



**Professional Education
for SAI Auditors - PILOT**
Professional Auditor. Professional SAI.



Assessment Report May 2023 Assessment Exams



The Professional Education for SAI Auditors exam sitting was held Tuesday 23 May to Thursday 1 June 2023. Assessment exams were sat either at a Pearson Vue test Centre or where this was not available on the Pearson Vue 'OnVue' system with online proctoring.

	Total	Passed	Will receive a certificate of competence
Exams delivered (CC, CA, FA and PA)	234	126 (54%)	67
Cross Cutting Exams	118	66(56%)	
Compliance Audit Exams	26	17 (65%)	23
Financial Audit Exams	41	21 (51%)	21
Performance Audit Exams	49	22 (45%)	23

Note those receiving certificates include those who had passed the audit stream exam in 2022 and were retaking only the cross-cutting exam in 2023.

After the exams were sat by PESA-P candidates the examining team met to discuss the papers and moderate the results. Overall, the exams were felt to be challenging but fair assessing the learning objectives communicated throughout the course.

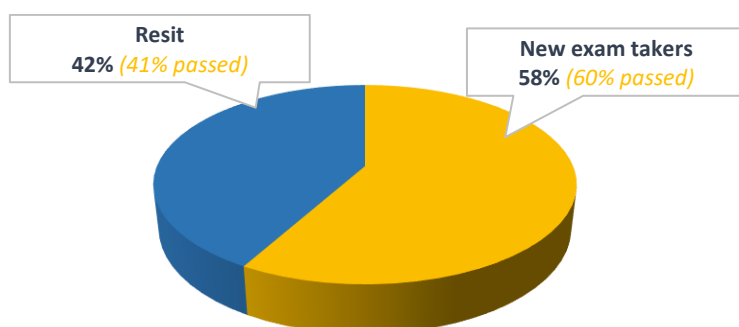
Cross Cutting Exams

Highest Mark: 88%

Lowest Mark: 28%

Content Category	Number of questions	Average mark 2022	Average mark 2023
Case 1: Value and benefits of SAIS	5	61%	63%
Case2: ISSAI 100	5	63%	63%
Case 3: Ethics	5	53%	60%
Case 4: Communication and stakeholder analysis	5	68%	62%
Standalone questions	15	59%	60%

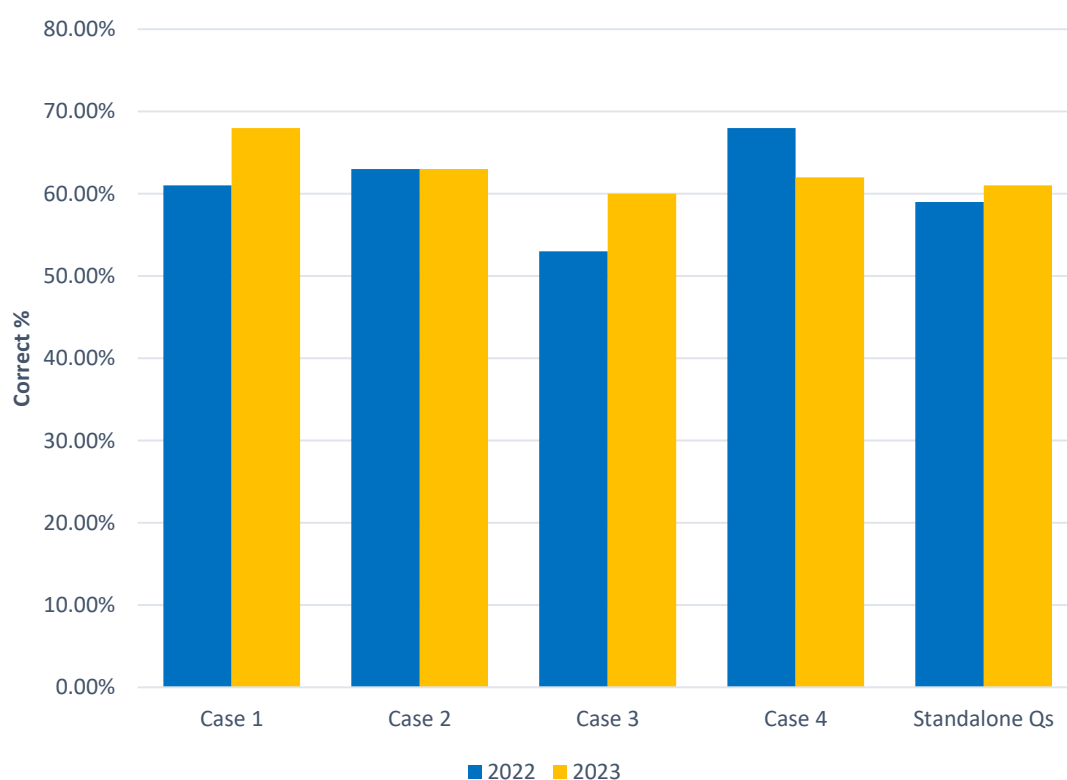
Please see exam question mapping under 'Other resources' for a detailed mapping of the learning objectives covered in each section.



