

## 2019 CIMA's CGMA Professional Qualification Operational Level performance descriptors

The presentation of results and feedback for the 2019 CGMA 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 Operational 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.

## Operational case study exam performance descriptors

<b>Core activity</b>	<b>Assessment outcome</b>	<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. Prepare costing information for different purposes to meet the needs of management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I can use appropriate technologies to gather data for costing purposes from digital and other sources.</li> <li>2. I can apply different costing methods to produce costing information suitable for managers' needs.</li> <li>3. I can explain costing information to operational and senior management using appropriate formats and media.</li> <li>4. I can compare different costing methods and systems to determine the most suitable for use by the organisation for different purposes.</li> <li>5. I can identify the cost information required for digital cost objects.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates costing information with clarity.</li> <li>• Demonstrates understanding of the business model and its environment, including digital ecosystems, in gathering cost information and when applying costing methods.</li> <li>• Applies professional judgement when gathering data for costing purposes and when applying costing methods.</li> <li>• Demonstrates technical understanding when applying costing methods.</li> <li>• Applies professional scepticism when comparing different costing methods.</li> <li>• Demonstrates business awareness when preparing costing information to meet the needs of management.</li> </ul>
B. Prepare budget information and assess its use for planning and control purposes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I can use appropriate technologies to gather data from digital and other sources to co-ordinate budget preparation.</li> <li>2. I can explain and use different forecasting methods to assist in budget preparation.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates issues arising from the preparation and implementation of budgets and the preparation and use of forecasts, with clarity.</li> <li>• Demonstrates understanding of the business model and its environment, including digital</li> </ul>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. I can use different approaches to produce information for use by managers when preparing budgets.</li> <li>4. I can explain budget information to managers using appropriate formats and media.</li> <li>5. I can apply various techniques to determine the effect on budgets of changes to variables.</li> <li>6. I can explain to functional managers how budgets are used for planning and control purposes.</li> <li>7. I can discuss the behavioural implications of budgetary planning and control.</li> <li>8. I can compare alternative approaches to budgeting to determine their suitability for the organisation and for different purposes.</li> </ol>	<p>ecosystems, in gathering data to assist in the preparation of budgets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies professional scepticism to the information gathered for budget preparation and the alternative budget approaches.</li> <li>• Demonstrates technical understanding when applying forecasting methods and budgeting approaches.</li> <li>• Demonstrates leadership and understanding of people when discussing the behavioural implications of budgetary planning and control.</li> <li>• Applies professional judgement in gathering data and determining the effect of changes to variables.</li> <li>• Demonstrates business awareness when selecting and implementing forecasting methods to support budget preparation.</li> </ul>
<p>C. Analyse performance using financial and non-financial information</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I can identify information that can enable managers to review performance.</li> <li>2. I can interpret variances to review functional and organisational performance.</li> <li>3. I can identify appropriate KPIs for different functions of the organisation.</li> <li>4. I can explain company performance using KPIs.</li> <li>5. I can prepare performance reports for use by different functions and for different</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates information about the performance of the functions within the organisation and the organisation as a whole, with clarity.</li> <li>• Demonstrates understanding of the business model and its environment, including digital ecosystems, in the selection of suitable KPIs.</li> <li>• Applies professional scepticism and business awareness in the interpretation of variances and KPIs.</li> </ul>

	<p>purposes in appropriate formats and media.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates technical understanding when interpreting variances and KPIs.</li> <li>• Applies professional judgement and professionalism in the preparation of performance reports for managers.</li> </ul>
<p>D. Apply relevant financial reporting standards and corporate governance, ethical and tax principles</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I can apply relevant IFRS in a given context, to facilitate the preparation of financial statements.</li> <li>2. I can apply the principles of corporate governance and ethics.</li> <li>3. I can identify the impact of tax regulation on transactions, decisions and profits.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates information about international financial reporting standards, corporate governance and ethical principles and the impact of tax regulation, with clarity.</li> <li>• Demonstrates technical knowledge of international financial reporting standards and can use professional judgement and professional scepticism when applying these in a given context.</li> <li>• Demonstrates business and ethical awareness and professionalism when applying the principles of corporate governance and ethics.</li> <li>• Demonstrates professional judgement and ethical awareness in the identification of the impact of tax regulations on the organisation.</li> </ul>
<p>E. Prepare information to support short-term decision making</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I can identify relevant costs and benefits.</li> <li>2. I can apply appropriate techniques that support short-term decision making.</li> <li>3. I can prepare information to support operational decisions.</li> <li>4. I can explain factors that could influence short-term decisions.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates information to support short-term operational decisions, with clarity.</li> <li>• Demonstrates understanding of the business model and its environment, including digital ecosystems, in the identification of relevant costs and benefits.</li> </ul>

	<p>5. I can apply appropriate techniques to deal with situations where there is risk and uncertainty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies professional judgement and reasonable business awareness when using short-term decision-making techniques and techniques for dealing with risk and / or uncertainty.</li> <li>• Demonstrates technical understanding when applying short-term decision-making techniques.</li> <li>• Demonstrates business and ethical awareness when explaining the factors that could influence short-term decisions.</li> </ul>
<p>F. Prepare information to manage working capital</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I can identify appropriate sources of short-term finance and methods of short-term investments.</li> <li>2. I can explain how to manage and control working capital.</li> <li>3. I can explain working capital ratios in comparison to prior periods or to other organisations.</li> <li>4. I can identify the impact of changing working capital policies.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates information about the working capital position of the entity with clarity.</li> <li>• Demonstrates business awareness in the selection of short-term finance and short-term investments.</li> <li>• Demonstrates business awareness and technical understanding when interpreting the working capital position of the organisation.</li> <li>• Applies professional judgement and reasonable business awareness when suggesting policies for the management of the working capital of the organisation and identifying the impact of changes in policy.</li> </ul>