

Institute of Management Accountants
Higher Education Endorsement Program



Faculty Guide to Criteria, Curriculum
Alignment, and the Application



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Questions?

Send an email to:

HigherEdEndorsement@imanet.org



Higher Education Endorsement Program Overview

The IMA Higher Education Endorsement Program recognizes business programs that meet the quality educational standards required to enable students to prepare for the CMA (Certified Management Accountant) designation.

Participating in the Higher Education Endorsement Program offers your institution valuable recognition and prestige through official acknowledgment on IMA's website, along with access to an endorsement seal, templated press materials, and promotional content to show case the achievement. This distinction goes beyond traditional accreditation—and comes at no additional cost. In addition to recognition, the endorsement provides curriculum validation through a formal evaluation of your program's content, helping ensure alignment with industry standards. This not only strengthens academic credibility but also attracts students seeking career paths beyond public accounting, particularly those interested in management accounting and the CMA designation.

Students at your institution benefit directly from endorsement through a curriculum that aligns with the CMA certification, preparing them for careers in management accounting and related fields. The endorsement ensures that the curriculum meets rigorous standards, giving students the opportunity to begin the CMA exam process while still in school. In addition, the program offers up to ten CMA scholarships per academic year, providing selected students with financial support and access to exam preparation resources. This built-in advantage helps students graduate with both academic preparation and a clear path toward professional distinction.

IMA Endorsement Criteria

To be eligible for IMA Endorsement, your program must meet the following criteria:

- Substantially, 75% – at least 31 of the 41 subtopics – of the CMA program is covered at the highest cognitive level, Level C.
- Adequate faculty resources are available to deliver the program.
- The program is accredited by a recognized accreditation organization, such as AACSB, ACBSP, IACBE, EQUIS, NEASC, or another international or regional accrediting body.

While the preceding criteria are essential to the decision to endorse a program, the following elements are also taken into consideration:

- The nature, relevance, and clarity of the faculty's objectives for the program, as well as the institution's commitment to those objectives.
- The processes in place to evaluate the program's effectiveness in meeting the evolving needs of employers.



CMA Program Learning Aims

The application demonstrates the extent to which the CMA program learning aims are achieved by identifying how many major CMA exam topic areas are addressed at **Level C**—the highest cognitive level defined by IMA.

Curriculum Coverage Levels and Skills	
A	Requiring skill levels of knowledge and comprehension.
B	Requiring skill levels of knowledge, comprehension, application, and analysis.
C	Requiring all six skill levels of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Cognitive Skills, Definitions, and Examples		
Knowledge	Ability to remember previously learned material such as specific facts, criteria, techniques, principles, and procedures	Identify, define, list
Comprehension	Ability to grasp and interpret the meaning of material	Classify, explain, distinguish between
Application	Ability to use learned material in new and concrete situations	Demonstrate, predict, solve, modify, relate
Analysis	Ability to break down material into its component parts so that its organizational structure can be understood; ability to recognize causal relationships, discriminate between behaviors, and identify elements that are relevant to the validation of a judgment	Differentiate, estimate, order
Synthesis	Ability to put parts together to form a new whole or proposed set of operations; ability to relate ideas and formulate hypotheses	Combine, formulate, revise
Evaluation	Ability to judge the value of material for a given purpose on the basis of consistency, logical accuracy, and comparison to standards; ability to appraise judgments involved in the selection of a course of action	Criticize, justify, conclude



CMA Exam Topic Areas

A comprehensive overview of the CMA exam topic areas is provided in the **CMA Content Specification Outline** located under **Essential Resources** on the [How to Prepare for IMA's CMA Exam and Pass](#) webpage. This document serves as a key reference when clarifying the scope of specific topic areas and understanding of the criteria reviewers will use to evaluate syllabi and assessment samples. Consulting the outline during the preparation of your application and supporting materials is strongly recommended, as it can help streamline the review process and reduce the likelihood of multiple revision rounds.

