

CIM

# CIM Qualifications Specification

Level 6 Qualification Specification:

CIM Level 6 Award in Strategy and Planning



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# About CIM

CIM is an Ofqual regulated provider and our qualifications are also accredited by the European Marketing Confederation. We currently have over 12,500 studying members in 118 countries and 18,000+ assessments are taken by our students every year.

Our qualifications are delivered through an international network of Accredited Study Centres, enabling you to learn in a way that suits your lifestyle - from flexible awards to full qualifications.

Each module is based on the CIM Global Professional Marketing Framework. Our unique framework is designed to help marketers meet the increasing demands that are expected of them at every stage in their career.

Over **100** years  
of supporting, developing  
& representing marketers

**12,500+**  
current studying members

**118**  
countries

**18,000+**  
assessments taken every year

# The CIM Global Professional Marketing Framework

**DIRECTION:** Developing capability by design for understanding & context.

**CAPABILITY:** Knowledge & abilities to deliver against the plan.

**PROFESSIONALISM:** The way we work.

**IMPACT:** The benefits to us, our business, the economy & society.



# Module Aim

Strategic planning is an essential skill for Marketing Managers, and empowers them to make informed decisions, optimise resources, and drive the organisation towards its goals in a competitive and dynamic marketing environment. The plan itself ensures the marketing department works together to achieve a common goal and gives direction to supporting activities. This module aims to equip candidates with advanced knowledge and skills in planning marketing at a strategic level, as well as developing the overall marketing plan, candidates will be able to adapt their use of planning frameworks and associated models to create the range of plans that integrate to deliver an organisation's strategy.

# Qualification Structure

## Qualification Sizes:

Qualification Title	Size
CIM Level 6 Award in Strategy and Planning	20 Credits (200 TQT) (160 GLH)

# Module Purpose

This module will provide candidates proficient understanding in conducting marketing audits, market trend analysis and how to use insights drawn to select suitable strategic options, including segmentation, targeting, and positioning. Candidates will be able to develop marketing plans that deliver organisational objectives based on data and insights, and recommend improvements based on evaluation of metrics applied. They will also be able to develop supporting marketing plans such as digital, brand and marketing communications plans and ensure they integrate to support overall marketing goals.

# Module Content

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	INDICATIVE CONTENT
1. Understand the organisation's priorities, purpose, direction and their impact on marketing strategy.	1.1 Explain the organisation's mission, vision and purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mission/vision/purpose statements</li> <li>• Organisation priorities</li> <li>• Organisational objectives</li> <li>• Objective hierarchy</li> </ul>
	1.2 Analyse the factors that drive the organisation's strategic direction and priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial imperatives</li> <li>• Global macro/micro-environmental factors</li> <li>• Ethical/Societal factors</li> <li>• Resource availability</li> <li>• Aligning operational objectives to support organisational strategy</li> <li>• Marketing strategy</li> </ul>
	1.3 Explain how operational and supporting objectives deliver organisational strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective cascade</li> <li>• Where supporting plans fit –               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Brand plan</li> <li>○ Digital plan</li> <li>○ Marketing Communications plan</li> <li>○ Proposition Management plan</li> <li>○ Customer Experience plan</li> <li>○ Sustainability plan</li> <li>○ International entry plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2. Understand how insights drawn from marketing audits inform the marketing plan.	2.1 Prepare an audit of the marketing environment .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of the micro and macro environment</li> <li>• Internal environmental analysis techniques</li> <li>• Trend analysis</li> <li>• Shifts in stakeholder value chain – values, attitudes and behaviours</li> <li>• Changing customer behaviour</li> <li>• Culture, leadership and management styles</li> <li>• Long term focus aligned to people, planet and profit</li> </ul>
	2.2 Apply a range of online and offline marketing environmental analytical models, frameworks and techniques to generate insights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PESTEL</li> <li>• Porter's 5 Forces</li> <li>• Marketing Mix analysis – 7 Ps</li> <li>• Ansoff matrix</li> <li>• BCG matrix</li> <li>• Multi-factor matrix</li> <li>• Mendelow's Power/Interest matrix</li> <li>• Customer Journey Mapping</li> <li>• Digital marketing audit</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitor analysis</li> <li>• Brand audit</li> <li>• Content audit</li> <li>• Digital and performance analytics</li> </ul>
	2.3 Summarise the findings of the marketing audit to inform the marketing plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combining the results of the marketing audit to create insights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SWOT analysis</li> <li>○ TOWS matrix</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3. Develop a strategic marketing plan to deliver an organisation's objectives.	3.1 Evaluate a range of strategic marketing options to deliver organisational objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of organisational objectives</li> <li>• Strategic options in a range of changing environments</li> <li>• Synergy between online and offline strategy</li> <li>• Relationship marketing/transactional marketing</li> <li>• Ansoff</li> <li>• Porter's generic strategy</li> <li>• Digital strategy</li> <li>• Brand strategy</li> </ul>
	3.2 Justify the selected strategic marketing option to deliver organisational objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection of strategic option <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Evaluation matrices</li> <li>○ Suitability/feasibility/acceptability</li> <li>○ Segmentation, targeting and positioning</li> <li>○ Strategic risk</li> <li>○ Marketing budgets and resources needed</li> <li>○ ROI</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	3.3 Develop a range of justifiable marketing objectives relevant to organisational objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cascade of objectives</li> <li>• SMART marketing objectives</li> <li>• Supporting marketing objectives</li> </ul>
	3.4 Prepare a marketing plan to deliver the marketing objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing mix to support selected strategic options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Product portfolio management</li> <li>○ Pricing decisions</li> <li>○ Promotional/communication strategy</li> <li>○ Distribution decisions – online/offline</li> <li>○ People decisions</li> <li>○ Process decisions</li> <li>○ Physical evidence</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

