



The UAE Internal  
**Auditors  
Association**

• April 21-23, 2026 • Abu Dhabi

# 2026 CAE CONFERENCE

**Connect. Innovate. Transform.**

📍 Conrad, Etihad Towers • 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 Strategy to Application

Day 1 transforms traditional learning into hands-on experience. Through immersive simulations and practical frameworks, participants gain immediately applicable tools for their audit functions.



9:00 am  
3:00 pm



Interactive workshops  
and facilitated exercises



Practical application  
of CAE leadership skills

## CAE Simulation Lab: You Are the CAE – Now Decide

### 01 AI Governance Failure

Navigate a critical breakdown in algorithmic oversight where automated systems have produced discriminatory outcomes. Decide how to escalate, communicate, and restore stakeholder confidence.

### 02 Senior Leadership Whistleblowing

Handle a complex ethical dilemma involving C-suite misconduct. Balance independence, confidentiality, and organizational protection while maintaining audit credibility.

### 03 Regulator Escalation

Respond to urgent regulatory scrutiny requiring immediate action. Coordinate with compliance, legal, and the board while managing reputational risk and operational continuity.



## Building the Risk Based Audit Plan

### Translating Enterprise Risk

Convert strategic risk registers into actionable audit priorities that align with organizational objectives and emerging threats.

### Resourcing the Risk Audit Plan

People, Platforms, Process, & Performance.

### Board Expectations

Understand what audit committees want to see and what diminishes credibility in modern audit planning.

## Leading the Modern Audit Function

### Essential Skills for 2026

Master the competencies CAEs need beyond technical audit expertise: strategic thinking, data literacy, and executive presence.

### Independence vs Advisory

Navigate the tension between maintaining audit independence while meeting growing demands for strategic advisory services.

### Talent & Culture

Build high-performing audit teams that attract top talent, foster innovation, and drive organizational influence.

## Wrap-Up & Key Takeaways

### Synthesis of Learning

Consolidate insights from three intensive masterclasses into actionable next steps for your audit function.

### Peer Reflections

Share breakthrough moments and commitments with fellow participants in facilitated reflection groups.

### 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

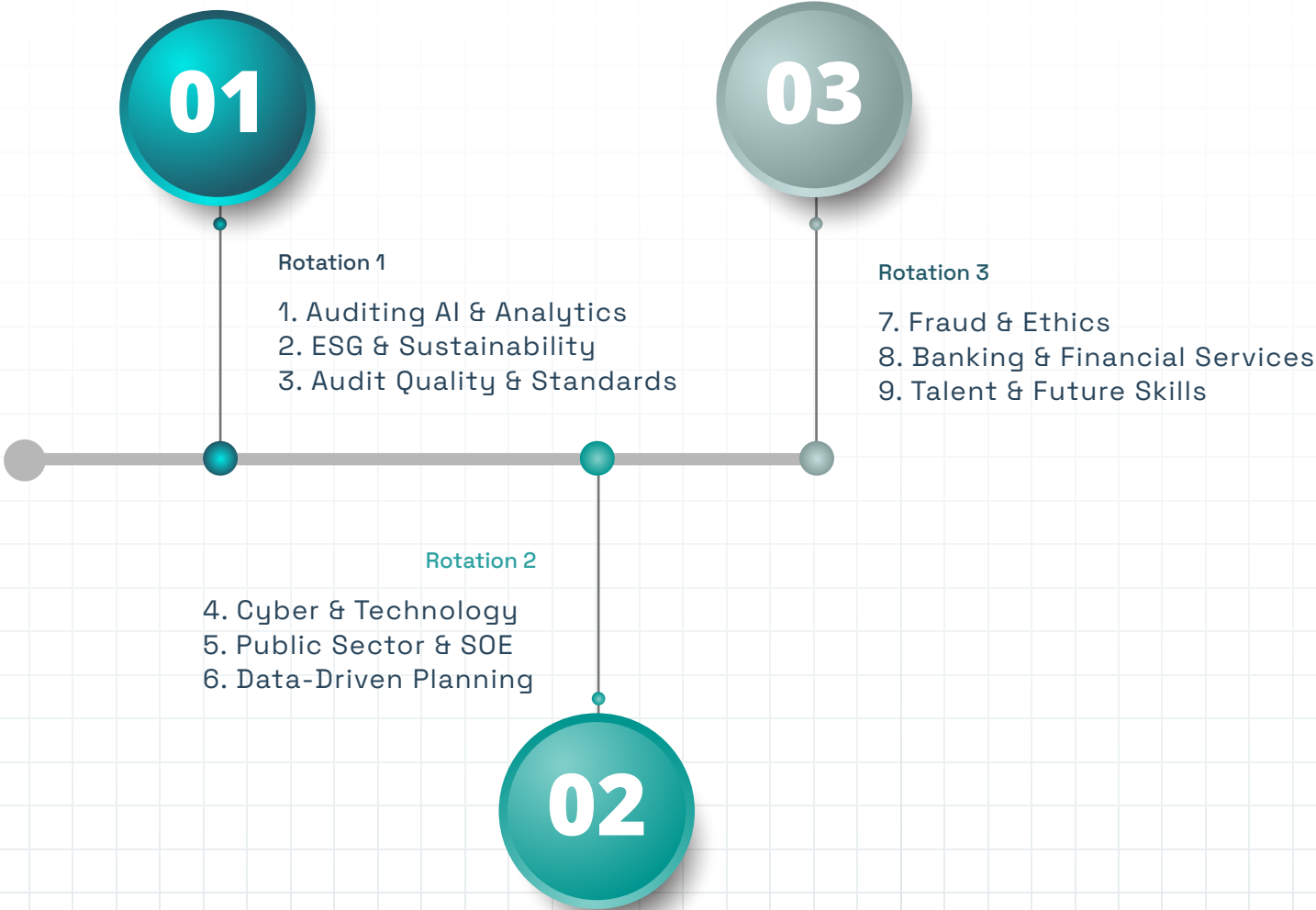
Has anyone changed their mind?  
Results revealed live



