

Pathways Plus

Strategic Management and Leadership

Level 7 Student Guide

Student Guide

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Introduction

Welcome to *Pathways Plus* Strategic Management and Leadership. The Chartered Management Institute has created these learning materials to support its Level 7 Strategic Management and Leadership qualifications.

The qualifications are geared towards senior managers who are focused on the direct interaction between operational performance and strategic development and implementation. As you develop and take on more responsibilities, your organisation will expect you to:

- communicate the strategic direction and relevant organisational objectives to the people you manage
- achieve the operational targets together
- contribute to the selection of objectives and direction through sound strategic practice.

The Level 7 Strategic Management and Leadership qualifications will help you fulfil these expectations. In working with these materials you should be able to:

- achieve the qualification
- develop your knowledge, understanding and skills in strategic management and leadership
- make a real contribution to your organisation's development.

There are no specific entry requirements, but it's crucial that you feel confident that you have sufficient experience and involvement at this level of management to make the best use of the materials and the assessment that follows.

This guide covers the following areas:

- the structure of the qualification
- the programme structure
- *Pathways Plus* and the development guides
- how to use supporting online materials
- how to manage your time
- assessment
- details of accredited units.

Qualification structure

There are three qualifications relating to Level 7 Strategic Management and Leadership, as shown in the table below.

CMI Code	Title	Qualification reference number
7A1V1	CMI Level 7 Award in Strategic Management and Leadership (QCF)	600/9461/8
7C1V1	CMI Level 7 Certificate in Strategic Management and Leadership (QCF)	600/9457/6
7D1V1	CMI Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (QCF)	601/1196/3
7EDV1	CMI Level 7 Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (QCF)	600/9460/6

The titles are those that appear on the qualification when it's awarded. The qualification reference number is the one allocated to the qualification, confirming that it's a fundable qualification on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). The CMI code is the one that must appear on the course registration form.

There are a total of 17 units. The table at the end of this section gives the titles, credits and guided learning hours (GLH) for each unit. The credit value specifies the number of credits that you will be awarded on achieving the learning outcomes of a specific unit.

- To achieve the **award**, you need to complete any combination of units to a minimum of 6 credits.
- To achieve the **certificate**, you need to complete any combination of units to a minimum of 13 credits.
- To achieve the **Diploma**, you need to complete any combination of units to a minimum of 39 credits
- To achieve the extended **diploma**, you need to complete all the core units (Group A) and three optional units (Group B) to a total of at least 66 credits.

To complete a unit, there's a certain amount of learning time required, to cover such activities as directed study, assessment, tutorials, mentoring and individual private study. The guided learning hours relate only to facilitated learning and associated assessments. Individual private study is not included.

Full details of each unit giving the learning outcomes and assessment criteria can be found at the end of this Student Guide.

The relationship of each unit to the National Occupational Standards can be found at the end of each development guide.

