



Annual Report

2014/15

TOUCHSTONE

INSTITUTE

COMPETENCY EVALUATION EXPERTS



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A Message from Ken Harris

As a long-standing member of the board, I have had the opportunity to witness remarkable growth and change in our organization, supported by the hard work, commitment and leadership of our board, CEO, directors and staff. This year, we reached a major milestone: after seven years operating as the Centre for the Evaluation of Health Professionals Educated Abroad (CEHPEA), we have fully transitioned to a new name and identity as Touchstone Institute. A “touchstone” refers to a test for determining quality. Our new name was chosen to reflect our commitment to the assurance of professional competencies through valid, reliable assessment.

Preparing for this change presented us with an opportunity to reflect on our history as an organization, assess our current state and plan a path for future growth and development. It is my pleasure to share with you the progress we have achieved, as envisioned in the strategic plan finalized by our board of directors in 2012. This report details the ways in which we have been working to build on and strengthen the solid foundations set by CEHPEA while creating frameworks to support our future development.

Our scope continued to broaden this year, with new partnerships and substantive projects in every area. It was also a time for renewal, as we initiated exam redevelopment processes for several of our assessments and restructured our education programs.

We achieved another first this year with our inaugural Perspectives Symposium. On a cold day in February, colleagues from regulation, education, research and assessment worlds gathered together at the MaRS Collaboration Centre in downtown Toronto for a program of interprofessional learning. It was an opportunity for us to connect with others in the field, share challenges and successes and expand our views on competency assessment.

Despite these successes, the year has not been without its challenges. In December 2014, we were saddened by the passing of one of our board members, Professor Brenda Zimmerman, director of the Health Industry Management Program at York University’s Schulich School of Business. Brenda was a brilliant and innovative thinker who shared a clear vision for Touchstone Institute. Her expertise in business transformation and renewal was invaluable to the implementation of our strategic plan and helped guide our organization’s transition to its current identity. She will be deeply missed.

I am very proud of the accomplishments of the staff, directors and CEO of Touchstone Institute, as well as the work and oversight of the board.



*Dr. Kenneth Harris, Chair,
Board of Directors, Touchstone Institute*

A Message from Sten Ardal

As competency evaluation experts, we are experienced in designing and implementing assessments for other professionals. When it comes to our own work, we rely on solid frameworks to provide the structure needed to guide our activities and assess our achievement.

This year, our annual report highlights the methodologies and processes that we continually develop and employ in each of our individual programs. Our departments – Assessment, Education, Communication Competency and Standardized Patients – are interdependent and united by these processes. Whether designing an educational curriculum or a high-stakes assessment, clear organizing principles are essential, as they are embodied in every facet of our work.

In the past year, we have been applying frameworks throughout our programs: the CanMEDS framework is the foundation for our physician education programs, which have gone through considerable review and expansion; competency blueprints provide the frames for designing assessments for optometry, nursing and dietetics; and communication competency is assessed against established language benchmarks. All our exams and education programs are administered according to standardized protocols designed to support candidates and ensure the long-term reliability, validity and effective delivery of our services.

While these organizing structures guide our work, they alone do not provide assurance or guarantee exceptional results. The essential ingredient is implementation by a highly motivated, dedicated and extremely nice team of skilled professionals.

The theme, “Frameworks for Assurance,” is timely and apt. We have had a productive year, not only in what has been delivered, but also in how we have grown and re-structured as an organization. We are more integrated with each other, clearer on our processes and better at what we do.

I am privileged and proud to lead this team.



Sten Ardal, CEO, Touchstone Institute

2014/15 Programs



Working with national and provincial government regulators, academic partners and subject matter experts, our programs support excellence in Canada's health professions and facilitate entry-to-practice for internationally educated health professionals.

Program Overview

Program	Description	Partner(s)	Our Role	Milestones
Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN)	Assesses the English-language proficiency of internationally educated nurses applying for licensure in the nursing profession in Canada.	Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB)	Management of test content, test results and the administration of test sessions at sites across Canada. Administration of test sessions at Touchstone Institute facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established The CELBAN Centre as national administrator. Recruited and trained assessors. Launched celbancentre.ca website and online registration system. Increased test accessibility via new test sites and pop-up sessions. Initiated qualitative and psychometric test review.
Canadian Medicine Primer (CMP)	Education program for sponsored visa residents and fellows that aims to facilitate a successful transition to residency training and postgraduate education in Ontario.	Ontario faculties of medicine	Curriculum development and delivery. Integration of patient simulations into learning model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented revised modular programming. Introduced academic advising program and learner debrief sessions. Developed unique programming for fellows.
Internationally Educated Nurses Competency Assessment Program (IENCAP)	Tests the knowledge, skill and judgement of internationally educated nurses seeking nursing registration in Ontario.	College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) Ministry of Health and Long- Term Care (MOHLTC)	Development and administration of written multiple choice and objective structured clinical exams (OSCEs). Management of test content, test results and reports to CNO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiated program redevelopment.

2015 Program Overview Continued

Program	Description	Partner(s)	Our Role	Milestones
Internationally Graduated Optometrists Evaluating Exam (IGOEE)	Tests the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of internationally graduated optometrists as compared to a recent graduate of a Canadian optometric program; assesses candidates' eligibility to write the national licensing exam.	College of Optometrists of Ontario (COO)	Development and administration of written multiple choice exam and objective structured clinical exams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated blueprinting workshop. Facilitated item writing workshops for written and performance items. Reviewed and refined written and performance items. Recruited and trained standardized patients and examiners. Conducted field test and pilot test.
Knowledge and Competency Assessment Tool (KCAT)	Online exam that assesses the knowledge, skill and ability of internationally educated dietitians to ensure safe, competent and ethical practice in Canada.	College of Dietitians of Ontario (CDO)	Development of a computer-based multiple choice exam.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted scoping and blueprinting workshops with dietitians representing clinical, public health and institutional dietetics practice from across Canada.
National Assessment Collaboration Objective Structured Clinical Exam (NAC OSCE)	Assesses the readiness of an international medical graduate for entrance into a Canadian residency program.	Medical Council of Canada (MCC)	Exam administration at Touchstone Institute and at off-site facilities as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded administration days and managed off-site location to accommodate over 1,000 candidates.