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.



**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

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

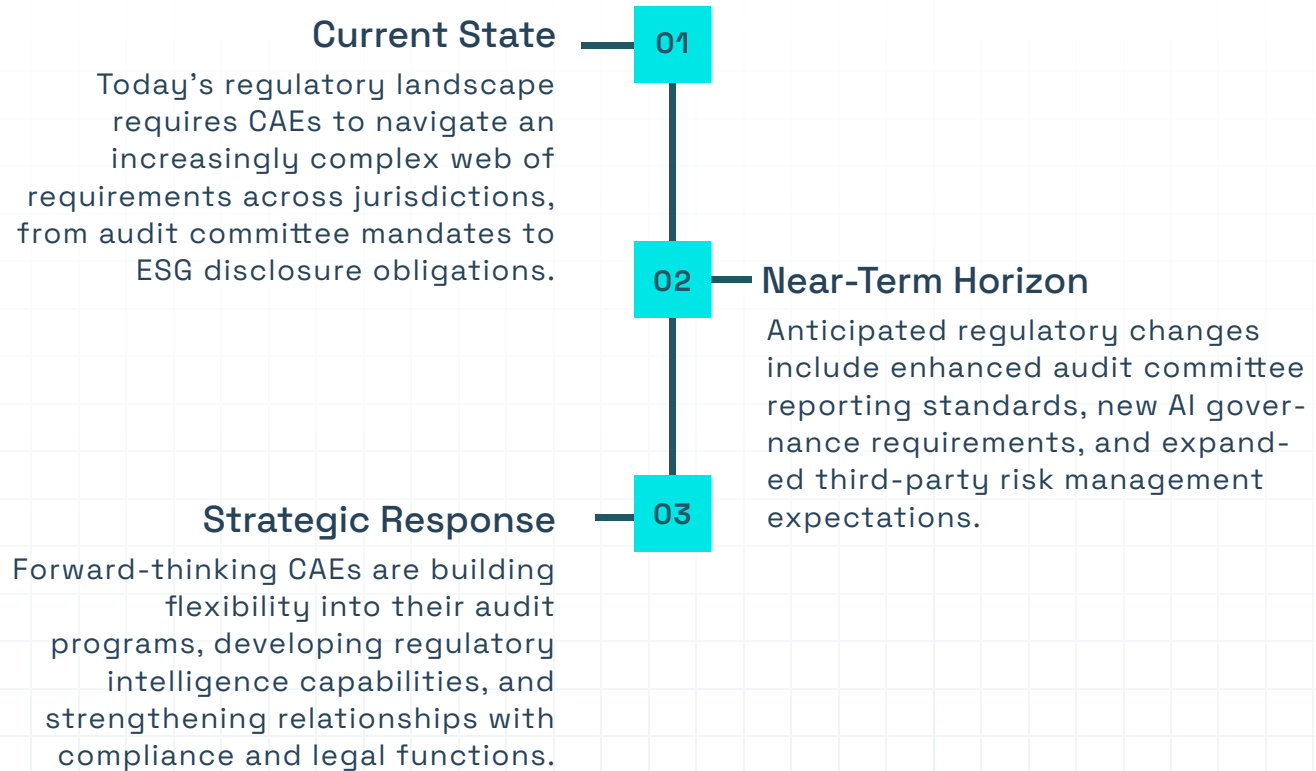
### Red Flag Indicators

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



## 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



**Abdulqader  
Obaid Ali**

Chairman of the Board,  
UAE IAA



**H.E. Ali  
Al Hosani**

Director of Internal Audit  
at Government, Abu Dhabi  
Department of Economic  
Development



**Richard  
F. Chambers**

Senior Advisor,  
Risk and Audit, AuditBoard,  
CIA, CRMA, CFE



**Jenitha  
John**

Chief Strategic Officer,  
UAE IAA



**Michael  
Fucilli**

Ex- Vice Chair of the Institute  
of Internal Auditors' Board  
of Directors

**Venue**

# CONRAD, Etihad Towers Hotel, Abu Dhabi



## About the Venue

Conrad Etihad Towers 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 the prestigious Corniche, attendees are just steps away from luxury shopping, cultural landmarks, and business districts.

# 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.

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**protiviti**<sup>®</sup>  
Global Business Consulting

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