



CIM Qualifications Specification

Level 4 Qualification Specification:

CIM Level 4 Award in Search Engine Optimisation



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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

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) involves optimising website content and structure to improve its visibility and ranking in search engine results pages, ultimately driving organic traffic. SEO supports businesses to increase their online visibility, attract relevant audiences, and enhance their digital presence, ultimately leading to improved brand awareness, website traffic, and conversions. This module focuses on the importance of search engine marketing for organisations as part of their digital marketing activities. Candidates will learn the key success factors for Search Engine Optimisation as well as understand effective paid search campaigns to achieve marketing goals.

Qualification Structure

Qualification Sizes:

Qualification Title	Size
CIM Level 4 Award in Search Engine Optimisation	10 Credits (100 TQT) (80 GLH)

Module Purpose

This module covers the fundamental aspects of search engine marketing. It covers three key outcomes: the first develops the necessary knowledge to understand the importance of search engine marketing in driving brand visibility, the second covers the essential elements of Search Engine Optimisation; and the third area develops an understanding of the steps involved in creating successful paid search campaigns.

Module Content

LEARNING OUTCOME	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	INDICATIVE CONTENT
1. Understand the importance of search engine marketing for organisations.	1.1 Assess the scope of search engine marketing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search engine functions • Search engine algorithms • Benefits and limitations of SEO and Paid search • Role of search engines in the customer journey • Search engine marketing supporting other marketing activities
	1.2 Explain the role of keyword research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of keyword research • Types of keywords (e.g. Informational, transactional, shorttail, longtail, etc.) • Search intent • Branded vs. unbranded • The role of keyword research tools (e.g. Ubersuggest, SEMrush, Ahrefs, etc) • Generation of keywords
2. Recognise the success factors for Search Engine Optimisation (SEO).	2.1 Determine the role of content in SEO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long and short form content • Experience, Expertise, and Trustworthiness (EEAT) • On-page factors • Search intent • SEO and the customer journey • Generating content ideas (e.g. content pillars) • Importance of sitemaps and site speed for SEO (basic technical SEO) • Issues of duplicated content
	2.2 Identify and explain off-page SEO techniques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domain Authority score (DA) • Link building • Social signal • Local listings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand mentions • Online reputation management • How to measure off-page SEO • Significance of off-page SEO
3. Understand how to develop effective paid search campaigns.	3.1 Describe the steps in creating paid search campaigns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid advertising types (e.g. search, mobile, desktop, display, shopping, etc.) • Campaign types (e.g. e-commerce, lead generation, technical, remarketing, etc.) • Targeting options

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Keyword ○ Audience (e.g. geodemographics, interests, habits) ○ Location ○ Mobile ○ Competitor ○ Long-tail ● Campaign objectives. ● User account set up for success ● Budget and costs including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Return on Investment (ROI) ○ Return on Ad Spend (ROAS) ○ Target Cost per Action (tCPA) ○ Cost Per Click (CPC) ● Paid advertising best practice ● The importance of landing pages ● Quality score (i.e. A/B testing)
	3.2 Present the approaches for measuring paid search campaign performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Metrics for paid search advertising campaigns including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organic Traffic ○ Keyword ranking ○ CTR ○ Conversion ○ Bounce/Dwell rate ● Measurement tools (e.g. Google Analytics 4, MozPro, SEMrush, etc.) ● Attribution modelling

Credits, Total Qualification Time (TQT), Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

The CIM Level 4 Award has been calculated as carrying 10 credits, which equates to approximately 100 hours of Total Qualification Time (TQT) and 80 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
- 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
Search Engine Optimisation	Onscreen Multiple-Choice Test 45 questions 90 Minutes	6x On-Demand windows (results issued after each close of On-Demand 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

You will need to have a minimum of one year's experience in the industry or a relevant Level 3 qualification to study the CIM Level 4 Award. Alternatively, an equivalent Level 3 Apprenticeship such as the Multi-channel Marketer or Marketing Assistant would also be accepted. CIM will consider other equivalent Marketing Apprenticeships.

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.

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and Exemptions

For further information on CIM's Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and Exemptions policy, please contact: exemptions@cim.co.uk

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, the 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, sample tests and more.

Progression Opportunities

All of our level 4 qualifications will be undertaken by learners who have the module integrated into their degree, or they will be working within the marketing industry, probably at a Marketing Assistant level. As such, we stipulate that the level 4 qualifications are designed to support with routes to employment as a Marketing Executive or support development in their role. Alternatively, it supports progression onto a Level 6 programme or module.

Command Verbs

CIM Level 4 Award

Command word	Interpretation of command word
Analyse Examine a topic together with thoughts and judgments about it.	Identify components of a broad range of models and the relationship between these components. Draw out and relate implications.
Appraise Evaluate, judge or assess.	Can provide a detailed account of the subject area including key theories and models.
Argue Provide reasoned arguments for or against a point and arrive at an appropriate conclusion	Produce reasoned arguments in response to a given brief using terminology correctly.
Assess Evaluate or judge the importance of something, referring to appropriate schools of thought	Examine closely with a view to measuring a particular situation taking account of strengths and weaknesses, for and against
Collect Systematically gather a series of items over a period of time	Systematically gather a series of items over a period of time which demonstrate a knowledge of the marketing discipline
Compare and contrast Look for similarities and differences between two or more factors leading to an informed conclusion	Identify the similarities and differences between two or more factors
Create Bring something into existence for the first time	Create a range of documents relevant to marketing using a range of communication methods and approaches
Define Write the precise meaning of a word or phrase. Quote a source if possible.	Define key words and terminology relevant to marketing
Describe Give a detailed account of something	Provide a thorough description of some non-routine ideas and information and present a clear description and account of the findings
Develop Take forward or build on given information	Build on given information using a range of information and ideas
Demonstrate Explain, using examples.	Clearly explain a range of ideas, using illustrative examples to underpin concepts used.
Determine Use research to check or establish something.	Use routine professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials relevant to marketing to identify evidence to support a course of action.
Explain Make plain, interpret and account for, enlighten, give reasons for.	Give a detailed response (definition and explanation) as to how/why something may benefit or present a barrier.

Identify List the main points or characteristics of a given item.	Can give the name and identifying characteristics; usually used in conjunction with other command words such as identify and explain.
Illustrate Give examples to make points clear and explicit.	Use a wide variety of examples to underpin the concepts you use.
Justify Support recommendations, explanations or arguments, with valid reasons for and against.	Explain why/give reasons to support your statements.
Outline Set out main characteristics or general principles, ignoring minor details.	State the main characteristics and key points from a range of sources.
Plan 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.
Present Exhibit something to others.	Present arguments, information or ideas, which are routine to marketing, to others. Convey complex ideas in a well-structured and coherent form.
Prioritise	determine the order for dealing with according to their relative importance
Provide	Make available for use; supply
Reflect Think carefully about something, consider something, review something that has happened or has been done.	Review and/or think carefully about something in order to assess reasons for its success or failure or identify improvements that can be made.
State Present in a clear brief form.	Present new and/or abstract data and information in a clear and concise manner.
Summarise Give a concise account of the key points, omit details and examples.	Summarise information and arrange in a logical manner.