

THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS OF PAKISTAN

Certificate in Accounting and Finance Stage Examination

Data, Systems and Risks

Examiners' Comments

Spring 2026

PASSING %

Question-wise							Overall
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
84%	28%	64%	18%	32%	24%	15%	40%

GENERAL COMMENTS

Although the passing percentage in the inaugural session was noted at 40%, poor performance was observed in Questions 4 and 7, which required students to apply their knowledge to the given scenarios. Students are advised to avoid repeating the same points in their answers and instead provide distinct and relevant responses to each specific requirement of the question. In addition, students should avoid selective study practices to ensure adequate preparation for achieving the overall passing marks.

QUESTION-WISE COMMON MISTAKES OBSERVED

Question 1

Marks could not be awarded in instances where examinees selected multiple options instead of selecting one correct option.

Question 2(a)(i)

Examinees correctly identified the appropriate level of the DBMS architecture at which the required changes were to be implemented by the database administrator to address each issue; however, they did not suggest appropriate corrective actions to solve the given issues.

Question 2(a)(ii)

Examinees failed to distinguish between the external level and internal level of the DBMS architecture, due to which the explanations and the characteristics of these two levels were interchanged, and marks could not be awarded.

Question 2(b)

Examinees correctly explained the big data challenges faced by TA; however, they failed to recommend a suitable solution to address each identified challenge. Examinees are advised to address all of the specific requirements of each part of the question.

Question 3(a)

Examinees did not discuss the following points related to the importance of database normalization for PTL:

- Reduction of data redundancy through the elimination of duplicate data.
- Enhanced data integrity by maintaining accurate and reliable records.
- Improved data consistency across reports due to structured data organization.

Question 3(b)

Examinees repeatedly discussed the same data security practices instead of explaining five different data security practices that organizations can adopt to address emerging threats to data security. Certain important data security practices, such as multi-factor authentication, zero trust architecture, and the use of intrusion detection systems, were not mentioned.

Question 3(c)

Examinees provided vague answers wherein the same points were repeatedly discussed in detail, which was not required. Key ethical principles that govern data collection practices, such as privacy and transparency, were altogether ignored.

Question 4(a)

Examinees incorrectly classified Linux as application software and Spiral as operating software. Furthermore, the examinees did not mention that an operating system acts as an interface between hardware and application software.

Question 4(b)

Examinees did not mention an important aspect of modular design, i.e., each component operates independently, and changes in one module have minimal impact on other parts of the system. This makes the system easier to maintain and update without causing significant downtime or disruptions.

Question 4(c)

Examinees did not mention that an automated failover mechanism could have avoided prolonged downtime. Furthermore, data transfer at month-end and the absence of real-time synchronization would ultimately impact data recovery, resulting in the loss of important data.

Question 5(a)

Examinees were not able to explain the following key features of Hybrid ERP:

- **Flexible Deployment:** Businesses can choose which modules or data to host on-premises and which modules to move to the cloud, depending on security, performance, and compliance needs.
- **Optimized Costs:** By balancing both solutions, businesses can optimize their IT budgets by keeping mission-critical systems on premises while leveraging the cost advantages of cloud services for non-core functions.

Question 5(b)

Examinees did not mention the following challenges of virtual reality:

- Requirement to purchase or otherwise arrange expensive specialized hardware.
- Deployment of advanced technology and expertise to create high-quality content.
- Need to deal with user discomfort caused by extended use of virtual reality setups.

Question 5(c)

Examinees did not mention that neural networks learn through a process of backpropagation, which involves forward pass, loss calculation, and backward pass.

Question 6(a)

Examinees were not able to correctly identify the applicable type of risk involved in each of the given incidents. Furthermore, certain mitigation strategies, such as User and Entity Behavior Analytics, Security and Information Event Management, Intrusion Detection and Prevention Systems, were not recommended.

Question 6(b)

- Examinees did not mention that under the layered security approach, each layer works independently, and if one layer is compromised, the other layers would continue to protect the critical assets of CBL.
- Examinees did not explain the proactive defenses that can help to prevent cybersecurity incidents in the future, such as threat intelligence, real-time monitoring, and frequent risk assessments.

Question 6(c)

Examinees did not identify certain practical measures that could address the cybersecurity workforce challenge at CBL, such as upskilling internal talent, implementing inclusive hiring strategies, and collaborating with the government and other educational bodies to implement programs to grow the talent pool on a large scale.

Question 7

Examinees were not able to identify the following best practices that CT should adopt to ensure effective IT governance and management:

- Establishment of a clear IT governance structure.
- Alignment of IT projects with the business strategy of CT.
- Implement formal change management and documentation procedures.

(THE END)