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H.E. Abdulla Bin Touq Al Marri
UAE Minister of Economy & Tourism

The UAE Internal Auditors Association
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• October 6-8, 2026 • Abu Dhabi

2026 CAE CONFERENCE

Connect. Innovate. Transform.

HILTON ABU DHABI YAS ISLAND • 40+ Speakers

23+ CPE CREDITS

Overview

The CAE Annual Conference 2026 is the region's premier gathering for Chief Audit Executives and senior governance leaders, bringing together 500+ decision-makers for three transformative days of learning, debate, and peer exchange.

Designed by CAEs, for CAEs, the conference moves beyond theory into real-world application, strategic foresight, and leadership influence. From immersive masterclasses to live AI demonstrations and Oxford-style debates, CAE 2026 redefines what an executive audit conference should be

Who Should Attend

The CAE Annual Conference 2026 is designed for senior audit and governance professionals who are shaping the future of assurance and organizational trust. It is an essential gathering for Chief Audit Executives, Heads of Internal Audit, and experienced leaders responsible for navigating today's complex risk environment. The conference is also highly relevant for board members and audit committee representatives seeking deeper insight into evolving expectations of internal audit at the highest level.

- Chief Audit Executives (CAEs)
- Heads of Internal Audit
- Audit Committee Members & Board Advisors
- Senior Risk, Compliance & Governance Leaders
- Public Sector & SOE Audit Leaders
- Financial Services, Banking & ESG Audit Specialists

Why Attend CAE 2026

Built for Senior Leaders

This is not an entry-level conference. Every session is designed for experienced executives navigating complexity, pressure, and influence at the highest levels

From Strategy to Execution

Participants don't just hear ideas — they practice decision-making, test frameworks, and leave with tools ready for immediate implementation in their organizations

Unfiltered Board & Peer Insight

Hear directly from audit committee chairs, regulators, and fellow CAEs — including candid discussions on independence, escalation, and leadership under pressure

Future-Ready Focus

AI, ESG, cyber risk, culture, ethics, and regulatory change are not treated as buzzwords — but as core assurance challenges requiring new skills and mindsets

Conference Structure at a Glance

Day 1 – Masterclass Day

From Strategy to Application

A fully immersive, hands-on learning day featuring:

- CAE Simulation Labs tackling real crises (AI failures, whistleblowing, regulator escalation)
- Risk-based audit planning frameworks
- Leadership, independence, and talent strategy workshops

Outcome: Delegates leave with practical frameworks, tested decisions, and peer-validated approaches

Day 2 – The CAE at the Center of Governance

Thought Leadership & Deep Expertise

- High-impact keynotes on the evolving CAE role
- Board-level perspectives on what truly drives audit credibility
- Live CAE Pulse data reveal capturing real executive sentiment
- An engaging Oxford-style debate on audit independence vs advisory
- 9 parallel tracks covering AI, cyber, ESG, fraud, banking, public sector, and future skills

Outcome: Strategic clarity, peer benchmarking, and exposure to best-in-class practices across sectors

Day 3 – The Future-Ready CAE

Influence, Skills & Long-Term Impact

- The Future Skills Map for CAEs
- Live AI demonstrations (no slides — real tools, real data)
- Culture, ethics, and conduct auditing methodologies
- Regulatory horizon scanning
- Panels on independence, courage, and influence
- A powerful closing keynote on high-impact ESG audits

Outcome: A forward-looking roadmap for sustained relevance and leadership influence

What Makes CAE 2026 Different

- ☑ 3-day narrative journey — from hands-on application to strategic vision
- ☑ 40+ sessions across multiple learning formats
- ☑ 9 deep-dive tracks for specialization
- ☑ Live data, live demos, and real debates — not passive presentations
- ☑ Senior-level pacing that respects executive time and attention

This is not a traditional conference.
It is a leadership experience

Day 1
Masterclass Day

From Foundations to Implementation
(AI in Internal Audit)

Day 1 is a full-day, hands-on masterclass built for Chief Audit Executives who want to move beyond AI buzzwords and into practical implementation. You'll build foundational AI literacy, see real internal audit AI in action, and take your first guided steps toward adopting AI agents in your audit function.

