

Applying for membership

ASSESSMENT OF PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Updated Practical Experience Requirements (PER)
from 1 February 2016

Introduction

CIMA's Practical Experience Requirements (PER) have been updated following the launch of the CIMA Professional Qualification. The updated requirements are aligned with the syllabus and assessment, and are based around the CGMA Competency Framework.

The Practical Experience Requirements are an essential part of the CIMA qualification and CIMA's membership application process. They complement assessments and demonstrate your ability to apply your knowledge and skills in the context of your professional experience.

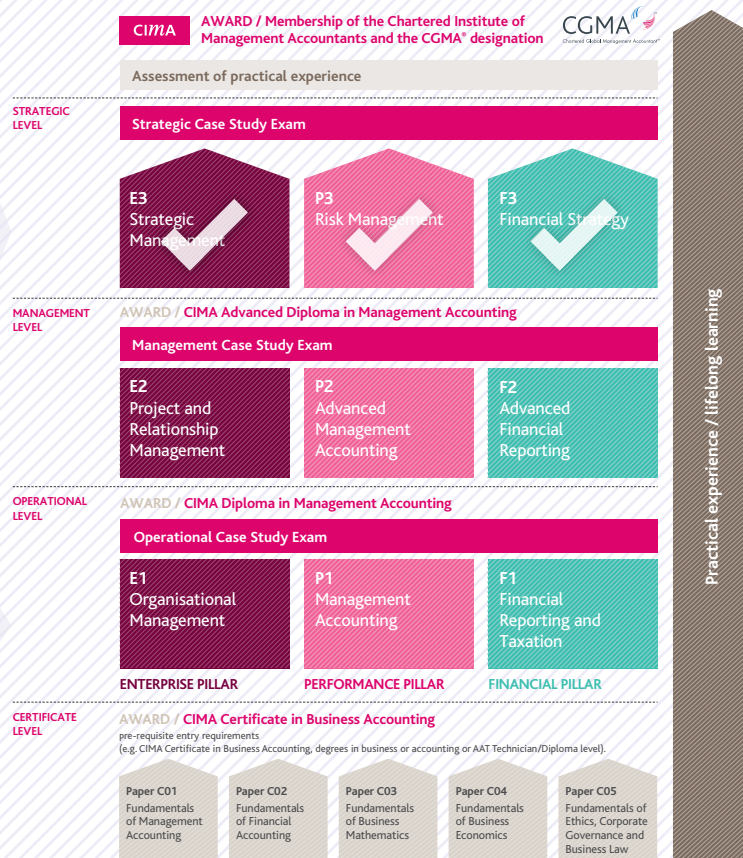
Your PER application will be assessed to determine whether you have gained sufficient experience to be awarded Associate membership – giving you the Chartered Management Accountant (ACMA) and Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA) designations.

This guide will help you prepare your PER application; providing you with details on the requirements, how to record your experience and information on the CGMA Competency Framework.

You can submit your application for assessment once you have completed all three objective tests at Strategic level.

If you have not completed the Strategic level Case Study exam at the time your experience is approved, your election to membership will be provisional pending your exam results.

You can begin to record your practical experience on the membership application tool as soon as you have started studying at Operational level of the CIMA Professional Qualification.



Please note:

The updated PER come in to effect from 1 February 2016. The existing PER process will remain open until 31 December 2016 for any pre-existing applicants and for students who have started recorded their experience under existing requirements.

