted to the program. At this point, you affirm your commitment to attend the program and are part of our program!