4. Understand how to align supporting plans to the marketing plan in delivering marketing objectives.	4.1 Assess a range of tactical activities relevant to marketing objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size of organisation – SME/Multi-national</li> <li>• Organisational priorities</li> <li>• Organisational resources</li> <li>• Skill base</li> <li>• Combination of supporting plans needed</li> <li>• Alternative supporting plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Brand plan</li> <li>○ Digital plan</li> <li>○ Marketing Communications plan</li> <li>○ Portfolio Management plan</li> <li>○ Customer Experience plan</li> <li>○ Sustainability plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	4.2 Justify options for adapting marketing planning frameworks for various support plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning frameworks – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SOSTAC</li> <li>○ APIC</li> <li>○ PRACE</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Adaptations – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Brand – Identity, Objectives, Strategy, Activation, Measurement</li> <li>○ Digital – Plan, reach, act, convert, engage</li> <li>○ Marketing Communications – Context analysis, aim, Pull/Push/Profile, audience, promotional mix/channels/content, evaluation</li> <li>○ Product Portfolio – Portfolio and market analysis, objectives, positioning, objectives, strategy, execution, measurement</li> <li>○ Customer Experience – Journey mapping, objectives, strategy, touchpoint optimisation, personnel training, measurement, continuous improvement</li> <li>○ Sustainability/Societal Impact – Purpose, aims (people, planet, profit), objectives, internal and external communication, implementation, measurement</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	4.3 Demonstrate alignment of all supporting plans to overarching marketing objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synergy between a range of supporting plans to achieve common goals</li> <li>• Relevance of objectives to the overall marketing objectives</li> <li>• Contribution of supporting plans to overarching plan</li> <li>• Continuous improvement</li> </ul>



5. Develop an implementation plan to achieve objectives.	5.1 Analyse the resources needed to implement the marketing plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human resource – in-house and out-sourced</li> <li>• Skills</li> <li>• Internal processes</li> <li>• Financial resource</li> <li>• Technology - Martech</li> <li>• Communication and collaboration</li> <li>• Data – compliance/impact/processes</li> <li>• Balancing resources to achieve results</li> </ul>
	5.2 Assess the options for resource improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gap analysis</li> <li>• Options for filling gaps</li> <li>• Resource audit</li> </ul>
	5.3 Justify the structure of a persuasive business case to meet resource needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business case to meet resource needs</li> <li>• Integration with business strategy</li> <li>• Risks and benefits</li> <li>• Stakeholder analysis – needs and engagement</li> <li>• Resources required</li> <li>• Financial analysis including budget and ROMI</li> <li>• Critical success factors</li> <li>• Gantt chart showing milestones &amp; dependencies</li> <li>• Accountability</li> </ul>
	5.4. Develop a timed action plan to meet objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time frames</li> <li>• Milestones</li> <li>• Action plans</li> <li>• Gantt charts</li> </ul>
6. Critically evaluate the results of measurements applied in plans to recommend continuous improvements.	6.1 Recommend appropriate control mechanisms to measure and monitor progress in delivery of the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial measures/control ratios</li> <li>• Operational measures and KPIs</li> <li>• Marketing dashboards</li> <li>• Evaluation of performance metrics/dashboards.</li> <li>• Appropriate theories and frameworks</li> <li>• Cost/productivity/market responsiveness/profit/customer &amp; employee satisfaction/strategic drift</li> <li>• Social behaviour/sentiment &amp; conversations/search and site behaviour</li> <li>• Digital analytics</li> <li>• Reports on social impact</li> <li>• Post-implementation reviews</li> </ul>

	6.2 Explain the steps involved in developing continuous improvement plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan, do, check, act</li><li>• Identify areas for improvement</li><li>• Objectives</li><li>• Improvement strategies and tactics</li><li>• Implement change</li><li>• Measure progress</li><li>• Evaluate results and outcomes</li><li>• Refine and replan</li></ul>
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# Credits, Total Qualification Time (TQT), Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

The CIM Level 6 Award has been calculated as carrying 20 credits, which equates to approximately 200 hours of Total Qualification Time (TQT) and 160 Guided Learning Hours (GLH).

