

MEDIA RELEASE

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SAICA congratulates successful January ITC candidates Institute encourages perseverance for unsuccessful candidates and reminds of second opportunity

Johannesburg, Friday, 27 March 2020: The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) would like to congratulate the 2 149 (of the 3 657) aspirant chartered accountants (CAs(SA)) who passed the Initial Test of Competence (ITC) in January 2020. Those candidates who were unsuccessful will have another opportunity later in the year to test the application of their technical competence. The ITC, which serves as the first of two SAICA qualifying examinations, is a standard setting examination. It assesses how well a candidate is able to apply the technical theoretical competence they have acquired at university by analysing and evaluating specific scenarios presented in the exam.

Commenting on the results, Freeman Nomvalo, SAICA CEO says: *“SAICA would like to acknowledge all those candidates who wrote the ITC and extend a special note of congratulations to those who passed. We trust that those candidates will hold themselves to the same high standards of excellence as they progress towards their final qualifying exam, the Assessment of Professional Competence.”*

The decline in the overall number of candidates to 59% who passed the January 2020 exam, compared to 71% in 2019, can be attributed to the large increase in the number of repeat candidates and the performance of candidates from Historically Disadvantaged Institutions and Distance Learning Institutions. Repeat candidates comprised 26% of the total population in January 2020 compared to 12% in January 2019. The overall pass rate for first time candidates was 68% (2019: 76%). Broken down further, 55% of African first time candidates were successful versus 84% of white candidates. A detailed breakdown of the ITC statistics can be found on the SAICA website (www.saica.co.za/examinations).

“A primary objective of SAICA is to grow the pipeline of relevant and representative talent for the profession. It is therefore encouraging to see the overall number of candidates steadily growing. However, we note that despite significant efforts to address transformation in the profession, through a variety of initiatives, pass rates by race group remain largely differentiated. This is extremely disappointing given the resources and efforts put into making a difference. Nonetheless, we remain resolute in developing a professional and appropriate profession,” added Nomvalo.

January 2020's ITC Top 10

To pass the ITC, candidates must obtain an overall pass mark of 50%. However, at each sitting of the ITC, the exam's top 10 candidates are recognised for their excellent performance. To be listed among the top performers, candidates must obtain a pass mark of 70% or more. In this sitting of the ITC, all 10 candidates achieved a pass with Honours –meaning they passed with a result of 75% or higher.

Place	Name	Surname	Training Office	University
1	Hayley	Ward	PwC	Nelson Mandela University
2	Andre	Van Staden	EY	University of Pretoria
3	Adrian	Rathbone	EY	University of Pretoria
4	Charis	Du Plessis	PwC	Nelson Mandela University
5	Daniela	Cronje	PwC	North-West University
6	Andre	Meyer	PwC	University of Pretoria
7	Christine	Butters	PwC	University of Pretoria
8	Janalee	Moyle	Deloitte LLP	University of Pretoria
9 (Tied)	Elizabeth	Bell	Deloitte	University of Pretoria
9 (Tied)	Sumaiya	Jeewa	Deloitte	University of Pretoria

“The role that universities play in the development of CAs(SA) cannot be under-estimated. SAICA would therefore like to extend its congratulations to the University of Nelson Mandela, the University of Pretoria and North-West University for the role they have played in supporting these top 10 candidates. The University of Pretoria, in particular, has done an outstanding job in registering 7 of the top 10 candidates,” said Nomvalo.

Expectations of the overall cohort, and support programmes’ role in transformation

When analysing the results of this year’s cohorts, SAICA would also like to reiterate the importance of the second sitting of the ITC exam, which was offered for the first time in 2013. This second sitting generally consists of a candidate population that comprises only repeat candidates, those who either elect not to write in January or whose supplementary results have not yet been released before the ITC exam registration date closes.

As the ITC is a standard setting examination, SAICA sets expectations (through its monitoring and accreditation criteria) that 80% of universities’ postgraduate cohort should pass the ITC over their first two exam sittings (January and June in the year following the completion of

their postgraduate programme). Prior years have shown that this yields very positive outcomes. For instance, the cohort for the 2018 postgraduate students who wrote in January and June 2019 was 75,4%, with only four universities not achieving the 80% expectation in 2019. Most universities cohort pass rates ranged between 89% and 97%.

Calling on repeat candidates not to be disillusioned and to persevere with re-writing the ITC, Nomvalo added: *“SAICA encourages candidates who are required to repeat the examination later this year to continue to work hard and not to give up. As prospective CAs(SA) you have several opportunities to pass the exam and there are support programmes available to assist you.”*

There are a variety of additional measures repeat candidates can take to improve their chances of passing the ITC on their second attempt. SAICA, for example, runs a Thuthuka ITC Repeat Programme to help assist candidates who failed the January sitting better prepare for the June sitting. This programme – one of many programmes to facilitate transformation within the profession – is one SAICA is particularly proud of as the results obtained by these candidates tend to dramatically outperform candidates who do not seek additional support when preparing to tackle the ITC for a second time as is evident by last year’s Thuthuka Repeat Programme candidates who scored an overall pass of 66% against the average of 38% in the 2019 June ITC sitting.

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Note to the Editor

About SAICA

SAICA, South Africa’s pre-eminent accountancy body, is widely recognised as one of the world’s leading accounting institutes. The Institute provides a wide range of support services to more than 50 000 members and associates who are chartered accountants (CAs(SA)), as well as associate general accountants [AGAs(SA)] and accounting technicians (ATs(SA)), who hold positions as CEOs, MDs, board directors, business owners, chief financial officers, auditors and leaders in every sphere of commerce and industry, and who play a significant role in the nation’s highly dynamic business sector and economic development.

About the Thuthuka Bursary Fund and Education Upliftment Project

One of SAICA’s prime goals is to contribute towards strengthening the country’s economy by playing a significant and leading role in transformation and skills development. The Thuthuka Education Upliftment Project, a pioneering initiative to promote transformation in the profession, was launched in the Eastern Cape in 2002 and is, today, a well-established successful national transformation initiative.

Thuthuka’s objective is to transform the demographics of the profession to reflect those of the country in terms of race and gender, and provide educational support to African learners and students for the benefit of the profession, while simultaneously helping to uplift communities. Therefore, SAICA prides itself in leading the chartered accountancy profession as a socially responsible driver of business and skills development by also further supporting and encouraging enterprise development initiatives.

What is the ITC and what does it measure?

The ITC examination is the first of two SAICA professional Qualifying Examinations that university graduates must pass to become a CA(SA). Written in either January or June each year, the ITC tests the integrated application of technical competence that candidates develop during the academic programme (which consists of a three-year undergraduate programme and a one-year postgraduate programme). The ITC assesses how well a candidate evaluates the underlying problems in each scenario and, through logical thinking, applies the theoretical knowledge they have gained at university.

To pass, candidates must obtain an overall pass mark of 50% (and must get a sub-minimum of at least 40% in three of the four professional papers).

About the Thuthuka ITC Repeat Programme

The Thuthuka ITC Repeat Programme is a six-week programme offered through The University of Cape Town and the University of Johannesburg. Up to 280 eligible African and Coloured candidates can be accommodated on the fully-funded programme where they participate in lectures, write weekly tests, and practice assessments. The programme also includes a mentoring and coaching element.

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