

A guide to your examination results

How will I receive my exam results?

This varies according to type of exam sat:

- **Certificate in Business Accounting Objective Tests:** You will be given a provisional pass or fail decision when you access/login to My Account via your Dashboard. Confirmed results, plus your scaled score and your performance against syllabus topic area will be published to My CIMA within 48 hours of sitting the exam. [Find out more...](#)
- **Professional Qualification Objective Tests:** You will be given a provisional pass or fail decision when you access/login to My Account via your Dashboard. Confirmed results plus your scaled score and your performance against syllabus content area will be published to My CIMA after 48 hours of sitting the exam. [Find out more...](#)
- **Professional Qualification Case Study Exams:**
 - **2019 Syllabus Professional Qualification** -Your results will be published on My CIMA approximately 5 weeks after the last day of the exam window. [Have a look at the exam timetable to find our results release dates.](#) The results will include; a pass or fail grade, a scaled score (between 0-150) and performance feedback by each core activity. [Find out more...](#)
 - **2015 Syllabus Professional Qualification February 2020 re-sit** [Find out more...](#)

Cert BA - Objective Tests

How will my results be presented?

Your Cert BA objective test results comprise the following three elements:

1. An overall grade (Pass/Fail)
2. A scaled score of between 0 – 150 (a mark of 100 or above is a pass)
3. An indication of whether you are proficient or not proficient in each syllabus topic area.

Your scaled score will show you how far above or below the pass score you were which will be particularly useful if you need to re-sit.

Your scaled score, along with your syllabus topic area feedback, will give an indication of where you should concentrate your studies and how much extra studying you will need to do to be prepared next time.

What is a scaled score?

CIMA students consistently tell us that they really like the flexibility of the exams. Offering exams every on single day of the year means that we have to have multiple versions of each test running concurrently. Each of these test versions will be very slightly different in terms of difficulty and therefore we need to find a way to present the results so that each candidate knows how they performed compared to others sitting at the same time whilst taking a different version of the exam.

Scaled scores are the industry standard approach to solving this problem. A scaled score ensures that you receive a consistent result that reflects the difficulty of the test you sit.

For objective tests, we give scaled scores of between 0 and 150, with the passing score being 100 or above.

Why do we need to transform the raw score?

There are multiple versions of the Cert BA objective tests (for greater flexibility and exam security). Care is taken to ensure that the questions selected for each exam version are comparable but, even so, minor differences in exam difficulty can remain.

Therefore, a raw score of 50 on one exam may not be directly comparable to a raw score of 50 on a slightly easier or more difficult version of the same exam. A candidate who receives a raw score of 50 on one exam may get 52 on a slightly easier version of the same exam or 48 on a slightly more difficult version of the same exam.

The raw score produced across all forms of the exam cannot be compared (even if, for example, two students achieved the same raw score) until they go through an industry standard process called 'equating' which results in the production of a scaled score.

By using scaled scores CIMA can ensure that you receive a score that gives a fair representation of how you performed in the exam – no matter which version of the exam you were presented with.

How do I use my exam feedback?

Against each syllabus topic area you will also receive a grade of either Proficient or Not Proficient. This provides you with a clear indication of the areas of the syllabus in which you have demonstrated competence and those areas you need to improve on.

If you passed your exam but received 'Not Proficient' on one or more syllabus topic areas, you should revisit study resources relating to these topics when preparing for higher level exams with pre-requisite knowledge required.

Likewise, if you failed your exam you should revisit the study resources related to the syllabus topic areas in which you received a 'Not Proficient' grade, while also focusing on a thorough understanding of the whole subject syllabus.

Please note: Your overall grade (pass or fail) is based on overall performance in the exam and is a snapshot of your performance in that one exam. Your proficient/not proficient scores can therefore be used as a guide to help you focus your revision but the only way to fully ensure a pass is to fully prepare across all syllabus areas.

Professional Qualification - Objective Test exams

How will my results be presented?

Your Objective Test results comprise:

1. An overall grade (Pass/Fail)
2. For Objective Tests sat from 5 March 2020 a scaled score between 0 – 150 (100 or above representing a pass)
3. An indication of whether you are proficient or not proficient in each exam content area.

What are scaled scores and why do we use them?

CIMA students consistently tell us that they really like the flexibility of the exams. Offering exams every on single day of the year means that we have to have multiple versions of each test running concurrently. Each of these test versions will be very slightly different in terms of difficulty and therefore we need to find a way to present the results so that each candidate knows how they performed compared to others sitting at the same time whilst taking a different version of the exam.