CGMA Competency Framework

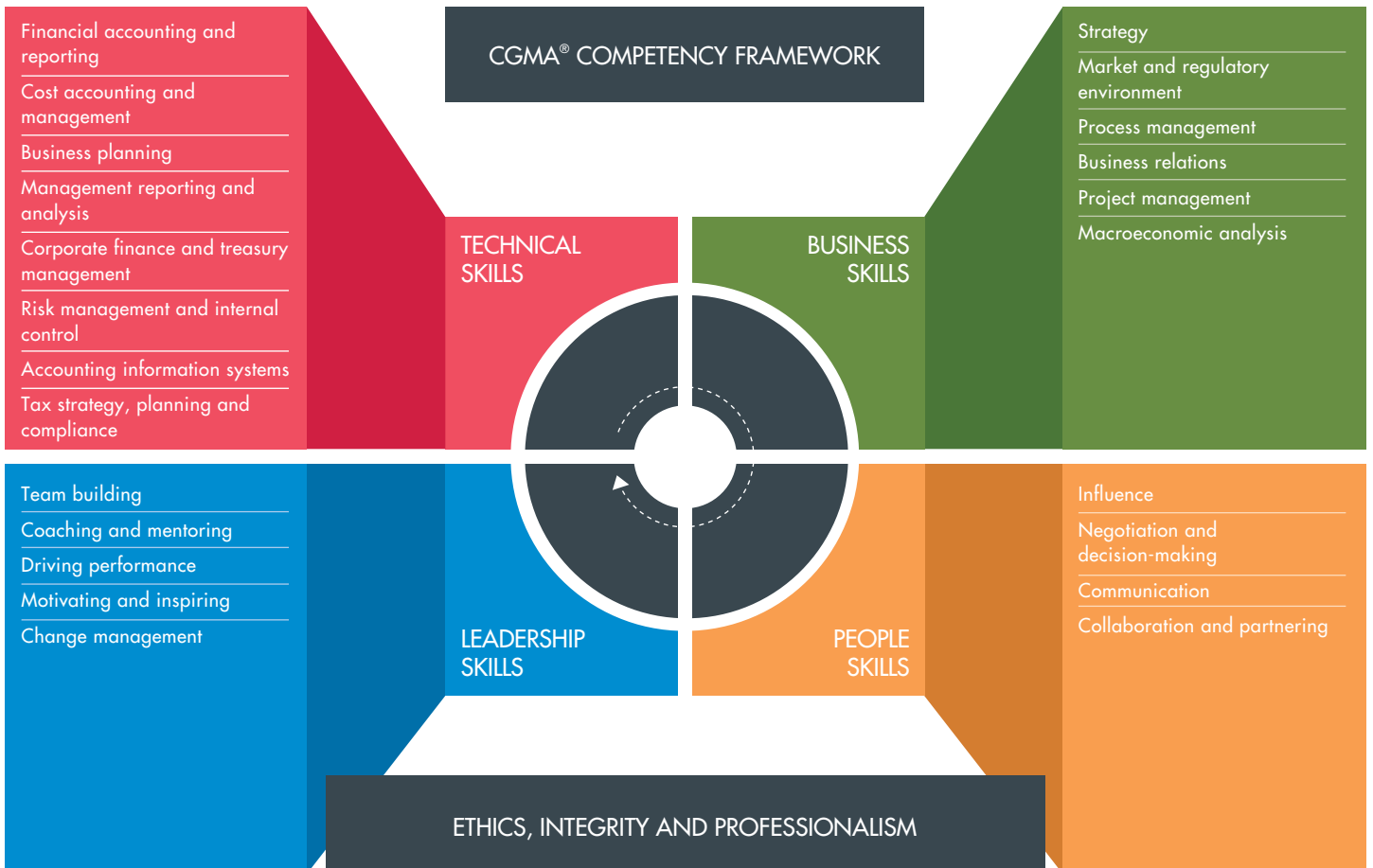
The updated Practical Experience Requirements are based on the CGMA Competency Framework which underpins the CIMA Professional Qualification. The Framework consists of four knowledge areas (Technical Skills, Business Skills, People Skills and Leadership Skills) and is underpinned by Ethics, Integrity and Professionalism. Each knowledge area contains a number of competency categories and individual competencies or skills. Ethics, Integrity and Professionalism are defined through the CIMA Code of Ethics (www.cimaglobal.com/codeofethics).

The Framework shows the range of technical, accounting and finance skills that management accountants need to do their jobs. Finance professionals need business skills in order to understand and apply their technical skills in a business context; they need people skills to influence the decisions, actions and behaviours of the organisation and business stakeholders through effective communication; and finally they need leadership skills at various levels to lead their peers and those whose work they oversee to deliver business objectives.

Through the submission of your PER application, you need to demonstrate that you have successfully developed skills and have been able to effectively apply your knowledge and skills to real-world business situations.

As a result, employers can be sure that as a qualified Chartered Management Accountant (ACMA) and a Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA) designation holder, you are equipped with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours, and that you will add value to their organisation through your commitment to the CIMA Code of Ethics (www.cimaglobal.com/codeofethics) and Continuous Professional Development (www.cimaglobal.com/Members/CPD).