CC Paper

For cross cutting, a total of 26 candidates took the CC assessment exam with an overall passing rate of 65% (2022 overall pass rate was 62%). New exam takers fared better in the exam with 60% of candidates being successful whilst for resit candidates 41% were successful.

Comparison of 2022 and 2023 CC Exam Results



The vast majority of candidates completed the exam by answering all questions. In the exam 2.5 mins was allowed on average to answer each question. Typically, the participants spend longer on questions attached to case studies and those with multiple responses required. This suggested good time management by candidates. However, there were instances of candidates spending 15 mins on one question with no case study attached. This indicates poor use of exam time where questions are equally weighted.

We also saw that some candidates spent a long time on the ethics case study and were rushed at the end of the exam leading to errors answers. Questions do not have to be answered in order, candidates can flag a question and return at the end of the exam. As all questions are equally weighted candidates are advised to consider answering questions where they feel comfortable at first.

There were some very strong candidates in the cross-cutting stream with the highest mark of 94%. Overall participants performed well on questions relating to communication and stakeholder engagement. Participants performed well on questions relating to ISSAI 100 and the fundamental audit principles. Questions with mirroring to the other parts of the syllabus (CA, FA and PA) went well suggesting that participants had built competency throughout the education.

We saw a significant improvement in performance by candidates in Case 3 on Ethics suggesting that candidates have planned well and prepared for this questions in this area.

In some areas candidates demonstrated a lack of knowledge of key theory. Candidates are reminded to spend time reading INTOSAI P12 and ISSAI 100, ISSAI 130 and ISSAI 140. Whilst candidates are not required to memorise the standards (e.g. to be able to list the INTOSAI P12 principles) they are expected to be familiar with the contents of those standards.

Candidates struggled with questions that asked them to connect case study and theory. In these questions candidates need to consider real life examples and concentrate on what the question is about.

- Which general principle of public sector auditing is not complied with?
- Which principle from INTOSAI P12 is demonstrated?
- Is professional judgement or professional scepticism being demonstrated?
- Which emotional intelligence quadrant does this fall into?
- What should this person do to develop emotional intelligence given a particular weakness?
- Which of these audit actions demonstrates the SAI working for equal futures for all?
- What action should be taken to demonstrate professional scepticism?
- Who is most likely to be a stakeholder in this situation?

In these types of questions, the candidate should think about what they have learnt (e.g. what does 'equal futures for all' mean?) and then apply that to the scenario. In the case of audit actions that demonstrate a commitment to equal futures to all the candidates will find that all the actions listed are audit actions, but they need to think about which ones relate to equal futures.