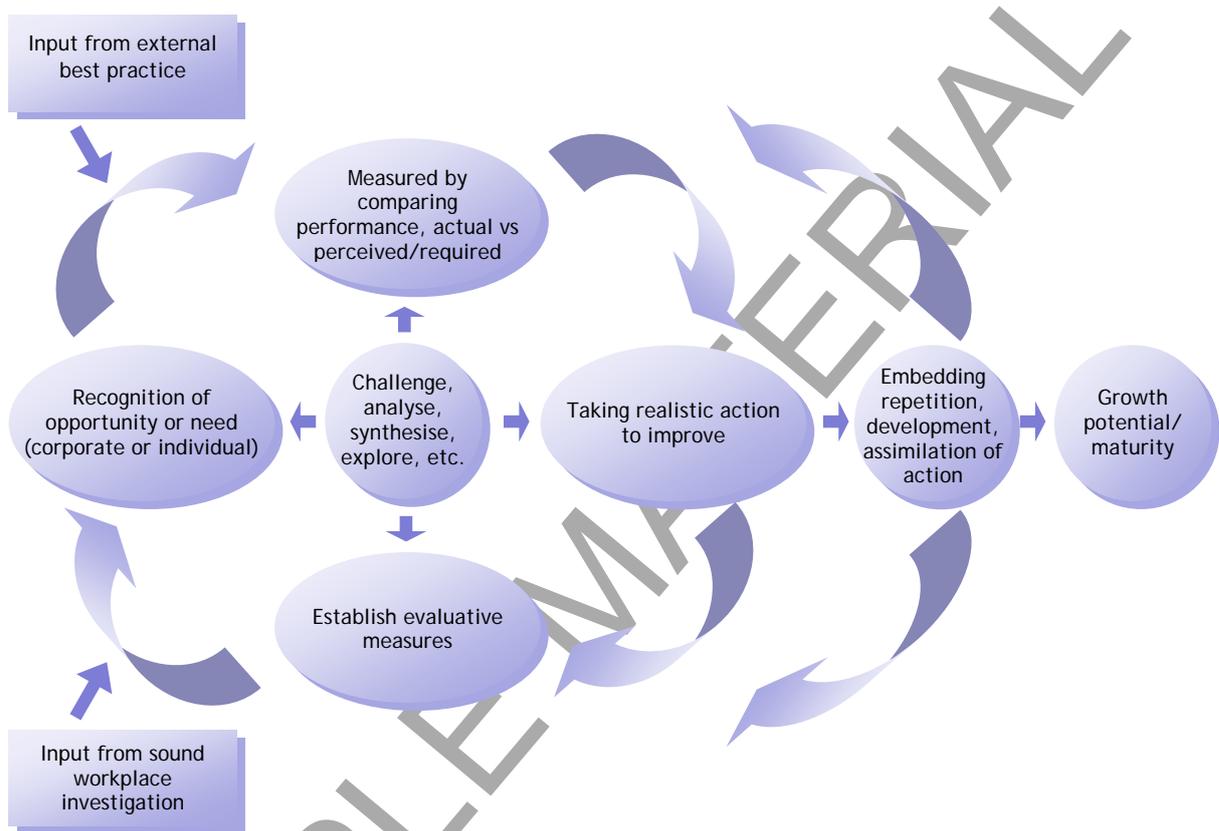
Units		Credits	GLH
Group A			
Unit 7001V1	Personal leadership development as a strategic manager	6	20
Unit 7002V1	Developing performance management strategies	7	25
Unit 7003V1	Financial management	7	30
Unit 7004V1	Strategic information management	9	30
Unit 7005V1	Conducting a strategic management project	10	35
Unit 7006V1	Reviewing organisational strategy plans and performance	9	30
Group B			
Unit 7007V1	Financial planning	6	20
Unit 7008V1	Developing a marketing strategy	6	20
Unit 7009V1	Strategic project management	6	20
Unit 7010V1	Implementing organisational change strategies	7	25
Unit 7011V1	Strategic planning	9	30
Unit 7012V1	Strategic human resources planning	8	30
Unit 7013V1	Strategic leadership	7	30
Unit 7014V1	Strategic leadership practice	7	30
Unit 7021V1	Introduction to strategic management and leadership	10	45
Unit 7022V1	Developing risk management strategies	9	30
Unit 7023V1	Strategic corporate social responsibility	9	30

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Programme structure

The following section is a guide to what's contained in any programme delivering this qualification. You'll first look at the learning inputs.

The model illustrated below examines the detail of developing effective workplace learning.



The core of the model takes its structure from the accepted learning models of the past few decades. Either your organisation or you begin by recognising a need or an opportunity. You then develop that recognition by comparing your actual performance against the potential of the perceived or required opportunity to improve. You can then take focused (SMART) action to evaluate its value.

Three things then influence the ability to make that 'virtuous circle' more effective. The first is the central element (centre circle), which influences the quality of thinking around the circle. It focuses on developing the ability to challenge, analyse, synthesise and explore. By encouraging these skills through good blended-learning approaches (as explained later in this Student Guide), you can improve the quality of knowledge and understanding.

Fuel is required to assist this process, which comes from two sources (i.e. the two rectangular boxes on the far left of the diagram):

- The first is workplace investigation, using a range of tools and techniques to encourage an attitude of seeking evidence rather than just using intuition, enhancing the value of experience with fact.
- Second, it's essential to compare your own practice with that of others (i.e. external best practice). The development guides provide a variety of resources to do this. Good desk research, using models, frameworks and concepts effectively, enables much more objective evaluation and successful development.