FIGURE 1: CGMA Competency Framework with competency categories



CGMA Competency Framework structure

The full CGMA Competency Framework can be found on the Practical Experience Requirements website: www.cimaglobal.com/PER

The Framework categorises individual competencies by knowledge area, competency category and proficiency level as presented in the example below.

FIGURE 2: Competency Framework structure

TECHNICAL SKILLS

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTING STANDARDS

This ensures that the organisation conducts operations and fulfils its statutory and regulatory obligations according to professional accounting standards (domestic and/or international as applicable per business model).

FOUNDATIONAL

- Demonstrate awareness and knowledge of the professional accounting standards
- Apply those principles to accurately record financial transactions and maintain appropriate supporting documentation

INTERMEDIATE

- Review the accuracy and legitimacy of recorded financial transactions and related reports
- Assist in developing and implementing new accounting and reporting pronouncements and determine the resulting impact
- Recommend appropriate accounting and reporting treatment for certain transactions

ADVANCED

- Demonstrate advanced level understanding of accounting standards
- Develop, manage and execute plans for implementation of new or updated accounting and reporting pronouncements
- Identify potential issues associated with unusual or complex transactions, review and approve the appropriate treatment

EXPERT

- Oversee accounting standards selected and implemented by the organisation
- Identify potential issues associated with proposed accounting and reporting rules

LEVEL 1

Knowledge area

LEVEL 2

Competency category

LEVEL 3

Proficiency level

LEVEL 4

Competencies

Competency proficiency levels

Competency categories contain a number of different competencies or skills. These are divided out into the four levels of proficiency (Foundational, Intermediate, Advanced and Expert).

FIGURE 3: Competency proficiency levels

EXPERT

This requires expert knowledge to develop strategic vision and provide unique insight to the overall direction and success of the organisation. This has formal responsibility for business areas and his/her actions and decisions have a high level of strategic impact.

ADVANCED

This requires strong understanding of the organisation's environment, current strategic position and direction with strong analytical skills and the ability to advise on strategic options for the business. This includes formal responsibility for colleagues and their actions; and that their decisions have a wider impact.

INTERMEDIATE

This requires a moderate understanding of overall business operations and measurements, including responsibility for monitoring the implementation of strategy. This has limited or informal responsibility for colleagues and/or needs to consider broader approaches or consequences.

FOUNDATIONAL

This requires a basic understanding of the business structures, operations and financial performance, and includes responsibility for implementing and achieving results through own actions rather than through others.

Practical Experience Requirements

The Practical Experience Requirements for Associate membership of CIMA have been defined as follows:

1. A minimum of 36 months' experience across the four knowledge areas, with a maximum of 60 months to be evidenced.
2. At least four competency categories must be selected between technical skills and business skills (with at least one from each) covering the minimum 36 months.
 - a. At least 18 months must be at the intermediate, advanced and/or expert levels.
 - b. The remaining 18 months can be gained across foundational, intermediate, advanced and expert levels.
3. A minimum of one competency category each from People and Leadership skills over 36 months.
 - a. These should be in the context of the technical and business skills and can be gained across foundational, intermediate, advanced or expert levels.