Submission Requirements

The Higher Education Endorsement Application:	Due to the time and preparation required for endorsement submission, including the compilation of supporting materials, the Higher Education Endorsement Application in Excel format is not available for download on IMA's website. The application is available upon request and should be obtained as the last step in your process to ensure your submission includes the most current version. An application preview is provided at the end of this guide to support your preparation for endorsement submission.
File Sharing:	Supporting documents must be shared using a file-sharing service such as Dropbox, Google Drive, or Microsoft OneDrive . Please include syllabi and assessment tool samples in separate folders.
Supporting Document Format:	The required format for documents is Word or PDF , with the exception of the application, which must be submitted in its original format, Excel.
File Name Formats for Syllabi and Assessment Tool Samples:	Syllabi file names must include the Course Title. For example, ACC 2112 Intermediate Accounting II. Assessment tool sample file names must be short due limited spacing on the application. File names should differ from syllabi file names for the ease of locating supporting documents. For example, "Doc 1" and "Doc 2 pg 10". On the application, there are 41 subtopics, each identified with a number. The number associated with the subtopic can be used to identify assessment tool samples. For example, Risk and return is number 27 on the application. The file name associated with that subtopic can be named "Doc 27a" and Doc 27b".



Submission Checklist

Application Preview	
Refer to the Application Preview to prepare your endorsement submission.	
☐	Have answers prepared for questions 1 – 19 of the General Information section of the application. Questions 8, 14, 18, and 19 require supporting documents and file names.
☐	Reviewers will pinpoint the 2 – 4 core courses that cover the majority of topic areas. Identify those courses.
☐	For the Curricular Content section of the application, prepare the following for each subtopic being supplied: a. Level or Year Taught: Freshman (FR), Sophomore (SO), Junior (JR), Senior (SR) b. Required (R) or Elective (E) c. School Rating of A, B, or C d. Highest School Rating of A, B, or C e. Syllabus File Name f. Assessment Tool Sample File Name No subtopic should be left blank. On the application there is an N/A checkbox next to each subtopic. For the subtopics you are not substantiating at Level C, check the N/A box.
☐	Compile and save syllabi for a minimum of 31 of the 41 subtopic areas taught at Level C. This is a minimum of 75% coverage.
☐	Compile and save assessment tool samples for a minimum of 25 of the 41 subtopic areas covered at Level C. Ensure that the samples are well distributed across both CMA exam parts. Where appropriate, the same tool may be cited for multiple subtopics. Samples must go beyond simple true/false or multiple-choice questions and include projects, case studies, rigorous assessments, and substantive homework assignments that reflect the depth and challenge of each course. Assessment tool samples should be provided only for subtopics covered at Level C. It is recommended that samples be submitted for as many subtopics as possible to enable the review committee to reasonably verify topic coverage within the program curricula. Following initial submission, applicants may be asked to provide additional samples to substantiate coverage of up to all subtopics reported at Level C.



Submission Checklist Continued

☐	Send an email to HigherEdEndorsement@imanet.org with a request for the Higher Education Endorsement Application.
☐	Save the application as an Excel file. Begin on the App Instructions tab.
☐	Email the submission including the application and the link for supporting documents to HigherEdEndorsement@imanet.org .



Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Question: How long does it take for an endorsement application to be reviewed?

Answer: In Phase I, the application and supporting documents are reviewed for totality. This includes confirming that at least 31 of the 41 Level C content areas are provided. The review takes place within the first week after the submission is received. If the submission meets the criteria, the application moves to Phase II, where two reviewers from the Committee for Academic Relations (CAR) evaluate it. This phase typically takes 5 to 8 weeks, depending on reviewers' availability. If both reviewers agree, the submission advances to Phase III, Endorsement. If they do not reach consensus, we will provide the steps needed to achieve endorsement.

Question: Can both undergraduate and graduate programs be submitted on the same application?

Answer: No, both programs must be submitted as separate applications. If the undergraduate curriculum does not meet the required criteria, additional courses at the appropriate rigor level will need to be identified and incorporated into the program to fulfill the standards. If the undergraduate program cannot provide students with the required CMA course content, then only the graduate program will be eligible for endorsement.

Question: Is there a template to follow when submitting the documentation? Is the final document similar to a Self-Study prepared for an accrediting body?

