



CIM Qualifications Specification

Level 6 Qualification Specification:

CIM Level 6 Specialist Award in SEO and Paid Search Management



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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.



Specialist Awards

The CIM Level 6 Specialist Awards have been developed for Marketing Managers and marketers working in operational and supervisory roles, who are looking to progress their strategic and management skills. Successful completion of a Specialist Award will equip the student with the knowledge, skills and understanding to support decision making within a digital context at an operational level and carry out an essential and successful professional marketing role within the workplace. These Specialist awards provide marketers with focused knowledge and expertise in specific areas of digital marketing while at the same time fitting in with either current carer goals, CPD or areas of interest within the Digital marketing sphere. These qualifications are designed to enhance skills, improve career prospects, and demonstrate a high level of proficiency in a particular marketing area.

Module Aim

With many customer journeys beginning with a search engine, adopting a successful search engine marketing strategy has become critical to increase brand reach and visibility. This module will provide you with the knowledge and skills to create an effective search strategy for both organic and paid channels. Candidates will understand how to apply research techniques to understand customer search behaviour and utilise it to optimise paid campaigns and websites to maximise search engine visibility.

Qualification Structure

Qualification Sizes:

Qualification Title	Size
CIM Level 6 Specialist Award in SEO and Paid Search Management	10 Credits (100 TQT) (80 GLH)

Module Purpose

This module develops knowledge and skills to enable a strategic approach to organic and paid search channels. It covers three key areas: the first is developing the understanding to apply research methods required for organic and paid search, including keyword research; the second area develops knowledge about how paid search activities can be managed, while the third key area covers how a website can be successfully optimised for organic search.

Module Content

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	INDICATIVE CONTENT
1. Utilise research methods for organic & paid search.	1.1 Explain keyword research techniques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of keyword research • Keyword research techniques, (e.g. exact match search, wildcard search, etc) • Types of keywords (e.g. Shorttail, Longtail, etc.) • Search intent
	1.2 Justify internal and external analysis tools to develop customer insights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keyword research tools • The role of keyword research tools (e.g. Ubersuggest, SEMrush, Ahrefs, etc) • Different types of keywords • Google Adwords tool • Google Console
2. Understand how paid search is managed.	2.1 Determine paid search activities to meet campaign and marketing goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality score • Targeting options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Keyword ◦ Audience ◦ Local ◦ Mobile ◦ Competitor ◦ Long-tail • Campaign objectives and settings • Ad types • Ad copy and creative Landing pages • Budget
	2.2 Analyse the effectiveness of paid search activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing and Optimisation • Legal requirements and risks • KPIs and Metrics <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)
3. Understand how organic search can be optimised.	3.1 Determine on-page optimisations to maximise audience visibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content optimisation • On page optimisations (E.g. Social sharing, readability, etc) • Link strategy

	3.2 Justify best practice for establishing site authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site architecture • Technical SEO • Content quality and consistency • User experience • Google Analytics
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Credits, Total Qualification Time (TQT), Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

The CIM Level 6 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 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
SEO and Paid Search Management	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

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, 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

Further guidance on APL and exemptions can be found in CIM 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 6 qualifications are undertaken by learners who are either integrating the module into their undergraduate or postgraduate marketing degree, or who are already working within the industry, typically in roles such as Marketing Executive or Marketing Manager. As such, the Level 6 qualifications are designed to support progression within mid to senior-level marketing roles, enhancing strategic thinking and leadership capability. Alternatively, they provide a strong foundation for further academic or professional development, including progression to a Level 7 qualification or related postgraduate study.

Command Verbs

CIM Level 6 Specialist Award

Command word	Interpretation of command word
Analyse Examine a topic together with thoughts and judgements about it.	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.
Appraise Evaluate, judge or assess.	Provide a comprehensive and detailed critique of the subject area demonstrating an in-depth understanding and awareness.
Argue Provide reasoned arguments for or against a point and arrive at an appropriate conclusion.	Engage in debate in a professional manner evidencing a comprehensive understanding and application of key principles.
Assess Evaluate or judge the importance of something, referring to appropriate schools of thought.	Synthesise and assess new and/or abstract information and data in the context of a broad range of problems, using a range of techniques.
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 critical understanding of the principal theories and concepts of the marketing discipline.
Compare and contrast Look for similarities and differences between two or more factors leading to an informed conclusion.	Synthesise and analyse the similarities and differences between two or more contexts.
Create Bring something into existence for the first time.	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.
Critically Evaluate As with evaluate but with a critical eye to form a well-informed judgement or conclusion	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
Define 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.

Demonstrate 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.
Describe 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.
Determine 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.
Develop 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.
Explain Make plain, interpret and account for, enlighten, give reasons for.	Present complex information evidencing comprehensive knowledge, understanding and application of key principles.
Identify List the main points or characteristics of a given item.	Critically identify elements of complex marketing problems and issues.
Illustrate 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.
Justify Support recommendations, explanations or arguments, with valid reasons for and against.	Communicate well-structured and coherent arguments relevant to marketing.
Outline 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.
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 in professional contexts that include a degree of unpredictability. Interpret, use and evaluate numerical/financial data to achieve the end goal.
Present 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 them 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 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.

State Present in a clear brief form.	Present new and/or abstract data in a clear and concise manner, appropriately contextualised to a marketing context.
Summarise 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.