Strategic level Examination Blueprint

Incorporating Strategic Case Study Examination, E3, P3, and F3 Objective Tests

Objective Tests from
January 2027 to January 2028
Case Study Examinations in May,
August, November 2027
and February 2028

Introduction

Blueprints to the future

Businesses and industries are becoming more complex, requiring specialized knowledge and continuous learning to stay competitive. The automation revolution is transforming the way work is done, decisions are made, and value is created by organizations.

With the emergence of new technologies the development of human expertise is more important than ever. As artificial intelligence and automation take over routine tasks, the demand for uniquely human skills - such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and adaptability — continues to rise.

The CGMA® Professional Qualification continues to evolve to ensure finance professionals stay relevant, o develop high-order thinking skills and take on leadership roles in collaboration with their counterparts to drive value creation.

The blueprints demystify the examination – giving greater clarity on examinable topics; assessment approach, design and weightings; and candidate expectations. The blueprints won't just aid candidates taking the examination, but will also orientate learning partners and employers about the judging parameters and the capabilities of finance professionals for tomorrow.

The purpose — setting expectations

The examination blueprints give candidates the clearest expression of what is expected of them in the CGMA Professional Qualification Examinations. It tells candidates what to prepare for and how to prepare for the Case Study Examinations and the Objective Tests. Working in tandem with the syllabus document, it aids the candidate in anticipating the type of questions to expect in the examination.

Along with explaining the examinations' key features, it lists the competencies, skills and knowledge necessary to pass the Case Study Examination and Objective Tests; apprises educators about the knowledge and skills needed to pass the examination; aligns employers with the capabilities of the candidates; and, above all helps us keep the examinations current, relevant and up to date with the latest standards.

As our most comprehensive statement to date on CGMA Professional Qualification Examinations, one of the core purposes of the blueprints is to assist candidates in getting into the mindset the examination demands.

The Finance Leadership Program

The Finance Leadership Program (FLP) is an online, self-directed learning and assessment platform which provides an alternative pathway to the CGMA designation. While the terminology used and structuring of the learning may differ, the content of the program is fully aligned with that set out in the CGMA Professional Qualification examination blueprints.

The FLP relies on its own continuous assessment model which determines proficiency and manages user progression through the learning content, meaning FLP students are not required to take CIMA Objective Tests. The program instils the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to proceed through the Operational, Management and Strategic Case Study exams – the points at which the FLP converges with the other CGMA Professional Qualification pathways.

Improving employability – now and in the future

The purpose behind the CGMA Professional Qualification is to ensure the relevance of the finance professional. In a business environment where expectations of finance are changing and technologies such as artificial intelligence, are reshaping and reimagining more and more roles, we are looking to build capabilities, enhance competencies, drive the employability and add to the confidence of a CGMA-qualified finance professional.

At the Strategic level, the objective is to equip candidates with the skills for long-term decision-making, being capable of supporting leaders and crafting strategy and to evaluate and manage risks that might prevent organisations from successfully implementing strategy; value organisations; and source financial resources required to implement a strategy.

The 'I can' statements, which reflect the competencies of a candidate at the end of a Case Study Examination and the representative task statements that emerge from the successful completion of Objective Tests — correspond directly with what employers are looking for and businesses need to transform and thrive.

Arriving at the blueprint

The CGMA Professional Qualification is underpinned by rigorous research that supports the development of the evolving role of finance, changes of roles within finance, the educational approach and the assessment approach.

Future of Finance 2.0 Research

Our Future of Finance 2.0 research focused on understanding the evolving role of finance professionals by collaborating with businesses, regulators, educators, and industry experts to inform the content and business simulations within the professional qualification.

The Future of Finance 2.0 research working method adopted a broad, inclusive approach, engaging AICPA & CIMA members, students, and the wider finance community.

Using an exploratory sequential design, we conducted an 18-month study combining qualitative and quantitative research.

Educational approach research

A second strand of researched focused on a comprehensive review of educational aspects of 'critical thinking'. This was conducted to inform the pedagogical approach of the professional qualification in fostering the development of critical thinking skills.

In a AI disrupted business environment, it's even more important that finance professionals shift their focus from foundational and intermediate proficiency level, to applying a higher-level expertise. The CGMA Professional Qualification is a result of these research findings and has been designed to drive employability and continued growth.

The CGMA Professional Qualification is made up of three levels – Operational, Management and Strategic. Each level imparts knowledge and business acumen that's expected out of a finance professional working at an entry level, managerial level or at a senior leadership level.

At the end of each level, candidates have to take a Case Study Examination – a business simulation of real-life job tasks that someone at that level is expected to perform. In addition, the purpose of the Case Study Examination is to assess the candidate's proficiency in those specific skills that are less likely to be automated. The Case Study Examination blueprints articulate the business simulation through the core activities and assessment outcomes. The Objective Test blueprints state the job tasks through the representative task statements. As a result, candidates are clear about the basis for each type of assessment.

Getting the skill sets and the mindset that matters

The fundamental knowledge and the skills acquired through each subject will be tested in the Objective Tests. Questions can be asked across the whole breadth of the Syllabus, and the tests are weighted based on remembering, understanding and application with some analysis and evaluation in highly structured scenarios. Candidates must pass the Objective Tests to move on to the Case Study Examination.

While the Objective Tests check that candidates have the best knowledge and skill set to tackle a situation, what's equally important is having the right attitude and mindset to affect and influence decisions, actions and behaviours. The Case Study Examination gives candidates ample opportunities to demonstrate these traits and an awareness and understanding of their simulated organisation and the ecosystem in which it operates. To be successful in the examination – and by extension in the real world of work – a candidate is also required to draw on enabling critical thinking or power skills that include; professional scepticism, analysis, seeing the big picture, problem-solving, communication and making recommendations.

The Case Study Examination — demonstrating the aptitude and the attitude

The Case Study Examination tests the knowledge, skills and techniques from the three pillars within one simulated scenario, and is taken at the end of each level of the CGMA Professional Qualification. Candidates are given information about a fictional industry and organisation in advance of the examination, and are expected to give solutions to the situations and challenges presented within the examination - based on the knowledge and skills acquired from the three subjects.

The Strategic Case Study Examination is the final competency test in the CGMA Professional Qualification and expects the candidate to think and respond like a Senior Finance Manager. After completing this level and gaining the required experience, membership and the CGMA designation is awarded. To attempt this examination, candidates must either first pass the three Objectives Tests for each of the subjects, have completed relevant Finance Leadership Program learning and assessment or have gained necessary exemptions.

Driving employability through simulation

Case Study materials are provided well in advance of the actual examination so that candidates can immerse themselves into its context. The pre-seen materials provide an opportunity for candidates to consider their previous studies in the context of the workplace and explore the links between the individual subjects as part of their research and preparation for the Case Study Examination. The Case Study Examination presents challenges and situations that a finance professional will encounter and employers have identified as critical at that level.

In a Strategic Case Study Examination five core activities — that are most frequent, critical and important to the work of a Senior Finance Manager — will be assessed. Successfully completing these activities is directly reflected in the 'I can' statements that showcase the competencies acquired by a successful candidate.

The CGMA Professional Qualification Examination Blueprints are pointers to the direction the future of finance will take. With the needs of the employer and the needs of a rapidly changing business landscape at its core, the CGMA Professional Qualification seeks to build capabilities, future-proof skills, improve employability and create finance professionals who will be navigators of disruption. It is yet another step from CIMA to help and partner you in leading the transformation – go beyond limits, beyond insights and beyond expectations.

Contents

Outline

This is the Examination Blueprint for the Strategic level of the CGMA Professional Qualification. It will set out in detail what is examinable in the Case Study Examination and the Objective Tests for the period stated on the cover of this document. It also provides information about the format, structure and weightings of the assessments. It complements the syllabus document and provides details specifically related to the different type of assessments and is a comprehensive statement on CIMA's examinations.

The purpose of the examination blueprint is to:

- Explain the key features of the examination.
- Describe how the examination was developed in consultation with employers.
- Document the competencies, skills and knowledge necessary to pass the Case Study Examination.
- Assist candidates in preparing for the examination
- Apprise educators about the knowledge and skills candidates will need to pass the examination.
- Apprise employers of what passing candidates can do.
- Guide the development of examination tasks and questions.

This blueprint sets out the examinable content and assessment structure for the Strategic level Case Study Examination and Objective Tests for:

- E3: Strategic Management
- P3: Risk Management
- F3: Financial Strategy

Blueprints for other levels are available on our exam blueprints page. For more information on the operational and administrative aspects of the examination please refer to our website.

Effective dates and examinable standards

The blueprint is based on the CGMA Professional Qualification Syllabus released in June 2026.

Examination period covered

Objective Tests from January 2027 to January 2028

Case Study Examinations in May, August, November 2027 and February 2028

Any updates to the blueprint document in future publications will be detailed here.

Version number	Date first published	Summary of changes
1.1	30 June 2026	Pg 49 – added IFRS 18 and IFRS 19 Pg 50 – deleted IAS 1
1	6 May 2025	New blueprint for the updated CGMA Professional Qualification'

International Accounting Standards and Exposure Drafts

The examination will be set in accordance with relevant International Accounting Standards and International Financial Reporting Standards. This also applies to the material relating to Financial Reporting Exposure Drafts.