Program	Description	Partner(s)	Our Role	Milestones
Nurse Practitioner Practice Assessment (NPPA)	Quality Assurance Competency assessment for Canadian nurse practitioners.	College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO)	Development and administration of objective structured clinical exam.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created working group. Conducted blueprinting workshops.
Pre-Residency Program (PRP)	Mandatory orientation program for international medical graduates who have been accepted into a specialty residency training program in Ontario.	Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) Ontario faculties of medicine	Curriculum development and delivery in online and classroom environments. Integration of patient simulations into learning model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented revised programming. Introduced renewed academic advising program and learner debrief sessions.
Pre-Residency Program – Family Medicine (PRPFM)	Mandatory orientation program for international medical graduates who have been accepted into an Ontario family medicine residency program through the Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS).	Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) Ontario faculties of medicine	Curriculum development and delivery in online and classroom environments. Integration of patient simulations into learning model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented revised modular programming. Consolidated and refreshed family medicine content.

Supporting Pathways to Practice

Our programs perform a critical role in ensuring competent, safe and effective care for Ontarians. We provide regulators with an objective, valid assessment of their candidates' professional knowledge, skills and judgement. For internationally educated health professionals (IEHPs), our programs help illuminate pathways as they pursue licensure or bridging to other Canadian contexts.

Our Clients and Partners

We work in close association with key stakeholders, including regulators, educational institutions, government and service agencies, to facilitate entry to practice for IEHPs.

Our Candidates

Our current programs assist health professionals at various points in their pathway to practice. Many IEHPs are referred to Touchstone Institute by their provincial regulator as part of their journey toward professional licensure. Assessments ensure candidates meet Canadian standards, while education programs for international medical graduates (IMGs) help ensure a successful transition to residency training in Ontario.

Internationally educated nurses (IENs)

Clinical competency

Some IENs seeking registration in Ontario are referred to Touchstone Institute for the IEN Competency Assessment Program (IENCAP) by the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO). This standardized examination consists of two parts – a written multiple choice exam and an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE). Exam questions and scenarios are based on entry-to-practice competency domains for registered nurses derived from The Ontario Registered Nurses Entry-to-Practice Competencies document.

Communication competency

IENs who are applying for licensure in the nursing profession in Canada may be required to provide proof of English-language proficiency to their provincial nursing regulatory body. The Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN) is one of two assessments accepted by Canadian nursing regulators and the preferred choice for many IENs. An occupation-specific assessment, CELBAN evaluates proficiency in all four skill areas – speaking, listening, writing and reading – with test tasks set in the context of nursing. Touchstone Institute operates The CELBAN Centre, the national administrator for the test, and serves as Ontario's largest test site.

Here are some of the **organizations** we worked with in **2014/15:**

Regulatory Bodies

College of Dietitians of Ontario (CDO)
College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO)
College of Optometrists of Ontario (COO)
College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario (CRTO)

Educational Institutions

McMaster University
Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM)
Queen's University
University of Ottawa
University of Toronto
University of Western Ontario

Government

Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade (MCIIT)
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC)

Other Organizations

Canadian Network of Agencies for Regulation (CNAR)
Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS)
Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB)
HealthForceOntario (HFO)
Medical Council of Canada (MCC)

Canadian nurse practitioners (NPs)

NPs in Ontario are randomly selected by the CNO to take the Nurse Practitioner Practice Assessment (NPPA), which addresses the 2010 Competency Framework. This exam consists of a learning plan, an objective test, and either a chart review and interview assessment or an OSCE. The OSCE is currently in redevelopment at Touchstone Institute and will relaunch on site at our facilities in 2016.

Internationally graduated optometrists (IGOs)

Provincial regulatory colleges may refer IGOs to Touchstone Institute for the Internationally Graduated Optometrist Evaluating Examination (IGOEE). The exam tests the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of IGOs as compared to recent graduates of a Canadian optometric program and assesses their eligibility to write the national licensing exam. It consists of a written component (multiple choice exam) and a performance evaluation comprising 12 standardized patient scenarios.

International medical graduates (IMGs)

Competency assessment

The National Assessment Collaboration (NAC) Exam is a mandatory requirement for all IMGs applying for the 2016 R-1 Main Residency Match. This national OSCE assesses an IMG's readiness for entrance into a Canadian residency program. Candidates can take the NAC OSCE at one of six provincial test centres. Touchstone Institute is the only test site in Ontario and the largest site in the country.

Orientation to residency

IMGs who have been accepted into an Ontario residency program attend our pre-residency program for family medicine and other specialty residents. Courses provide curriculum, orientation, supports and services to prepare participants for a successful transition into postgraduate training in Ontario. Specialty residents attend our core program, which features topics in communication, law and ethics, privacy, confidentiality and challenging situations. Family medicine residents attend the core program and take additional family medicine courses customized to their needs, before moving on to phase two of their pre-residency program, which is conducted at the university where they have been matched through the Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS).

“[PRP] is an excellent program, and I am very glad that I was able to participate in it. The benefit to incoming IMGs is very clear, and it's very evident that all the staff involved are invested in improving healthcare in Ontario, and helping us as people.”

– *Pre-Residency Program (PRP) Participant*

Visa trainees

Visa residents and fellows are invited to attend the Canadian Medicine Primer at Touchstone Institute. This program consists of three days of customized courses followed by the core pre-residency program module and an optional two-week family medicine module. Courses are designed to provide an orientation to the Canadian health care system and prepare learners to work effectively in Ontario health care environments.