Compliance Audit

Highest mark – 85%

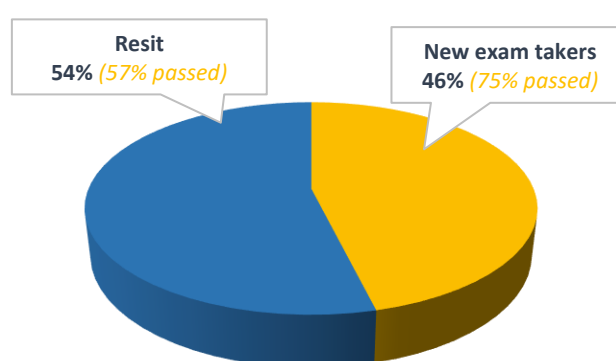
Lowest mark – 26%

Content Category	Number of questions	Average mark
Case 1	8	65%
Case 2	20	72%
Standalone questions Paper 1	6	60%
Standalone questions Paper 2	6	64%
Standalone questions Paper 3	6	61%
Standalone questions Paper 4	10	66%
Standalone questions Paper 5	4	55%

Please see exam question mapping under 'Other resources' for a detailed mapping of the learning objectives covered in each section.

For compliance audit, a total of 26 candidates took the CA paper exam with an overall passing rate of 65% (2022 overall passing rate was 56%). Individual passing rates for new exam takers and resits are 75% and 57%, respectively.

12% of the candidates showed excellent performance scoring 80% and higher. From the overall 17 passers, 9 candidates have also taken cross-cutting paper exam with 56% passing rate. These 9 candidates are all new exam takers.



