

Strategic Case Study

The CIPFA Professional Qualification (PQ) and the related international route to full CIPFA membership – the International Public Financial Management (IPFM) qualifications, develops aspiring accountants, auditors and financial managers in terms of their competence to perform the four key roles of the modern finance professional. Three of the roles, ie steward, enabler & innovator and business partner, are the principal focus of the modules leading up to the Strategic stage. At the Strategic stage the focus is more on the role of leader, but this also involves the integration and application of the skills and knowledge related to the other three roles.

In the Strategic Case Study (SCS), students are not being assessed on their knowledge of syllabus content. So, while it is likely that students will wish to refresh their knowledge of various topics in preparation for the SCS exam, significant volumes of new learning are unlikely to be necessary.

There is therefore no new list of syllabus topics presented here or detailed content for each learning outcome. Instead, the focus is on using the skills and knowledge from the other modules in addressing strategic financial management problems effectively.

In the assessment, students are required to integrate and apply knowledge from different modules in order to address a series of practical issues and to communicate information clearly and effectively to recipients, often to senior stakeholders. The emphasis is on evaluating and responding to practical issues. SCS assessments therefore take the form of an extensive set of materials (a significant proportion of which are issued as advance material before the examination date), giving information on a scenario to represent something close to a real-life set of tasks. The role of the candidate will be specified in the advance material and the detailed tasks will be specified at the start of the exam, together with further information about the scenario.

Summary of aims

- A Define and determine approaches to solve problems
- B Apply techniques to solve problems and facilitate decision making
- C Analyse information and evaluate results applying professional judgement
- D Communicate effectively

Other information, including assessment

Prior knowledge:	All other modules. Where the SCS exam assumes knowledge from a module that is different between the PQ and IPFM this will be made clear in the advance material issued for the exam, and access will be provided to relevant technical update material at that point.
Standards:	Any required will be made clear in the advance material issued for each exam.
Validity:	Up to and including September 2024 examinations
Assessment:	A 210 minute exam with 100 marks available. Advance material will be provided 4 weeks before the exam. There will be 2-3 non-optional questions, each worth between 20 and 70 marks. The pass mark is 50% and it is also necessary to obtain at least 25% of the marks available on each individual question.

Overall Aim	Learning outcome
A Determine appropriate approaches and techniques to solve a variety of problems and meet the needs of decision makers and other recipients	A1 Evaluate the organisational, professional and regulatory environments in which the professional accountant and financial manager is expected to operate
	A2 Determine the information required by specified decision makers and other recipients
	A3 Formulate problems that are to be solved and determine an appropriate approach to solving them, recognising relevant constraints and assumptions
	A4 Determine the decisions that are required to resolve the problem, taking into account appropriate decision-making criteria for the organisational and environmental circumstances
	A5 Determine ethical judgements and decisions required based on an understanding and application of ethics knowledge and ethical sensitivity
	A6 Determine appropriate planning, analytical and decision-making techniques, demonstrating awareness of their limitations
B Apply skills, knowledge and techniques to facilitate problem solving and decision making	B1 Analyse and interpret complex policy, operational, financial, legal, budgetary or other relevant information
	B2 Apply appropriate planning, analytical and decision-making skills, knowledge and techniques correctly, demonstrating awareness of their limitations
	B3 Evaluate the findings of preliminary analyses, and determine and apply further appropriate analytical and decision-making techniques as necessary

	B4 Apply good governance and ethical principles to the problem-solving and decision-making processes
C Critically evaluate the results of analyses and use professional judgement to formulate appropriate conclusions and recommendations	C1 Evaluate the results of analyses and demonstrate professional judgement in formulating conclusions and recommendations appropriate to the political, cultural, economic, legal, ethical and environmental context
	C2 Evaluate the meaning and implications of conclusions and recommendations and determine relevant management/financial management strategies and policies, in the context of appropriate professional and ethical standards
D Present information, analyses, conclusions and recommendations effectively	D1 Present information, analyses, conclusions and recommendations using methods and formats appropriate to the needs of specific recipients and decision makers
	D2 Determine the type of information and level of detail appropriate to specific recipients and decision makers
	D3 Present clear and concise reports, briefing notes and other forms of business communication as required in order to provide relevant information, analyses, conclusions and recommendations to decision makers and other recipients