



June 23, 2016

**TO: ALL LLQP STAKEHOLDERS**

**Subject: Release of Psychometric Audit of the LLQP Exam**

On behalf of CISRO members across the country, I am pleased to announce that the Psychometric Audit of the LLQP Exam has been completed by Yardstick Testing & Training Experts. A copy of their report is included with this letter. We will also be posting the report to the CISRO website in the next several days.

CISRO would like to thank those stakeholders who provided referrals of psychometric experts, from which Yardstick was chosen. CISRO would also like to thank Yardstick for their invaluable advice in defining and conducting the evaluation. Their report represents a valuable tool in CISRO's ongoing efforts to maximize the quality of the LLQP program. It confirms that many of the processes we followed in developing the new LLQP exam aligned with best practices outlined in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*. At the same time, the report points out areas where opportunity exists for further improvement. Reflection on how these improvements could be implemented has begun and our initial thoughts on this are included here.

The report contains two key recommendations for improvement, outlined in the Executive Summary:

1. ***"Yardstick recommends that all jurisdictions follow the same policies and procedures for exam administration ..."*** CISRO has maintained throughout the program development process that exam administration was the responsibility of each jurisdiction. In keeping with that, we published "exam administration guidelines" for jurisdictions to follow. Since these were merely guidelines and not mandated procedures, Yardstick was concerned that it allowed for differences in exam administration that could impact the validity of the exam results. CISRO is confident that the key aspects of exam administration that could impact validity are indeed harmonized. However, this recommendation does encourage us to identify further opportunities to align exam delivery processes across jurisdictions.
2. ***"It is recommended that CISRO conduct a new standard setting study to obtain a new exam passmark that is reflective of industry expectations for the knowledge and skills of life insurance agents at job entry."*** During the development process for the harmonized LLQP program, CISRO did not consider altering the pass mark of 60% that has been in place since the inception of the LLQP program. We welcome feedback from stakeholders on this recommendation.

In addition to the above two areas, there are a number of recommendations for improvement in the report. Without attempting to re-list them all here, I did want to highlight a few of the other recommendations on which we expect to take action:

1. **Documentation** – In several areas of the report, there are comments and recommendations regarding documentation of processes, procedures, etc. The common theme of these comments is that there is an opportunity to raise the level of documentation by creating a detailed, central program manual for the harmonized LLQP. CISRO, through our Education Service Provider, will begin to identify a strategy for improving this area. Some of the initiatives, by nature, will be forward looking, but where practical, we will also seek to improve documentation on the key processes followed throughout the program development process over the past four years.

2. **Adherence to Item Writing Principles** – The report is very complimentary of the process followed in developing exam questions, the training of the subject matter experts who created the questions, and the overall quality of the questions themselves. There are some specific recommendations for addressing minor issues with some of the questions, and the report also recommends that CISRO examine questions for “insensitive content” through a broader and more formal approach. Although no such insensitive content was identified in the report, a specific analysis will confirm that all students are provided with an equal opportunity to demonstrate competence. CISRO will be following up on these recommendations to maintain overall question quality.
3. **Equivalence of Exam Forms** –The report concludes that our exam forms are equivalent, but Yardstick recommends that CISRO be diligent in ensuring that alternate forms of each module be monitored to ensure continuing exam score equivalency. This is a process that has already been employed by our Education Service Provider in the early months of the harmonized LLQP, and forms a key component of our ongoing exam quality assurance process.
4. **Pilot Testing of New Exam Questions Being Developed** – The psychometric expert recommends that new questions be pilot tested before being included in live scoring. One method identified in the report is adding a small number of test questions to each exam format. CISRO is conscious of time constraint issues with the exam, and our goal will be to find a balance between maximizing the validity of any pilot process without impacting the exam writing experience for students. Again, CISRO welcomes specific stakeholder feedback in this area – in particular relating to how this can best be accomplished.

Upcoming stakeholder meetings will certainly afford the opportunity for dialogue on the issues outlined in this letter – and also any other findings and recommendations that are included in the report.

As we announced at stakeholder meetings in the fall of 2015, we are also inviting stakeholders to provide feedback on the report, its findings and recommendations. The feedback period will run from today until Monday August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Submissions should be addressed to:

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Submissions can also be made electronically to [ron.fullan@skcouncil.sk.ca](mailto:ron.fullan@skcouncil.sk.ca)

We look forward to your feedback, and to identifying areas and means for improvement with the harmonized LLQP.

Yours truly,



Ron Fullan  
Chair, Canadian Insurance Services Regulatory Organizations