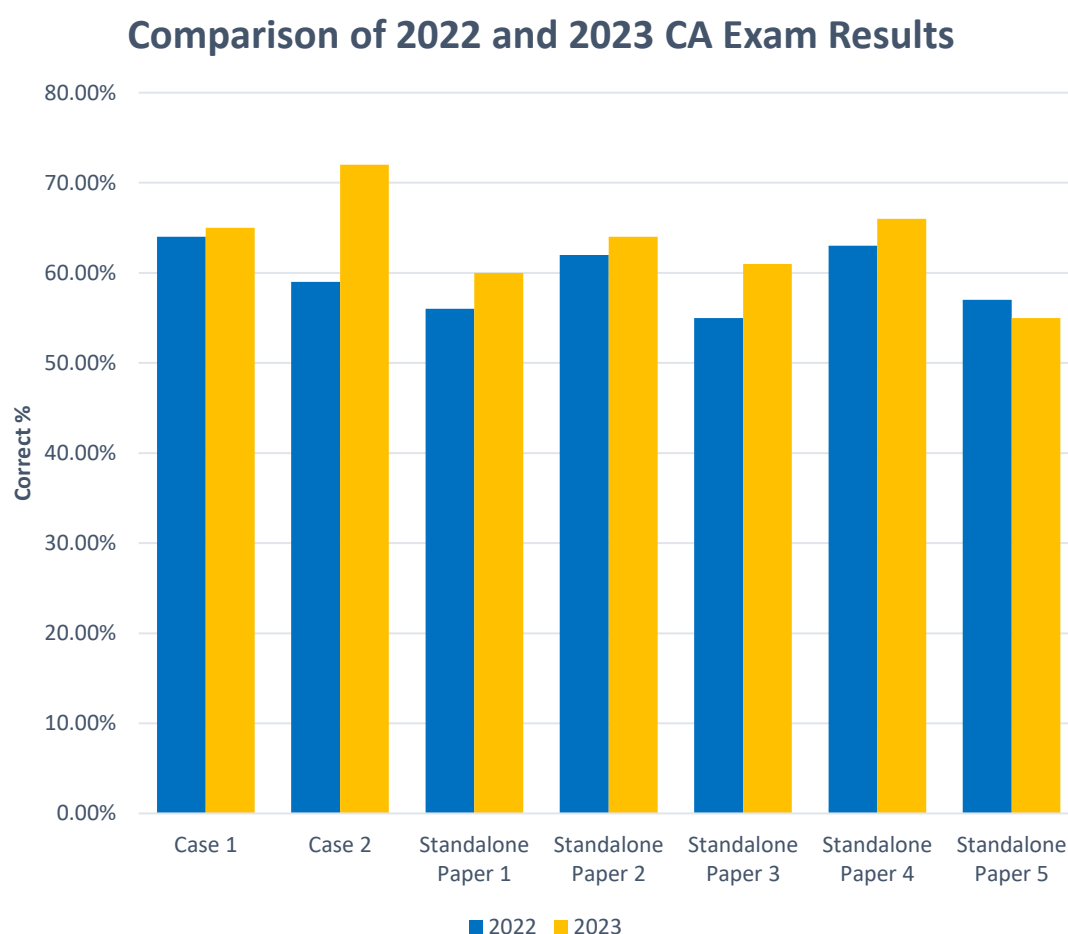
CA Paper

In general, there are improvements in the examination performance based on the 2022 data, especially on Case 2 which covers planning to reporting phases of the compliance audit. Questions with correct percentage of less than 30% in 2022 have increased to a range between 30% to 83% in 2023. Factors that may have directly or indirectly contributed to the increase in the overall passing rate include the prior experience for resit cases, affecting 54% of all takers, and the introduction of review tutorials.

The 2023 results show that examinees did well on questions related to general principles, development of recommendations, ethical behaviour, principle of compliance audit reporting, audit objective, audit procedure to address risk, qualitative

materiality, fraud, and evaluation of audit evidence, with 100% correct percentage. The 2022 examination showed that examinees also did well in the prior year in these areas with average correct percentage of 85%.

Comparison of 2022 and 2023 examination results is shown below:



Analysis of the current examination showed that examinees struggled in answering questions related to the following:

- Propriety criteria
- Specific requirements on audit plan and strategy
- Audit scope
- Identification of risk
- Elements of compliance audit report
- Audit conclusion

These areas are recommended to be prioritised in the future exam preparations and IDI will provide additional tutorials to support revision in these areas. In addition, we emphasize to the candidates during exam preparation the importance of carefully reading the case study and

linking to the related question since dependence on the information in the question may result in different analysis. Examinees are also encouraged to completely read all the phrases/words in the options since there are distractions that are not apparent within the option.

Financial Audit

Highest mark - 88%

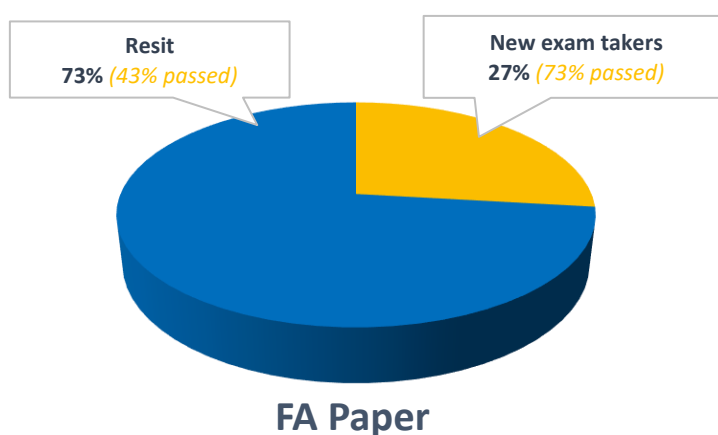
Lowest mark - 25%

Content Category	Max Scored Questions in Content Area	%Correct
Case 1: Pre-engagement activities	5	46%
Case 2: Risk assessment	5	69%
Case 3: Analytical procedures throughout the audit	10	68%
Case 4: Auditor's response to risks	10	72%
Case 5: Gathering evidence	5	60%
Case 6: Reporting and follow up	5	58%
Standalone questions Paper 1: Introduction, Concepts and Principles of Financial Audit	5	58%
Standalone questions Paper 2: Pre-engagement	1	78%
Standalone questions Paper 3: Planning and risk assessment	8	67%
Standalone questions Paper 4: Conduct a Financial Audit	5	66%
Standalone questions Paper 5: Completion, Reporting and Follow-up in Financial Audit	1	63%

Please see exam question mapping under 'Other resources' for a detailed mapping of the learning objectives covered in each section.

