This article will help you understand the Strategic case study marking process and make sense of your overall mark and your competency grades.

When you get your case study exam results you will receive a scaled score of between 0 – 150. You must achieve 80 or above to pass the exam AND you must meet the minimum threshold for each competency and for integration. This means that for each competency and for integration you must be graded either ‘moderate’ or ‘strong’.

The competencies that you will be graded against are:

- Technical skills
- Business skills
- People skills
- Leadership skills

For the Strategic case study exam:
Each competency can be awarded approximately 25% of the total marks available

You will also get a grade for ‘integration’. For the Strategic case study exam you can be awarded a maximum of 9 marks for integration.

To receive the grade ‘moderate’ in a competency you must earn somewhere between (approximately) one-third and two-thirds (33% to 67%) of the available marks for that competency

Each variant of an exam may award slightly different marks for each competency. Have a look at this table to see how marks were awarded for the five variants in the May 2016 Strategic case study exam:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variant</th>
<th>Technical skills</th>
<th>Business skills</th>
<th>People skills</th>
<th>Leadership skills</th>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>Total marks available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variant 1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variant 2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variant 3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variant 4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variant 5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that getting moderate grades for all competencies does not guarantee that you will achieve a scaled score of 80 or above and pass your exam.
Let’s have a look at three examples of overall marks and competency grades for a better understanding.

Example 1 – a pass (you scored 80 or above and you scored moderate in all competencies)
In this example you are likely to have achieved close to two-thirds of the marks available in each of the competencies that you scored moderate in. Your overall marks were above 80 – well done, this is a pass!

Example 2 – a fail (your overall mark is in the 70’s and you scored moderate or strong in all competencies)
Even though the student in example 1 didn’t achieve a strong grade in any of their competencies they have achieved a better overall mark than you. Your moderate grades are likely to have been at the lower end of the grading scale for one or more competencies (so you were awarded approximately one-third of the marks available rather than up to two-thirds). Even with a strong grade in one or more competencies you have not achieved sufficient marks overall to reach 80.

Example 3 – a fail (your overall mark is 80 or above but you achieved a mix of moderate, strong and fail grades against your competencies)
Although your overall mark is 80 or above you have not passed the exam as you achieved at least one fail grade against a competency. You have achieved 80 or above marks as you scored well in the remainder of your competencies.

Why do you fail if you score 80 or above but achieve a fail grade for one of the competencies?
Let’s use this example – you have achieved a scale score of 83 and the following grades for your competencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>People</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your role in the Strategic case study exam is of a senior manager. Even though you have excellent technical skills, you have not demonstrated adequate leadership skills and therefore you are not suitable for the role because a senior manager is expected to lead a team.

Read our guide on 'roles and responsibilities' in the Strategic case study exam for advice on how to produce a good answer at the right level for your audience.

Find out how you could have achieved better grades in each competency
If you have failed your Strategic case study exam you will want to know what you can do in your re-sit to improve your performance and achieve a pass.

Have a look at our grade descriptors for guidance on what you are expected to demonstrate against each of the competencies to achieve a strong grade. The grade descriptors show you what you should be aiming for and will help you identify why your performance may not have met the general standard required for a particular competency.

Following each exam we produce a 'post exam kit' which contains:

- Each of the five variants of the exam
- The suggested answers
- The marking guidance
- The examiners report
Go to the Strategic case study resources area on CIMAconnect and search for ‘post exam kit’ to find the material relevant to your exam.

Have a look through each exam variant and find the one that you took then have a look at the marking guidance for your variant and see where the competencies were applied in the exam and how many marks were available for each competency.

Next, take a look at the suggested answers for your variant and see how each competency was applied. Then read the examiner’s report to see how the examiner expected the competency to be applied and how it could have been applied better.

You could also review the other variants and see how the competencies were applied in all of the questions to help you understand how marks are awarded.

Finally

There are a number of articles, resources and guides available to help you prepare for your case study exam – you can find them in our ‘pre-exam kits’ which are available (along with the pre-seen material) before each case study exam.

Go to the Strategic case study Study Resources and search for ‘pre-exam kit’.

And don’t forget to use this handy self-check list to assess your readiness for the Strategic case study exam – pay careful attention to the advice and pointers throughout.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR FUTURE STUDIES!