9:00 am
3:00 pm

Interactive masterclass
+ live demonstrations
+ guided lab

Practical AI application
across the audit lifecycle

AI in Internal Audit: From Foundations to Implementation

01 AI Foundations for Audit Leaders

Build a clear understanding of AI through an internal audit lens: large language models, prompt engineering, retrieval-augmented generation (RAG), agentic AI, and key risk considerations such as hallucinations, data privacy, and AI governance.

02 Real Implementation: Inside an IA AI Journey

A candid walk-through of implementing advanced AI inside an internal audit function—what worked, what didn't, and what leaders should anticipate. Includes live demonstrations and practical lessons learned.

03 Guided Hands-On Lab: Build Your First AI Audit Agent

A step-by-step lab where every participant creates a working AI audit agent prototype using approachable tools that require no prior coding experience—and leaves with a clear path to apply it in their department.

AI in Internal Audit: From Foundations to Implementation

This masterclass is designed for CAEs who want a realistic, practical view of AI in internal audit—what it can do today, what can go wrong, and how to start safely.
The day combines essential concepts, real-world implementation lessons, and a guided lab so participants don't just hear about AI—they experience it.

Delivered by:

Osama Abbas

Osama Abbas is the Former Chief Internal Audit Officer at Astratech & Botim, where he leads the internal audit function across one of the UAE's fastest-growing technology groups. A computer scientist turned auditor, Osama has spent over a decade in internal and external audit across firms including KPMG, Deloitte Middle East, and Emirates Transport, consistently working at the intersection of technology and assurance.

Osama is deeply invested in bringing artificial intelligence into internal audit, not as a future aspiration, but as a current operating reality. His work focuses on infusing AI across the audit lifecycle, from risk assessment and planning through fieldwork and reporting. He has also operationalized data analytics as a core audit capability, turning it into a strategic differentiator for the departments he has led.

He holds CIA, CISA, CISM, CEH, CFE and other certifications, and brings a combination of deep technical understanding and a pragmatic, execution-focused mindset to the evolving landscape of AI and emerging technologies.

Wrap-Up & Key Takeaways

Synthesis of Learning

Convert the day's concepts into an actionable starting plan for your internal audit function—what to pilot, what to govern, and how to build capability.

Prototype in Hand

Leave with a working AI audit agent prototype and practical guidance on how to iterate it responsibly.

Preview Day 2

Get oriented for tomorrow's main conference sessions and parallel track opportunities.

Day 2
Main Conference

The CAE at the Center of Governance

Day 2 brings together 500 delegates for the premier gathering of audit leadership minds, combining main stage thought leadership with deep-dive track sessions.

Leadership Keynotes

Industry-leading perspectives on the evolving CAE role in disrupted risk environments.

Parallel Tracks

Nine specialized sessions covering AI, cyber, ESG, fraud, and sector-specific challenges.

Oxford Debate

An engaging close examining internal audit's dual role as advisor and independent challenger.

The Evolving Role of the CAE in a Disrupted Risk Landscape

The risk landscape has fundamentally transformed. CAEs must now navigate artificial intelligence failures, geopolitical volatility, climate uncertainty, and rapid technological change—all while maintaining audit independence and delivering strategic value.

This opening keynote examines how leading CAEs are redefining their mandate, building future-ready teams, and positioning internal audit as an indispensable governance function rather than a compliance checkbox.

Board Expectations Unfiltered: What CAEs Must Get Right

From the Board's Perspective

Audit committee chairs and non-executive directors share candid insights on what they truly value—and what frustrates them—about CAE reporting and engagement.

- Communication clarity vs technical detail
- Strategic insight vs process assurance
- Proactive identification vs reactive reporting

This session provides rare, unfiltered perspective on how boards evaluate CAE performance and contribution.

AI, Automation & Assurance: Moving from Talk to Execution

The Conversation

Everyone discusses AI's potential impact on audit

The Strategy

Forward-thinking CAEs develop AI roadmaps

The Execution

Leading functions deploy AI tools and build new capabilities

This session cuts through AI hype to showcase practical implementations: automated testing, predictive analytics, natural language processing for contract review, and algorithmic audit planning. Learn from CAEs who have successfully integrated AI into their audit methodology.