Answer: There is no template other than the application. It is helpful to name separate files providing the requested information using file names consistent to the terms used in the application.

Question: To demonstrate rigor at Level C, is a complete set of tests, exams, and quizzes from each course required, or would a sample test from each course be sufficient?

Answer: A well-distributed sample of assessment materials covering both parts of the CMA exam is sufficient, provided it addresses at least 25 subtopics. To streamline the review process and potentially reduce the number of review rounds, additional samples are encouraged if available.

Samples should reflect Level C rigor and consist of assessments such as projects, case studies, exams, and homework assignments that show case students' critical thinking and analytical skills, rather than true/false or basic multiple-choice formats.

To assist the review team, a mapping of CMA subtopics to specific assignments should be provided. Indicate which specific questions or components within those materials demonstrate Level C coverage of the identified subtopics.

Question: Is reapplication for endorsement required in the future?

Answer: Yes, after five years, a renewal application will be sent to determine whether the program continues to meet endorsement criteria. Any changes affecting the program should be documented.

Question: If a topic listed on the curricular content table (e.g., Special Issues) is unclear, where can additional information be found?

Answer: A detailed overview of each major topic area can be found in the CMA Exam Content Specification Outlines (CSO). See “CMA Exam Topic Areas” to access CMA CSO.

Question: In Question 8 of the general section of the application, what is meant by “advising handout?”

Answer: It is a sheet or webpage showing what courses should be taken to prepare for the CMA exam and should correspond with the courses listed on the application.

Question: Is a student chapter required for endorsement? If so, what is the process of starting a chapter?

Answer: No. We encourage you to consider forming a student chapter, if viable. Click [here](#) for more information.

Question: In Question 11 of the General section of the application, may we provide ratios and percentages in place of specific figures, as our student enrollment data is confidential?

Answer: No, the number of students is required. The information will be kept strictly confidential.

Question: What are faculty resources?

Answer: Faculty (“FTE”) that participate in meeting the program endorsement requirements.

Question: In question 17 of the general section of the application, are graduation rates requested for first-year students or for declared accounting majors?

Answer: Graduation rates should reflect students who are declared in the accounting program.

Question: In question 19C, what methods and metrics are used to evaluate effectiveness in meeting the needs of employers?