Scaled scores are the industry standard approach to solving this problem. A scaled score ensures that you receive a consistent result that reflects the difficulty of the test you sit.

Why do we need to transform the raw score?

There are multiple versions of the nine CIMA objective tests (for greater flexibility and exam security). Care is taken to ensure that the questions selected for each exam version are comparable but even so, minor differences in exam difficulty can remain.

Therefore, a raw score of 50 on one exam may not be directly comparable to a raw score of 50 on a slightly easier or more difficult version of the same exam. A candidate who receives a raw score of 50 on one exam may get 52 on a slightly easier version of the same exam or 48 on a slightly more difficult version of the same exam.

The raw score produced across all variants cannot be compared (even if for example, two students achieved the same raw score) until they go through an industry standard process called 'equating' which results in the production of a scaled score.

By using scaled scores CIMA can ensure that you receive a score that gives a fair representation of how you performed in the exam – no matter which version of the exam you took.

What does proficient/not proficient mean?

The grade Proficient means that you have scored above the boundary required to demonstrate competence against a particular exam content area.

The grade Not Proficient means that you have scored below the boundary required to demonstrate competence against a particular exam content area.

Your overall grade (pass or fail) is based on overall performance on the exam.

How do I use my exam feedback?

Your grade (Pass/Fail) is an aggregation of performance across all exam content areas. Against each exam content area you will also receive a grade of either Proficient or Not Proficient. This provides you with a very clear indication of the areas of the syllabus in which you have demonstrated proficiency and which areas you need to improve on.

If you passed your exam but received 'Not Proficient' on one or more exam content areas, you should revisit study resources relating to these topics when preparing to sit your Case Study exam.

Likewise, if you failed your exam you should focus on revisiting the study resources related to the exam content areas in which you received a 'Not Proficient' grade.

Why don't I have a score? (for exams sat before 5 March 2020)

With the introduction of the new qualification, we need to have sufficient results based on these new exams to be able to produce a scaled score. Until we have a sufficient number of students who have sat the new exams, we aren't able to issue a consistent score, but are able to provide confirmation of your performance as pass /marginal fail /fail result. Your results have been calculated using an assessment industry standard methodology to ensure they are fair, rigorous and robust.

We feel it is better to share your results straight away rather than having to wait several months as we build the dataset needed to give you a statistically verified scaled score mark. This will allow you to make decisions on next steps, move swiftly through the qualification and on towards earning your CGMA designation. We wish you good luck with your continued studies.

I sat an exam prior to 5 March 2020. Will I receive a scaled score for my Objective Test?

Scaled scores will not be issued retrospectively for students who took an objective test before 5 March 2020.

What does Marginal fail mean? (for exams sat before 5 March 2020)

We will provide a pass, a marginal fail or fail grade. A marginal fail grade identifies candidates who failed their exam by 5% margin of the passing standard. The marginal fail score is a temporary measure until we have sufficient numbers of exams sat to provide a scaled score. Our research shows that students who put effort into their preparation and marginally failed an exam had a high chance of passing their re-sit exam if they took it within 3 –4 weeks of the original sitting.

2019 Professional Qualification - Case Study exams

How will my results be presented?

Your case study exam results are made up of three elements, all of which need to be considered:

1. An overall grade (pass/fail)
2. A scaled score between 0 and 150 (80 or above representing a pass)
3. Feedback on your performance by each core activity

[Have a look at the exam timetable for case study exam results release dates.](#)

Why do we use scaled scores?

CIMA students consistently tell us that they really like the flexibility of the exams. Offering exams over an exam window means that we have to have multiple versions of each case study exam running concurrently. Each of these exam versions will be very slightly different in terms of difficulty and therefore we need to find a way to present the results so that each candidate knows how they performed compared to others sitting at the same time whilst taking a different version of the exam.

Scaled scores are the industry standard approach to solving this problem. A scaled score ensures that you receive a consistent result that reflects the difficulty of the test you sat. For case study exams, we give scaled scores of between 0 and 150, with a passing score being 80 or above.

How should I interpret my result?

The main information in which you are interested is whether you have passed. This will be given against “Grade”.

- If you are given a ‘Pass’, you have generally performed well across the test and met the required passing standard.”
- If you have been graded as a ‘Fail’, you have not demonstrated suitable competence across all of the tasks in the case study.