Our Frameworks for Assurance

Since 2007, we have been building infrastructure to support the design, administration and evaluation of high-stakes clinical and communication competency assessments. Our standardized processes reflect our commitment to quality assurance at every stage of our education and assessment lifecycles – from program development, administration and reporting to review, maintenance and renewal.

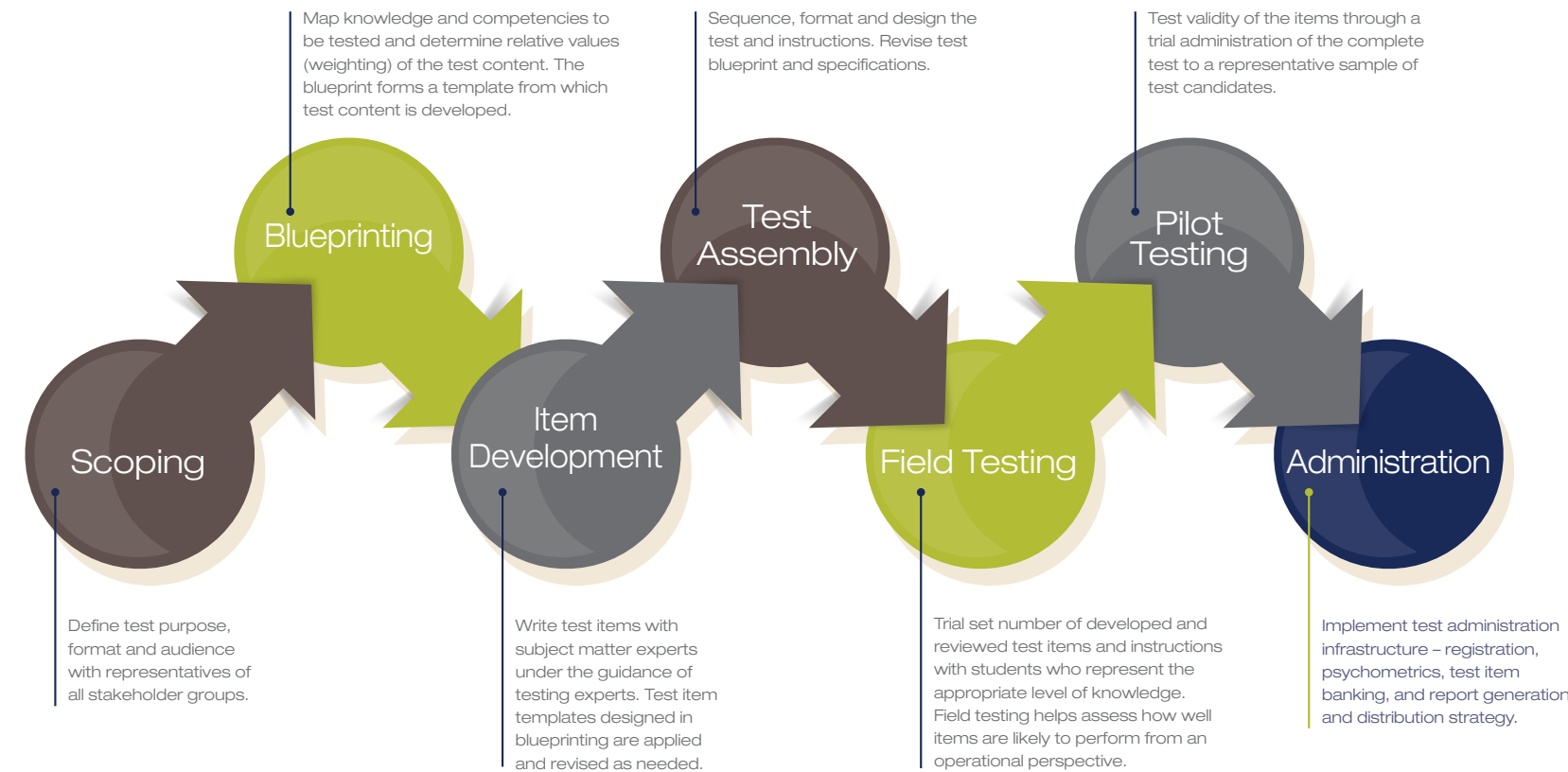
Creating a Program



Exam Development

Our assessments are designed to evaluate the knowledge, skills and professional judgement of health professionals. Exams are constructed and validated by our in-house experts, who work in collaboration with practising health professionals and experts in health care from Ontario's universities, professional colleges and regulatory bodies. We work with examiners to develop objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) stations and multiple choice questions (MCQs), then commit to ongoing development of content and test forms. All questions are banked, including a history of their use and performance.

Exam Development Process



New Exams – Project Developments

Internationally Graduated Optometrists Evaluating Exam (IGOEE)

In 2014/15, we partnered with the College of Optometrists of Ontario to begin development of the first competency assessment for internationally graduated optometrists. A field test was completed in August 2014 to ensure that all aspects of the clinical stations and written exam – content relevance, presentation, timing and level of difficulty – were logistically feasible and acceptable. Observers and examiners provided feedback to fine-tune the written exam and clinical stations.

Optometry regulators from across Canada met to discuss progress of the exam and the role it could play in other jurisdictions. Observers from jurisdictions across the country joined us for the pilot test in November and agreed that the IGOEE would be made available to candidates seeking licensure throughout English-speaking Canada.

The first administration of the IGOEE took place in June 2015.

College of Dietitians of Ontario (CDO) Knowledge and Competency Assessment Tool (KCAT)

In November 2014, we began working with the CDO to develop the KCAT for internationally educated dietitians. A scoping workshop was held in January with dietitians representing clinical, public health and institutional dietetics practice from across Canada. A blueprinting workshop, attended by 16 dietitians from several provinces, defined how the exam will be developed and created explicit instructions and guidelines on how professional competencies will be expressed within the exam to support accurate decisions on the candidates' competence.