As a general rule, CIMA will examine such standards from the effective date. Details of specific standards that are examinable for the period covered by this blueprint document will be clearly stated in the Objective Tests blueprints below.

For Case Study Examinations, where individual standards will not normally be directly assessed and where marking can accommodate a variety of approaches, candidates may refer to new standards before the effective date when early adoption is permitted.

Developing the exam blueprints

With our ongoing research into the way businesses and their finance function operates, we continue to strive to identify the future direction of the finance function. The research creates insights into the future of finance, and more crucially an understanding of the future needs of businesses and employers globally. The CGMA Professional Qualification is rooted in this research and its findings. The syllabus sets out the body of knowledge, skills and techniques that employers and organisations value and need.

By collaborating with learning partners, test design experts and psychometricians, we translated the syllabus content into core activities, assessment outcomes and representative task statements. Based on this, we produced the draft blueprints that provide a clear direction on the approach to be taken in the examinations.

We discussed the draft with learning providers and key stakeholders, to validate the draft and to inform the final decisions about the blueprints and examination design such as weightings.

These extensive discussions and multiple layers of consultations ensured that what is included and emphasised are indeed the knowledge, skills and techniques that are most in-demand with employers. At the heart of it, both the syllabus and the blueprints work together to drive employability and organisational performance.

The blueprints are reviewed and updated annually to ensure CIMA's Examinations remain focused on the skills organisations most valued in their finance professionals.

Find out more about our Future of Finance 2.0 research.

Strategic level examination — An overview

The CGMA Professional Qualification

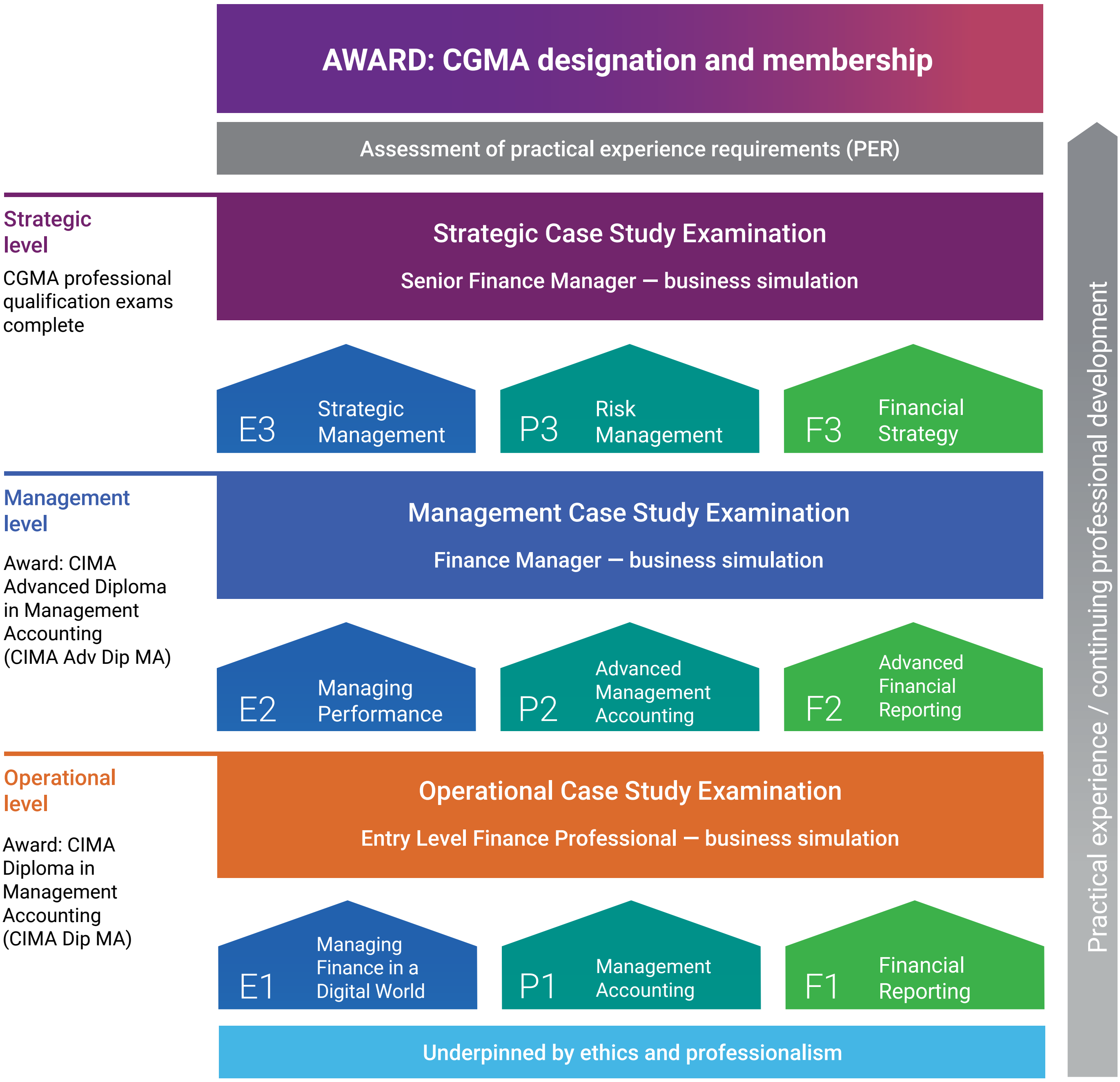
Our overriding objective in designing the CGMA Professional Qualification is to enhance the employability of candidates and members by creating a learning system that enables them to acquire skills, competencies and the mindset that are in high demand with employers. This is more important than ever, keeping in mind the increasing pace of change and traditional roles being redefined by changing expectations of finance teams to add value, sustainability, technology and AI advances.

The CGMA Professional Qualification is divided into three levels — Operational, Management and Strategic. Each of these levels consists of three pillars of domain knowledge — Enterprise, Performance and Financial. Passing each level of the qualification confirms a candidate's capabilities to perform the tasks at that level in the workplace to the highest standards. When combined with the required practical experience, the CGMA Professional Qualification ensures that members are ready to support and lead their organisations, through the challenging environment of continuous change.

The syllabus, assessments and practical experience, the CGMA Professional Qualification ensures that members are ready to support and lead their organisations, through the challenging environment of continuous change. The syllabus, assessments and practical experience requirements ensure members are not only competent in the essential accounting, finance and business-related skills, but also in the skills required to lead the finance function in a digital age.

The Strategic level focuses on the role of the Senior Finance Manager and long-term strategic decision-making. Once this level is cleared, a CGMA-qualified finance professional will be able to support organisational leaders to craft strategy; evaluate and manage sustainability, financial and non-financial, risks that might prevent organisations from successfully implementing strategy; value organisations; and source financial resources required to implement strategy.

Qualification structure



CIMA's approach to assessment

Each level of the CGMA Professional Qualification culminates in a Case Study Examination, which integrates the knowledge, skills and techniques from across the three pillars into one synoptic capstone examination. The Case Study Examination is a role simulation. It requires candidates to perform authentic work-based activities presented during the course of the examination, drawing together learning from each of the three subjects to provide solutions to the issues and challenges asked. Pre-seen material is provided is provided in advance, so that candidates can immerse themselves in the fictional organisation and industry for the simulation and can analyse the organisation's current position before the examination.

The Case Study Examination, at each level, simulates the job role linked to the level and focuses on the core activities which employers expect competent individuals in those roles to perform.

Objective Tests for each of the individual subjects ensure the acquisition of the breadth of knowledge, skills and techniques which provide the foundation for approaching the Case Study Examination.

Strategic Case Study Examination

At the Strategic level, the role simulated is that of the Senior Finance Manager. The Case Study Examination provides a simulated context which allows candidates to demonstrate that they have acquired the required knowledge, skills, techniques and mindset for that role.

The Strategic Case Study Examination is the final test of competence of the professional qualification, and once it has been passed and the practical experience requirements are met, membership and the CGMA designation is awarded.

Strategic level Objective Tests

Three Objective Tests underpin the Strategic Case Study Examination, one for each of the professional qualification subjects. The Case Study Examination can only be attempted after all Objective Tests for the level have been completed successfully or exemptions have been given.

Within each level, candidates are free to study and take Objective Tests in any order they wish. CIMA's suggested order of study is to begin with the Enterprise pillar subject, then move to the Performance pillar subject and then to the Financial pillar subject. The qualification has been designed so that, at each level, the Enterprise pillar gives the broad context in which the Performance and Finance pillars operate. The Performance pillar provides the context of what Management Accountants do within an organisation, and the Finance pillar considers the reporting and the implications of this activity. It is for these reasons that this order is suggested.

For example, CIMA would recommend candidates studying the Strategic level to start with E3, then move to P3 and then to F3 before sitting the Strategic Case Study Examination.

Assessing skills

CIMA has adopted a skill framework for the assessments based on the revised Bloom's Taxonomy[1] of Education Objectives. Bloom's Taxonomy classifies a continuum of skills that candidates are expected to know and demonstrate.