**Credits** – Each module has a credit value which indicates how many credits are awarded when a module is completed. The credit value also gives an indication of how long it will normally take to achieve a module or qualification. One credit usually equates to 10 hours of learning.

**Guided learning hours (GLH)** –The number of hours of teacher-supervised or directed study time required to teach a qualification or unit of a qualification.

**Total Qualification Time** – is the amount of time expected to take, on average, to complete the learning outcomes of a module to the standard defined by the assessment criteria and includes:

- guided learning hours
- practical and work-based learning
- assessment preparation time and
- assessment time
- supported self-study time

# Assessment

The assessment method for this module is an Onscreen assessment utilising Multiple Choice Testing. Assessments are employer-driven, practitioner-based, relevant, and appropriate for business needs.

Module	Assessment Type	Availability
Strategy and Planning	Onscreen Plan Submission Onscreen short and extended Answer Response test 2 hours	6x Assessment Windows (results issued after each close of window)

## Grading

### Module Grading

Grading will be applied to each module as well as to the overall qualification.

Distinction	(D)	80%+
Merit	(M)	70-79%
Pass	(P)	60-69%
Fail	(F)	0-59%

The percentage mark along with the corresponding grade will be issued for each module. To achieve the total qualification each individual module needs to achieve 60% or above.

# Entry Requirements

One or more of the following is required to gain entry onto this qualification:

- CIM Level 4 Professional Certificate in Marketing or CIM Level 4 Certificate in Professional Marketing or
- CIM Level 4 Certificate in Professional Digital Marketing.
- Any relevant Level 4 qualification
- An equivalent Level 4 Apprenticeship such as Marketing Executive. CIM will consider other equivalent Marketing apprenticeships.
- An equivalent Level 6 Apprenticeship such as Marketing Manager. CIM will consider other equivalent Marketing apprenticeships.
- Bachelor's or Master's degree, with at least one-third of credits coming from marketing content (i.e. 120 credits in Bachelor's degrees or 60 credits with Master's degrees)
- Professional practice (suggested two years of marketing in an operational role) and diagnostic assessment.

If English is not your first language, you will also need to provide evidence of achieving one of the following English Language qualifications within the last two years: IELTS Academic Module with an overall score of 6.5 (each component pass mark must be 6.0 or above) or Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English grade B or above. CIM will consider other equivalent alternatives.

## Accessibility & Inclusion

There may be incidents where candidates may require special consideration and reasonable adjustments to the delivery and assessment of qualifications. In the event of this, Study Centres or candidates should review the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations policy which is available to candidates on the **MyCIM Portal** once they are registered.

Reasonable adjustments enable a candidate with additional requirements to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding of the levels of attainment required by the relevant CIM qualification specification. CIM ensures its Reasonable Adjustments Policy aligns with regulatory and legal requirements.

Special Considerations enable a candidate to apply for special consideration to be considered as part of their assessment by way of marks/ percentage of marks for their assessment. The application of Special Consideration focuses on a scenario before or during the assessment that impacted the candidate's ability to perform on the day of an assessment, so they are not disadvantaged by circumstances outside of their control. CIM ensures its Special Considerations Policy aligns with regulatory and Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ) guidelines.

# Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Exemptions

Further guidance on RPL and exemptions can be found in CIM Exemptions policy.

## Membership

Membership with CIM is required to allow candidates to book any assessments and access support and resources. Once you have enrolled with an accredited study centre it is encouraged to join membership at the level that best suits your experience. For example, if you have three years' experience in marketing, our Associate (ACIM) level may be best suited. Check out all membership levels [here](#).

Alternatively, all students studying CIM qualifications can join at the [Affiliate Studying](#) level which allows you to book for any future assessments and access student resources such as EBSCO, Senior Examiner Reports and more.