Exam Renewal

Renewal is a key stage of exam management and essential to quality assurance. Evaluation and redevelopment of our existing assessments ensure their continued reliability and validity. Exam renewal is driven by psychometric analysis of test items and supported by a standardized review and redevelopment process that includes the active engagement of regulators and subject matter experts.



Exam Renewal – Project Developments

Internationally Educated Nurses Competency Assessment Program (IENCAP)

In 2014, we initiated a process to develop and maintain the written and clinical items for the IENCAP. Items that performed well psychometrically in previous administrations were cloned. Item bank cases were reviewed at multiple levels before each assessment to ensure that the clinical skill that was expected to be performed by the candidates could be realistically assessed and that the competencies are still part of the blueprint. From April 2014 to March 2015, we held 13 development sessions.

In 2015/16, the IENCAP redevelopment will continue with MCQ review and writing workshops to create the exam blueprint, then proceed with field testing, reporting design and ongoing maintenance and review.

Nurse Practitioner Practice Assessment (NPPA)

In late 2014, we began a collaboration with the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) to redevelop the NPPA. The process began with the identification, training and orientation of a chief examiner and subject matter experts. In early 2015, we hosted blueprinting workshops and trained item writers.

Further development of the assessment, including item writing, report design, field testing, piloting and ongoing maintenance and review continues in 2015/16.

Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN)

Renewal of the CELBAN test began in early 2015 with a review of the speaking and writing sections of the test. Consultations were conducted with practising nurses and CELBAN assessors to review test content. The test specifications were validated and updates identified. New test content will reflect the current nursing context with relevant topics, cultural references and standards of professionalism.

Exam redevelopment continues throughout 2015/16 with consultations with nursing regulators to understand and address their needs and concerns during the planning process.

Communication in Context Occupation-Specific Language Assessment

Communication plays a critical role in the delivery of professional services. Communication competency requires a strong linguistic foundation, knowledge in cross-cultural communication and a skillful approach to communicating in Canada's unique context. Occupation-specific language-proficiency tests help candidates prepare for the communication needs of their professional practice and the workforce.

Launched in 2014, our Communication Competency Program has been actively engaged in the following activities:

- Working with provincial regulators to identify their communication competency assessment needs through our project advisory committee.
- Contributing to the renewal of tools and processes of existing communication competency assessments.
- Designing and developing new assessment tools to meet identified needs.
- Offering valid, reliable occupation-specific communication competency assessment services at Touchstone Institute's central Toronto location.
- Providing oversight for the administration of assessments at other sites in Ontario.

Our approach is to leverage existing frameworks in assessment to benefit a broader range of internationally educated health professionals, ensuring that all health professions and the Ontarians they serve reap the benefits of these services.



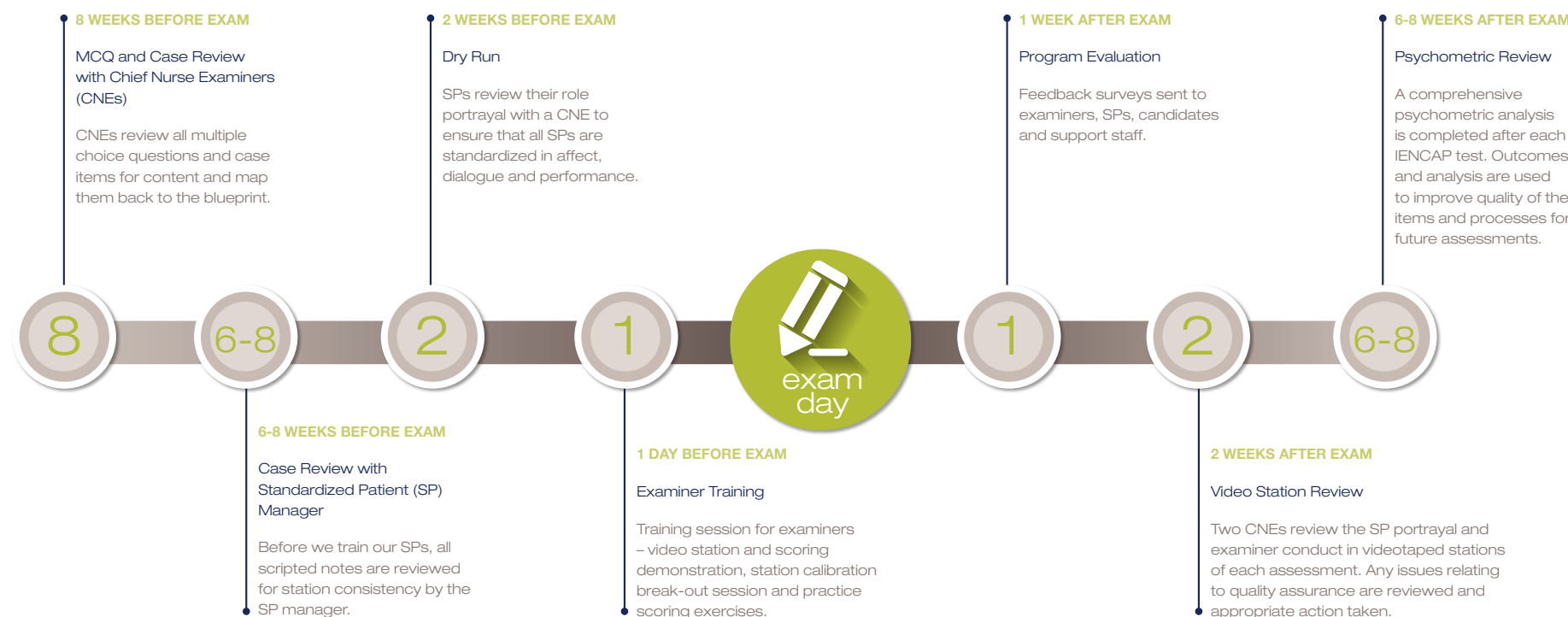
The Communication Competency Program receives financial support from the Government of Ontario

Test Administration

Test administration conditions and processes have an impact on test security and the reliability of the results. Our dedicated Exam Unit has developed standardized protocols to support the needs of candidates and ensure the reliability and validity of all assessments.

