

“MY JOURNEY TOWARDS BEING A CIA”



Name : Nur Amalina Binti Awi @ Alwi

Age : 34 years old

Current Employment : Senior Executive, Group Corporate Assurance at SD Guthrie

Work Experience : 10 years overall in Compliance and Internal Audit

Education Background : Bachelor's Degree in Accounting, CIA, Fellow Member of ACCA

IIAM Membership Category : Chartered Member of IIA Malaysia (CMIIA)



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

To be honest, when I graduated, I wasn't entirely sure what I wanted to do. What I did know was that I've always enjoyed solving problems and finding solutions. Then I had the opportunity to join Boustead Holdings Berhad as an SL1M trainee in Group Internal Audit for six months. At that time, I had no idea what internal audit was—I just thought, why not give it a try and see where it takes me!

That decision changed everything. What started as a short-term opportunity turned into a career I genuinely enjoy.



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

I like to think of internal auditors as trusted advisors to the organization. We're not just checking for compliance — we help improve processes and ensure everything runs efficiently. At the end of the day, our role is about keeping the business strong and resilient.

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

Internal auditors face a wide range of challenges, from keeping up with new regulations, sustainability and ESG requirements, and growing cybersecurity threats to adapting to shifts in industry-specific compliance. However, the greatest challenge is often maintaining the right balance between being objective and independent while still earning management's trust. Without that trust, even well-founded recommendations are unlikely to be implemented.





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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?

Yes, definitely. IIAM provides great training, networking opportunities, and resources that keep us updated on global best practices.

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

Yes, but I don't need to recommend it. All of my fellow internal audit colleagues are already members, reflecting IIAM's strong credibility and reputation.

6. What motivated you to take the CIA exam?

I wanted to challenge myself and gain a globally recognised credential. The CIA designation shows commitment to the profession and opens doors for career growth. It was about pushing myself to the next level.

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

For me, the biggest challenge was the extensive scope of the syllabus, as I took the CIA Challenge Exam, which combines all three parts; P1, P2, and P3 into a single sitting. Studying everything at once was tough. On top of that, I was preparing during the height of COVID-19, when everything felt uncertain and, honestly, a bit depressing. Balancing work and study under those circumstances required a great deal of discipline and mental strength.





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

I started by putting together a simple schedule, using late nights and weekends for studying. I also broke the syllabus into smaller, manageable chunks so it didn't feel overwhelming. That way, I could focus on one section at a time instead of stressing about everything at once. It really came down to being consistent and making the most of the time I had.

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

As a CIA certified professional, I envision myself as a future Chief Internal Auditor. Possible? Maybe! But I'm optimistic, moving forward step by step.

10. How important is CIA for an internal auditor?

It's very important. CIA validates your expertise, aligns you with global standards, and helps you stand out while advancing your career.

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

- Be disciplined: Stick to your schedule as much as you can.
- Practice, practice, practice: Keep working through practice questions until the answers start sticking—it really helps you get comfortable with the exam format.
- Stay consistent: Short, regular study sessions beat last-minute cramming any day. It's all about steady progress.