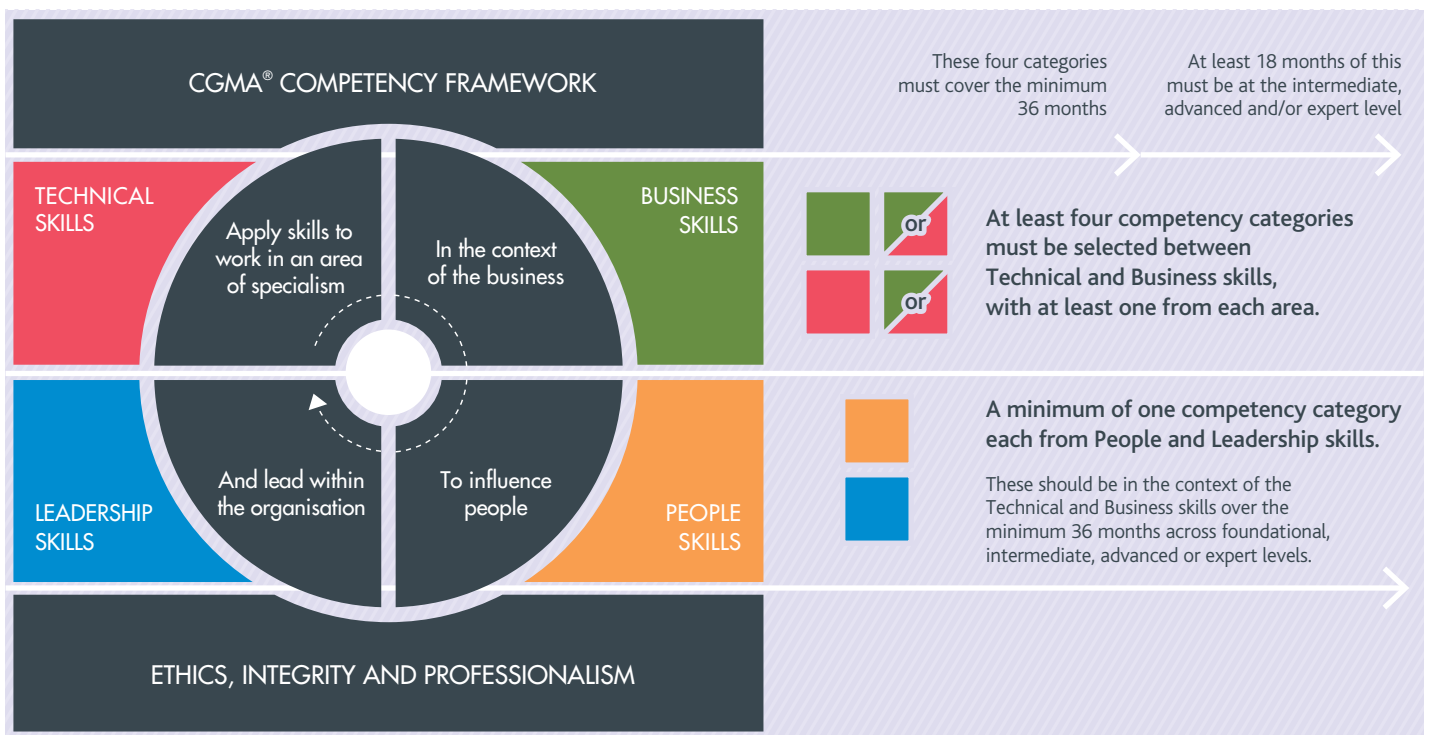
4. Where you have more than five years' relevant experience:
 - a. You should upload detailed evidence for a maximum of five years' experience.
 - b. The remaining experience (outside of the five years) should be recorded in your Career Progression Summary.

In addition, there are some competency categories where you will need to demonstrate competence against more than one of the sub-categories. This is to ensure that you have a broad range of relevant experience and the details are shown in **Appendix A: Minimum Requirements**.

The requirement for between 36 and 60 months of recorded detailed experience does not have to cover sequential periods of employment and could be drawn from longer periods, where appropriate.

Your detailed description against each competency needs to demonstrate what you did to meet the competency and proficiency level. There is an upper limit of 500 words per competency.

FIGURE 4: CGMA Competency Framework with experience requirements



Membership Application Tool (MAT)

All membership applications must be submitted using the online Membership Application Tool (MAT) – a process introduced to enable you to record your

practical experience against the CGMA Competency Framework. Detailed guidance on using the MAT is available on the website: www.cimaglobal.com/per.

Recording of Relevant Experience

The MAT should be used to record experience as and when it is achieved and can be found on MY CIMA. You can begin to record your experience as soon as you have started studying at the Operational level, or higher. We recommend that you should record your experience as it is gained, to help accurate recording and support the verification process.

Experience gained needs to be recorded against the appropriate competency and the assessment will take account of the following aspects:

- Have you identified the correct competency?
- Does the description of the experience gained clearly demonstrate that the competency has been evidenced? You have to show how the tasks completed by you are fully aligned with the activity defined
- Does your experience gained clearly support the proficiency level claimed?

On submission, the assessors will be looking for evidence that your experience demonstrates that the detailed Competencies at the proficiency levels claimed have been achieved.

There are some circumstances which could lead to your experience not being accepted:

- The experience has been recorded against an inappropriate competency
- The experience does not demonstrate clearly that the competency has been achieved
- The experience has been recorded against the competency at an incorrect level.

Any of these instances can result in the application being deferred for additional information or review if CIMA's minimum experience requirements are no longer met.

It is likely that in any one role an applicant will have evidence of multiple competencies in the same time period. The process will ask you to state what percentage of your time was spent on each competency.

