



MY JOURNEY TOWARDS BEING A CIA

Name: Mohd Hazrin Bin Ibrahim

Current Employment: International Islamic University Malaysia

Work Experience: 12 years

Education Background: Bachelor in Accountancy, CIA

IIAM Membership Category: Professional Member, CMIIA



1. Why did you decide to pursue a career as an internal auditor?

I did not initially aim to become an auditor for this long, because my ambition was to become a chartered accountant. My plan was to gain as much experience as I could as an external auditor.

But life took another road when I got a role as a Junior Consultant (Internal Audit Executive) at a business consulting firm back in 2013. I remember thinking, "Why not take this road and see where it leads me?" It was and still is a very challenging journey.

2. How important is an Internal Auditor's role in the organisation?

I was once told that internal auditors are like "police," whose role is to find people's faults. I totally understand this misconception. However, I prefer internal auditors to be regarded as business partners and consultants.

By being viewed this way, clients can approach us as professionals within the company, seeking advice and consultation. This is the most value-adding role that internal auditors can offer, in addition to providing objective assurance on the organization's achievement of its objectives.

3. What is the typical challenge internal auditors generally face? And amongst them, can you highlight what would be one of the biggest challenge?

Over the years, I have found that keeping the internal audit team aligned on every audit engagement can be quite challenging. Often, it is more about people management than auditing procedures. Sometimes, the work performed by the team does not meet expectations, even though the audit program is detailed and designed to support the intended conclusion.

When it comes to audit work, I also have to admit that the tedious nature of working papers can be overwhelming at times. But that's part of the job. Sometimes, there is only one way to reach the destination—in this case, to arrive at a well-supported audit conclusion.



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4. Does the Institute play a role in supporting your Internal Auditor scope of work? If yes, in what ways? And if no, what can we do better?

Definitely! I completed my CIA papers in 2024. Over the past couple of years, the Institute has offered revision classes, shared tips and tricks, and even provided support in answering my queries. Even now, I'm still keeping in touch with IIAM.

If I may suggest, it would be great if IIAM courses could be a bit more "wallet-friendly." As a semi-government body, it can be a bit trickier for us to obtain approval for higher course fees.

5. Would you recommend IIA Malaysia to your fellow IA colleagues?

Of course. I am currently the only one in the department with CMIIA membership. I have encouraged my fellow team members to pursue professional certification if they wish to progress further in the profession. It will open doors eventually and demonstrates a commitment to continuous self-improvement.

6. What motivated you to take the CIA exam?

I foresee that I will remain in this profession for quite some time. Therefore, I need to demonstrate my commitment and professionalism. One of the best ways to do that is by obtaining the CIA—and that is exactly what I did. I became the first internal auditor in a Malaysian public university to successfully obtain the CIA.

Another strong motivator for me was career progression. I have to admit that this was a key factor that drove me to the finish line. To improve my career prospects, I see the CIA certification as an important stepping stone.

7. What were the challenges you encountered when attempting the CIA exam?

The most challenging part was staying consistent. I created a daily schedule to spend at least one hour studying the materials. As a father of four young children, it was not easy to maintain that routine. I was very fortunate to have my wife's support, but the challenge was real. I believe consistency and commitment are among the key qualities a candidate should have.





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8. How did you manage your study time while working?

The common advice is always “manage your time,” but for me it was more specific than that. I set a strict schedule: every night, I would study for one hour—no more, no less. If I studied longer, I knew I wouldn’t be effective anymore.

It really came down to consistency and discipline. As a working adult, our time and energy are usually drained by the evening—I admit that. But consistency and commitment are what push you forward.

On weekends, I preferred to spend time with my kids. I think that’s fair, because I had already put in five hours during the weekdays. Most importantly, I had to manage stress. Work stress and study stress don’t help at all. For me, the best way to manage stress was simply to be with my family.

9. As a CIA certified professional, where do you envision yourself?

I am where I am meant to be. For now, the department needs a CIA-certified member as a backbone, and I’m happy to provide that support and service. However, in the near future, I envision myself taking on senior managerial positions in audit departments in other organizations—hence my decision to pursue the CIA certification.

10. How important is CIA for an internal auditor?

It is evidence of commitment to the profession and proof of competence.

11. Please provide 3 main advice for those attempting to take the CIA examination?

Discipline, Consistency and Commitment.

- Discipline – Establish a study plan, meet your study goals, and follow through.
- Consistency – Set aside time to study every night and stick to it.
- Commitment – Face challenges, and if the plan doesn’t work due to obstacles, change the plan—not the goal.