

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued by:



ITC candidates prove their mettle in the face of COVID-19's challenges on education

Johannesburg, Friday 2 July 2021 – Today, the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) announced that 2 507 (2020: 2 149) candidates who wrote the first 2021 sitting of the Initial Test of Competence (ITC) in April passed.

When it comes to education and training during the COVID-19 pandemic, the global consensus is that students are negatively affected by the challenges of studying remotely. Over and above the mental strain of the pandemic, students faced many challenges including the stop-start nature of the academic year, as well as adapting to online learning and teaching. Educationalists are predicting that some knock-on effects of the pandemic may result in the delayed progression and graduation of students. Yet many students have turned these challenges into opportunities. This is certainly the case for the prospective chartered accountants [CAs(SA)] who wrote and passed the April ITC.

'With 64.5% of candidates passing the first sitting of the ITC for the year, SAICA would like to congratulate each of them for their dedication and sheer determination in rising to the challenge at hand. These candidates had to overcome immeasurable odds to pass; and they lived up to the task,' says Freeman Nomvalo, CEO of SAICA.

A breakdown of the results reveals that the candidates who made up this 64.5% pass rate completed their studies at the following types of institutions:

	Number of Institutions	Pass Rate
Overall Results	19	64.5%
SAICA Accredited Academic Providers - Residential	16	83.5%
SAICA Accredited Academic Providers - Distance	3	40.8%

Detailed statistics can be found on the SAICA website: www.saica.org.za

Thuthuka students shine

SAICA is particularly pleased with the overall results of its Thuthuka students, and what these results reveal about the profession's ongoing transformation achievements. Having put considerable "skin in the game" to ensure the success of its Thuthuka beneficiaries, SAICA is delighted to announce that Thuthuka students achieved an 86.8% pass rate for this exam.

It is well publicised that the chartered accountancy profession aims to "create a constant flow of suitably qualified accounting professionals who represent the racial and gender composition of the country". Much of this work is done through the SAICA's Thuthuka programme, which supports the studies of over 1 000 African and Coloured students every year.

Having surpassed the racial pass rate of all candidates this, says Nomvalo, is “testament to the great lengths Thuthuka and its university programme managers took to ensure that funded students had access to additional support resources to enable an optimum study environment, despite the challenges presented by the pandemic during 2020.”

In addition, SAICA is also encouraged by the fact that 60% of total passes for the April 2021 sitting of the ITC were made up of African (39%), Coloured (7%) and Indian (14%) students. While we celebrate these results, we remain concerned about the significant gap between the pass rate of African and White candidates.

What is the ITC and what does it measure?

The ITC is the first of two professional Qualifying Examinations university graduates must pass to become CAs(SA). Annually, there are two sittings of the ITC. It tests the integrated application of technical competence that candidates develop during the academic programme (this consists of a three-year undergraduate programme and a one year postgraduate programme). The ITC assesses a candidate’s ability to evaluate the underlying problems in each scenario and, through critical thinking, applies the theoretical knowledge they have gained through the academic programme.

To pass the ITC, 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). Below is the racial demographic table of the April 2021 results.

By Race	Total	Failed	Passed	% Pass
African	1 899	916	983	51.8%
Coloured	254	79	175	68.9%
Indian	558	204	354	63.4%
White	1 165	176	989	84.9%
Race not disclosed	11	5	6	54.5%
Grand Total	3 887	1 380	2507	64.5%

Detailed statistics can be found on the SAICA website: www.saica.org.za.

It is also worth noting that, of the 983 African candidates who passed, almost one third (315) are distance learning candidates emanating from UNISA. This is a significant contribution to the professions’ transformation objectives. SAICA, through its transformation and growth department, are working closely with UNISA to develop programmes to further assist their students in improving their success.

A special note of congratulation to the April 2021 ITC Top 10

As outlined above, candidates must obtain an overall mark of 50% to pass. Yet some excel and go on to earn a spot in SAICA’s prestigious top candidate list. This is an impressive achievement limited to the ten top candidates who, to qualify, must obtain a pass mark of 70% or more for the examination. All the top ten candidates achieved this with honours (more than 75%).

These candidates are:

Position	Name
1	Hanne Mertens
2	Christi-Ann Du Toit
3	Meera Ranchod
4	Naushaad Maharaj
5	Natasha De Wet
6	Sadiyah Wahab
7	Alexa Sikiotis
8	Cameron Rencken
9	Cayley Tarr
10	Stefano Filippi

Nomvalo extended SAICA's congratulations to all the successful candidates: 'Well done to the successful ITC candidates. The destiny of hard work is success. You have worked hard and the amount of time and effort you have invested shows. We know that you will hold yourself to the same standards of excellence as you progress in completing your training contract and work towards passing your final professional exam, the APC. We look forward to celebrating with you when you have completed your remaining requirements to register as a CA(SA).'

Calling on repeat candidates to persevere when re-writing the ITC later this year, Nomvalo stated: 'I encourage candidates who are required to repeat the examination to continue working hard and not to give up. As prospective CAs(SA), you have several opportunities to pass the exam and there are many support programmes available to assist you. Many of the CAs(SA) you meet in the workplace did not pass their qualifying exams on their first attempt but, like them, you could be successful on your next attempt.'

[Ends]

Word count: 1014

SAICA Media Contact

Ms Karin Jacobsen

Project Manager: Marketing and Communications

SAICA Nation Building Division

Tel: 011 621 6913

Email: karinj@saica.co.za

Mr Kulani Chauke

Corporate Communications Co-Ordinator, Marketing & Communications (SAICA)

Tel: 011 479 0698

Email: kulanic@saica.co.za

Notes to 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 46 000 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.

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 twice a 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 SAICA's transformation initiatives:

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. Through Thuthuka, a pioneering initiative to promote transformation in the profession, SAICA launched its transformation efforts in the Eastern Cape in 2002 and has grown this into a national project that includes various interventions across the education value chain as well as the highly successful Thuthuka Bursary Fund.

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 supporting and encouraging enterprise development initiatives.