As a test site, our comprehensive facilities comprise 78 individual examination rooms, equipped with audio and visual surveillance that can be recorded and played back at a later time. On exam day, candidate performance is evaluated by profession-specific examiners, while over 80 trained, contract support staff fill various roles, such as hall monitors, invigilators, catering staff and more. Our Standardized Patient (SP) Program offers a pool of more than 1,500 trained SPs.

Case Study: IENCAP Quality Assurance



Standardized Patients (SPs)

Our in-house SP program is an essential part of all our assessment and case development studies. Before each assessment, we rigorously screen and train SPs to ensure they are suitable for the patient role they will play. Our dedicated trainers work with small groups of SPs to review scripts for the patient scenarios and perform dry-runs prior to assessment day.

Examiners and Support Staff

The role of an examiner requires a strong selection process, station-specific training and ongoing evaluation. All examiners for Touchstone Institute assessments attend a mandatory training session the evening before an assessment. Each session includes:

- An overview of the foundations of an OSCE as it relates to test scoring and competency evaluation
- Video station and scoring demonstrations
- Station calibration breakout sessions
- Practice scoring exercises

We hire and train support staff as candidate greeters, registration support, hall monitors, catering, candidate group leaders and track leaders. Those who interact with candidates attend a two-hour training session before each exam. Candidate feedback surveys consistently report positive interactions, with candidates appreciating the guidance, understanding and support they receive on exam day.

Psychometrics

We employ rigorous processes to evaluate and validate the accuracy of testing procedures and the calculation of results, which are randomly double rated. We work alongside regulators to deliver reports that meet their needs and requirements. Reports are generated through our psychometrics team, who ensures ongoing reliability and validity of all measurement tools.



Test Administration – Project Developments

IENCAP

In 2014/15, we increased both test capacity and the number of administrations of the assessment for IENs to accommodate the large numbers of referred IENs who had yet to be assessed.

National Assessment Collaboration (NAC) Exam

The Independent Review of Access to Postgraduate Programs by International Medical Graduates in Ontario (Thompson & Cohl) recommended that all IMGs be required to challenge the Medical Council of Canada's NAC Exam. Ontario medical schools enacted this recommendation and in order to qualify for 2015 residency positions, candidates were required to submit their NAC Exam scores to CaRMS by November 2014. As a result, the number of candidates more than doubled this past fall. In Ontario, 934 candidates were registered for September exam administrations and 888 candidates completed the exam.

We accommodated the increased numbers by adding two test dates, which resulted in back-to-back weekends and necessitated the use of additional space at the Toronto Michener Institute. This is the first time Touchstone Institute administered this exam off-site. The exam was also administered in March 2015 to 143 candidates at Touchstone Institute's facility.

CELBAN

In September 2014, we established The CELBAN Centre and assumed national administration of this occupation-specific language test for internationally educated nurses. The CELBAN Centre establishes and oversees test sites across Canada, manages test registration, marking and reporting and maintains productive working relationships with a range of stakeholders. In the first six months of operation, The CELBAN Centre achieved many milestones:

- Opened new sites in Winnipeg and Toronto.
- Recruited and trained 26 examiners.
- Hosted itinerant test administrations in Saskatoon and Vancouver.
- Launched online registration for candidates.
- Increased the number of test sessions overall.
- Held test administrations at Touchstone Institute, now the largest test centre in Ontario.

SPs

This year, our SPs achieved a notable milestone: their role in the IGOEE marked the first time that SPs have been used in an optometry assessment setting in Canada. To accommodate the unique needs of this assessment, we established processes and procedures to ensure patient safety and suitability, as well as assessment reliability. Patients were screened for eye disease and matched to specific cases based on their clinical findings.

Education Program Design and Delivery

Residency is the transition period between medical school and independent practice. Our education programs aim to identify and fill any gaps that may exist between university programs provided to Canadian medical graduates and training that IMGs have received in preparation for residency. Touchstone Institute currently offers three types of education programs:

- **Pre-Residency Program (PRP)** – mandatory for IMGs who have been accepted into an Ontario specialty residency program; formerly known as Orientation to Training and Practice (OTPC)
- **Pre-Residency Program – Family Medicine (PRPFM)** – mandatory for IMGs who have been accepted into an Ontario family medicine residency program; formerly known as Pre-Residency Program (PRP)
- **Canadian Medicine Primer (CMP)** – offered to visiting fellows and to residents studying in Canada under visa arrangements

Curricula for all programs are developed and delivered by consulting physicians and medical educators from across Ontario.

Education programs are supported by our SPs, who participate in daily encounters and simulations with learners. They are trained on specific feedback techniques to coincide with the feedback that residents receive from the program's physician facilitators.



Education – Project Developments

In 2014, we began restructuring our education programs, organizing courses into three distinct modules:

- Core programming – relevant to all learners
- Family medicine programming – topics specific to family medicine residents; visa trainees may also find these courses useful and are invited to attend
- Primer programming – customized content for visa residents and fellows

Learner	Education Modules			Program Name
	Primer	Core	Family Medicine	
Specialty Medicine Resident		●		Pre-Residency Program (PRP)
Family Medicine Resident		●	●	Pre-Residency Program Family Medicine (PRPFM)
Visa Resident or Fellow	●	●	(●)	Canadian Medicine Primer (CMP)

The family medicine module is optional for visa trainees and clinical fellows.