Skill levels and verbs

The following table details the verbs included in the blueprints for both Objective Tests and Case Study Examinations and maps these to the four skill levels that will be used for the purposes of assessment:

Skill level		Verbs used	Definition
Level 5	**Evaluation** The examination or assessment of problems, and use of judgment to draw conclusions	Advise Assess Evaluate Recommend Review Select	Counsel, inform or notify Evaluate or estimate the nature, ability or quality of Appraise or assess the value of Propose a course of action Assess and evaluate in order, to change if necessary Choose an option or course of action after consideration of the alternatives
Level 4	**Analysis** The examination and study of the interrelationships of separate areas in order to identify causes and find evidence to support inferences	Align Analyse Communicate Compare and contrast Develop Discuss Examine Monitor Prioritise Produce	Arrange in an orderly way Examine in detail the structure of Share or exchange information Show the similarities and/or differences between Grow and expand a concept Examine in detail by argument Inspect thoroughly Observe and check the progress of Place in order of priority or sequence for action Create or bring into existence
Level 3	**Application** The use or demonstration of knowledge, concepts or techniques	Apply Calculate Conduct Demonstrate Determine Perform Prepare Reconcile Record Use	Put to practical use Ascertain or reckon mathematically Organise and carry out Prove with certainty or exhibit by practical means Ascertain or establish exactly by research or calculation Carry out, accomplish, or fulfil Make or get ready for use Make or prove consistent/compatible Keep a permanent account of facts, events or transactions Apply a technique or concept
Level 1/2	**Remembering and understanding** The perception and comprehension of the significance of an area utilising knowledge gained	Define Describe Distinguish Explain Identify Illustrate List Recognise State Outline Understand	Give the exact meaning of Communicate the key features of Highlight the differences between Make clear or intelligible/state the meaning or purpose of Recognise, establish or select after consideration Use an example to describe or explain something Make a list of Identify/recall Express, fully or clearly, the details/facts of Give a summary of Comprehend ideas, concepts and techniques

1 Revised taxonomy see Anderson, L.W. (Ed.), Krathwohl, D.R. (Ed.), Airasian, P.W., Cruikshank, K.A., Mayer, R.E., Pintrich, P.R., Raths, J., & Wittrock, M.C. (2001). A taxonomy for learning, teaching and assessing: A revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Complete Edition). New York: Longman. For original taxonomy see Bloom, B.S. (Ed.), Engelhart, M.D., Furst, E.J., Hill, W.H., & Krathwohl, D.R. (1956). Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals. Handbook 1: Cognitive domain. New York: David McKay.

Simulating the role of the Senior Finance Manager - the Strategic Case Study Examination

Examination purpose

CIMA's Case Study Examinations are capstone examinations designed to enable candidates to draw together previously acquired knowledge, skills and techniques and to showcase how they would respond to real-world situations.

The examination combines the content covered in the three subjects at the level into a single assessment. It challenges candidates to analyse scenarios and provide solutions to the type of problems that they would encounter in the workplace for the job role matched to the level of the professional qualification.

The examination takes the form of a business simulation to provide a rich, immersive scenario to prepare and to provide a context for the tasks in the examination. The scenarios are developed around today's modern business environment and the challenges that candidates will face – allowing them to demonstrate the core activities that have been identified by employers as critical.

Examination tasks are practical and applied, not theoretical or academic. To be successful, candidates will have to perform the core activities in the same way and to the same standards that would be valid and valued in the workplace.

The business simulation

The simulation is made up of three broad parts:

- The role of finance
- The role simulated
- The job tasks simulated

The simulation will require candidates to demonstrate that they have acquired the knowledge, skills and mindset of the CGMA finance professional along with an appreciation of the impact of the features of the simulation (the context, organisational structures and environment and ecosystem within which the organisation operates).

Simulating the changing role of the finance function

The finance function has a mandate to go beyond its core historical accounting role. This changing mandate doesn't discard core accounting; it's still an essential foundation of the finance function. However, societal and business expectations have changed, and finance teams enabled by technology are now required to not just assess a broader range of information, but to add value, develop insights, solve problems, create options and propose recommendations to support and make business decisions.

In the business simulation Case Study Examinations, candidates undertake finance business partnering activities appropriate to the level of role simulated, thus preparing and equipping them to perform critical in-demand finance and business roles.

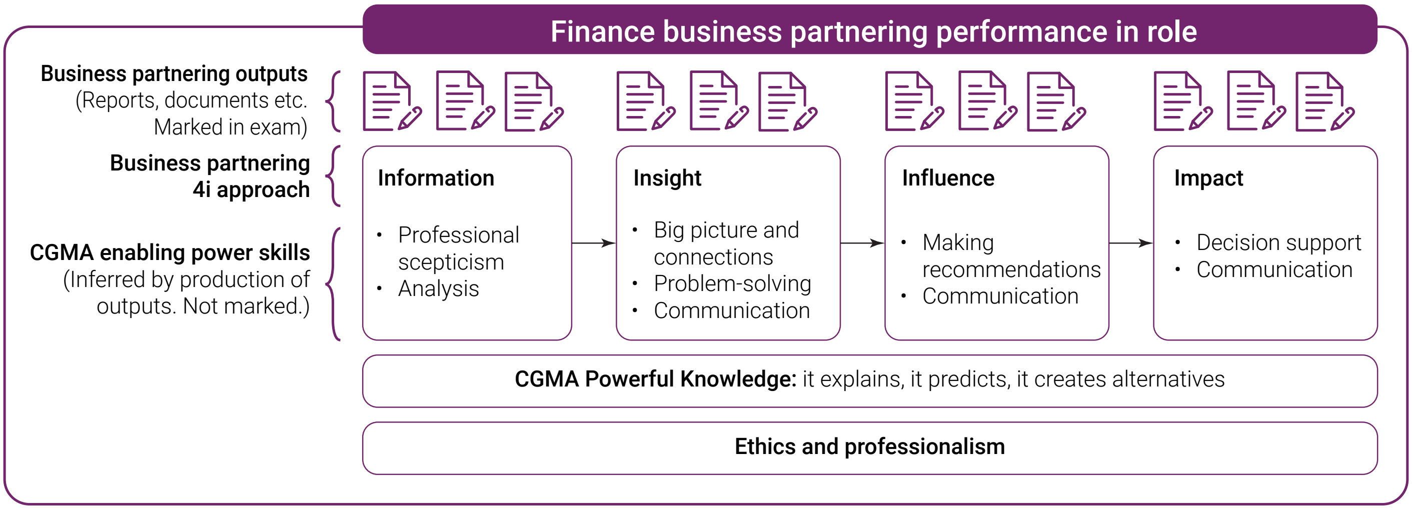


Figure 1: Finance business partnering performance in role, from information to impact.

Senior Finance Manager – simulating the job tasks

Within the Strategic Case Study Examination, five core activities will be assessed. These core activities represent the tasks most frequent, critical and important to the Senior Finance Manager role.

The five core activities are:

A. Develop business strategy

B. Evaluate business ecosystem and business environment

C. Recommend financing strategies

D. Evaluate and mitigate risk

E. Recommend and maintain a sound control environment

The core activities are linked to associated assessment outcomes expressed in terms of 'I can' statements. These statements reflect the skills and competencies that drive the employability of successful candidates.

Senior Finance Manager – mindset of the CGMA finance professional

The Case Study Examination allows the opportunity to demonstrate technical knowledge applied to a scenario. But to respond fully to the given scenario and problems to add value to the simulated organisation, candidates will need to ensure that they have the attitude and mindset to affect and influence their own decisions, actions and behaviours and those of others within the organisation. They must also have an awareness of the environment in which the organisation is operating, and the increasingly digital ecosystem.

Enabling qualities and competencies such as communication, professional scepticism, leadership, professional judgement, ethical awareness and business acumen are critical to performing well in the examination tasks as well as the workplace.

The core activities require and draw together the knowledge, skills and techniques acquired while studying for Objective Tests, and combining them with the mindset of a CGMA finance professional. The pre-seen material and information provided during the course of the Case Study Examination provides a rich simulation which enables the candidate to demonstrate the acquisition of these and their overall competency in the role.

