

# CIMA guidelines for effective course delivery

Welcome to the CIMA guidelines for effective course delivery.

We hope these will provide a practical guide to help you set up a successful course of tuition leading to the CIMA exams. These guidelines are the result of many years work with tuition providers across both public and private sectors and offer a blueprint for successful and effective course delivery. They offer ideas grouped around the process providers might go through when establishing a course of CIMA tuition, that is:

- design
- deliver
- support and
- review.

The focus is on the students' learning processes and experiences, and the environment within which learning takes place. Further detailed information to support these guidelines can be found in a series of advisory 'implementation guides.'

Tuition providers wishing to be added to the CIMA college listing service must have read and indicated a commitment to implementing these guidelines

## Design

### **CIMA specific classes**

Where possible, classes should be CIMA specific. This means that CIMA students should not be taught alongside students from other courses as there is not usually sufficient similarity between all the courses to avoid disadvantaging some students. Market research with local employers and into other available tuition is useful to help identify whether dedicated courses for students from different professional bodies are viable.

### **Course planning and schemes of work**

Schemes of work covering the syllabus in full should be prepared for each subject taught and made available to students at the start of the course. The course should allow time for both syllabus coverage and revision and ideally incorporate tuition on appropriate exam techniques. Homework and course assignments should be plotted into schemes of work. Students should be made aware of their input into the learning process and any associated expectations of them. For a detailed example of a scheme of work, see implementation guide 6.

## **Course handbook**

Students and their employers should benefit from a course handbook which gives full details of the requirements of the CIMA qualification, courses offered, dates, times, fees plus information on quality control/complaints procedures and so on. Course handbooks should provide an idea of the maximum numbers of students who will be taught in class and of facilities to support them in their studies e.g. library/IT access, rest and refreshment facilities, disabled access and so on. The course handbook should also contain names, qualifications and contact details of teaching staff, together with their specialist subjects. For a detailed example of a course handbook see the CIMA implementation guide 1.

## **Delivery**

### **Control and co-ordination**

It is essential to have a named individual who is responsible for the co-ordination of the course and is the main point of contact for students. This person should be responsible for monitoring any problems, for example staff absences, and for notifying students/employers if courses have to be cancelled or postponed due to staff unavailability. Where courses are cancelled, students should be notified immediately and their fee reimbursed.

Student details, including contact ID numbers and records of attendance, should be kept for all students so that accurate pass rate data can be determined. Students should be asked for their CIMA student ID on the course enrolment form. In order to comply with the Data Protection Act (UK only), students should be asked to consent to information regarding their attendance and progress being shared with their employer and CIMA.

### **Study materials**

It is important to use quality study materials. We recommend the CIMA study systems. They are core reading for each syllabus subject and are largely written and endorsed by the CIMA examiners. Should you choose to use alternative materials, you should ensure that they are specific to the CIMA qualification, and updated regularly. Up-to-date materials are vital as the CIMA syllabus is constantly evolving. The new 2010 Professional Qualification syllabus was launched in 2010. Up-to-date information on the latest syllabus and exam developments is available via the CIMA website. We advise you to check the site regularly to ensure you are up to date with any changes.

Teaching staff should have access to the CIMA' *Financial Management* magazine and website.

### **Teaching staff**

To be effective, teaching staff must have a detailed knowledge of the latest CIMA syllabus and learning outcomes for the paper/s they teach. They should also have access to/have studied the post exam guides and questions and answers for a number of previous exam diets/pilot questions for the new syllabus.

Staff should be suitably qualified for the papers they teach. It is likely that many will be members of professional accountancy bodies, or other appropriate professional institutions, such as taxation or law. Some might also have additional teaching qualifications. All staff will benefit from additional development opportunities in teaching/coaching and mentoring skills.

It is helpful if staff can meet together regularly to discuss issues such as the content and delivery of the course, exchange ideas about teaching methods and discuss any other problems which are being experienced. This is particularly important for part-time staff to keep them up to date with developments within the overall course plan and to help them feel part of the teaching team. See implementation guide 5 for guidelines on staff qualifications.

## Support

### Tuition support

Students should be provided with a copy of the course handbook together with information on enrolment and registration procedures, subject selection and the demands of the CIMA syllabus. They should also be made aware of/provided with access to the vast range of support resources available on the CIMA website.

Students should be offered the opportunity to practise exam standard questions and given guidance on how to assess their answers. Ideally there should be regular progress reviews for students (this could include timed questions, mock exams, self assessments and so on). Students should be encouraged to discuss their progress/any problems individually with their lecturer/s.

### Facilities

Where possible, the college should seek to provide facilities which will assist students in their studies and provide a comfortable environment in which to study (taught courses only). Facilities available may include a library, PC's/e-learning materials, internet access, rest rooms, facilities for snacks and drinks, disabled access and so on.

## Review

### Review process

Colleges should undertake a documented review process for each course cycle covering:

- enrolment and retention;
- exam performance;
- student feedback;
- learning materials;
- teaching and delivery issues;
- quality control procedures;
- accommodation and resources; and
- action planning.

For a pro forma on course review, see implementation guide 4.

### Student feedback

Student feedback is an important part of the review process and students should be encouraged to complete feedback forms, for each paper studied, at least once in every course cycle. Feedback questionnaires should include questions re staff performance, for example, punctuality and attendance, the setting and marking of homework and so on. Students' views should be reflected in future course planning; problem areas should be identified and appropriate action plans developed to address the issues raised. For an example of a student evaluation form, see implementation guide 2.

For suggestions for the formation and activities of a staff-student consultative group to obtain feedback from students download implementation guide 3.

### Employer feedback

Whilst it can be difficult to get employers to participate in the learning process, it is very useful if their feedback can be gained, particularly for the purposes of future course planning/marketing. CIMA suggest that contact with employers is maintained and that they are invited to feed into the course review process whenever possible.

For further details on CIMA Learning please visit our website or email [cimalearning@cimaglobal.com](mailto:cimalearning@cimaglobal.com)