CIMA

Employer Support Guide

Confident conversations to secure CGMA® Professional Qualification funding



Employer-funded development is common — here's how to explore it

Professional development is a vital part of your career journey, and securing your employer's support is an important step to achieving your goals.

Employer support can look like:

- Securing funding
- Study leave
- Protected study time
- Flexible working arrangements
- Mentoring

The challenge isn't asking — it's knowing how to frame the conversation in business terms. When you clearly connect your growth to business value, you position professional development as an opportunity that benefits both you and your employer.

The following pages include practical email templates that you can adapt when approaching your manager, HR, learning and development, or other stakeholders to discuss employer support. Use them as a starting point and tailor them to your organisation and circumstances.

Self-advocacy is hard, but with the right information, you can confidently lead these conversations to secure support.



A qualification built for future-focused finance professionals

Rooted in the core principles of management accounting, the Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA®) Professional Qualification from The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants® (CIMA®) is a strong fit for anyone building a career in business and finance.

CGMA-qualified professionals are trained to connect financial data to business strategy.

The globally recognised qualification and programme advances knowledge in finance, operations, strategy, management, digital literacy, and leadership. The programme is designed to help you transform from trusted adviser to key decision-maker. You'll be able to prepare costing information, manage working capital, apply financial standards and governance, collaborate with internal and external stakeholders, and more. With deeper financial knowledge and honed business acumen, you can drive organisational value and lead decision-making efforts.



Turning development into shared priority

Employer-funded professional development can create value for both employees and organisations. Whilst not required by law, employers offer funding to attract talent — a more developed employee is very beneficial for them.

There are many reasons an organisation would support a professional qualification:

- Filling capability gaps
- Investing in succession planning
- Increasing employee engagement and retention
- Enhancing productivity and decision-making quality

Common funding models include:

Full funding	Partial funding	Repayment agreements
The employer agrees to fund the qualification fully	The employer agrees to cover a portion of the cost and leaves the remainder to be covered by other means	The employer agrees to pay for the qualification, but expects reimbursement if the employee leaves before an agreed-upon time

Exploring employer support often means connecting with a few different partners in your organisation — such as your manager, human resources representative, learning and development liaison, finance representative, and directors. Don't let this aspect intimidate you — these colleagues often understand the connection between your development and the organisation's success.



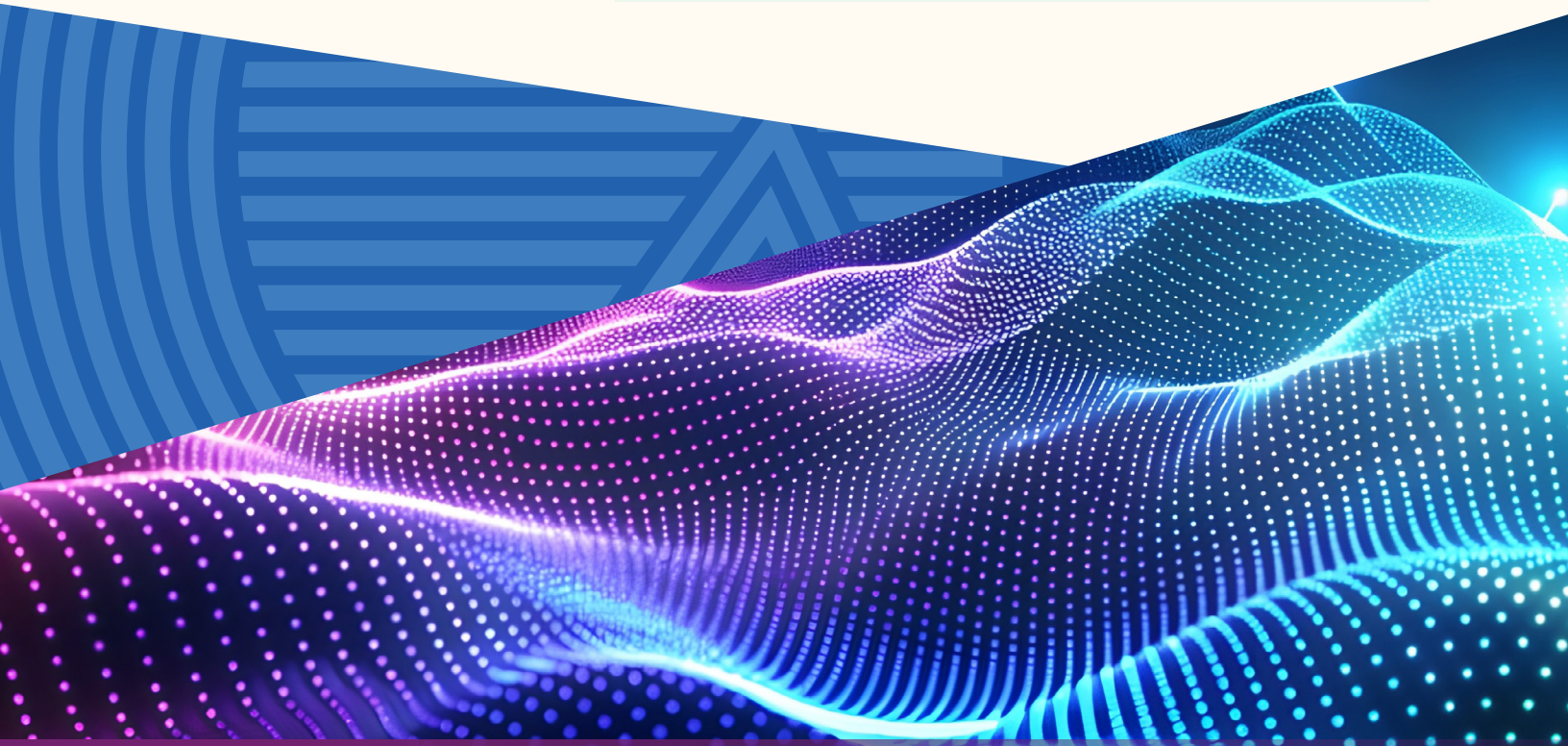
Is employer support an option for you?

