

Comments on Candidate Performance on the March 2019 Assurance Elective

Candidates appeared to have enough time to answer all requireds in each case. However, there were some issues with time management between the various assessment opportunities (AOs).

Some candidates struggled with identifying the appropriate HB criteria and linking to case facts. Candidates who did not have a strong handle on relevant HB sections had a hard time obtaining a competent assessment when addressing financial reporting AOs. The application of audit and review methodology was important for five AOs found on the first case and this proved to be difficult for some candidates.

When analyzing issues, candidates sometimes jumped to the conclusion or recommendation without first providing the required analysis. This leads to a shallow discussion with no support for the candidate's recommendation.

Case facts were well used by most candidates, who attempted to integrate them into their analysis.

Strengths of the candidates:

- Most candidates attempted to address all AOs, showing good issue identification.
- Most candidates provided a conclusion on the issue identified (although conclusions were not always supported).

Weaknesses of the candidates:

- Some candidates seemed to have spent too much time on some issues and not enough on others. Candidates need to ensure that they are allocating their time appropriately with a good balance between all AOs. For example, some candidates spent too much time discussing the internal controls AOs and not enough time on the financial reporting AOs.
- Some candidates were not able to correctly use the HB concepts in resolving issues. Some basic errors or misunderstandings of the HB content have been noted. Further, candidates did not always reference the correct HB sections or relevant HB criteria when address certain AOs.
- Candidates often jumped to the conclusion or recommendation without first analyzing the issue and HB criteria. Candidates need to understand that the analysis of the issue is the first step before arriving at the conclusion.
- Candidates could have used the numbers in the case more often. Some attempt was made to provide supporting calculations, but this could have been stronger. Providing the numbers to back up the analysis provides more depth to an analysis and helps support the conclusions.



- Candidates frequently struggled to differentiate between a review engagement and an audit engagement. Candidates often referred to audit approaches and audit procedures despite performing a review engagement in one of the cases.