

Operational Case Study Practice Exam

Marking Guidance

Aims of the assessment

Available four times a year, the case study exams consolidate the learning at each level to reflect real-life work situations. They are human marked.

This approach is rigorous and allows us to test a wide range of knowledge and skills across each level, in a way that encourages students to go beyond specialising in a particular pillar.

We test a variety of skills including research and analysis, how to present information, and communication skills.

This change is a cornerstone of CIMA's commitment to delivering the competencies employers have told us they need. Our changes in assessment contribute to our wider aim of improving 'employability'.

Competency based assessment

The integrated case study exams are set within a simulated business context, placing the candidate in the job role matched to the competency level. The exam is intended to replicate "a day in the life" of a finance professional operating at that level and provide a simulated environment for candidates to demonstrate the required level of proficiency in each of the competency areas. Consequently, the exam will be set and marked according to the competency weightings at the level.

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING ROLES AND COMPETENCIES

■ Technical skills
■ Business skills
■ People skills
■ Leadership skills



INFLUENCES

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

STRATEGY

Cecilia
C – SUITE

POST QUALIFICATION (CPD)



INFLUENCES

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

STRATEGY

Fiona
SENIOR MANAGER

STRATEGIC LEVEL

At the **strategic level**, Fiona advises top level management, as they set the strategy for the business. This means analysing strategic options – the various courses of action the business can take – based on the organisation’s environment and its current strategic position. Considering risks is paramount; they need to be identified, classified, evaluated, and then managed/reported. Strategic options recommended will require justification and she needs to advise on where to source finance for the strategies.



INFLUENCES

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

- Oversight
- Complex financial reporting
- Builds financial business cases
- Medium-term investment

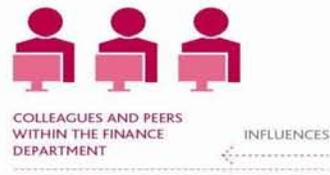
PLANS

- Aligns KPIs to plans
- Projects

Sally
MANAGER

MANAGEMENT LEVEL

At the **management level**, Sally is responsible for monitoring the implementation of strategy. Her focus is on the medium-term. She needs to translate the long-term strategy (decided at the senior management/board level), into more tangible, shorter-term goals (to be implemented at the operational level). Decisions need to be taken about which investments in products, their prices and the long-term assets are needed to ensure they are produced. The costing calculated at the operational level will help with this. The costing information will also enable Sally to analyse the drivers of costs, and manage them. These decisions cannot be made in a vacuum, they need to consider the environment in which the business operates, as well as key stakeholders. Performance needs to be measured: both that of individuals and of divisions. A more detailed consideration of risk is required for this longer-term decision making, as well as the options of long-term finance. More advanced financial reporting is required, in order to paint a picture of past performance; and this may involve group accounts for a number of entities.



INFLUENCES

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

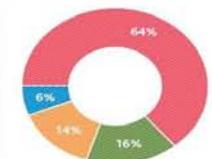
- Performance
- Reports on cost
- Raw data
- Presents reality through numbers

BUDGETS

Robyn
FINANCE OFFICER

OPERATIONAL LEVEL

At the **operational level**, Robyn is responsible for implementing strategy. Her focus is on the short-term. She needs to understand costs and cost accounting, in order for her to start preparing budgets, and to advise about short-term changes in products, volume and prices. Putting budgets together for the business also requires an understanding of how the business is structured, and will require communicating aspects of the budget to non-finance staff; both in the preparation and the delivery. Robyn prepares financial reports to show how the business is performing. She'll need to know about the regulatory environment, financial reporting, and business taxation. She may make decisions on working capital, cash and short-term finance.



Results

The pass mark is 60%. It is intended that results will be issued 3 weeks after the final day of the exam window. The result will be issued in the form of a pass/fail decision, together with a scaled score for the exam overall. We will convert a raw mark to a scaled score to balance out any minor differences within and between exam sittings, and so ensures that candidates obtain the correct result. In addition, feedback will be given by competency level. Further detail on how results will be reported, feedback and on scaled scores and how these should be interpreted will be provided at a later stage.

Marking Guidance

The following marking guidance is based on the practice exam. The practice exam can be viewed at <http://www.pearsonvue.com/cima/practiceexams/>

This marking guidance has been provided by CIMA for information purposes only. It is indicative of how marks for a case study exam at this level would be split between the competencies. It is not to be considered exhaustive. Note: while the published weighting of competencies for the level would be reflected in the distribution of marks for each examination, there may be some small variations between different forms of the examination.

CIMA will not accept challenges to this marking guidance on the basis of academic judgement.

Competency	Section/task	Marks	Total marks available for competency
Technical skills	1. ABC vs traditional costing	21	64
	2. Impact of new factory on financial statements	11	
	3. Budgeting queries	23	
	4. Cash position	7	
	Integration	2	
Business skills	2. Impact of new factory on recruitment	6	16
	3. Budgeting queries	2	
	4. Marketing	7	
	Integration	1	
People skills	1. ABC vs traditional costing	4	14
	2. Impact of new factory on recruitment	6	
	4. Marketing	4	
Leadership skills	4. Cash position	6	6