As set out in the detailed requirements, your time should be allocated against Technical and Business Skills. Experience against Leadership and People Skills should be recorded but no time should be allocated, as we expect that you will have gained this type of experience concurrently with Technical and Business Skills.

Verification

Your experience needs to be verified by at least two people who have knowledge of your work prior to submitting your membership application. Verification would normally be provided by your immediate supervisor or manager, unless there are special circumstances. The MAT provides a means for requesting and confirming the verification, including the ability to add a personal message in the request.

The Verifiers will be asked to confirm that you have completed the activities in the role they are verifying.

Verifiers should not be relatives of the applicant. The key requirement is that they must be able to confirm that you have carried out the activities described.

Verification can take place as soon as your experience has been recorded and there are no planned amendments. (In the event of any subsequent changes which you make to your experience, there will be a need for re-verification.)

Career Progression Summary

Before you submit your application, you must upload a Career Progression Summary. This document helps to give the assessors a holistic overview of your career and should show how your detailed experience and competencies fit in with other experience that you have gained throughout

your career. You should include details of your employers, positions held and dates. There should also be a brief description of any relevant experience not included as part of your main submission.

Submission for Assessment

Your application can be submitted for assessment as soon as you have successfully completed the Strategic Objective Tests, provided that you have gained sufficient experience. Approval at that stage will be recorded and will result in full Associate Membership of CIMA on successful completion of the Strategic Case Study.

Alternatively, if you have already successfully completed the Strategic Case Study, before submitting your Practical Experience, approval will result in Associate Membership of CIMA.

You won't be able to submit your practical experience for assessment unless you have met the minimum requirements set out in Appendix A: Minimum Requirements. This is to ensure breadth of learning and experience has been achieved across the CGMA Competency Framework. The Membership Application Tool will notify you when you attempt to submit without satisfying the minimum requirements and will also inform you if your application is ready to submit by clicking on the **Is my experience ready?** button.

What happens next?

After submission, the application will be assessed independently by two Assessors and you will be notified of the result.

In the event that the application is not considered to demonstrate adequate experience, it will be deferred and you will be advised of areas that need to be strengthened or where further explanation is required.

Appendix A – Minimum Requirements

There are some competency categories where you will need to demonstrate competence against more than one of the sub-categories as outlined above. This is to ensure that you have a broad range of relevant experience.

Technical Skills	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert	Minimum competencies required
Financial Accounting and Reporting				2
Professional accounting standards	3	3	2	(2)
Transactional accounting and closing processes	5	5	5	(2)
Financial reporting and compliance	2	2	2	(2)
Cost Accounting and Management				2
Cost Accounting	3	3	3	(2)
Cost Management	3	3	2	(2)
Business Planning				2
Planning, Forecasting and Budgeting	3	3	3	(2)
Capital Expenditure and Investment evaluation	1	2	2	(2)
Management Reporting and Analysis				2
Financial Analysis	3	4	4	(2)
Management Reporting	2	3	3	Not alone
Performance Management	3	4	4	(2)
Variance Analysis	2	2	1	Not alone
Benchmarking	1	1	1	Not alone
Corporate Finance and Treasury Management				2
Cash Management	2	2	1	(2)
Mergers and Acquisitions	3	2	2	(2)
Treasury Policies and Treasury Risk Management	2	2	2	(2)
Business Valuation	1	1	1	Not alone
Corporate funding	1	2	2	Not alone
Risk Management & Internal Control				3
Risk Management Policies and Procedures	1	3	3	Not alone
Risk Identification and Assessment	2	1	1	(2)
Risk Response and Reporting	3	3	2	(2)
Internal Control	4	4	4	(3)
Internal Audit	2	2	1	Not alone
Accounting Information Systems				2
Information Systems Environment	1	1	1	Not alone
Accounting Applications	1	1	1	Not alone
Technology Developments and IT Solutions	3	3	3	(2)
Tax Strategy, Planning and Compliance				2
Taxation Law	2	2	1	Not alone
Tax Return Preparation and Review	1	1	1	Not alone
Tax Accounting	2	2	1	(2)
Tax Audit	1	1	1	Not alone
Tax Planning	1	1	1	Not alone

Business Skills	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert	Minimum competencies required
Strategy	3	3	3	2
Market and Regulatory Environment	3	3	3	2
Process Management	3	3	3	2
Business Relations	3	3	3	2
Project Management	3	3	2	2
Macroeconomic Analysis	2	2	2	2

Please note: Where 'Not alone' is referenced, you must demonstrate another competence against that particular competency type. For example, if you selected Management Reporting under the Management Reporting and Analysis category, you would also need to select another competency from within the Management Reporting and Analysis category, such as Financial Analysis.