Performance descriptors

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 can be found here:

- [Operational Level Performance Descriptors](#)
- [Management Level Performance Descriptors](#)
- [CIMA Gateway Performance Descriptors](#)
- [Strategic Level Performance Descriptors](#)

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 examination 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 examination and they offer a consistent way to feedback 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.

Will pass rates for Case Study exams be issued?

Yes. Pass rates for each of the case study windows will be issued through the Examiner’s Report. Due to the introduction of the shared pre-seen for case study exams pass rates are available 2 weeks after results are released for all exams using the same shared pre-seen material. Pass rates for May/ August will be available 2 weeks after the results for the August case study have been released. Pass rates for November/ February will be available 2 weeks after the results for the February case study have been released.

2015 Professional Qualification – February 2020 re-sit Case Study exams

This was the last case study exam using the CIMA 2015 syllabus. All future case study exams will be based on the [2019 CIMA Professional Qualification Syllabus and blueprint](#).

How will my results be presented?

Your case study exam results are made up of three elements, all of which need to be considered:

1. An overall grade (pass/fail)
2. A scaled score between 0 and 150 (80 or above representing a pass, as long as you have met the minimum threshold for each competency*)
3. Sectional feedback giving an indication of performance against each of the competencies (reported as Strong, Moderate or Fail)

*You will be expected to reach a minimum threshold score for each competency (approximately one third of the total marks available for that competency) and for integration.

How should I interpret my case study result?

The main information in which you are interested is whether you have passed. This will be given against “Grade”.

- If you are given a ‘Pass’, you have performed well in integrating your performance across the four CGMA competencies, weighted for the appropriate level of the syllabus.
- If you have been graded as a ‘Fail’, you have not demonstrated suitable competence across all of the tasks in the case study.

Why is CIMA issuing a scaled score rather than a percentage mark?

Under the 2015 syllabus and assessment, each case study window contains a number of variants of the exam. Each variant differs slightly in challenge and content, meaning that the same raw score across all variants cannot be compared until they go through an industry standard psychometric process called ‘equating’ which produces a scaled score. Equating all variants of the exam ensures results are fair to all students, and that irrespective of the slight differences in variants, produces a common score to judge student performance consistently.

To pass a case study exam, students must score 80 or above (with a minimum threshold score for each competency and for integration, this is approximately one third of the total marks available for that competency). This is the scaled equivalent of a pass mark of 60% issued by CIMA for professional level examinations prior to 2015

Can I convert my scaled score into a percentage?

No. The scaled score (between 0 - 150) is not a direct transformation of the raw score.

Your raw score goes through a process of equating to ensure fairness before being transformed into a scaled score.

Sectional feedback - "grade descriptors".

You will be awarded a performance rating (Strong, Moderate or Fail) for each individual competency (Technical, Business, People and Leadership) and for integration. For each of these elements, we have developed a set of grade descriptors. Grade descriptions are a very useful and objective way of describing the standards of achievement likely to have been demonstrated by candidates awarded a particular level of performance. The descriptors are based on the skills and/or abilities expected for different occupational roles. They are part of a holistic system which recognises links between categories and progression between achievement levels. Few of you are likely to be "moderate" or "strong" across or even within all competences, most exam performance will be a mixture and your final result will reflect where you sit on balance. The descriptors offer a generic and consistent description of the performance required to reach a particular grade in the case study exam. They can help you identify where your performance in an individual competency may have fallen short of the general standard for the level of case study you sat.

For each competency, you will be issued one of three categories indicating your performance (Fail, Moderate, Strong). explanations for each of these are shown below:

Fail: You did not achieve the minimum threshold required to pass the exam for this competency.

Note: Students will be expected to reach a minimum threshold score for each competency (approximately one third of the total marks available for that competency). This is so that successful students can demonstrate that they are business ready, and have shown that they have a good balance of ability across the competencies. There are a few exceptions to this, where only a small number of marks exist for a particular competency, it would not be meaningful to specify a minimum threshold (this will be the case with Leadership skills at the Operational level, which only accounts for 6% of the total credit available, and also for Integration at the Operational level).

Moderate: Your performance in this competency met the threshold required but there will be weak areas where you could have scored more highly. Additional development of this competency is recommended to improve your performance in future exams.

Strong: You performed strongly demonstrating a high level of competency, well above that of a "minimally competent" candidate.

Will pass rates for Case Study exams be issued?

Yes. Pass rates for the February 2020 re-sit case study windows will be issued through the Examiner's Report to be released two weeks after exam results are made available.