



INFLUENTIAL POINT

Remove the O-Word

["Oriental" is a term rooted in xenophobia and white supremacy.](#) It is imperative that we eliminate it from our lexicon. This important first step is the beginning of a generations-long investment in dismantling colonialism and advocating health diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Calls to Action

1. Remove "oriental" from all East Asian medicine institutions, including in names, acronyms, diplomas, titles, and licensing and accrediting bodies immediately
2. Begin a dialogue across the community and profession to explore which terms will replace "oriental," foregrounding the voices of upcoming generations of Asian and Asian American stakeholders
3. Provide alumni with new diplomas reflecting this change, free of charge, within one year of its adoption

This petition explicitly calls upon the following entities to immediately adopt this change: [NCCAOM](#), [ACAOM](#), and **all East Asian Medicine academic institutions.**

Why Do We Need to Remove the O-Word?

Eurocentric Origins

"Oriental" was originally used to indicate any land lying East of an imagined European center. To the original users of the word, it evoked exoticism, foreignness, and the perceived racial inferiority of the "other." It does not honor heritage but instead centers a European worldview while persecuting those of Asian descent.

Anti-Asian Racism in America

[Just as Asian cultures are not monolithic](#), there is not a universal consensus around the use of "oriental" among Asian or Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) students and practitioners. The most significant divergence in thought is perhaps between those born and raised in Asia and those born in the United States and raised as Asian Americans.

In the United States, orientalism is inextricable from the racism and murderous violence of the ["Yellow Peril"](#) in the 19th and 20th centuries which abused and exploited Asian labor for American expansionism. Orientalism also played a role in vehemently xenophobic legislation and social discriminations throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, and is [still alive today](#).

National Precedent

In 2016, the term was removed from all United States federal regulations through a [bill authored by New York State Representatives Grace Meng \(D\) and Hakeem Jeffries \(D\)](#). It received unanimous, bipartisan congressional support and was signed into law by President Obama. The bill also struck the terms "Negro," "Eskimo," and "Spanish surname" (to honor Latinx citizens). These blatantly offensive terms are the companions of "oriental."

We will fail in our institutional anti-racism efforts before they begin if we persist in using this antiquated term. Thank you for signing and sharing this [petition](#).