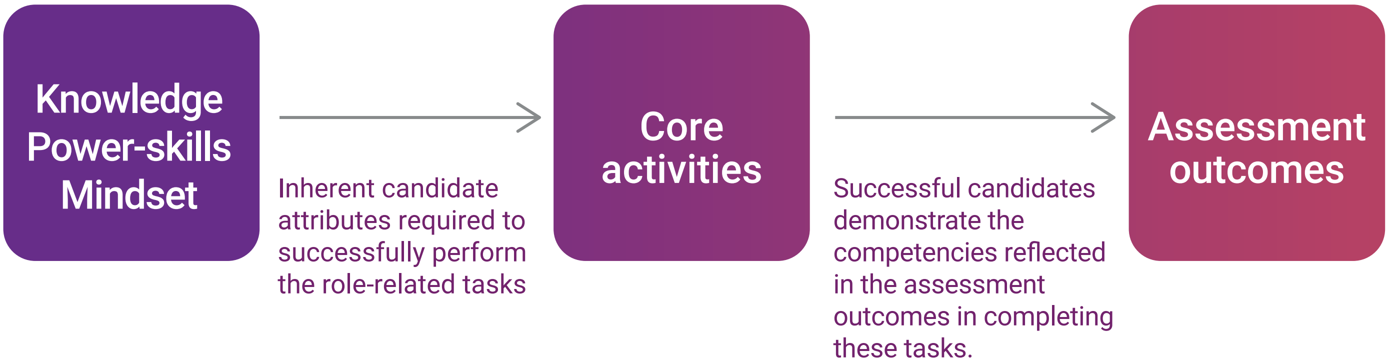
Understanding the blueprint

The Case Study Examination blueprint articulates the synoptic relationships across the three pillars for the level. Its core activities are integrated and multidisciplinary. By completing the core activities, successful candidates will implicitly demonstrate not just the technical abilities but all the required competencies and the mindset for that level.

As detailed above, the Case Study Examination blueprint contains the following:

- Listing of who the simulated role works with
- Description of the level of complexity of problem-solving undertaken
- A summary or 'job description' of the role simulated
- Core activities – Business-related tasks that are common to the role being simulated and valued by employers which, if performed satisfactorily, enables the demonstration of the assessment outcomes.
- Assessment outcome – A clear assertion of what a CGMA-qualified finance professional can do when the Examination has been completed and what the assessment will be designed to measure. Case Study assessment outcomes will be synoptic.

A weighting range is given for each core activity. This represents the amount of time that will be allocated to each core activity in the examination.



Senior Finance Manager — simulating the role

The role simulated is that of a Senior Finance Manager.

Works with:

- **Leadership teams**
- **Board of directors**
- **Finance teams**
- **Direct reports**
- **Business leaders**
- **Partners**
- **Suppliers**
- **Customers**
- **Stakeholders**

Address strategic business problems that have limited definition and involve many interacting factors

The finance function is key to creating partnerships for strategic success. As a Senior Finance Manager, I play a crucial role in advising the organisation's leadership teams on business strategy. I create sustainable value for stakeholders by supporting strategic decision-making, often by scenario planning to support and validate decisions.

Risk management is a significant part of my responsibility. As there are reputational risks and threats to stakeholders, I have a duty to advise on governance issues; financial, non-financial and sustainability-related. I am involved in evaluating the control environment and managing internal audits. I am aware that there are increasing risks from cyber threats.

I also raise finance from suitable sources to ensure new strategic projects are properly resourced. I understand how capital markets operate and how they and external factors determine value.

I advise on matters that require considerable judgement and could have significant impact on stakeholders. I am trusted because I adhere to high standards of professionalism and ethics.

Typical engagements:

Working in a range of organisations and industries, previous role holders have:

- Provided sustainability advice to a robotics company.
- Provided strategic direction for an organisation wishing to launch a sport to an overseas country.
- Advised on stakeholder management approaches for a global logistics company disrupted by protest groups.

Core Activity	Assessment Outcome	Weighting
A. Develop business strategy	• I can evaluate strategic options • I can recommend strategic decisions • I can evaluate potential acquisitions and divestment opportunities • I can recommend responses to opportunities and threats arising from digital technologies • I can recommend responses to sustainability issues	15–25%
B. Evaluate business ecosystem and business environment	• I can recommend appropriaate financial, non-financil and sustainability-related strategic objectives • I can select and apply suitable strategic analytical tools • I can conduct an analysis of stakeholder needs and recommend appropriate responses • I can recommend appropriate responses to changes in the business ecosystem • I can recommend KPIs that encourage sound strategic management • I can recommend responses to economic, political and currency risks	15–25%
C. Recommend financing strategies	• I can recommend suitable sources of finance • I can recommend dividend policy • I can recommend and apply business valuation models	15–25%
D. Evaluate and mitigate risk	• I can evaluate risks and recommend responses and can maintain the corporate risk register • I can identify ethical dilemmas and recommend suitable responses • I can evaluate and mitigate cyber risks • I can recommend internal controls	15–25%
E. Recommend and maintain a sound control environment	• I can apply internal audit resources • I can recommend appropriate controls and evaluate the implications of compliance failures • I can recommend responses to threats arising from poor governance	15–25%
E. Recommend and maintain a sound control environment	I can apply internal audit resources. I can recommend appropriate controls and evaluate the implications of compliance failures. I can recommend responses to the threats arising from poor governance.	15–25%

Examination approach

Structure and format

The Case Study examination is a business simulation based on pre-seen material provided in advance. This material is released at least 6 weeks before the first examination date and gives candidates context and information about a fictional organisation and its industry to enable preparation.

In the examination itself, candidates will be presented with one 'unseen' variant, which is three hours long and consists of three, equally weighted sections (tasks). Each section is 60 minutes and is comprised of more than one sub-task. Guidance on how long to spend on each sub-task is provided during the exam to aid in planning and writing. Candidates can finish a section early and move on to the next but cannot return to previous sections. After 60 minutes, candidates will automatically be moved on to the next section. It is strongly advised that candidates familiarise themselves with the test driver in the 15-minute tutorial which is available before the start of the examination.

The examination typically assesses more than one core activity in each section, and the order of core activities in the blueprint may not reflect their structure in the examination. All core activities will be assessed in each variant according to the weightings shown in the blueprint. Not all assessment outcomes will be examined in each variant of the exam.

Item types

Candidates will be asked to construct written responses in various standard business communication formats, such as emails, memos, reports, and briefing notes. The test driver allows responses to be formatted and presented professionally. For full details on this functionality and to try it out in advance, visit the Pearson VUE CIMA page.

The tasks do not require specific calculations, but as part of a written response where appropriate, candidates should demonstrate how they have used, analysed and interpreted data from both the pre-seen and new information presented during the examination.

Reference materials

Mathematical tables will be included for reference in each Case Study Examination are:

- Present value table
- Cumulative present value table
- Normal distribution table

Full details of the exam tables and formulae are available on the CGMA Study Hub.

A copy of the pre-seen material will be available for reference on-screen throughout the examination.

A calculator is included within the test driver although candidates are permitted to use their own calculators if it's on the CIMA-approved calculator list.

A whiteboard is available for planning and workings along with an on-screen scratch pad. Please note that depending on whether the exam is taken in a test centre or online will depend on whether the whiteboard is physical (test centre) or on-screen (online exam).

Marking, grading and feedback

The Case Study Examinations are human-marked.

The Case Study results will contain the following information:

- Grade: Pass or fail
- Scaled score: 0 to 150 with 80 and above being a pass

There is no requirement to obtain a pass or meet a minimum threshold for each core activity.

Feedback on performance against each core activity will be provided so that candidates know their areas of weakness for further study.

Find more information in performance descriptors document.

To support preparation, full post exam supporting materials for all Case Study Examinations are available two weeks after the exam results are published for the final Case Study in the shared pre-seen.

This material includes:

- pre-seen material
- exam variants
- suggested solutions
- examiners report
- marking guidance

An interim examiner report is published two weeks after the results are issued for the first Case Study window to provide guidance.

CIMA recommends that candidates use these materials to prepare for their examinations. Materials to support with examination preparation can be found in the CGMA Study Hub.

Candidate experience

There are four examination windows every year, based on two different pre-seen materials; The November/ February case studies share a pre-seen and so too do the May/ August Case Study Examinations. To find the dates for upcoming case study examinations and which examination windows share pre-seen material, please refer to the exam timetable. Pre-seen materials will be posted on the CGMA Study Hub in advance of the exams.

Candidates should use the pre-seen materials to prepare, fully immersing themselves in the simulated scenario, giving consideration the organisation's current position and future strategy. The examination itself will be a business simulation of the specified role which is outlined in the relevant Examination Blueprint document. Candidates will encounter various tasks and sub-tasks related to one or more core activities outlined in the blueprint.

New information will be provided at the beginning of each section. Candidates must formulate a response by considering this new information in conjunction with their previous analysis of the pre-seen material and apply this to their written response.

Examination results will be available from the candidate's exam dashboard six to eight weeks after the exam.

Candidates with special educational needs may benefit from specific arrangements when taking an exam. CIMA is committed to supporting candidates who may need additional support through their exams. Please review our special accommodations policy, which gives more details including what we can offer, how to apply, what documentation is required and much more.

Full details of operational and administrative aspects of the examination can be found on our website.

Acquiring the knowledge, skills and techniques required for the Senior Finance Manager role — Strategic level Objective Tests

Test purpose

For those that are eligible, Objective Tests for each of the individual subjects assure that candidates have acquired the fundamental knowledge and techniques for the role that will be simulated in the culminating Case Study Examination.

The Objective Tests cover all areas of the syllabus and ensure that learning has taken place across the breadth of the syllabus. If eligible, passing the Objective Tests is a pre-requisite for progressing to the capstone Case Study Examination.

The Objective Tests are weighted towards remembering and understanding and application with some analysis and evaluation in highly structured scenarios.

Understanding the blueprint

The blueprint is structured as follows:

- Exam content sections
- Lead and component outcomes
- Representative task statements.