In the learning materials you look at many issues from different perspectives, returning to core areas and examining them with a different emphasis. This, together with good assessment practice, enables you to embed core skills, knowledge and understanding in your practice.

Activity

Activity 1

Take each segment of the model and think about how you could do this more effectively. Fill in the table below by considering the following:

- Is this a strength for you or a weakness, and what's your evidence for that?
- How can you work on this by doing this programme?

Segment in model	Comment/ observations on strengths and weaknesses	Things to work on
Recognition of opportunity or need (personal or corporate)		
Comparing performance, actual vs perceived/required		

Segment in model	Comment/ observations on strengths and weaknesses	Things to work on
Taking realistic action to improve		
Establish evaluative measures		
Challenge, analyse, synthesise, explore		
Input from standard best practice		
Input from sound workplace investigation		
Embedding, repetition, development, assimilation of action		

Feedback

All of us have strengths and weaknesses in the way that we approach learning. It's important that you recognise these and work on them to make yourself more effective as a learner. And in doing so, it will make you more effective as a manager and leader.

It's very easy when there are so many demands in the workplace to put aside these skills and just 'do'. However, without working on these skills it will be difficult to improve and you'll always be just an effective 'firefighter'.

To develop this reflective learning approach, we suggest that you revisit this exercise at regular intervals to see how your skills and abilities are developing.

This approach takes advantage of effective blended learning.

Blended learning

Blended learning – that is, using more than one type of intervention to achieve a learning goal – allows for maximising learning opportunity. *Pathways Plus* and its links to a variety of resources create maximum learning opportunities. Your centre will explain in more detail how this will work for your programme.

Four broad principles offer support to blended learning:

- **Learning occurs in context:** To be effective, your learning needs to be focused strongly in your own work context. The programme does this, and you are strongly encouraged to focus on integrating your work activities with the programme, including the assessment. Also, it's a good idea to involve your organisation, and your line manager in particular, in some way.
- **Learning is active:** Your learning should generate connections between current and present knowledge and future development, and identify meaning from those experiences. A real key to success is to focus your thinking on improvement and development, both personally and organisationally. Practical (SMART) outcomes are vital to motivating learning.
- **Learning is social:** A social view of learning focuses attention on making connections between participants within a learning group and then out into a broader context. These connections often continue beyond the life of the learning experience or opportunity. There are many stakeholders in your learning, so ensure that you keep people informed. But, more than that, work to develop a good learning group, supporting your colleagues, learning from and with them, and seeking help and advice from them.
- **Learning is reflective:** It's vital for you to evaluate the implications of the ideas you're studying. This can happen

when you get feedback about your thinking — that feedback coming from a variety of sources such as your tutor, line manager and peers.

Personal, individual learning is vital, and is the thing that is measured by assessment. But that experience is enhanced, made more enjoyable, successful and challenging by the involvement of others in a blended learning experience. The following exercise, exploring all the stakeholders in your learning experience, encourages you to identify and explore how they can contribute to that, and how you and they together can develop a fulfilling and valuable experience for all.

Activity

Activity 2

Conduct a stakeholder analysis of people involved with your learning, including all professional and personal stakeholders and complete the table following this activity.

What are the key implications for you from the stakeholder analysis?

SAMM

Stakeholder	Their contribution to your learning opportunity	Your contribution to their learning and other personal and professional goals

