

## **Guidelines on the contribution academic experience may make towards a successful application for membership of CIMA**

### **Introduction**

These guidelines will help CIMA passed finalists who have worked in an academic environment and wish to include that experience in their application for membership. These notes should be read in conjunction with the Practical Experience Requirements (PERs) and the associated Indicative Outcomes. They help to clarify whether, and to what extent, academic experience can count towards fulfilling CIMA's PER.

It is important to bear in mind that CIMA's new Career Profile format for membership applications is associated with revised Practical Experience Requirements. In submitting a minimum of three years' relevant practical experience for assessment, the only **absolute** requirement is that at least 18 months of those three years is demonstrated in the Core area (Area 2) of the PER.

### **Definition**

In this context, academic experience is defined as any work experience obtained in an academic environment which may satisfy one or more areas of CIMA's PER.

### **Guidelines**

Teaching and lecturing, even in accountancy and related subjects, do not satisfy any of the PER. It is acknowledged that teachers and lecturers are involved in imparting knowledge about theory and best practice (and may make critical assessments of the value to management of various ideas and techniques). However, they do not gain 'hands-on' work experience, perform organisationally based tasks, or provide advice to managers.

It is accepted that the knowledge and skills which underpin the lecturing role will enhance other types of experience (such as consulting and/or departmental management) which do make a useful contribution to CIMA's PER.

For this reason, CIMA has identified four areas of academic work which it will consider as contributing towards its PER. These are:

- 1 Consultancy and assignments
- 2 Research and publication
- 3 Management and administrative activities
- 4 Other experience.

#### **1 Consultancy and assignments**

The provision of advice, based on detailed analyses of internal and external factors, is an important element in the role of an effective management accountant. Therefore, consultancy involving advice to management in areas directly related to the PER can provide opportunities for gaining relevant experience. In this area, CIMA will want to assess the applicant's role in making suggestions, implementing recommendations, and also their responsibility for outcomes. The significance of the consultancy work, and the degree of real engagement with the organisation concerned, will affect the extent to which CIMA will accredit this work towards fulfilment of the PER.

Applicants should give full details about the nature of any consulting assignments, the level of responsibility for the work, and the amount of contact with (and time spent in) client organisation(s).

## **2 Research and publication**

Empirically-based case study research, whether or not followed by publication(s), normally involves visits to an outside company. It is often supported by 'secondary' research on public statistics and relevant academic literature. It can therefore provide valuable opportunities for contact with industry and exposure to their management accounting and control systems.

When describing experience in this area, applicants should consider carefully the extent to which they have drawn upon real practice during their activities. They should also describe their involvement and interaction with the company, and specify any changes in company policy or practice which may have resulted from their involvement.

## **3 Management and administrative activities**

Lecturers often have managerial responsibilities within their own department or organisation. These may be tasks such as the administration of ongoing academic or support activities, and/or the design and launch of new courses/programmes (including consideration of revenue, costs and investment required, as well as resource allocation decisions). These activities might include exposure to the preparation and monitoring of central or departmental budgets, accounts and systems of the organisation.

This sort of experience should be described fully, if the applicant wishes it to be considered as part of their relevant experience.

## **4 Other**

There are additional areas of activity which may be relevant and thus contribute to an applicant's practical experience, and it is worthwhile submitting for assessment any experience of this nature.

These are:

- periods of time spent in specific areas (e.g. managing a crèche or a college shop) which may have included related accounting;
- working on the accounts of any clubs or societies within the applicant's own organisation (whether in a voluntary or paid capacity);
- experience gained while on secondment or sabbatical;
- working on projects during vacations.

## **Conclusion**

Certain types of experience, gained whilst employed in an academic environment, will contribute towards the total relevant practical experience claimed by an applicant. As a general guide, it is likely that such experience will count as (a maximum of) 12 months towards the total.

Any application for membership of CIMA which focuses entirely on academic work will be unlikely to succeed, owing to a lack of direct line experience in the three areas of the PER, although CIMA is prepared to be flexible in instances where the experience is of exceptionally high quality across a broad range of PER areas.

When preparing their submission, applicants should indicate the nature of their academic employment (subject, level, and whether full or part-time), and describe experience which meets any of the criteria described above. They should also briefly document any additional activities, such as project supervision and/or the design of 'armchair' case studies, which might contribute towards fulfilment of CIMA's PER.