

17 August 2022

Our Ref: MC/IIQE/CIR

By email only

To: Chief Executives of all authorized insurers, Responsible Officers of all licensed insurance agencies and licensed insurance brokers companies

Dear Sirs,

Remote Invigilation Mode Examination (“RIME”) for the Insurance Intermediaries Qualifying Examination (“IIQE”) and Insurance Qualification specified by the Insurance Authority (“IA”) under GL23

In our circular issued on 15 March 2022, the IA announced the launch of RIME for delivering the IIQE offered by the Vocational Training Council (“VTC”). RIME, at that stage, was launched as a back-up contingency to provide continuity in delivering the IIQE at a time when there was a substantial decrease in the availability of the physical exam mode due to COVID-19.

Although RIME was only in place for a limited period (and ceased when capacity for the physical exam mode was restored to normal levels), the IA and the VTC treated this as a pilot phase to assess the possibility of deploying RIME on a permanent basis. We have now completed our assessment.

Based on our assessment, we consider that delivering the IIQE through RIME with the same safeguards and post-exam measures that were in place during the pilot phase, replicates the level of integrity of delivering the IIQE through the existing physical exam modes (i.e. Pencil-and-Paper Mode Examination or Computer Screen Mode Examination with the candidates being physically present at the VTC’s designated examination centres). As such, RIME (with the same safeguards and post-exam measures in place) can be made a permanent option for delivering certain IIQE papers alongside the existing physical exam options.

Permanent launch of RIME for 3 IIQE papers

Accordingly, the IA is pleased to announce that, from 9 September 2022 onwards, the VTC will offer RIME to the public as a permanent option for taking the following IIQE papers:

- (1) the Principles and Practice of Insurance (P&P) paper,
- (2) the General Insurance (GI) paper, and
- (3) the Long Term Insurance (LT) paper.

The VTC will aim to provide RIME sessions for the above IIQE papers on a biweekly basis, normally with 3 sessions on each RIME examination day (one session for each of the abovementioned IIQE papers). For these purposes, RIME is now open for enrolment. Please refer to [website of VTC](#) for enrolment details and other examination requirements applicable to the regular mode of RIME.

As indicated, the safeguards and post-exam measures that accompany RIME will be the same as during the pilot phase. These are necessary to underpin the integrity of delivering the IIQE through RIME. These safeguards, measures and other arrangements are detailed in the Appendix. The IA will keep these measures under review and revisit them in future, after we have developed more experience and data regarding delivery of the IIQE through RIME.

Consequential update on Insurance Qualifications specified by the IA under GL23

Pursuant to paragraph 5.2(a)(vii) of Guideline on “Fit and Proper” Criteria for Licensed Insurance Intermediaries under the Insurance Ordinance (Cap. 41) (“GL23”), to become an individual licensee, the applicant concerned is expected to satisfy a minimum education standard. One of the acceptable qualifications to satisfy such standard is an insurance qualification specified by the IA from time to time and published on the IA’s website.

Taking account of the developments made in the modes for delivering the exams for different insurance qualifications in the past few years (and the benchmark which the IA considers RIME sets for remote invigilation of examinations), the IA has updated the List of Acceptable Insurance Qualification (e.g. FLMI) to reflect this aspect on the IA’s website at the following link:

https://www.ia.org.hk/en/legislative_framework/files/Aug_2022_Insurance_Qualifications_Eng.pdf

The licensing FAQs (e.g. acceptable qualifications for exempting from IIQE papers) have also been updated on the IA’s website at the following link:

https://www.ia.org.hk/en/infocenter/faqs/faqs_15.html

Enquiries

If you have any enquiries, please contact:

- the VTC - by email to cpdc@vtc.edu.hk or by phone to 2919 1467 for matters concerning the RIME and the IIQE in general, and by email to peak@vtc.edu.hk or by phone to 2836 1922 for matters concerning the tailor-made training courses.

- the IA - by email to licensing@ia.org.hk for licensing matters relating to insurance intermediaries.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Gregoire
Head of Market Conduct
General Counsel
Insurance Authority

c.c. The Hong Kong Federation of Insurers
Professional Insurance Brokers Association
The Hong Kong Confederation of Insurance Brokers
Vocational Training Council

Appendix

(A) Arrangements of the regular mode of RIME

- (1) The RIME is only available for the three basic IIQE papers, namely (1) the Principles and Practice of Insurance (P&P) paper, (2) the General Insurance (GI) paper, and (3) the Long Term Insurance (LT) paper.
- (2) The duration and number of questions of a RIME paper are the same as those for the original IIQE papers.
- (3) An individual who passes the relevant RIME papers would be considered, for the purposes of licensing, as having passed the equivalent IIQE papers, such that he/she can be granted an intermediary licence by the Insurance Authority (“IA”) to carry on regulated activities in the lines of business that passing these papers would permit, subject to the fulfillment of all other applicable licensing requirements. However, within 18 months¹ counting from the date of passing the RIME paper (“the 18-month period”), the individual must also:
 - i) attend a tailor-made course to be administered by VTC for the relevant IIQE paper (a certain number of CPD hours will be available for such course) - for details, please refer to part (B) of Appendix ; or
 - ii) pass the relevant original IIQE paper.
- (4) An individual who relies on the RIME passing results to apply for his/her intermediary licence from the IA, will initially only be granted a licence for 18 months counting from the date of passing the RIME paper (“the first licence”). For the purpose of counting the 18-month period of the first licence, the latest passing date of the RIME paper will be adopted².
- (5) Upon expiry of the 18-month period, the first licence can be renewed for 3 years provided that the individual has fulfilled either of the requirements in (3)(i) or (ii) above within the 18-month period and shows proof of this to the IA during his/her licence renewal application. If the individual is unable to submit to the IA evidence of fulfilling

¹ Or such longer period as the IA may specify, if for example the suspension of the IIQE is significantly prolonged thereby reducing the time available for completion of the make-up examination or course attendance.

² Examples for counting of 18-month period for the first licence:

Example A: If P&P paper (RIME mode) and LT paper (RIME mode) are passed on 16 and 30 Sep 2022 respectively, the 18-month period will run from 30 Sep 2022.	Example B: If P&P paper (Original mode) was passed on 5 Sep 2022 while GI paper (RIME mode) and LT paper (RIME mode) are passed on 16 and 30 Sep 2022 respectively, the 18-month period will run from 30 Sep 2022.
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either post measures (3)(i) or (ii) above by the end of the 18-month period when his/her first licence is due for renewal, the first licence will expire at that point without renewal.

- (6) RIME is only available to individuals who are not existing licensees but who wish to be licensed by the IA. Individuals who are already licensed to carry on regulated activities in certain lines of business cannot rely on RIME results for the purpose of varying their line of business.

(B) Tailor-made training course to be administered by VTC

- There will be a tailor-made training course for each of the three RIME papers: (1) Principles and Practice of Insurance, (2) General Insurance, and (3) Long Term Insurance.
- Each course will cover all the topics in the syllabus of the examination paper in question.
- The duration of each course is 9 learning hours and there will be an end-of-course assessment with 25 multiple-choice questions to ensure the licensees' understanding of the course contents. The pass mark of the assessment is 70%.
- **CPD hours** can be granted at the rate of one CPD hour for every 3 hours of participation in any one such tailor-made course, provided the licensees have completed the relevant course and passed the end-of-course assessment.
- The end-of-course assessment will on average take 30 minutes, which will not count towards the total CPD hours granted.