Feedback

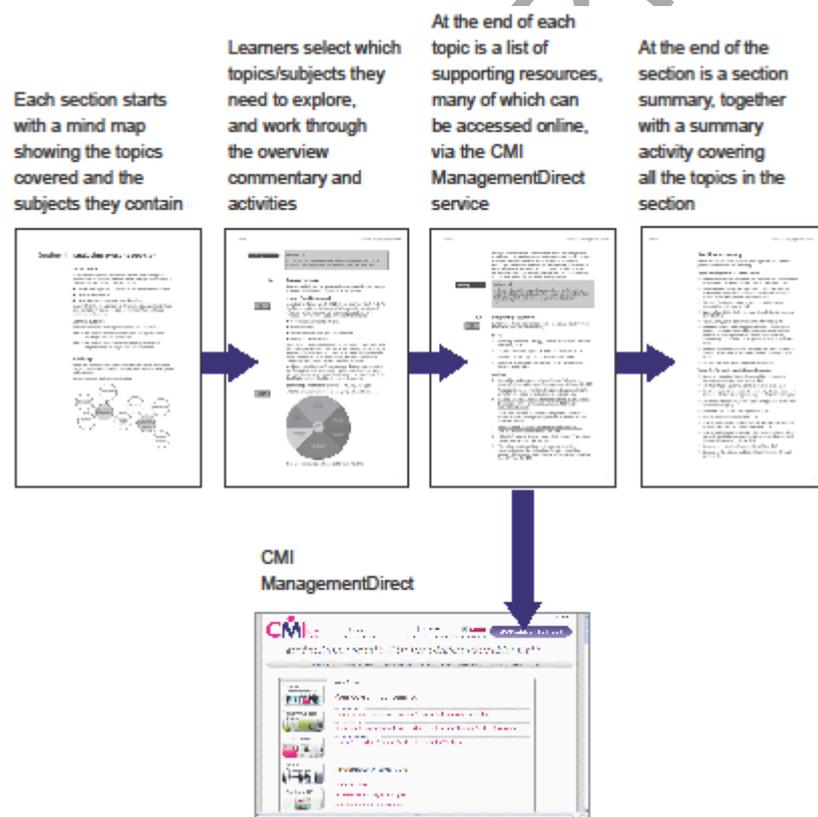
All the people you've listed are vital to you, either as sources of information, guidance, critical friends or support. Key to this is the link you make with fellow participants in your learning group. It's crucial to establish sound communications so that you can offer each other support and help, exploring the issues together and sharing good sources.

Another key link is with your line manager and colleagues. Workplace investigation can be of great benefit to your organisation. You therefore need to establish good and positive channels to help you as you explore areas and skills that others have to offer.

Pathways Plus – the content of the development guides

The *Pathways Plus* learning materials take the form of 15 development guides. Units 7006V1 and 7011V1 are presented together in one development guide, as are Units 7013V1 and 7014V1.

These development guides are supported by further resources, many of which are available online via the CMI ManagementDirect portal. An integrated learning journey is provided by these materials, and this is set out in the diagram below.



The development guides provide support materials to help achieve the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for each unit. They guide you towards a variety of sources and investigative journeys so that you can take ownership of your own learning journey. They also work as part of a blended learning approach, as discussed above.

The structure of each development guide enables you to effectively and efficiently identify areas and subjects to enhance your knowledge and development. Each development guide is divided into sections, which are then split up into topics. Each guide starts by showing the sections and topics schematically and relating them to the learning outcomes.

As you work through each guide, selecting the learning journey that best meets your needs, you are directed to other resources, many of them easily available and accessible through the Chartered Management Institute's online resources.

How to use Pathways Plus

At this level of management and leadership, it's expected that you are capable of independent learning – working on your own, selecting appropriate desk research, carrying out effective workplace investigation and managing that within the agreed time constraints.

You need to select the areas of learning that you most require in order to gain maximum personal and organisational development. Before you start each guide, it may be valuable to carry out a needs analysis using the introduction and mind map to establish the best approach for you. It will also be valuable to know the assessment requirements for your centre, so that as you study you can highlight appropriate resources for the development guides.

You can then start to work through the subjects or topics that you've highlighted. A key feature of the materials is the use of models and frameworks. They are designed to make the learning more active and to give you excellent tools for analysis and evaluation at this strategic level.

You'll also find links and references to other sources:

- ManagementDirect (the CMI management and leadership portal). These sites are signposted in the materials to give you easy access to a vast amount of articles, reports, books, checklists and multimedia
- books to enhance your studies (such as *Exploring Corporate Strategy* by Johnson *et al.*)
- relevant websites and other materials.

You can use these suggestions to direct your own learning journey.