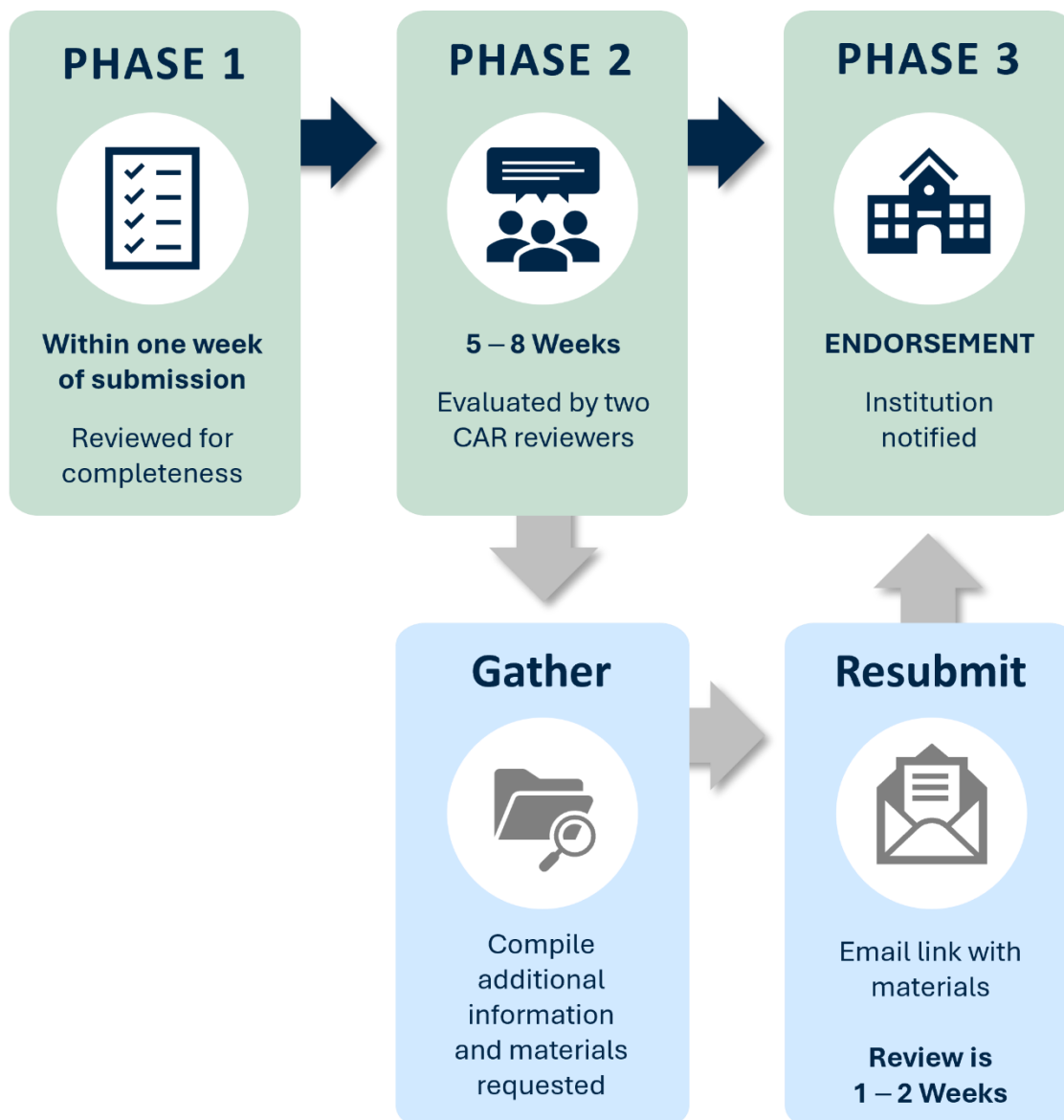
Answer: Identify ways used to evaluate and improve the program to meet what employers are looking for. This might include employer or intern surveys, advisory board, or third-party assessments.

If you have additional questions, send an email to: HigherEdEndorsement@imanet.org



Endorsement Application Review Timeline

The endorsement application review timeline is subject to change based on application volume, reviewer availability, and other unforeseen circumstances.





Application Preview

The following document is intended solely as a preview of the Endorsement Application.

Institutions are encouraged to review the requirements thoroughly and, when ready to proceed, contact HigherEdEndorsement@imanet.org. Upon request, IMA will provide the official application and offer the opportunity to schedule a meeting to address any questions about the application process.

For the preview, proceed to the next page.



HIGHER EDUCATION ENDORSEMENT APPLICATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

Part 1: Institution Name and Contact Information

1. Name of Institution:
Country:
Address:
2. Awarding Institution (if not applicant institution):
3. Degree or Program name for which endorsement is being requested (select) Degree or Program Type:
Degree or Program Name:
4. Program Website Address:
5. Program leader contact name:
E-mail Address:
Telephone Number:
6. Name of contact for this submission:
E-mail Address:
Telephone Number:
7. Business school (or university) accrediting body:
Status and date of most recent program review:

Part 2: Program Resources and Outcome Assessments

8. Do you have an advising handout showing courses for the program to be endorsed?
If Yes, provide attachment and the file name of document here:
9. Does your institution have an IMA student chapter? If yes, how many members does the chapter have?
10. Have your students received CMA scholarships in the past?
11. Number of students enrolled in program: Full-Time: Part-Time:
12. Is the program enrollment steady, growing, or shrinking?
13. Total departmental faculty resources (FTEs):
14. Faculty resources (FTEs) devoted to program for which endorsement is sought: Please provide an attachment of short bios for each faculty member devoted to the program. File name of document:
15. Percent of full-time faculty: Percentage of faculty with professional certification:
16. Average class size: Faculty/Student Ratio:
17. In the past two years, what is your program's graduation rate?
18. Does your school have a plagiarism and/or academic integrity policy?
If Yes, provide attachment and the file name of document:
19. Please respond to each question below in 500 words or fewer. Submit your answers as a single document in either Word or PDF format.
File name of the attached document:
 - a. What are the outcome objectives for program for which endorsement is sought?
 - b. To what extent do you feel your department is committed to these objectives and why?
 - c. What methods/metrics do you have in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in meeting the needs of employers?
 - d. Why do you feel your university or college should be an IMA endorsed school?