Other program initiatives include:

- Physician-facilitated simulated patient encounters
- Academic advising to provide individualized confidential support to learners
- Skills checks to determine a skills benchmark against a Canadian medical graduate
- Physician-facilitated online learning modules
- Debrief sessions to discuss learners' experiences, concerns and tips for success
- Optional informational sessions with regulatory bodies, agencies, associations and financial institutions

Measuring Performance

To evaluate our performance, we look to the success of our programs. Guided by the road map of our 2012 strategic plan, we achieved new milestones in every area. This year, we assessed more candidates than ever before, formed new relationships with regulators, contributed our expertise in assessment and simulation to partner organizations and reinvested in our existing programs to ensure their continued value.

Increasing Capacity for Assessment

The number of candidates assessed at Touchstone Institute continued to grow this year. We were able to increase not only the number of administrations for our exams but also the capacity levels for each assessment.

Establishing New Relationships

Assessing competencies for international and Canadian professionals is an emerging challenge for many regulators. This year, we formed new partnerships with regulating bodies from across the health care spectrum and reaffirmed existing relationships to develop or administer new assessments using our valid, reliable frameworks.

Expanding Simulation Services

Organizations recognize the value of professional simulation services for assessment, training and quality assurance. Our standardized patient (SP) unit was originally created to support our assessments and later expanded to provide simulated patient scenarios in our education programs. Since then, it has grown to accommodate the needs of outside organizations. Our SPs, trainers and consultants offer simulation for large or small groups, as well as expert advice on and assistance with developing clinical and non-clinical scenarios. Our clients value the number and range of SPs our program provides, our experienced trainers and the expertise we can offer from our experience as regular administrators of high-stakes, large-scale exams. This year, our SPs participated in projects such as:

- Videotaped simulations
- Simulations for research projects
- Simulation in undergraduate nursing programs



Test Administrations

Number of candidates assessed

	NAC	IENCAP	CELBAN*
2014/15	888	1,002	732
2013/14	678	960	N/A
2012/13	492	83	N/A

*CELBAN is administered at test sites across Canada.



New Projects

Partner	Milestones
College of Optometrists of Ontario	Piloted IGOEE
College of Nurses of Ontario	Initiated renewal of NPPA and IENCAP
College of Dietitians of Ontario	Began development of CDO KCAT
Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks	Administered CELBAN, launched exam renewal process

Listening to Program Participants

We rely on evaluative feedback from our learners, examiners and educators to refine and improve our education programs for IMGs. Participants complete surveys on the overall program elements and on individual education sessions. We also hold debriefing sessions with learners and physician faculty and facilitate discussions with our physician consultants to gather feedback, evaluate program impact and plan program renewal for future sessions.

“Although originally from Toronto, I feel the PRP system was still a great introduction to all the resources available to us as residents and how we can help our patients. The experience with the simulated patients was amazing and the whole process was a tremendous help in preparing us for residency and what to expect as working physicians. This program should be offered to all Canadian medical graduates as well to help them transition”

“I found the standardized clinical encounters to be extremely useful. The SPs were superb, and I found the marking to be fair and detailed.”

“It was a very pleasant experience for me. It felt like a safe learning environment. We were encouraged to ask questions and received very good tips and feedback.”

Feedback from our 2014 Program Attendees

“Best part of the course was the ability to network with doctors who are incredibly successful in family med and who love what they do. After the challenges of getting into the system they made me believe that I could have a great and fulfilling career. All the doctors were VERY helpful and available to answer questions and address concerns :). Grateful for the opportunity to meet such professional and caring people.”

“I feel very lucky to have been able to participate in the program! I think it has given me a lot more confidence as residency approaches. I felt very welcomed.”

Our Strategic Plan

In 2012, we developed a strategic plan to define our priorities and guide our activities as we develop and grow as an organization. In 2014/15, we made great strides in all areas of our plan.

2012 Five-Year Plan	2014/15 Milestones
Assessment Expand our current assessment offerings to maximize use of our expertise and facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Became national administrator for CELBAN. • Began development of KCAT. • Initiated renewal processes for IENCAP, NPPA and CELBAN. • Developed, piloted and launched IGOEE.
Transition Programs Optimize current transition programs to respond to emerging opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched and expanded CMP for visa residents and fellows. • Restructured existing pre-residency programs. • Integrated in-house SP program into learning model with physician facilitation. • Participated in research with universities to demonstrate effectiveness of transition programs.
Human Resources Invest in our staff and board members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalized corporate communications activities. • Recruited psychometrics team. • Created staff development plan. • Provided board members with orientation package. • Addressed succession planning.
Continuous Quality Improvement Build our infrastructure and capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established financial process and controls. • Presented at national and international conferences. • Participated in policy forum. • Hosted first annual symposium in competency assessment.
Revenue Generation Develop alternative revenue streams to expand our services, reach and impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased volume in paid assessment programs. • Generated educational revenue potential. • Rented facility space. • Provided consulting services.

Learning and Sharing

We strive to learn and develop as an organization by participating in workshops and conferences, forming strong partnerships and networks, and engaging in new learning experiences. With the launch of our annual symposium, we aim to foster a community of competency assessment, provide a forum for knowledge sharing and discussion, and create learning opportunities for others.

Perspectives in Competency Assessment Symposium

On Thursday, February 5, 2015, we hosted a day-long symposium in competency assessment, connecting professionals in assessment, health care, education and regulation at the MaRS Collaboration Centre.



1. Best Practices

After an introductory plenary by Deputy Minister Bob Bell, attendees enjoyed standout presentations by Cees Van der Vleuten and Geoff Norman.

2. Decision-Making and Design

During an engaging interactive session, Debra Sibbald – Executive Director of Assessment Programs at Touchstone Institute – asked us to reflect on the presentations and our reactions, and observe how they align with and impact our beliefs, practices and goals.

3. Sharing Perspectives

A panel discussion, featuring diverse perspectives and experiences in competency assessment, provided insight into issues of fairness and registration practices across different professions.

4. Research and Learning

Ivy Lynn Bourgeault and Andrea Baumann broadened our views of competency assessment by discussing topics in global migration and workforce integration.

5. Interprofessional Education

Ivy Oandasan introduced us to the concept of heutagogy and made the case for assessment as a curriculum tool.