Accessing resources

CMI has its own resources for students which can be located by visiting the CMI's online ManagementDirect management and leadership portal at <http://mde.managers.org.uk/members>. Study Support can be found by clicking on the Study Support tab located underneath the ManagementDirect search box. Tutors may access the content of Study Support by clicking on the More option and then CMI Qualifications or for the level & units under Senior Manager Resources.

ManagementDirect is an excellent source of information and useful for gaining ideas to help with your study.

Connecting to ManagementDirect requires a username and password, which you will receive direct from CMI.

On the home page of ManagementDirect you will be prompted to 'Login' and will need to enter your username and password to gain access to the resources.

One way to view the resources available is to select from the headings '5 minute briefing', '20 minute briefing' and 'Extended briefing' which break down the resources according to the time available to the user. In each case key topics are listed alphabetically and then you can choose the extent of information that you want on that subject with links provided to appropriate resources.

Another way to find resources is to use the 'A-Z' topic search at the top of the home page. So, for example, if you want to know more about mentoring, you would click on M, then on 'Mentoring' and you are presented with a list of resources (definition, leader video, checklists, etc).

You can also search each content category ('Definitions', 'Leader videos', etc) to view the resources available. For example, if you hover over 'Concepts' and then click on 'Models' you are presented with over 60 different models (7Ps, ACHIEVE coaching model, etc). Click on the title and a html page will open.

Or you can search using the prominent 'Search' box on the ManagementDirect Homepage.

Exploring the site for half an hour or so will allow you to see what's available. You'll discover that ManagementDirect is a very flexible tool providing a library full of resources, but the key to any library is to roam around it and practise the possible routes and choices before looking for specific resources.

In addition, the CMI Management Library holds an extensive range of books and pamphlets for loan to members. A postal loan service is offered to members in the UK only. You will only pay your return postal charges. Go to www.managers.org.uk/library to review the collection and to place your requests.

Managing your time

Key to your success in undertaking this learning is the management of your time. It's important to take fully into account your personal work and life commitments and to balance those with the requirements of the completion of the development guides.

A good suggestion is to organise a time line or a Gantt chart, marking out a target completion date. First, identify the actual times when it will realistically be possible to complete each guide. Also, establish what assessment is required and when you should complete it, working out final draft stages and allowing suitable time for workplace investigation. That should then give you a clear picture of the amount of time available for any desk

research, which, in turn, should help you decide when and where you can organise your study time.

We can't stress enough how crucial effective time management is when a senior manager like yourself attempts to study for improvement. Without this, study tends to be rushed and ineffective, and the opportunity for development limited.

It's also important for you to be clear about your learning styles and preferences. This will help you organise your time successfully to gain as much as you can from the opportunity to learn, and ensure that you fully understand the routes to resources that this material provides. If you do this effectively, you should have a successful learning experience and validate the investment of time, effort and money involved.

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Assessment

The main objective of assessment is to meet the learning outcomes relating to each unit. Assessment is in itself a great learning opportunity, offering you the opportunity to investigate issues that are important for you personally as well as for your organisation.

Your assessor will give you feedback on your work, providing the opportunity to understand the assessment given and to suggest ways in which your responses can be improved.

Your assessment centre will:

- select assessment tasks and activities relevant to the context of each unit
- give clear instructions on what's expected
- clearly explain any criteria for assessment
- set out what will happen if your work doesn't achieve the required standard.

You are required to make your assessed work:

- accurate, current and authentic
- relevant in breadth and depth.

You must also show that you have the following:

- a clear grasp of concepts
- the ability to link theory with practice
- the ability to communicate clearly in the relevant discipline, at the expected level for the qualification.

The qualifications have no grading, but only recognise a 'pass' or 'fail' result. Centres are completely free to apply their own grade scales but these are completely separate from the CMI qualification.

Your centre will give you details of the variety of assessment approaches it will use. The written word (however it is generated or recorded) will still probably provide the majority of the assessable work. The amount and volume of work for each unit is likely to be in the region of 3,000 to 3,500 words or the equivalent. The use of models and frameworks, plus appropriate charts, graphs and tables, will be valuable in communicating information and will assist in the presentation and development of analysis and evaluation.

Success will mean a gain for your organisation as well as for yourself, and a validation of your credibility as a strategic manager and leader.