UPON COMPLETION, CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO THE INSTRUCTIONS TAB FOR STEP 3

N/A	Level or Year Taught	Required or Elective	School's Rating	Highest School Rating	Syllabus File Name	Assessment Tool Sample File Name
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CURRICULAR CONTENT

EXAMPLE								
1	Financial statements	N/A	FR	R	B	C	BUS2000 - Introduction to Finance	Doc 1a
		☐	JR	R	B	C	ACC3112 - Intermediate Accounting I	Doc 1b
			JR	R	C	C	ACC3122 - Intermediate Accounting II	Doc 1c, pg 10
2	Recognition, measurement, valuation, and disclosure	N/A	JR	R	C	C	ACC3112 - Intermediate Accounting I	Doc 2, pg 7
		☐						

PART 1: FINANCIAL REPORTING, PLANNING, PERFORMANCE AND CONTROL								
External Financial Reporting Decisions								
1	Financial statements	N/A ☐						
2	Recognition, measurement, valuation, and disclosure	N/A ☐						
Planning, Budgeting and Forecasting								
3	Strategic planning	N/A ☐						
4	Budgeting concepts	N/A ☐						
5	Forecasting techniques	N/A ☐						
6	Budgeting methodologies	N/A ☐						
7	Annual profit plan and supporting schedules	N/A ☐						
8	Top-level planning and analysis	N/A ☐						
Performance Management								
9	Cost and variance measures	N/A ☐						
10	Responsibility center and reporting segments	N/A ☐						
11	Performance measures	N/A ☐						
Cost Management								
12	Measurement concepts	N/A ☐						
13	Costing systems	N/A ☐						
14	Overhead costs	N/A ☐						
15	Supply chain management	N/A ☐						

16	Business process improvement	N/A ☐							
Internal Controls									
17	Governance, risk and compliance	N/A ☐							
18	Systems controls and security measures	N/A ☐							
Technology and Analytics									
19	Information systems	N/A ☐							
20	Data governance	N/A ☐							
21	Technology-enabled finance transformation	N/A ☐							
22	Data analytics	N/A ☐							
SUBTOTAL – PART 1 AT LEVEL C							0		
PART 2 - STRATEGIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT									
Financial Statement Analysis									
23	Basic financial statement analysis	N/A ☐							
24	Financial ratios	N/A ☐							
25	Profitability analysis	N/A ☐							
26	Special issues	N/A ☐							
Corporate Finance									
27	Risk and return	N/A ☐							
28	Long-term financial management	N/A ☐							
29	Raising capital	N/A ☐							
30	Working capital management	N/A ☐							
31	Corporate restructuring	N/A ☐							
32	International finance	N/A ☐							
Decision Analysis									
33	Cost / volume / profit analysis	N/A ☐							
34	Marginal analysis	N/A ☐							

35	Pricing	N/A ☐						
Risk Management								
36	Enterprise risk	N/A ☐						
Investment Decisions								
37	Capital budgeting process	N/A ☐						
38	Capital investment analysis methods	N/A ☐						
Professional Ethics								
39	Business ethics	N/A ☐						
40	Ethical considerations for management accounting and financial management professionals	N/A ☐						
41	Ethical considerations for the organization	N/A ☐						

Subtotal – Part 2 at Level C	0
Subtotal – Part 1 at Level C	0
Parts 1 and 2 at Level C	0

Percent of Topics at Level C	0.00%	Level C Coverage Not Met
Assessment Tools Examples	0	Assessment Tool Requirement Not Met

[CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO THE INSTRUCTIONS TAB FOR STEP 4](#)