For financial audit, a total of 41 candidates took the FA paper exam with an overall passing rate of 51% (2022 overall passing rate was 39%). Individual passing rates for new exam takers and resits are 73% and 43%, respectively.

14% of the candidates showed excellent performance scoring 80% and higher. From the overall 21 passers, 12 candidates have also taken cross-cutting paper exam with 83% passing rate. It is noteworthy to mention that ALL of the new takers who passed the FA paper exam (i.e., 73% of the total) has also passed the cross-cutting paper exam.

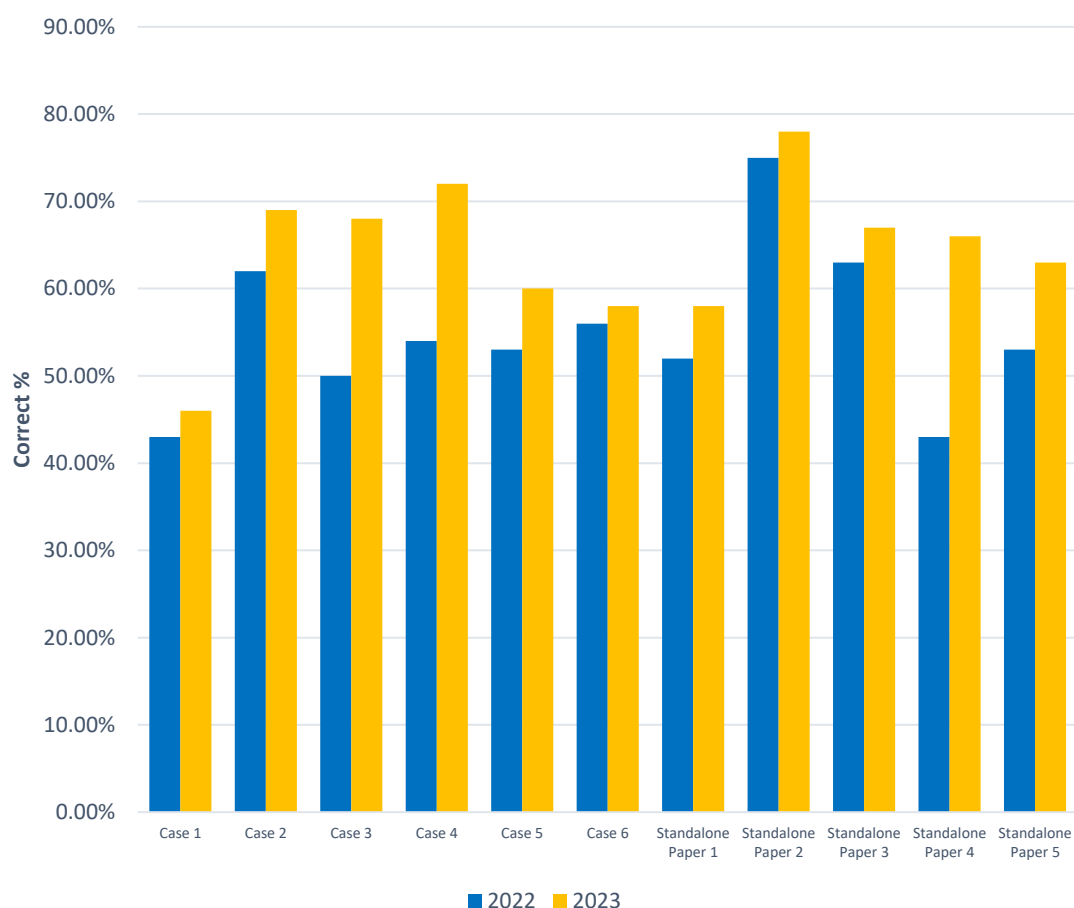


Factors that may have directly or indirectly contributed to the increase in the overall passing rate include the prior experience for resit cases, affecting 73% of all takers, and the introduction of review tutorials.