A **representative task statement** is a plain English description of what a CGMA finance professional should know and be able to do.

The content and skill level determine the language and verbs used in the representative task.

CIMA will test up to the level of the task statement in the Objective Test (an objective test question on a particular topic could be set at a lower level than the task statement in the blueprint).

The format of the Objective Test blueprints follows that of the published syllabus for the CGMA Professional Qualification.

Weightings for content sections are also included in the individual subject blueprints.

Note: The task statements in the blueprint are representative and are not intended to be (nor should they be viewed as) an all-inclusive list of tasks that may be tested on the Examination. It also should be noted that the number of tasks associated with a particular content group or topic is not indicative of the extent such content group, topic or related skill level will be assessed on the test.

Objective Tests blueprints

E3: Strategic Management

Formulate strategy and create conditions for successful implementation.

Content weighting:

Content area	Weighting
A. The Strategy process	15%
B. Analysing the organisational ecosystem	20%
C. Generating strategic options	15%
D. Making strategic choices	15%
E. Strategic control	20%
F. Digital strategy	15%
	100%

E3A: The strategy process		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
1. The purpose of strategy	a. Strategy			✓		Analyse the advantages and disadvantages of strategy development.
	b. The purpose of strategy			✓		Analyse the essential features and characteristics of strategy including the long-term time horizon, considering the organisation as a whole, stakeholder analysis, gaining sustainable competitive advantage and environmental analyses.
2. The types and levels of strategy	a. Types of strategy			✓		Analyse the different approaches to strategy development including the traditional top-down approach, emergent strategies, incrementalism and freewheeling opportunism.
	b. Levels of strategy			✓		Analyse the levels of strategy including corporate, business and functional and the impact of strategic lenses on those levels.
3. The strategy process	a. The rational and emergent processes of arriving at strategy.			✓		As part of the strategy process, analyse the organisational ecosystem, strategic options or choice, and strategic implementation and control.

E3B: The organisational ecosystem		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
1. The elements of the ecosystem	a. Markets and competition			✓		Perform or review a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis to analyse an organisation's internal and external options related to overall strategy.
				✓		Perform or review a Mendelow's Matrix analysis to analyse an organisation's stakeholders related to their level of interest and power.
				✓		Prepare, or review, a Porter's Five Forces analysis to analyse an organisation's competition.
				✓		Prepare or review a Porter's Diamond analysis to analyse an organisation's position related to national competitive advantage.
	b. Society and regulation			✓		Perform a PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technology, Legal and Environment) analysis to analyse the impact of society on an organisation.
2. The drivers of change in ecosystem	a-e Institutional /systemic, social, market, technology and sustainability			✓		Analyse the drivers of change in an ecosystem including globalisation, geopolitical impact, demographics, customer empowerment, digital technology, automation and sustainability.
3. The impact of the ecosystem on organisational strategy	a. The impact of strategic networks and platforms on organisational strategy			✓		Analyse what an organisation can do to create value in an ecosystem and how that organisation can capture the value they helped to create.
	b. Stakeholder analysis in networks			✓		Analyse the participants and interactions in networks and platforms and their associated roles, reach, capabilities, rules, connections and courses.
				✓		Analyse how technologies such as cloud computing, social media, mobile and analytics impact ecosystems.
				✓		Analyse how technologies that create a more open, connected and complex business environment impact corporate social responsibility.

E3C: Strategic options		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
1. The context of generating strategic options	a. The role of governance and ethics in the strategy process			✓		Analyse the role of governance and business ethics in the context of generating strategic options.
	b. Purpose, vision, and values of organisation and their impact on strategy			✓		Analyse the linkage between purpose, vision and values to each other and to generating strategic options.
2. Option generation	a-b. Key strategic questions and an organisation's starting position			✓		Prepare or review Porter's generic strategies, Ansoff's matrix and method of growth for establishing a choice of possible future strategies.
	c. Potential organisational operating ecosystem			✓		Use trend analysis and system modelling to forecast potential organisational operating ecosystems.
	d. Frameworks to generate options			✓		Use scenario planning and long-range planning as tools in strategic decision-making.
				✓		Analyse value drivers (tangible and intangible) and the data needed to describe and measure them.
				✓		Analyse game theory approaches in strategic planning and decision-making (complex numerical questions will not be tested).
				✓		Analyse Real Options as a tool for strategic analysis (complex numerical questions will not be tested).

E3D: Strategic choices		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
1. Options	a. Criteria for evaluation			✓		Analyse strategic options and criteria for evaluation including the application of the suitability, acceptability and feasibility framework.
	b. Options against criteria			✓		Analyse options against criteria for strategic options.
	c. Recommend appropriate options				✓	Recommend appropriate action for strategic options.
2. Choices into coherent strategy	a. Value analysis			✓		Prepare or review a Porter's value chain analysis to assess whether an organisation has a sustainable competitive advantage.
	b. Portfolio analysis				✓	Recommend how to manage the product portfolio of an organisation to support the organisation's strategic goals.

E3E: Strategic control		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
1. Strategic performance management system	a. Detailed action plans			✓		Set appropriate strategic targets through the use of non-financial measures of strategic performance and their interaction with financial ones.
	b. Action plan communication				✓	Evaluation of strategic targets through the development of critical success factors (CSFs)
	c. Implementation			✓		Link CSFs to Key Performance Indicators and corporate strategy and their use as a basis for defining an organisation's information needs.
	d. Incentives to performance			✓		Effective communication of strategic performance targets, including the need to drive strategic performance through stretch targets and promotion of exceptional performance
2. Resource allocation to support strategy implementation	a. Resource availability			✓		Perform an analysis of key resources and capabilities needed for strategy implementation.
	b. Resource allocation to strategic choices			✓		Perform an analysis of forecasts, trend analysis, system modelling and in-depth consultation with experts to aid resource allocation.
3. Change management techniques and methodologies	a. Impact of strategy on organisation	✓				Understand the importance of managing critical periods of adaptive, evolutionary, reconstructive and revolutionary change.
	b. Change management strategies			✓		Analyse the impact of change on organisational culture (including the cultural web and McKinsey's 7s model).
	c. The role of the leader in managing change				✓	Evaluate the role of leadership in managing the change process and building and managing effective teams.
					✓	Evaluate the approaches and styles of change management and managing the resistance to change.

E3F: Digital strategy		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
1. The governance of digital transformation	a. The roles and responsibilities of the board and executive leadership in digital strategy			✓		Analyse the board's and senior leadership's role in an organisation's digital strategy, including defining value and charting, articulating, and overseeing the execution of digital strategy and transformation.
2. Digital transformation	a. Digital technologies			✓		Analyse an organisation's use, or potential use of, digital technologies, including cloud computing, big data analytics, process automation, AI, data visualisation, blockchain, internet of things, mobile and 3-D printing.
	b. Digital enterprise				✓	Advise management how to survive digital disruption and thrive in a digital age by rethinking their traditional business model and incorporating digital business and operating models.
3. Elements of digital strategies	a. Economics of digitisation				✓	Advise management on how digital transformations and the creation of vast, interconnected ecosystems driven by business to business can disrupt and reshape industries.
	b. Digital ecosystems				✓	Advise management on how the participants in an ecosystem impact an organisation's strategy, including the participant's role within the environment, reach through the environment and capability or key value proposition.
	c. Digital consumption				✓	Advise management on how technology and experience with new platform technologies and business models have transformed customer expectations to integrated and customised experiences.
	d. Data and metrics			✓		Analyse digital traction metrics, including scale, active usage and engagement to assist management in measuring the success of a digital business.
	e. Leadership and culture				✓	Advise management on leadership's role in building a digital workforce, including attracting and retaining talent, becoming an employer of choice, creating a workforce with digital skills, bringing leadership to the digital age and fostering a digital culture.

Objective Tests blueprints

P3: Risk Management

Analyse, evaluate and manage strategic, operational and cyber risks.

Content weighting:

Content area	Weighting
A. Enterprise risk	25%
B. Strategic risk	25%
C. Internal controls	25%
D. Cyber risk	25%
	100%

P3A: Enterprise risk		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
1. Sources and types of risk	a. Sources of risks			✓		Analyse upside and downside risks arising from internal and external sources and from different managerial decisions.
	b. Types of risks			✓		Analyse strategic and operational risks.
				✓		Analyse risks arising from international operations such as cultural differences and differences between legal systems (no specific real country will be tested).
2. Risk exposure	a. The impact of risk			✓		Quantify risk exposures (impact if an adverse event occurs) and their expected values and likelihood of occurrence.
	b. The likelihood of risks			✓		Analyse risk maps of risk exposures as a basis for reporting and analysing different risks.
	c. The interaction of different risks				✓	Evaluate implications of interaction between risks.
3. Ways of managing risk	a. Roles and responsibilities			✓		Analyse responsibilities of board members, the chief risk officer and other members of the management team with respect to understanding and managing risks.
					✓	Advise management on its responsibilities for reporting risks to shareholders and other stakeholders.
	b. Risk tolerance, appetite and capacity			✓		Analyse strategies for risk mitigation (including TARA: transfer, avoid, reduce and accept) in coordination with risk tolerance, appetite and capacity.
	c. Risk management frameworks				✓	Advise on compliance with COSO Enterprise Risk Management: Integrating with Strategy and Performance (2017) and ISO 31000 Risk Management — Guidelines (2018).
				✓		Analyse assurance maps as a structured way to identify the main sources and types of assurance in an organisation.
	d. Risk analytics				✓	Evaluate risk register entries, including the nature of the risk, ownership and mitigation.
			✓			Prepare risk reports for stakeholder responses.
					✓	Evaluate ethical, social and environmental dilemmas associated with risk management.