6. Engagement

Zubin Austin treated the audience to an engaging presentation on the topic of disengagement and the need for us to be firing on all pistons.

“Hearing a variety of perspectives and being challenged to think differently about competency assessment.”

“The incredible line up of keynote speakers who built their presentations off of one another so nicely. I liked how the concepts were meant to be provocative and spark discussion.”

“Learning about trends in competency assessment, finding points where my work intersects with the work of others, and rethinking what professional competency means.”

We asked our guests to share their feedback on the symposium. Here’s what they liked about the day.

“Seasoned speakers who were willing to share their wisdom (instead of just knowledge).”

“The panel discussion with insights in fairness in registration practices, and finding out what others have done to address some of the barriers IEPs face.”



Looking Ahead Join us on February 23, 2016, for our second annual symposium.

Perspectives 2016 will explore key issues in communication competency.

UCAN Membership

Touchstone Institute is now a member of the Umbrella Consortium for Assessment Networks (UCAN), a non-profit umbrella organization for various assessment networks in the field of educational examinations. UCAN provides all-in-one solutions for educational exams. As a member organization, we are now connected to more than 50 partners from seven countries and gain access to their best-in-field resources and tools, including tOSCE, which we began to integrate into select assessments in 2014/15. This tablet-based app replaces paper scoring sheets and is a valid, reliable way for assessors to evaluate candidates during an examination.

TOUCHSTONE
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COMPETENCY EVALUATION EXPERTS

Communication

In January 2015, we officially transitioned to our new name and identity as Touchstone Institute. Since the change, we have been connecting with stakeholders, engaging partners and communicating with candidates to increase clarity and awareness of our programs and services. Our website serves as a central hub of information, supported by the following channels:

- A bi-monthly newsletter to over 600 subscribers updates our stakeholders on program developments and key events.
- Our Facebook and Twitter accounts allow us to connect with others in the fields of education, assessment and communication to share the latest research and news.
- An online marketing form allows our partners to share their news to extend its reach.

Events

Conferences provide an opportunity for us to connect with others in the field of competency assessment and medical education to share our research, experience and learning. In 2014/15, we participated in events in Canada and internationally. Authorship includes Andrea Strachan, Dr. Debra Sibbald, Fergus O'Connor, Dr. Eric Wong, Dr. Sandra Monteiro, Dr. Shobhan Vachrajani and Sten Ardal, except where otherwise indicated.



Competence Assessments of Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) Successfully Evaluate Eligibility for Canadian Licensure Examination. Ottawa Conference, Ottawa, April 2014

The Impact of a Transition Program for International Medical Graduates on Communication and Clinical Skills. Ottawa Conference, Ottawa, April 2014

Disrupting Diagnostic Reasoning: The Effect of Interruptions on Diagnostic Accuracy of Residents and Emergency Physicians. Monteiro, S., Sherbino, J., Ilgen, J., Dore, K., Wood, T., Young, M., Bandiera, G., Blouin, D. and Norman, G. Ottawa Conference, Ottawa, April 2014

Validity Evidence for a Key Features Examination to Assess Clinical Decision Making in Internal Medicine Clerkship. Lang, V.J., Bronander, K., Harrell, H., Kovach, R., Monteiro, S., and Bordage, G. Ottawa Conference, Ottawa, April 2014

The Impact of Positive and Negative Moods on Knowledge Acquisition and Transfer. McConnell, M., Monteiro, S., Pottruff, M., Norman, G., Kulasegaram, K. and Eva, K. Ottawa Conference, Ottawa, April 2014

Effectiveness of an Individualized Academic Advising Program for International Medical Graduates. Canadian Conference on Medical Education, Ottawa, April 2014

Reflecting on Diagnostic Errors: Does It Help to Take a Second Look? Monteiro, S., Norman, G., Patel, A., and Sherbino, J. McMaster Symposium on Education & Cognition Poster Presentation, Hamilton, April 2014

IEN Competency Assessment Program. 8th Annual Partners in Education and Integration of IENs Conference, Toronto, May 2014

Canadian Neurological Sciences Federation Annual Congress. Banff, June 2014

Competence Assessments Successfully Evaluate Eligibility of Diverse Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) for Canadian Licensure Examination. Association for Medical Education in Europe, Milan, September 2014

The Impact of Mood Induction of Learners' Application of Basic Science Implications to Novel Problems. McConnell, M., Monteiro, S., Pottruff, M., Norman, G., Kulasegaram, K. and Eva, K. Association for Medical Education in Europe, Milan, September 2014

Strengths and Challenges of OSCEs (Workshop). Canadian Network of National Associations of Regulators Conference, Montreal, October 2014

Do Physicians Address Cost When Discussing Care Plans with Patients? Brandt-Vegas, D., Levinson, W., Norman, G., Monteiro, S.D. and You, J. Wilson Centre Research Day, Toronto, October 2014

Communication Competency Assessment Roundtable. Canadian Network of National Associations of Regulators, Montreal, October 2014

Competency Assessment Forum. Office of the Fairness Commissioner Symposium, Toronto, November 2014

Test Washback. CARE 4 Nurses Conference, Toronto, November 2014

Key Decision-Making in Assessment Design: Expert Lenses. Perspectives in Competency Assessment, Toronto, February 2015

Our People



Board of Directors

Left to Right: • **Sten Ardal**, CEO, Touchstone Institute • **Dr. Kenneth Harris**, board chair, Touchstone Institute, deputy CEO and executive director, Office of Specialty Education, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada • **Trudy Reid**, retired hospital executive • **Anne Coghlan**, executive director and CEO, College of Nurses of Ontario • **John McKinley**, principal, JMcKinley Consulting and CloudPHI



• **Steven Watts**, partner, KPMG LLP, and chair, Touchstone Institute finance committee • **Rocco Gerace**, registrar, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario • **George M. Thomson**, senior director, International Programs at the National Judicial Institute • **Mark Walton**, assistant dean, Post-Graduate Medical Education, McMaster University

Touchstone Institute Staff



Above: Sara Cecchetto, Will Truong, Yzelle Duran, Arin De Fazio, Darko Giacomini, Stephanie Hooker, Karen Huszar, Daniel Grossutti, Lysa Le, Venkata Marella, Cameo Allan, Sten Ardal, Laura Jamieson, Sarah Kaff, Suzanne Bambrick, Alex Van Tran, Afsheen Hasan.