The 2023 results show that examinees did well on questions about audit responses to risk at both financial statements level and assertion level, reporting activities, different assertions, analytical procedures, and evaluation of evidence. Some of these areas were previously included among the weak areas in the past examination as described below:

- At the category level, comparison of results of 2022 and 2023 examinations shows that there are improvements in all categories. Notably, there are significant improvements in cases 4 and 5, and standalone questions for paper 4 and 5 which cover thematic areas such as analytical procedures, conducting stage of the audit and reporting.
- At the question level, topics with less than 10% correct percentage in the past involving responses to risk of material misstatements both at the financial statements and assertion levels, objective of financial auditing, and materiality, have well progressed with more than 50% correct percentage in 2023.

Comparison of 2022 and 2023 FA Exam Results



There were areas that took participants longer time to answer since they are expected to exercise professional judgement and at the same time, do some mechanical calculations. These involved analysis of data and calculation of expected values for substantive analytical procedures, and exercising judgement in the calculation of performance materiality. Nonetheless, the results are still positive with 44-45% correct percentage, and that the time consumed was compensated by other items in the question bank.

Despite the higher correct percentages in 2023 examination, less than 20% of candidates answered questions correctly in the following areas:

- Sample selection methods that are not popularly used in statistical sampling
- Exercise of professional judgement in assessing team's competency
- Identifying key control activities

These areas are recommended to be prioritised in the preparations by candidates preparing for the exam and by IDI in making revision tutorials available.

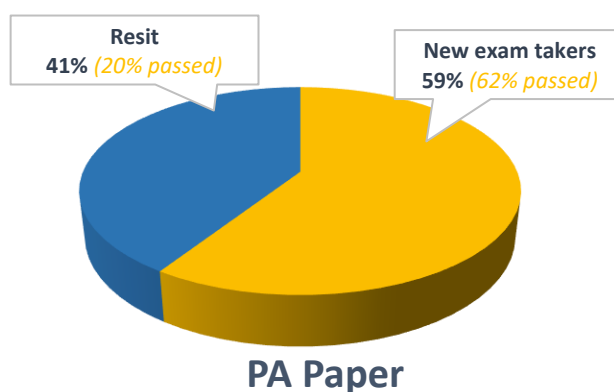
Performance Audit

	2023 (%)	2022 (%)
Highest mark	85	88
Lowest mark	15	18

Content Category	Number of questions	Average mark
Case 1	15	63 %
Case 2	15	56 %
Case 3	15	59 %
Standalone questions – Paper 1 (Concepts, principles and process)	3	79 %
Standalone questions – Paper 2 (Tools and techniques)	2	79 %
Standalone questions – Paper 3 (Performance audit planning)	3	53 %
Standalone questions – Paper 4 (Conducting a Performance audit)	3	67 %
Standalone questions – Paper 5 (Performance audit report and follow-up for impact)	4	63 %

Please see exam question mapping under 'Other resources' for a detailed mapping of the learning objectives covered in each section

For performance audit, a total of 49 candidates took the PA paper exam with an overall passing rate of 45% (In 2022, 163 candidates took the exam, and the overall passing rate was 55%). Individual passing rates for new exam takers and resits are 59% and 41%, respectively.