The CAE Pulse Live: What CAEs Really Think

In real-time, we reveal aggregated insights from our pre-conference CAE Pulse survey, capturing the collective perspective of audit leaders on critical questions:

- Where are CAEs most concerned about organizational risk exposure?
- What capabilities do audit functions lack for future relevance?
- How are reporting relationships and independence evolving?
- What keeps CAEs awake at night in 2026?

Interactive discussion follows as participants compare their own contexts to peer benchmarks.

Internal Audit: Strategic Advisor or Independent Challenger?

The Motion

"Internal Audit Should Be a Strategic Advisor, Not an Independent Challenger."

01 Opening Vote
Audience votes on the motion before arguments begin

02 Spirited Debate
Expert panelists present compelling cases for and against

03 Closing Vote
Has anyone changed their mind? Results revealed live

This engaging closer challenges conventional thinking about the CAE mandate and provides a memorable end to Day 2's main conference programming.

The CAE Pulse Live: What CAEs Really Think

Choose your learning path across three 40-minute rotations, each offering nine specialized tracks designed for senior practitioners.

01

Rotation 1

1. Auditing AI & Analytics
2. ESG & Sustainability
3. Audit Quality & Standards

03

Rotation 3

7. Fraud & Ethics
8. Banking & Financial Services
9. Talent & Future Skills

Rotation 2

4. Cyber & Technology
5. Public Sector & SOE
6. Data-Driven Planning

02

Day 3
Main Conference

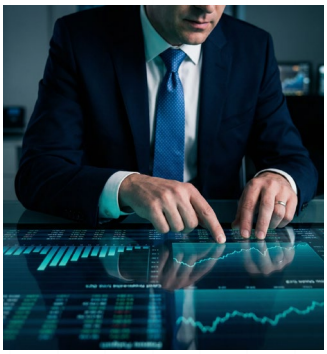
The Future-Ready CAE

Future Skills

Competencies CAEs need for sustained relevance and impact

Culture & Ethics

Auditing the intangibles that drive organizational behavior



Regulatory Evolution

Anticipating the next wave of assurance expectations uismod tincid

The final day synthesizes conference learnings into a forward-looking agenda, equipping CAEs with the mindset and tools needed for long-term success.

The Future Skills Map for CAEs

Traditional audit competencies remain foundational, but the CAE of 2026 and beyond requires an expanded skillset that bridges technical expertise with strategic leadership.

Data Fluency

Interpreting analytics and AI outputs

Emotional Intelligence

Building trust and managing relationships

Executive Presence

Influencing C-suite and board decisions

Tech Savviness

Understanding emerging technologies

Change Leadership

Driving transformation in audit methodology

AI in Audit: Live Demonstration

01 Automated Testing

Watch AI-powered continuous auditing identify anomalies in transaction data sets in real-time

02 Natural Language Analysis

See how AI extracts key risk indicators from unstructured documents like contracts and policies

03 Predictive Risk Modeling

Observe machine learning algorithms forecast emerging risks based on historical patterns

No PowerPoint slides—just live software demonstrations showing AI tools that are transforming audit practice today. Vendors showcase real implementations, and CAEs share lessons from deployment in their organizations.

Auditing Culture, Ethics & Conduct

Culture has emerged as a critical risk factor, yet it remains one of the hardest areas for internal audit to assess effectively. This session explores practical methodologies for evaluating organizational culture, ethical climate, and behavioral risk.

Beyond Surveys

How to gather authentic signals about culture through observation, analytics, and speaking-up data

Red Flag Indicators

Early warning signs of cultural deterioration that precede fraud, misconduct, or reputational damage

Board Reporting

Communicating culture and conduct findings in ways that drive governance action

Regulatory Expectations: What's Coming Next

01

Current State

Today's regulatory landscape requires CAEs to navigate an increasingly complex web of requirements across jurisdictions, from audit committee mandates to ESG disclosure obligations.

02

Near-Term Horizon

Anticipated regulatory changes include enhanced audit committee reporting standards, new AI governance requirements, and expanded third-party risk management expectations.

03

Strategic Response

Forward-thinking CAEs are building flexibility into their audit programs, developing regulatory intelligence capabilities, and strengthening relationships with compliance and legal functions.

