

HOW TO USE THE PRE-SEEN MATERIAL

In the case study exams we link what you have learnt while studying for your objective tests to the competencies that employers told us they want to see in the workplace.

They are actually a great way for you to showcase your knowledge and skills and boost your own confidence when job seeking or looking for promotion.

Seven weeks before each new case study exam window opens, we will publish the pre-seen materials onto CIMAconnect.

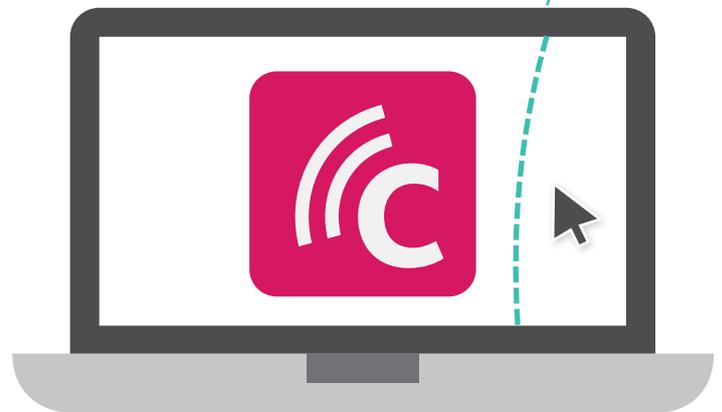
These will consist of a few pages (2-6) of background information about the organisation, this begins to tell you the story of the organisation. There will also be lots of other resources supplied to help you really get to grips with the case and understand the context in which it operates, markets, competitors and so on, where the pre-seen material will form the basis of the tasks that a candidate can expect during the exams.

These might include:

- Financial statements
- (extracts from) annual report
- Tax regime
- Industry analysis
- Competitor analysis
- Industry newsletters
- Press releases
- Organisation charts
- Slide presentations
- Mission statements
- Company's strategy
- Newspaper or website articles
- Product images or brochures

Altogether your pre-seen resources might cover 20+ pages of information.

All information is fictitious, as is the featured organisation, BUT it will all be "true to life". The case writers seek inspiration for their cases in what is happening in the real world, looking for business contexts, industries or issues which are topical and interesting. The case writers will regularly read the financial pages of quality newspapers in their search for new ideas so it would be a good idea if you did, too.



HOW TO USE IT TO PREPARE FOR THE CASE STUDY EXAM

DO

- ✓ Immerse yourself in the pre-seen and get to know it inside out. Unlike previous Strategic pre-seens in the 2010 syllabus where the exam might not draw too much on the pre-seen, these cases will be all about the information you have been provided with. You will need to become really familiar with the organisation, its structure, products, competitors, industry, strengths and weaknesses, its financials and what they might (or might not) be telling you about the state of the business.
- ✓ Understand that the same basic information can be used in a variety of ways. So, from the same base scenario and figures, you could be asked to advise on an acquisition ... or a divestment. Or, report on introducing a new product line...or rationalising the current product range.
- ✓ Try to identify any issues the organisation faces. These issues could be financial (F pillar subject), organisational (E pillar subject), performance (P pillar subject), ethical / legal or other general risks the organisation is facing.
- ✓ Be happy that you won't be required to do any lengthy calculations BUT remember you will be required to comment on, interpret, identify inaccurate calculations produced by someone else so you need to be very confident with the numbers – at all levels. In other words do the appropriate calculations / analysis at home!
- ✓ Pay attention to the role you have been assigned, for example in the February 2015 Management case study, you would be a senior management accountant [of Bild]. Your role in the organisation would be to provide information to the Finance Director to enable the company's performance to be measured and for decision making purposes. This will help you generate ideas about the sorts of tasks you might be asked to do and the level at which you would need to pitch your responses (the personas for each of the three levels are included at the end of this article for your reference).
- ✓ Use the pre-seen to think about the sorts of requirements you might be presented with and use these to model questions and practice answers BUT...

DON'T

- ✗ Try to guess what the question requirements might be – you'll probably be wrong! Remember, there are 5 variants to each case, so the same information could be tested in a variety of ways.
- ✗ Spend time trying to work out what real life company the case might be based on. It isn't a real organisation and there are no marks for additional industry research.
- ✗ Read lots of analyses of the pre-seen produced by other people, these may give you some ideas but you really need to do the work yourself so that you know the pre-seen inside out.
- ✗ Panic! We want you to pass and if you have really prepared well around the pre-seen, stay calm, remember your role and audience, the answers should flow.



AN EXAMPLE OF INTEGRATED CASE STUDY CONTENT

LEVEL	YOUR ROLE	YOUR AUDIENCE	QUESTION TYPES	CASE STUDY FOCUS
STRATEGIC	Senior manager	CFO and rest of senior management team	Long essays, supported by calculations and analysis	<p>E3 Analysis of strategic options, leading to recommendations and justification.</p> <p>P3 Risks associated with this need to be scrutinised.</p> <p>F3 A financial strategy needs to be formulated, ensuring the strategy is adequately funded.</p>
MANAGEMENT	Manager	CFO and senior business managers	Long and short essays, supported by calculations and analysis	<p>E2 Consideration of key stakeholders, and implementation via projects.</p> <p>P2 Product and pricing decision, and/or the performance evaluation of division(s)/component parts.</p> <p>F2 Impact on the financial statements and the performance of the organisation.</p>
OPERATIONAL	Finance officer	Manager and product owners	Short essays, supported by calculations and analysis	<p>E1 Analysis of the structure of the organisation, as well as cross-functional communication.</p> <p>P1 A costing and/or budgeting issue.</p> <p>F1 Preparation of parts of or entire financial statements.</p>

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants

26 Chapter Street
London
SW1P 4NP
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 20 8849 2251
cima.contact@cimaglobal.com

CGMA
Chartered Global Management Accountant

Powered by
AICPA | **CIMA**

Two of the world's most prestigious accounting bodies, AICPA and CIMA, formed a joint venture to establish the CGMA designation to elevate the profession of management accounting.

CGMA, CHARTERED GLOBAL MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT, and the CGMA logo are trademarks of the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants. These trademarks are registered in the United States and in other countries.