Appendix B – Frequently Asked Questions

Why have Practical Experience Requirements?

The Practical Experience Requirements are an essential part of the CIMA qualification and CIMA's membership application process. They complement assessments and measure whether you have gained enough experience and can apply knowledge and skills in the context of real-world business.

Are the requirements the same for students working in different sectors and/or countries?

Yes. The Practical Experience Requirements are universally applicable and ensure an appropriate standard and rigour is maintained in CIMA's approach to admitting members to the Institute. The Practical Experience Requirements are closely aligned with the CIMA Professional Qualification through the CGMA Competency Framework, and adhere to IFAC standards.

How much experience do I need?

You will require a minimum of 36 months (three years) experience across all four knowledge areas of the CGMA Competency Framework. Please refer to the Practical Experience Requirements for a full set of rules.

When can I start recording my PER?

You can begin to record your PER once you start studying at Operational level of the CIMA Professional Qualification.

How do I record my practical experience?

You should record your practical experience through the Membership Application Tool, available on your MY CIMA account from Operational level onwards. There are no limits to the amount of times you can update the experience prior to submitting for assessment, so you should continue to update it as you gain relevant experience.

How will I judge whether I have sufficient practical experience?

The Membership Application Tool is intuitive and provides you with an indication of the readiness of your application for assessment. When you believe you have satisfied the requirements, you can check if your application is ready for assessment by clicking the **Is my experience ready?** button.

In the event of an application being received with inadequate experience, we will advise you on how you can improve your application.

What is a Career Progression Summary?

Prior to submission, you should upload a Career Progression Summary. The Career Progression Summary is essentially your resume and should provide a broad overview of your entire career which will give context to the 3-5 years detailed experience that is being submitted for assessment. This will enable the assessors to gain an understanding of how your submitted experience fits into the rest of your career. You can also detail any additional experience that you wish the assessors to consider.

When can I submit my practical experience for assessment?

Your membership application can be submitted once all verifiers have verified your practical experience. This gives you control over communication with your verifiers and ensures no delays in providing you with a result on your application.

You can submit your membership application once you have completed all three Strategic level Objective Tests. If you have not completed the Strategic level Case Study exam at the time your experience is approved, your election to membership will be provisional pending your exam results.

When can I use the letters ACMA, CGMA?

Only when you have been admitted as an Associate member of CIMA can you describe yourself as a Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA) designation holder and use the ACMA, CGMA designations after your name. You must not describe yourself as 'CIMA qualified' or use the designation in any correspondence or on any documentation, including your CV, business card or LinkedIn profile, until you have passed all the CIMA exams, had your practical experience successfully assessed and been admitted to membership. If you do use ACMA, CGMA when you are not entitled to, you may be disciplined. For more information you may wish to refer to Members' Regulations 11.4 of CIMA's Royal Charter, Byelaws and Regulations booklet and CIMA's code of ethics at: www.cimaglobal.com/codeofethics.

How will I know if my application has been successful?

If you have had your practical experience approved, and completed all CIMA exams, you will be put forward for election to membership. The election to membership will be confirmed by email, usually within 48 hours.

If you have had your experience approved, but not yet completed your final CIMA exam, you will be sent a 'Practical Experience Approved' email by CIMA's Membership Applications Team. If it then takes more than 12 months for the exams to be completed CIMA will automatically request, via email, that you log back on and re-confirm your membership application declarations.

What happens if my application isn't successful?

If the assessors have determined that you do not meet the minimum requirement for approval then CIMA's Membership Applications team will communicate the assessors feedback to you via email. This guidance will provide you with a full understanding of why the application was not approved and will inform you of the information you need to complete your re-submission.

What happens if I have an incomplete application in the existing system started prior to 1 February 2016?

If you currently have an application in the existing system (started prior to 1 February 2016), you have two options:

1. Complete and submit your current application by 31 December 2016
2. Extract your progress from the existing system into a document and repurpose your application for use in the new system.

Any incomplete applications still in the system on 31 December 2016 will no longer be accessible.

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