P3B: Strategic risk		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
1. Risks associated with formulating strategy	a. Relevance of the assumptions on which strategy is based			✓		Analyse risks associated with formulating strategy, including the relevance of the assumptions on which a company's strategy is based.
				✓		Analyse a company's strategic choice and associated risks, including competitive strategy, product-market strategy and method of growth.
	b. Potential sources and types of disruptions to strategy			✓		Analyse the potential sources and types of disruptions to strategy and impacts that scenario planning and stress testing strategy have on risk mitigation.
					✓	Recommend models and inputs for stress testing strategy.
2. The sources and impact of reputational risks	a. Sources of reputational risk			✓		Analyse the risks of unethical behaviour, including the sources of reputational risk.
	b. Impact of reputational risk on strategy			✓		Analyse the impact of reputational risk on strategy and the impact of strategy on brand and reputation of the organisation.
3. Governance risks	a. The role of board and its committees in managing strategic risk	✓				Understand the role of the board, chair of the board and CEO in managing strategic risk. and its committees in managing strategic risk.
		✓				Understand the role of the executive and non-executive directors on a board of directors.
				✓		Analyse the role of the board's committees, including the role of non-executive directors and the roles of the audit committee (including the role and responsibilities of the external auditor), compensation committee, risk committee and nomination committee in managing strategic risk.
				✓		Analyse the risks associated with directors' compensation, including impact on strategy and reputational risk.
	b. Failure of governance and its impact on strategy			✓		Analyse the risks associated with poor governance or poor governance structures and the impact on strategy.

P3C: Internal controls		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
1. Internal control systems	a. Roles and responsibilities for internal controls				✓	Advise on the responsibilities of directors, managers and internal auditors for internal control.
					✓	Advise on the responsibilities of the risk manager.
	b. The purpose of internal control		✓			Demonstrate understanding that a company's internal controls should provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives relating to operations, reporting and compliance.
	c. The features of internal control systems			✓		Analyse the set of standards, processes and structures that provide the basis for carrying out internal control across the organisation, including tone at the top, organisational structure, assignment of authority and responsibility, integrity and ethical values.
				✓		Analyse the appropriateness of control systems for the management of an organisation.
2. Recommend internal controls for risk management	a. COSO — Internal Control — Integrated Framework			✓		Analyse an organisation's process for identifying and assessing risk to the achievement of objectives, including considering the impact of possible changes in the external environment and within its own business model that may render internal control ineffective.
	b. Control weakness				✓	Identify and evaluate risk with a view to advising on the control system and the management of control weaknesses.
				✓		Analyse an organisation's control activities at various stages of the business processes and over the technology environment. Additionally, consider the preventive or detective controls, manual or automated activities and segregation of duties.
	c. Compliance failures				✓	Evaluate presence and functioning of internal controls against internal and external criteria and recommend responses to compliance failures.
				✓		Analyse an organisation's information and communication process, including the internal and external communication of relevant business information.

P3C: Internal controls (cont.)		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
	d. Internal controls for risk management				✓	Recommend preventive and detective control activities, including segregation of duties, in the main functional areas.
3. Internal audit in organisations	a. Forms of internal audit	✓				Understand the forms of internal audit including compliance audit, fraud investigation, value for money audit/ management audit and social and environmental audit.
	b. Internal audit process	✓				Understand the operation of internal audit, the assessment of audit risk and the process of analytical review.
		✓				Understand inherent risk, control risk and detection risk.
					✓	Interpret results of analytical review and advise on the reliability.
	c. Effective internal audit		✓			Determine the elements of effective internal audit including independence, staffing and resourcing.
	d. The internal audit report			✓		Analyse the results of internal audit reports and any associated findings.

P3D: Cybersecurity risks		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
1. Cybersecurity threats	a. Nature and impact of cybersecurity risks	✓				Understand the types of sensitive information the entity creates, collects, transmits, uses and stores that is susceptible to cybersecurity risk.
		✓				Understand the organisation's cybersecurity objectives related to availability, confidentiality, integrity of data, and integrity of processing and the process for establishing, maintaining and approving them.
		✓				Understand the organisation's characteristics of technologies, connection types, use of service providers and delivery channels.
			✓			Determine the organisation's cybersecurity risks and environmental, technological, organisational and other changes that could have a significant effect on the entity's cybersecurity risk management program.
				✓		Analyse specific exposures arising from IT systems and networks.
	b. Types of cybersecurity risks		✓			Determine internal and external threats arising from malware and recommend defences.
			✓			Determine the types of web application attack and recommend defences.
			✓			Determine the threats and opportunities created by ethical and unethical hackers, including social engineering.
	c. Risk of security vulnerabilities			✓		Analyse potential downside risks arising from cybersecurity breaches.
2. Cyber security processes	a. Cyber security organisational characteristics	✓				Understand the organisation's cybersecurity risk governance structure, including the processes for establishing, maintaining, and communicating integrity and ethical values, providing board oversight, establishing accountability, and hiring and developing qualified personnel.
			✓			Determine how the organisation identifies, assesses and manages the risks associated with vendors and business partners.

P3D: Cybersecurity risks (cont.)		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
			✓			Determine the entity's process for communicating cybersecurity objectives, expectations, responsibilities and related matters to both internal and external users.
					✓	Recommend suitable company policies on cyber security and suitable preventive and detective controls in response to vulnerabilities.
	b. Security controls		✓			Determine the organisation's process for developing a response to assessed risks, including the design and implementation of control processes.
					✓	Recommend cybersecurity responses that comply with standards (ISO27001).
	c. Centralisation in security		✓			Determine the process the organisation uses to assess the effectiveness of controls included in its cybersecurity risk management program, including information about the corrective actions taken when security events, threats and vulnerabilities occur
				✓		Analyse outputs from cybersecurity monitoring systems.
3. Cyber security tools and techniques	a. Forensic analysis				✓	Recommend techniques for the investigation of known and suspected breaches.
	b. Malware analysis				✓	Develop responses to known and potential malware threats.
	c. Penetration testing				✓	Improve cybersecurity by testing for exploitable vulnerabilities.
	d. Software security				✓	Recommend appropriate security standards for software.
4. Cyber risk reporting	a. Cyber risk reporting frameworks				✓	Evaluate cyber risk reporting needs of board, managers and other stakeholders (including users in the case of service organisations).
					✓	Evaluate management's description of CRMP or service organisation's system.
					✓	Advise on content of cyber risk report in response to results of work performed.

Objective Tests blueprints

F3: Financial Strategy

Create financial strategy, evaluate and manage financial risk and assess organisational value.

Content weighting:

Content area	Weighting
A. Financial policy decisions	15%
B. Sources of long-term funds	25%
C. Financial risks	20%
D. Business valuation	40%
	100%

F3A: Financing policy decisions		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
1. Strategic financial objectives	a. Different types of organisations and their financial objectives			✓		Analyse overall strategic financial objectives (e.g., value for money, maximising shareholder's wealth, providing a surplus) of different types of entities (e.g., incorporated, unincorporated, quoted, unquoted, private sector, public section, for-profit and not-for-profit).
	b. Financial objectives			✓		Analyse financial objectives (e.g., earning growth, dividend growth, gearing) and assessment of attainment.
				✓		Analyse the impact to financial objectives considering changes in underlying economic (e.g., interest rates, exchange rates, inflation) and business variables (e.g., margins, volume)
	c. Non-financial objectives			✓		Analyse the non-financial objectives (e.g., human capital, intellectual capital, social capital and relational capital) and assessment of attainment.
					✓	Advise management on the principles and scope of reporting environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues (e.g., Global Reporting Initiative's Sustainability Reporting Framework and UN Sustainable Development Goals).
2. Strategic financial policy decisions	a. Investment, financing, and dividend policy decisions and interrelationships between policy decision areas			✓		Analyse the investment, financing and dividend decisions and the interrelationship between them in meeting the cash needs of the entity.
				✓		Analyse forecasted financial statements and future cash needs and the relationship to investment, financing and dividend decisions.
				✓		Analyse interests of shareholders and other stakeholders in investment, financing and dividend decisions (e.g., impact on investor and lender rations, compliance with debt covenants and attainment of financial objectives).
					✓	Evaluate financing requirements and cash available for payment of dividends based on the overall consideration of the forecasted future cash flows arising from investment decisions, business strategy and forecasted business and economic variables.

