



2019 CIMA Professional Qualification Strategic Level performance descriptors

The presentation of results and feedback for the 2019 CIMA professional qualification case study exams has changed. This is to align with the exam blueprints that have been developed and, most importantly, provide candidates with more meaningful feedback to better support future study and exam preparation.

Your case study exam result

When you get your case study exam result you will see:

1. An overall grade (Pass/Fail).
2. A scaled score between 0–150 (80 or above represents a pass).
3. Feedback on your performance by each core activity (formerly sectional or competency feedback).

1 and 2 above are unchanged from the 2015 professional qualification case study exams. However, the feedback you will receive has changed. Feedback on performance will be given by the core activities which are defined in the [exam blueprints](#). These core activities are a clear expression of the job tasks that are simulated in the case study exam so feedback on how you performed in each of these allows you to better understand your strengths and weaknesses and decide what to work on in the future.

Since there is now no requirement to meet a minimum threshold for each core activity (as there was for the previous competencies and integration), feedback by core activity can be better aligned to the overall passing standard for the exam and the feedback you receive will be directly related to the overall passing standard for the exam form you sat.

Altogether, the result and feedback format provides improved, actionable information for candidates.



Performance descriptors for core activities

You will be given feedback as to whether or not you met the exam level passing standard for each core activity.

Performance descriptors for each core activity of the Strategic Level case study can be found below. They state the characteristics and level of achievement that candidates who met the passing standard would generally demonstrate.

Note: all core activities will be assessed in each form of the exam in line with the weightings published in the exam blueprint. A sample of related assessment outcomes will be tested. For more details, see the [examination blueprint](#).

How should I use the performance descriptors?

The performance descriptors are applicable across all forms and sessions of the case study exam and they offer a consistent way to feed back on your performance in the exam. They will help identify where your performance in an individual core activity may have fallen short of the overall passing standard for the level of case study you sat.

They are best used in conjunction with the exam blueprint and all other study resources available for the case study exams. When preparing for the exam, you can use these performance descriptors to benchmark your performance and see what you need to achieve to become “exam ready”.

If you have performed well across all core activities, the performance descriptors will highlight what you should continue to do and which skills you can build on for future exams.

If you have not reached the passing standard for one or more core activity, the performance descriptor provides guidance on the minimum level of performance you will need to achieve in order to meet the passing standard and will help guide further study.

Strategic case study exam performance descriptors

Core activity	Assessment outcome	<i>If you met the exam level passing standard for each of the core activities, you can generally be described using some or all of the following characteristics:</i>
A. Develop business strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I can evaluate strategic options (digital and otherwise). 2. I can recommend strategic decisions (digital and otherwise). 3. I can evaluate potential acquisitions and divestment opportunities. 4. I can recommend responses to opportunities and threats arising from digital technologies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates strategic decisions and evaluation of strategic options clearly. • Demonstrates understanding of the business model and its environment, including digital ecosystems and disruptive businesses, in the development of business strategy. • Applies professional scepticism when recommending responses to opportunities and threats arising from digital technologies. • Demonstrates leadership when evaluating and advising on strategic decisions. • Demonstrates professional judgement and business awareness in the development of business strategy. • Demonstrates ethics and professionalism in the evaluation of strategic options and in the recommendation of strategic decisions. • Demonstrates technical understanding of the tools and techniques used to evaluate strategy.
B. Evaluate business ecosystem and business environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I can select and apply suitable strategic analytical tools. 2. I can conduct an analysis of stakeholder needs and recommend appropriate responses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates the evaluation of the business ecosystem and business environment clearly. • Demonstrates understanding of the business model and its environment, including digital ecosystems and disruptive businesses, in the selection and application

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. I can recommend appropriate responses to changes in the business ecosystem. 4. I can recommend KPIs that encourage sound strategic management. 5. I can recommend responses to economic, political and currency risks. 	<p>of strategic analytical tools and in the recommendation of responses to change in the ecosystem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies professional scepticism in the analysis of shareholder needs and recommendation of responses. • Applies professional scepticism when recommending KPIs that encourage sound strategic management. • Demonstrates leadership when making recommendations with regard to stakeholders, changes to the business ecosystem and when recommending KPIs. • Applies professional judgement to the evaluation of the business ecosystem and business environment. • Applies ethics and professionalism to the selection of suitable strategic analytical tools and to evaluating and dealing with stakeholder needs. • Applies ethics and professionalism when recommending responses to economic, political and currency risks. • Demonstrates business awareness when evaluating the business ecosystem and business environment. • Demonstrates adequate technical understanding of techniques used in risk management.
C. Recommend financing strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I can recommend suitable sources of finance. 2. I can recommend dividend policy. 3. I can recommend and apply business valuation models. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates recommendations clearly with regard to financing strategies. • Demonstrates understanding of the business model and its environment, including digital ecosystems and disruptive businesses, in the selection and application of business valuation models.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies professional judgement and ethics and professionalism when recommending business strategies. • Demonstrates business awareness in recommending suitable sources of finance and in recommending and applying business valuation models. • Demonstrates adequate technical understanding of models used to evaluate funding decisions.
D. Evaluate and mitigate risk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I can evaluate risks and recommend responses and can maintain the corporate risk register. 2. I can identify ethical dilemmas and recommend suitable responses. 3. I can evaluate and mitigate cyber risks. 4. I can recommend internal controls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates clearly in the evaluation and mitigation of risk. • Demonstrates understanding of the business model and its environment, including digital ecosystems and disruptive businesses, in the evaluation and mitigation of control risks. • Applies professional scepticism and business awareness to the evaluation and mitigation of control risks. • Demonstrates leadership and professional judgement when evaluating and mitigating risk. • Applies ethical principles and professionalism to the identification of ethical dilemmas and the recommendation of suitable responses. • Demonstrates technical understanding of risks, including cyber risks.
E. Recommend and maintain a sound control environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I can apply internal audit resources. 2. I can recommend appropriate controls and evaluate the implications of compliance failures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates clearly in recommending controls and in the evaluation of the implications of compliance failures. • Communicates clearly in recommending responses to the threats arising from poor corporate governance.

	<p>3. I can recommend responses to the threats arising from poor governance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates understanding of the business model and its environment, including digital ecosystems and disruptive businesses, in recommending controls and in the evaluation of the implications of compliance failures.• Demonstrates professional scepticism, leadership, professional judgement and business awareness in maintaining a sound control environment.• Applies ethical principles and professionalism in recommending responses to the threats arising from poor governance.• Demonstrates technical understanding of internal audit techniques.
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