



**July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018**

**To:** All LLQP Stakeholders

**From:** LLQP Governance Committee

**Re:** Pilot Testing

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## **Background**

In the spring of 2016, the Canadian Insurance Services Regulatory Organizations (CISRO) requested that an external psychometric audit be conducted to ascertain the quality of the LLQP exams and licencing procedures. The results of this audit are presented in a [report](#) available on the CISRO website. Overall, the report draws very favourable conclusions, and makes recommendations to further optimize the quality of the LLQP. One such recommendation was to pretest all new questions before incorporating them into the exams that candidates are required to pass.

This recommendation prompted us to start pilot testing all newly drafted questions. More recently, evidence of exam collusion collected in more than one jurisdiction has driven the LLQP Governance Committee to update exam versions more frequently. Preoccupations with exam security has made pilot testing even more crucial to LLQP exam administration.

Since February of 2017, 990 candidates throughout Canada have taken part in this endeavour, which allowed us to pilot test a total of 390 questions: 60 questions for each of the two *ethics* modules and 90 questions for each of the three *products* modules. Statistical analyses were performed in order to confirm the quality of these questions, as well as to identify those that could benefit from some adjustments and pinpoint those few questions that might need to be rejected outright. This pilot testing procedure was put in place to help us better calibrate our exams and increase their validity even further. It allowed us to create the new exam formats that were implemented at the beginning of 2018. We sincerely thank all the candidates who volunteered to take part in this first pilot testing project and thus contributed to the improvement of the LLQP exams. We also wish to thank the course providers who helped in raising awareness as to the importance of pilot testing and encouraged candidates to participate.

## **New approach**

Although the pilot testing procedure yielded satisfactory results, it proved rather cumbersome to implement and manage. The fact that not all provinces could participate, and that candidates within participating provinces could choose whether or not to take part in the process limited its efficiency, as gathering enough data for meaningful analyses took longer than had been hoped for. Also, the representativeness of the samples (and of the conclusions drawn from our analyses of the data) was potentially diminished due to self-selection bias.

Recently, we looked into other pilot testing approaches to find one that would be easier for administrators to manage, would foster better representativeness, and, in the context of collusion, would allow us to renew exam formats more frequently while maintaining the same level of quality.

As a result, we have devised the approach detailed below after taking into consideration:

- Excellent pass rates currently being achieved
- Evidence that candidates currently have ample time to answer all questions
- Solid psychometric properties of our exams
- The need for certain candidates to write all four exams in a single day

#### Main characteristics

- 5 pilot questions added to every existing exam format to be answered within the 75-minute time frame
- Pilot questions excluded from candidates' final score and managed to avoid impact on candidate performance
- Candidates informed of the presence of pilot questions to ensure transparency
- Candidates unaware of the position of pilot questions in the exam to ensure they are answered as earnestly as the others and that valid data can be gathered
- Exam proctors given no more information than candidates themselves regarding the presence of pilot questions

#### Advantages

- A more representative sampling of candidates, to draw more definitive conclusions as to the quality and difficulty level of pilot questions
- Capacity to roll out new exam formats comprised of pretested questions more frequently, to help guard against collusion
- Assurance that decisions regarding a candidate's competency are always based on thoroughly validated questions
- Possibility for candidates to continue to write all four exams on the same day

#### **Next steps and requested collaboration**

The updated pilot testing approach will be implemented in all jurisdictions as of September 1, 2018. In the meantime, we kindly ask that you inform candidates of the upcoming changes in order that they be prepared and understand the importance of pilot testing questions to help maintain and enhance the relevance, quality and validity of the LLQP exams. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to write to us at: [llqp.pgap@lautorite.qc.ca](mailto:llqp.pgap@lautorite.qc.ca) and an exam specialist will provide the requested clarifications.