F3A: Financing policy decisions (cont.)		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
3. The external influences on financial strategic decisions	a. Market requirements				✓	Advise on the development of financial and non-financial strategy regarding the lender's loan conditions (e.g., lending criteria relating to business plans, liquidity ratios, cash forecasts, credit rating, quality of management and, where applicable, green financing).
	b. Taxation			✓		Analyse impact of taxation regulations (domestic and international) in setting financial strategy.
	c. Regulatory requirements			✓		Analyse impact of industry regulation in setting financial strategy.

F3B: Sources of long-term funds		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
1. The capital structure of a firm	a. Choice of capital structure			✓		Analyse capital structure theories (traditional theory, Modigliani and Miller's (MM) theories with and without tax and practical considerations and calculations using MM formulae).
	b. Changes in capital structure			✓		Perform and analyse calculation of cost of equity or weighted average cost of capital (WACC) to reflect a change in capital structure.
				✓		Analyse impact of choice of capital structure on financial statements and key performance measures (e.g., ratios of interest to investors and compliance with debt covenants).
				✓		Analyse the structure of debt/equity profile of a group of companies, including tax implications and thin capitalisation rules.
					✓	Evaluate the impact of changes in capital structure for an incorporated entity on shareholders and other stakeholders.

F3B: Sources of long-term funds (cont.)		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
2. Long-term debt finance	a. Selecting debt instruments			✓		Analyse the criteria for selecting appropriate debt instruments (e.g., bank borrowings, bonds, convertible bonds, commercial paper and green finance).
	b. Target debt profile			✓		Analyse the target debt profile (e.g., interest, currency and maturity profile) to manage interest, currency and refinancing risks.
				✓		Analyse the use of cross-currency swaps and interest rate swaps to change the currency or interest rate profile of debt.
	c. Issuing debt securities			✓		Advise on the issuance of debt securities (private placement, capital market issues and the role of advisers and underwriters).
	d. Debt covenants			✓		Analyse debt covenants for compliance (e.g., interest cover, net debt/EBITDA, debt/debt and equity).
	e. Tax considerations			✓		Analyse the tax considerations in the selection of debt instruments.
					✓	Evaluate and compare alternative methods of raising long-term debt finance.
3. Equity finance	a. Methods of flotation			✓		Analyse methods of flotation and implications for the management of the entity and for its stakeholders.
	b. Rights issues			✓		Analyse use of rights issues, including choice of discount rate, impact on shareholder wealth and calculation of the theoretical ex-rights price (TERP) and yield adjusted TERP.
					✓	Evaluate and compare alternative methods of raising equity finance.
4. Dividend policy	a. Cash dividends			✓		Analyse the impact of cash dividends on shareholder value and entity value, financial statements and performance measures.
					✓	Evaluate the alternatives to cash dividends and their impact on shareholder wealth and entity performance measures.
	b. Scrip dividends			✓		Analyse the impact of scrip dividends on shareholder value and entity value, financial statements and performance measures.
	c. Share repurchase programmes			✓		Analyse the impact of share repurchase programmes on shareholder value and entity value, financial statements and performance measures.
				✓		Analyse implications for shareholder value of alternative dividend policies including MM Theory of dividend irrelevancy.
					✓	Recommend appropriate dividend policies including consideration of shareholder expectations and the cash needs of the entity.

F3C: Financial risks		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
1. The sources and types of financial risks	a. Sources and types of financial risk			✓		Analyse the sources and types of financial risk (economic, political, currency and interest rate) and their impact on an organisation.
2. Financial risks	a. Quantification of financial risks			✓		Analyse the effects of exchange rates (e.g., interest rate parity, purchasing power parity and the Fisher effect).
				✓		Analyse value at risk to measure the risk of loss for investments.
3. Managing financial risks	a. Economic and political risks				✓	Recommend methods for responding to economic, transaction and translation risk.
	b. Currency risk instruments				✓	Evaluate operations and features of the more common instruments for managing currency risks including swaps, forward contracts, money market hedges, futures and options.
	c. Interest rate risk instruments				✓	Evaluate operations and features of the more common instruments for managing interest risks including swaps, forward rate agreements, futures and options.
					✓	Recommend techniques for combining options in order to achieve a specific risk profile such as caps, collars and floors.
					✓	Recommend internal hedging techniques.

F3D: Business valuation		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
1. Context of valuation	a. Listing of firms			✓		Analyse the advantages and disadvantages of becoming a listed company and the impact to various stakeholders.
	b. Mergers and acquisitions (M&A)				✓	Advise on the reasons for and against acquisitions, mergers and divestments (e.g., strategic position, synergistic benefits, Big Data opportunities and risks).
	c. Demergers and divestments			✓		Analyse taxation implications of acquisitions, mergers and divestments (group loss relief, differences in taxation rates, withholding tax and double tax treaties).
				✓		Analyse process and implications of a management buy-out, including potential conflicts of interest.
				✓		Analyse the role/function/implications of acquisition by private equity or venture capitalists.
2. Valuation methods	a. Different valuation methods			✓		Calculate the value of an entity using different asset valuation methods.
	b. Strengths and weaknesses of each valuation method			✓		Calculate the value of an intangible asset (intellectual property rights and brands) using different valuation methods.
				✓		Analyse different methods of valuation (share prices, earnings valuation, dividend valuation, discounted cash flow valuation).
				✓		Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of each valuation method.
				✓		Use the Capital asset pricing model (CAPM), including the meaning and derivation of the component and the ability to gear and un-gear betas.
				✓		Calculate an appropriate cost of capital for use in discounted cash flow analysis (e.g., cost of equity or WACC) by reference to the nature of the transaction (e.g., division or entire entity), including use of CAPM, dividend valuation model and MM WACC formula.
			✓			Apply the efficient market hypothesis and its relevance for the valuation of quoted entities.

F3D: Business valuation (cont.)		Skill level				
Lead outcome	Component outcome	Remembering and understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Representative task statement
3. Pricing and bid issues	a. Pricing issues			✓		Analyse forms of consideration and terms for acquisitions and their impact on shareholders, including taxation impact.
				✓		Analyse treatment of target entity debt (settlement and refinancing).
				✓		Analyse methods/implications of financing a cash offer and refinancing target entity debt.
	b. Bid issues			✓		Analyse bid negotiation (e.g., managing a hostile bid) including agency issues.
4. Post transaction issues	a. Post transaction value			✓		Analyse post transaction value for both acquirer and seller (e.g., taking into account synergistic benefits, forecast performance and market response).
	b. Benefit realisation			✓		Analyse integration of management and systems and the effective realisation of synergistic benefits.
				✓		Analyse types of exit strategies and their implications.

Examination approach

Structure and format

Each Objective Test comprises 60 questions drawn from across the individual subjects of the syllabus in line with the weightings for each content area as set out in the blueprint. Each Objective Test is 90 minutes long.

It is strongly advised that candidates familiarise themselves with the test driver in the 15-minute tutorial which is available before the start of the examination.

All questions are independent and worth equal marks. Partial marks are not available – all elements of a question must be answered correctly for it to be marked correct. Candidates may answer questions in any order and can navigate back and forth to any question to change their answer, time permitting.

Item types

The following objective test items may be used:

- Multiple choice
- Multiple response
- Fill in the blank (number entry)
- Drag and drop

Reference materials

Mathematical tables and formulae will be included for reference in each Objective Test as follows:

P3	Present value table, cumulative present value table and normal distribution table
E3	None
F3	Present value table, cumulative present value table, normal distribution table and the following formulae: ▸ DVM ▸ CAPM ▸ WACC ▸ M&M ▸ TERP ▸ FX, interest rate and inflation ▸ VaR

Full details of the exam tables and formulae are available on the CGMA Study Hub. A calculator is included within the test driver although candidates are permitted to use their own calculators if it's on the CIMA-approved calculator list.

A whiteboard is available for planning and workings along with an on-screen scratch pad. Please note that depending on whether the exam is taken in a test centre or online will depend on whether the whiteboard is physical (test centre) or on-screen (online exam).

Marking, grading and feedback

On the successful completion of an Objective Test, the candidate will be given a provisional pass or fail grade before leaving the test centre. CIMA will confirm the final grade on the candidate's exam dashboard within 48 hours of taking the assessment.

More information on how to interpret results can be found in the exam results guide.

Feedback on performance in each content area of the examination will be given in the form of a proficient/not proficient rating so that candidates know their areas of weakness for further study.. There is no requirement to achieve a grade of proficient in all content areas.

Candidate experience

The Objective Tests are computer-based and available on demand at more than 5,000 Pearson VUE assessment centres worldwide or online. Candidates can book examinations up to 48 hours before the examination date, subject to availability.

Find more information on the operational and administrative aspects of the examination.