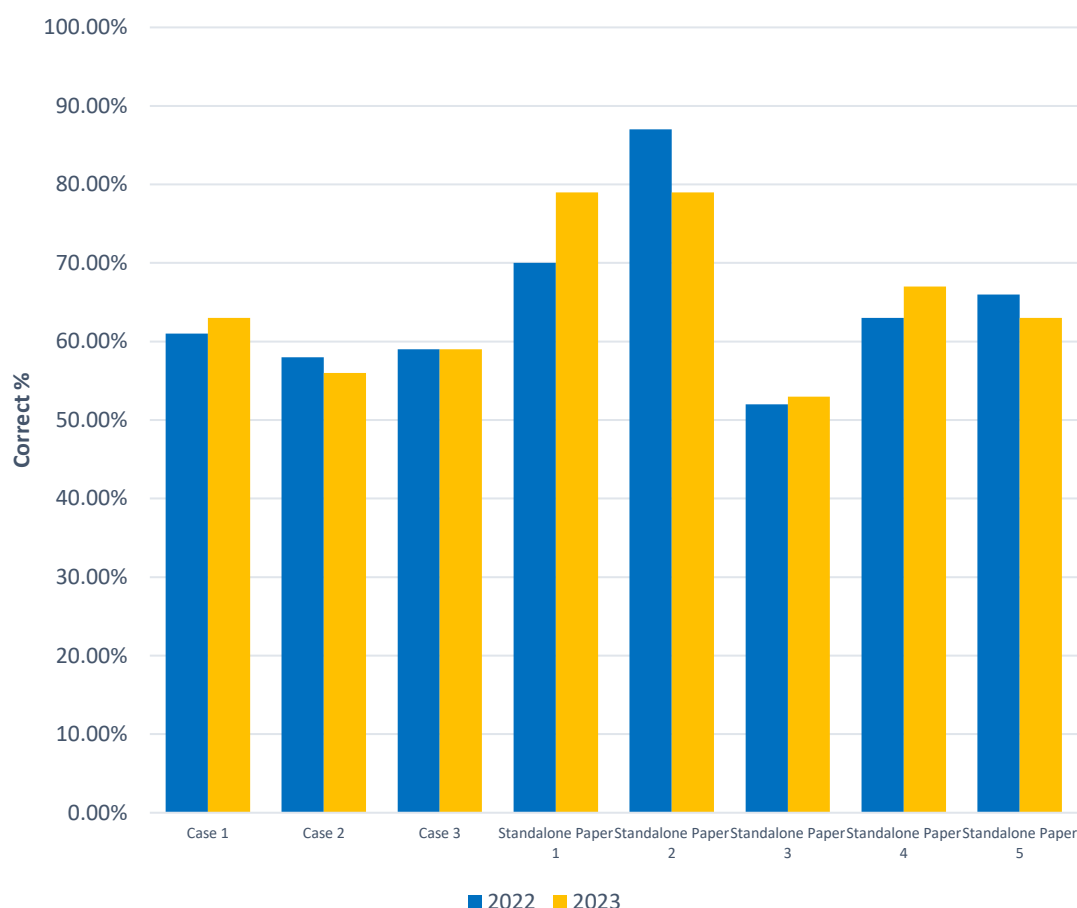
It is important to highlight that the number of candidates in 2023 is less than third of the number in 2022. It means that any statistical analysis will be less significant to conclude on the overall tendency of the results. Having said that, this report will present results and analysis from both years, with comparisons between them.

The results show that 12% of the candidates had excellent performance, scoring 80% or higher. From the overall 22 passers, 19 candidates have also taken cross-cutting paper exam in 2023, with 74% passing rate. From these candidates, 14 are new exam takers.

From the numbers, it is possible to see that the new exam takers went better than the resits. This can be explained, directly or indirectly, by the following factors: some resits might have considered themselves prepared for the new exam and did not review the education material

or participated in the webinars; the resits went through the education material for longer time than the new exam takers; the new exam takers might have prepared better for the exam. Comparison of 2022 and 2023 examination results is shown below:

Comparison of 2022 and 2023 PA Exam Results



The 2023 results show that the candidates did well on questions related to concepts, principles, process, tools, and techniques. The weakest area was related to audit planning, especially on questions about audit criteria and audit objective. Challenges in this area may reflect the fact that planning a performance audit requires specific competencies and skills and involves different activities. The 2022 examination also showed that the lower scores were in questions relating the audit planning.

The average of correct questions related to the case studies is 59%. Though each case study question was about a specific topic, the cases contained questions related to all papers, requiring from the candidate a systemic thinking that covers the whole audit process. That might be the reason why the scores were lower for the case study questions than for the standalone questions (with exception of the questions about audit planning).

Participants struggled with multi-response questions, where they had to select more than one option. For these questions, the mark was given only when the participant chooses all the

correct options therefore participants are advised to think about each option carefully and separately.