

**Media release
For immediate release**

Johannesburg, Friday 30 August 2024 – The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) congratulates the 189 candidates who passed the second sitting of Initial Test of Competence (ITC). These candidates join the 1 726 who passed the January 2024 sitting, bringing the total number of successful candidates for the 2024 ITC to 1 915. The second sitting mainly comprises candidates who were unsuccessful in the January sitting and some first-time candidates from academic providers with mid-year intakes.

The ITC is the first of two SAICA qualifying examinations for the CA(SA) designation. It assesses how well a candidate can apply the technical competence that they acquired through the academic programme by requiring the candidate to analyse and evaluate specific scenarios.

The journey towards obtaining the chartered accountant designation is often demanding and multifaceted, requiring dedication, practise and resilience. The challenging landscape of accounting, shaped by evolving regulations, complex financial principles and technological advancements, demands a robust curriculum that aligns with industry expectations. We understand that the path to achieving these qualifications can be filled with obstacles and we are committed to enhancing our support to academic providers through our quality assurance processes and our candidates in navigating this journey.

The table below presents the candidate population for the June 2024 ITC categorised by academic provider type:

SAICA accredited provider type	Number of academic providers	Total number of candidates	As a % of total population
Residential	15	351	26%
Distance	3	982	74%
Total	18	1333	100%

SAICA acknowledges an increase in first-time candidates from distance learning education providers as part of their qualification journey, comprising 234 candidates in June 2024 ITC, compared to 105 in June 2023 ITC. This trend allows many working candidates to pursue their accounting qualifications while continuing their careers. However, balancing the demands of studying with full-time work can be challenging and may impact candidates’ ability to prepare adequately for examinations.

The following table presents the racial demographics of the June 2024 ITC:

Demographics	Total	Fail	Pass	Pass Rate	First Time Candidates Pass Rate	Repeat Candidates Pass Rate
African	793	698	95	12%	26%	9%

Coloured	79	62	17	22%	33%	19%
Indian	188	170	18	10%	6%	10%
White	238	185	53	22%	38%	17%
Demographic not	35	29	6	17%	0%	24%
Total	1333	1144	189	14%	27%	11%

* Detailed statistics can be found on the [SAICA website](#)

To pass the ITC, candidates must achieve an overall pass mark of 50% and secure a minimum of 40% in at least three of the four professional papers.

SAICA continues to be concerned with the performance of the June ITC candidates and believes that more needs to be done to support candidates, especially those repeating the ITC. Therefore, SAICA and its partners need to focus more on the support that can be provided to repeat candidates. Partners in this regard would include FASSET who have been key in initiatives to support candidates in the past.

SAICA encourages candidates who have an opportunity to repeat the examination in 2025 to learn from the experience and continue to work hard to better their chances of passing the examination. There are a variety of additional measures repeat candidates can take to improve their chances of passing the ITC, which will be renamed the Initial Assessment of Competence (IAC) in January 2025. SAICA, in collaboration with FASSET, runs a Thuthuka ITC Repeat Programme to assist repeat candidates in better preparing for the next sitting. SAICA is engaging with several service providers to implement a support programme to assist all repeat candidates before their attempt again in January 2025.

Patricia Stock, SAICA CEO, stated, "While this pass rate is much lower than in previous years, SAICA remains steadfast in its commitment to creating a robust pipeline of students and newly qualified CAs(SA). To achieve this, SAICA will adopt a strategic approach in collaboration with relevant stakeholders for the benefit of both students and the profession:

1. Distance education providers must remain a focal point.

"As the SAICA ITC is offered twice a year, a significant portion of candidates who write in June are repeat candidates. Moreover, SAICA's analysis of the examination population reveals that a substantial number of African candidates complete their studies through accredited distance academic providers. These providers play a crucial role in the profession's transformation objectives. Consequently, it is imperative for these institutions to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of their programmes and make necessary adjustments to support their students to prepare adequately for the SAICA examinations.

"It is evident that further efforts are required to support students studying at distance institutions and to provide additional assistance to candidates from these institutions who are repeating the ITC. SAICA continues to engage with the affected academic providers to aid them in improving their success rates," added Stock. It is also important for all training offices and employers to collaborate with SAICA in these programmes to support the candidates. Support from the training offices and employers may include a review of the time candidates are allowed to focus on their preparation for the January 2025 IAC.

2. Addressing pipeline challenges in the education system.

"It is well-documented that there are challenges within the basic education system, particularly the low number of learners who pursue mathematics at school and subsequently those who pass

mathematics with the required minimum of 60% for entry into a CA-stream Bachelor of Commerce degree.

“As a scarce-skills profession, SAICA is competing for our share of a diminishing pool of talent,” explained Stock. “While the percentage intake of aspiring CAs(SA) at a university level has remained relatively stable over the past few years, the fact remains that fewer learners are entering the system due to issues within the education system, including the mathematics crisis.”

A recent study examining the performance of Black students studying accounting has found that their experiences in accounting programmes and, consequently, their performance may be significantly influenced by factors such as language, social, family, and cultural backgrounds. Educators need to modify their teaching strategies to improve student success to meet these challenges.

SAICA urges stakeholders to reflect on their roles within the profession.

“All stakeholders with a vested interest in the outcomes of the CA(SA) qualification process must collaborate in closing the gap in the pass rates of different demographic groups. This collective effort is essential to ensure that the challenges highlighted above do not hinder the progress the profession has made in its ambitious transformation endeavours,” stated Stock.

Congratulations to the June 2024 candidates

“I’d like to commend all the candidates who challenged themselves with the ITC exams,” said Stock. “My particular congratulations go to those who passed this time around – especially considering the obstacles many of you may have had to conquer. As you progress towards the Assessment of Professional Competence, the final qualifying exam, I have full faith that you will be successful. To those who were not successful in this sitting, I urge you to reflect on this opportunity and the changes or improvements you may need to ensure that you are successful in your next opportunity,” concluded Stock.

Transition from ITC to IAC

The June 2024 sitting of the ITC marks the final examination in its current format. Moving forward, it will be known as the Initial Assessment of Competence (IAC). Stakeholders have been informed that the quality and standard of the exam have not changed, but rather that it has evolved to reflect the ever-changing environment in which CAs(SA) operate. Further details on the IAC can be found on the [SAICA website](#).

ENDS

About SAICA

[The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants](#) (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.

Chartered Accountants are highly valued for their versatile skill set and creative lateral thinking, that is why all of the top 100 Global Brands employ Chartered Accountants.

SAICA is a member of [Chartered Accountants Worldwide](#) (CAW), a global family that connects over 1,8 million fellow Chartered Accountants and students in more than 190 countries. Together, we support, develop, and promote the role of Chartered Accountants as trusted business leaders, difference-makers, and advisers.

SAICA Media Contacts

Kgauhelo Dioka, kgauhelod@saica.co.za

Project Manager: Communications

SAICA Brand Division

Renette Human, renetteh@saica.co.za

Project Director: Communications

SAICA Brand Division