# Command Verbs

CIM Level 6 Award

Command word	Interpretation of command word
<p><b>Analyse</b> Examine a topic together with thoughts and judgements about it.</p>	<p>Analyse new and/or abstract data and schools of thought and consider alternative solutions and outcomes independently, using a range of appropriate models, principles and definitions. Compare and analyse alternative models using appropriate rationale and criteria.</p>
<p><b>Appraise</b> Evaluate, judge or assess.</p>	<p>Provide a comprehensive and detailed critique of the subject area demonstrating an in-depth understanding and awareness.</p>
<p><b>Argue</b> Provide reasoned arguments for or against a point and arrive at an appropriate conclusion.</p>	<p>Engage in debate in a professional manner evidencing a comprehensive understanding and application of key principles.</p>
<p><b>Assess</b> Evaluate or judge the importance of something, referring to appropriate schools of thought.</p>	<p>Synthesise and assess new and/or abstract information and data in the context of a broad range of problems, using a range of techniques.</p>
<p><b>Collect</b> Systematically gather a series of items over a period of time.</p>	<p>Systematically gather a series of items over a period of time which demonstrate a critical understanding of the principal theories and concepts of the marketing discipline.</p>
<p><b>Compare and contrast</b> Look for similarities and differences between two or more factors leading to an informed conclusion.</p>	<p>Synthesise and analyse the similarities and differences between two or more contexts.</p>
<p><b>Create</b> Bring something into existence for the first time.</p>	<p>Create a range of products of work relevant to marketing that demonstrate originality and creativity. Use a few skills that are specialised, advanced or at the forefront of marketing.</p>
<p><b>Critically Evaluate</b> As with evaluate but with a critical eye to form a well-informed judgement or conclusion</p>	<p>To assess or judge the value, quality, or significance of something in a thorough, analytical, and discerning manner, taking into account multiple perspectives, evidence, and implications. Examining the strengths and weaknesses, considering alternative viewpoints, and questioning assumptions or biases to arrive at a well-founded and balanced judgment or conclusion</p>

<b>Define</b> Write the precise meaning of a word or phrase. Quote a source if possible.	Define key words and terminology relevant to one or more specialisms some of which is informed by or at the forefront of the marketing discipline.
<b>Demonstrate</b> Explain, using examples.	Explain a broad range of ideas persuasively and with originality, using a wide variety of illustrative examples to underpin findings and exemplify points.
<b>Describe</b> Give a detailed account of something.	Synthesise and analyse new and/or abstract ideas and information and present a clear description and account of the findings.
<b>Determine</b> Use research to check or establish something.	Execute a defined project of research, development or investigation to identify evidence to support a course of action. Make judgements where data/information is limited.
<b>Develop</b> Take forward or build on given information.	Build on detailed knowledge of marketing principles, theories and concepts using originality, creativity and insight. Use a combination of routine and advanced/specialist skills to develop complex ideas.
<b>Discuss</b> Investigate or examine by argument and debate, giving reasons for and against.	Produce detailed and coherent arguments in response to well-defined and abstract problems using relevant marketing language.
<b>Evaluate</b> Make an appraisal of the worth (or not) of something, its validity, reliability, effectiveness, applicability.	To assess or judge the value, quality, or significance of something based on specific criteria or standards. It involves analysing and considering various factors to form an opinion or make a decision about the subject being evaluated and in the process review its reliability, validity and applicability.
<b>Explain</b> Make plain, interpret and account for, enlighten, give reasons for.	Present complex information evidencing comprehensive knowledge, understanding and application of key principles.
<b>Identify</b> List the main points or characteristics of a given item.	Critically identify elements of complex marketing problems and issues.
<b>Illustrate</b> Give examples to make points clear and explicit.	Apply a wide variety of illustrative examples to underpin findings supported by references to wider reading to make points clear and explicit.
<b>Justify</b> Support recommendations, explanations or arguments, with valid reasons for and against.	Communicate well-structured and coherent arguments relevant to marketing.
<b>Outline</b> Set out main characteristics or general principles, ignoring minor details.	Selectively identify valid and relevant information from a range of sources, making judgements where data/information is limited.
<b>Plan</b> Put forward a proposal for a course of action, usually to achieve a goal.	Produce a structured proposal for planned stages to achieve a goal in professional contexts that include a degree of unpredictability.



	Interpret, use and evaluate numerical/financial data to achieve the end goal.
<b>Present</b> Exhibit something to others.	Make formal presentations about specialised topics to informed audiences that include professional peers, senior colleagues and specialists.
Prioritise	determine the order for dealing with according to their relative importance
<b>Provide</b>	Make available for use; supply
<b>Recommend</b> Put forward proposals, supported by a clear rationale.	Produce reliable and valid conclusions and proposals based on abstract data and situation, appropriately contextualised to a marketing context.
<b>Reflect</b> Think carefully about something; consider something; review something that has happened or has been done.	Review and critically analyse a range of complex issues in order to assess reasons for an item's success or failure and/or to identify improvements that can be made.
<b>State</b> Present in a clear brief form.	Present new and/or abstract data in a clear and concise manner, appropriately contextualised to a marketing context.
<b>Summarise</b> Give a concise account of the key points, omit details and examples.	Summarise abstract information, data and contradictory information in a logical and concise manner.