There is a guide that gives further information on whether a test centre or an online examination is appropriate here.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Capstone examination	A capstone examination is designed to demonstrate mastery of previously acquired knowledge and skills and the drawing together of these to provide solutions to unstructured problems. It takes place at the end of a period of study and serves as a culminating assessment experience. By its position and design it is a **synoptic assessment.**
Case Study	A (fictional) realistic simulation of an organisation or problem that a candidate could reasonably expect to face if operating in the role being assessed.
Simulation	An assessment exercise that involves the achievement of a specific task or tasks which seek to reproduce real life situations.
Synoptic assessment	A synoptic assessment is one that combines two or more modules (subjects) of study into a single assessment. Its aim is the "undoing" of the modularisation (in CIMA's case, pillar and subject divisions) of the syllabus and to help students make connections between the modules and provide a more holistic approach to learning and assessment. It is typically delivered at the end of a course or programme to assess across all the knowledge, skills and behaviours developed within that course.
Blueprint	A test blueprint is a document that gives clear guidance to all stakeholders (candidates, tuition providers, examination item writers) on what is examinable for a particular test. It will also normally include details about the test such as information on the weightings for/ importance of specific elements of the test or mapping the different cognitive levels of the test content.
Task statement (Objective Tests)	A task statement is a plain English description of what someone should be able to **know and do.** For Objective Tests, task statements will form the basis of the **blueprint**.
Core activities (Case Study)	Business-related tasks which are common to the role being simulated and valued by employers which, if performed satisfactorily, enables the demonstration of the **assessment outcomes.**
Assessment outcome (Case Study)	A clear assertion of what a CGMA-qualified professional can do when the examination has been completed and what the assessment will be designed to measure. Case Study assessment outcomes will be **synoptic**.

Appendix

International accounting standards

For all students of the F pillar and all Case Studies

The CGMA syllabus for the F pillar (and BA3) makes numerous references to the International Accounting Standards. Although students are not expected to learn the title of each one, the content and application of a number of them are an essential part of the learning outcomes and examinable in both Objective Tests and Case Study Examinations.

This table describes the content, briefly, of the standards that are currently in publication and the relevance to each CGMA subject. At the end of this appendix, we provide a summary of how the examinable date for IFRS is determined for the Objective Tests.

International financial reporting standards (IFRS)

Number	Name	Application/relevant articles	Useful to be studied in conjunction with:	Examinable subjects
IFRS 1	First-time Adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards	Not examinable		
IFRS 2	Share-based Payment	Not examinable		
IFRS 3	Business Combinations	For the acquirer of a target entity, it explains how to recognise and measure: ▶ assets and liabilities of the acquiree; ▶ any non-controlling interest in the acquire; and ▶ goodwill or a gain on a bargain purchase. Also explains the disclosure requirements to enable users to determine the nature and financial impact of the business combination.	IAS 27, IAS 28, IFRS 10, IFRS 11	From F2
IFRS 5	Non-current Assets Held for Sale and Discontinued Operations	Defines a non-current asset held for sale and explains how such an asset is measured and presented in the financial statements. The standards also defines what is meant by a discontinued activity and explains the presentation and disclosure of such activities in the financial statements. However, this element of the standard is not examinable.	IAS 16, IAS 36	From F1
IFRS 6	Exploration for and Evaluation of Mineral Resources	Not examinable		

Number	Name	Application/relevant articles	Useful to be studied in conjunction with:	Examinable subjects
IFRS 7	Financial Instruments: Disclosures	Not examinable		
IFRS 8	Operating Segments	Not examinable		
IFRS 9	Financial Instruments	Provides the recognition and measurement rules for financial instruments.		From F2
IFRS 10	Consolidated Financial Statements	For an entity that controls one or more other entities, sets out the principles for the presentation and preparation of the consolidated financial statements.	IAS 27, IAS 28, IFRS 3, IFRS 11	From F2
IFRS 11	Joint Arrangements	Sets out the financial reporting principles for entities that have an interest in jointly controlled arrangements.	IAS 27, IAS 28, IFRS 3, IFRS 10	From F2
IFRS 12	Disclosure of Interests in Other Entities	Describes the disclosure requirements for an entity that has interests in other entities to enable the users to evaluate the nature and risks of the relationships, in addition to the effects on the group financial statements.		From F2
IFRS 13	Fair Value Measurement	Defines fair value and describes how it is measured as well as the disclosure requirements about such measurements.		From F2
IFRS 14	Regulatory Deferral Accounts	Not examinable		
IFRS 15	Revenue from Contracts with Customers	Prescribes the accounting treatment for revenue.		BA3 and F2
IFRS 16	Leases	Describes the accounting treatment of leases in both the lessee's financial statements (F1) and the lessor's financial statements (F2). Note: Accounting for sale and leaseback transactions is not examinable.		From F1
IFRS 17	Insurance Contracts	Not examinable		
IFRS 18	Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements.	Provides guidance on the requirements for the presentation and disclosure of information in financial statements.		From F1
IFRS 19	Subsidiaries without Public Accountability: Disclosures	Not examinable		

International accounting standards (IAS)

Number	Name	Application/relevant articles	Useful to be studied in conjunction with:	Examinable subjects
IAS 2	Inventories	Provides guidance on the determination of cost of inventory (raw materials, work in progress and finished goods), its valuation and any subsequent write-offs as an expense.		From BA3
IAS 7	Statment of Cash Flows	Provides guidance on definitions of cash and cash equivalents and how to present cash flows in a statement of cash flows.		From BA3
IAS 8	Basis of Preparation of Financial Statements	Prescribes the basis of preparation of financial statements which includes general matters, accounting policies, accounting estimates and corrections of errors.		
IAS 10	Events after the Reporting Period	Describes the definition of events after the reporting period and explains how they are accounted for and any disclosures required.		From F1
IAS 12	Income Taxes	Prescribes the accounting treatment of income taxes and deferred tax.		From F2
IAS 16	Property, Plant and Equipment	Explains the recognition and measurement of property, plant and equipment. This includes initial cost, subsequent expenditure, depreciation and revaluation of such assets.	IAS 36, IAS 38, IFRS 5	From BA3
IAS 19	Employee Benefits	Not examinable		
IAS 20	Accounting for Government Grants and Disclosure of Government Assistance	Not examinable		
IAS 21	The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates	Considers the accounting treatment of transactions in a currency other than the entity's home currency. This includes transactions for an individual entity and how to translate a subsidiary entity in preparation for consolidation.		F2
IAS 23	Borrowing Costs	Not examinable		
IAS 24	Related Party Disclosure	Explains the disclosure requirements that draw attention to the possibility that the statements of financial position and profit or loss may be affected by transactions and outstanding balances with parties related to the entity.		From F2
IAS 26	Accounting and Reporting by Retirement Benefit Plans	Not examinable		
IAS 27	Separate Financial Statements	Outlines the accounting and disclosure requirements for investments in subsidiaries, joint ventures and associates when an entity prepares separate financial statements.	IFRS 3, IFRS 10, IFRS 11, IAS 28	From F2

Number	Name	Application/relevant articles	Useful to be studied in conjunction with:	Examinable subjects
IAS 28	Investments in Associates and Joint Ventures	Explains how to account for investments in associates. This includes the application of the equity method used when accounting for associates and joint ventures.	IAS 27, IFRS 3, IFRS 10, IFRS 11	From F2
IAS 29	Financial Reporting in Hyperinflationary Economies	Not examinable		
IAS 32	Financial Instruments: Presentation	Prescribes the presentation of financial instruments.	IFAS 7, IFRS 9	From F2
IAS 33	Earnings per Share	Prescribes the principles for the calculation and presentation of basic and diluted earnings per share.		From F2
IAS 34	Interim Financial Reporting	Not examinable		
IAS 36	Impairment of Assets	Explains that an asset or cash-generating unit cannot be reported at a value higher than its recoverable amount and how to account for any resulting impairment.	IAS 16 IAS 38	From F1
IAS 37	Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets	Prescribes the accounting and disclosure requirements for provisions, contingent liabilities and contingent assets	IAS 10	From F2
IAS 38	Intangible Assets	Prescribes the recognition and measurement of intangible assets.	IAS 36	BA3 and F2
IAS 39	Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement	Not examinable		
IAS 40	Investment Property	Not examinable		
IAS 41	Agriculture	Not examinable		

IFRS sustainability disclosure standards

Number	Name	Application/relevant articles	Useful to be studied in conjunction with:	Examinable subjects
IFRS S1	General Requirements for Disclosure of Sustainability-related Financial Information	Prescribes how an entity prepares and reports its sustainability-related financial disclosures and sets out general requirements for the content and presentation of those disclosures, so that the information disclosed is useful to primary users in making decisions relating to providing resources to the entity. Note: an understanding of the objectives and scope is required.	IFRS S2	F2
IFRS S2	Climate-related Disclosures	Requires an entity to disclose information about climate-related risks and opportunities that could reasonably be expected to affect an entity's cash flows, its access to finance or cost of capital over the short, medium or long term. Note: an understanding of the objectives and scope is required.	IFRS S1	F2

Policy regarding examinable dates for IAS/IFRS for the CGMA professional qualification

The assessments will be set in accordance with relevant International Accounting Standards and International Financial Reporting Standards. This also applies to the material relating to Financial Reporting Exposure Drafts.

As a general rule, CIMA will examine such standards from the effective date (or as close as is practical). This will normally be the date that a new examination blueprint becomes effective. Details of specific standards that are examinable for the period covered by the examination blueprint will be stated in the objective test section of the blueprint.

For Case Study Examinations, where individual standards will not normally be directly assessed and where marking can accommodate a variety of approaches, candidates may refer to new standards before the effective date where early adoption is permitted.

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