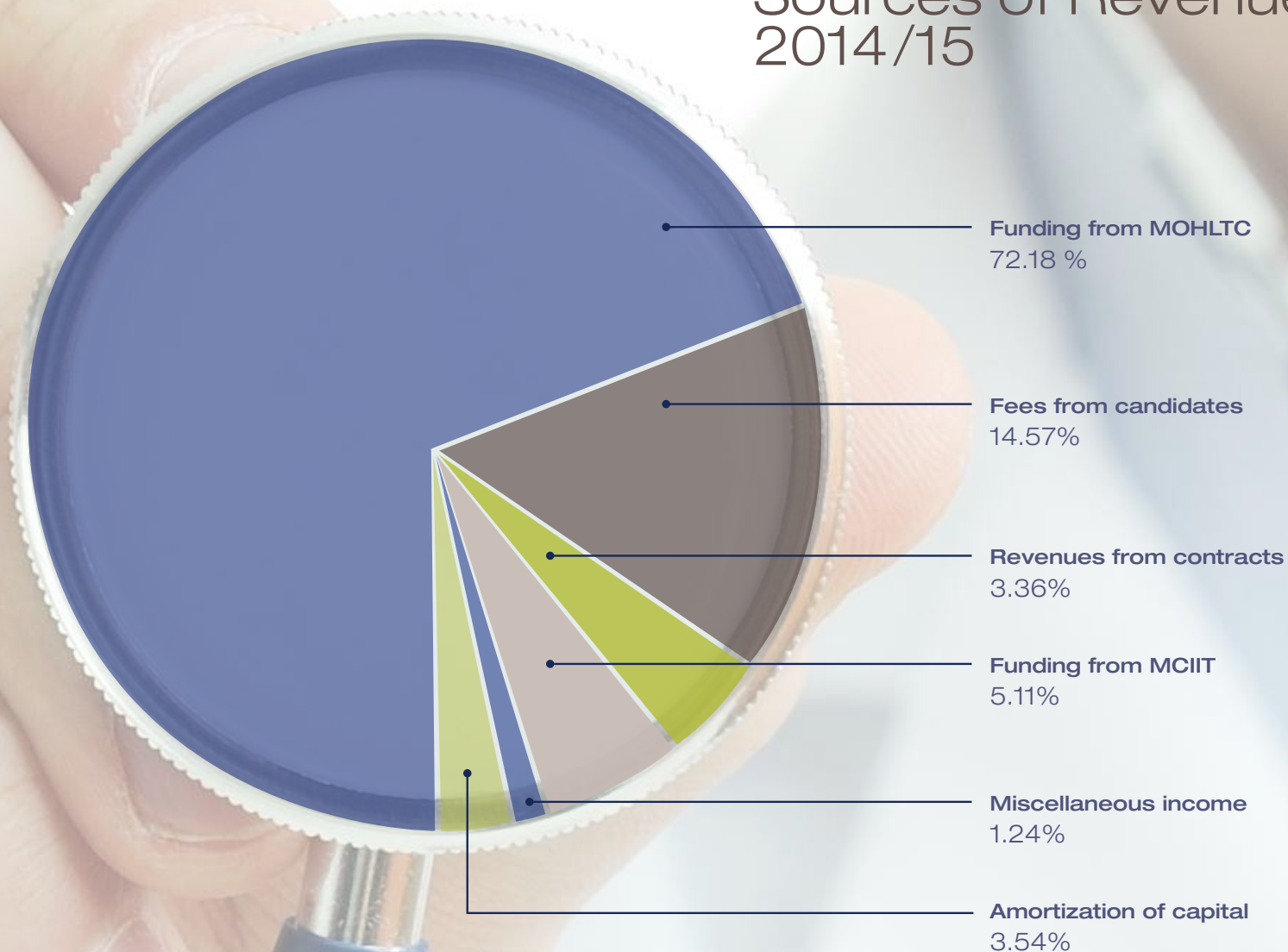


Above: Bill Quinn, Jocelyn Dilworth, Umayangga Yogalingam, Raffaella De Fazio, Shawn Chisholm, Sandra Braun, Marion Roy, Adrian Frisina, Amy Myers, Andrea Strachan, Rae-Ann Iacucci, Laura Segal, Fergus O'Connor, Julie Gallo, Hannah McLean, Debra Sibbald, Simon Nguyen. Missing: Sandra Monteiro.

The Financials



TOUCHSTONE INSTITUTE Sources of Revenue 2014/15



Additional financial statements are available on request.

Expenses 2014/15



Condensed Statement of Operations

Year Ended March 31	2015	2014
Revenues		
Funding from Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	7,997,881	8,110,949
Exam fees, development and application fees	2,552,930	1,284,928
Other revenues	137,108	153,590
Amortization of deferred capital funding	391,985	434,417
	11,079,904	9,983,884
Expenses		
Examiners and support staff	2,560,506	2,242,514
Employees salaries and benefits	2,656,287	1,871,683
Facility rental and occupancy	1,236,797	1,220,680
Bursaries paid out	288,750	336,148
Clinical funding to medical schools	494,484	544,488
Professional fees	637,570	519,162
Other operating expenditures	1,902,789	1,762,830
	9,777,183	8,497,505
Excess of revenues over expenses	1,302,721	1,486,379
Repayable to Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	(1,176,736)	(1,486,379)
Net assets	125,985	-



Annual Report 2014/15

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