Aligning Assurance, Risk & Compliance in Complex Organizations

The "three lines of defense" model sounds elegant in theory but often breaks down in practice. This panel brings together CAEs, Chief Risk Officers, and Chief Compliance Officers to discuss:

- Where coordination works—and where it fails
- Managing overlap without duplication
- Clarifying accountability when risks span multiple functions
- Board reporting that integrates rather than confuses

Candid dialogue on one of governance's most persistent challenges, with practical strategies for improved alignment.

Fireside Chat
"From Assurance to Influence: The CAE's Role in Shaping the Future Enterprise"

This fireside chat challenges Chief Audit Executives to move beyond traditional assurance and step into a role of strategic influence—shaping decision-making, resilience, and trust at the highest levels of the organization.

- The CAE–Board Relationship
- Audit in an Age of Disruption
- From Findings to Foresight
- Influence, Courage & Judgment

Interactive discussion follows as participants compare their own contexts to peer benchmarks.

Independence Under Pressure: When CAEs Must Say No

Independence is the cornerstone of internal audit credibility—but it's tested constantly. Panelists share real scenarios where they held the line despite organizational pressure:

Refusing Scope Limitations

A CAE insisted on including a sensitive area in the audit plan despite executive resistance

Escalating Disagreements

Taking an unresolved issue to the audit committee when management wanted it buried

Protecting Team Members

Defending auditors from retaliation after delivering unwelcome findings

This panel provides both inspiration and practical guidance for maintaining independence when stakes are high.

Incorporating Extraordinary ESG Audits into your Audit Plan for Major Impact

This session explores how internal audit functions can move beyond routine ESG coverage and design extraordinary, high-impact ESG audits that truly influence strategy, performance, and stakeholder trust. It will focus on identifying ESG risks that matter most, integrating them into the audit plan with clear prioritization, and delivering insights that go beyond compliance to drive measurable impact. Participants will gain practical guidance on how to position ESG audits as a strategic enabler strengthening governance, accountability, and long-term value creation.

The closing keynote synthesizes conference themes into a compelling vision of CAE leadership for the next era. What will distinguish exceptional CAEs from adequate ones?

Conference Outcomes & 2027 Outlook

Key Insights

The organizing team synthesizes major themes, unexpected learnings, and breakthrough moments from three intensive days.

CAE Pulse Summary

Final analysis of survey data collected throughout the conference, revealing how CAE perspectives evolved.

Looking Ahead

A preview of emerging topics that will shape next year's agenda and the ongoing evolution of the profession.

Participants leave with concrete takeaways, renewed energy, and a network of peers committed to advancing internal audit's impact and influence.

World-Class Speakers

Hear from the visionaries defining the future of audit, security, and digital innovation

H.E. Abdulla Bin Touq Al Marri

UAE Minister of Economy and Tourism, Ministry ofEconomy and Tourism

Abdulqader Obaid Ali

Chairman of the Board, UAE IAA

H.E Ali Al Hosani

Executive director of internal audit, Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development and Chair of UAE IAA CAE Majlis

Jenitha John

Chief Strategic Officer, UAE IAA

Osama Abbas

Former Chief Internal Audit Officer, Astratech & Botim

Tom McLeod

Chief Audit Executive, Chief Risk Officer

Dina Fakih

IA lead,
Deloitte

Edvin Edisho

IA transformation,
Deloitte

Mohamed Elaarag

Partner,
EY

Iyad Mourtada

ACFE CFE Authorised Trainer,
OpenThinking Academy

Mostafa Hassan

CHIEF AUDIT OFFICER,
BEEAH

Lalit Vijay Vyas

Product Solutions Manager,
Optro

Yue Kendall

Vice President,
Group Internal Audit, DKSH

Elizabeth Sullivan

2025-2026 IIA North American Board Chair & SVP, Chief Risk and Audit Officer at WMATA

Venue

HILTON ABU DHABI YAS ISLAND

About the Venue

Hilton Abu Dhabi Yas Island is Abu Dhabi's premier luxury conference destination. Renowned for its modern architecture and stunning views of the Arabian Gulf, it provides the perfect backdrop for CAE 2026.

Located on Yas Island, attendees have easy access to world-class amenities, cultural attractions, and excellent business facilities.

Join the Region's
Premier Gathering of Chief Audit Executives

Be part of three transformative days of insight, leadership, and connection shaping the future of internal audit.

Meet the Partners & Sponsors of the 2026 CAE Conference

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