Receiving employer funding and support may not be a realistic option for everyone. Before you begin, consider these factors:

YES	NO	
☐	☐	Does your organisation have a learning and development (L&D) or training budget?
☐	☐	Has your employer funded professional development for colleagues before?
☐	☐	Has your employer allowed employees to study for various qualifications or certifications before?
☐	☐	Do you have an HR contact you could approach?

If you answered **mostly yes**, you're in a strong position to explore employer support.

If you answered **mostly no**, don't give up hope yet. You may still find parts of this toolkit useful in building your case. If you're unable to secure employer support, you could explore self-funding or selecting a programme that provides flexible payment options.



Framing your request for impact

The likely first step in this process is to present your case to your direct manager. With their support, funding will be more easily approved, and they'll have a sense of next steps or who might hold the budget.

Shifting the conversation from personal goals to a clear business case may be more influential.

Even though your growth is an important part of this conversation, employer approval is typically guided by the effect on the business. Confidently lead these conversations to secure support.

Instead of approaching your boss and saying, ***"I want to study and earn my CGMA qualification,"*** present the statement, ***"Here's a business case for my studies that benefits the organisation."***

Key points to mention during conversations

As you bring up your desire to study for the CIMA qualification, highlight that the programme and qualification are:

Discuss how the qualification aligns to:

- Globally recognised
- Flexible with their pathway options
- Designed for working professionals
- Built to support immediate workplace applications
- Designed to tackle the future of finance
- Strategic decision-making
- Commercial insight
- Information preparation, costing analysis, decision support, and capital management
- Finance partnering
- Risk and governance
- Leadership pipeline

Because skills can be directly applied to current projects, the return on investment happens faster. What you learn improves projects, processes, and outputs in real time.

This reframes the conversation around outcomes your manager understands and bridges the gap between the qualification and business value.



CGMA qualification in action

Earning your CGMA qualification supplies you with a broad, future-ready skill set. You'll become a well-rounded professional who can adapt to change, lead projects, and navigate digital transformation.

Here's a glimpse of what a CGMA qualification can help you do:

- Analyse and translate financial and nonfinancial data
- Provide decision support and strategic recommendations
- Build forecasting models to highlight changes and improve revenue
- Break down budget variances and provide explanations
- Connect market trends to internal data
- Contribute to planning meetings by linking financial data to wider business goals
- Identify process inefficiencies and suggest more cost-effective ways of working



"I chose CGMA because it was more of a business qualification … I don't see myself sitting behind a desk working in audit. I really wanted something that would allow me to interact with people."

— Leena Dattani, FCMA, CGMA, Commercial Strategy Consultant

A five-step road map to securing support

Supportive, collaborative discussions — rooted in business realities — start with a flexible conversation road map.

Read through the following five steps — each offers practical tips and a potential script to say to yourself, your manager, or another stakeholder. The goal is to approach conversations with clarity, confidence, and a business-focused intention. You may not need to follow all steps, depending on your organisation and circumstances.

Step one: Set your intentions

Ground yourself before the conversation so you feel calm and confident. Asking about professional development is a normal, healthy workplace conversation. Prepare one powerful sentence about why this qualification matters to your role and to the organisation.

Say to yourself: *"This conversation is about my personal growth and the organisation's growth. It is okay to ask about funding."*

Step two: Approach your manager

Your manager will often be your first and most influential supporter. Schedule a chat or wait until your next one-on-one meeting. Remember, frame the conversation around business value and not personal desire.

Say: *"I've identified that the Chartered Global Management Accountant qualification would strengthen my contribution to shaping business strategy. Can I walk you through how the qualification would support our team's goals?"*

Step three: Engage HR or L&D

Once you have your manager's approval, discussing next steps with HR and/or L&D can clarify policies and funding pathways. This is your chance to ask about existing budgets, timelines, reimbursement processes, and eligibility.

Say: "I'm pursuing the CGMA qualification and working with my manager. Could you please share what development funding options are available?"



Step four: **Connect with those in charge of allocations**

The team or person directly responsible for funding may need reassurance on cost, timing, or ROI. Prepare a simple cost-benefit summary that highlights efficiencies gained.

Say: *"I'm seeking a qualification and I want to ensure my request aligns with budget expectations. Here's the expected cost and benefits for our team that the qualification supports."*

Step five: **Close all conversations with clarity**

End each conversation the same way: Summarise your ask in one sentence, detail next steps, offer a short proposal in writing, and agree on a follow-up date.

Say: *"Would it be helpful if I sent an email detailing costs and outcomes for your review and records?"*

Use this, not that

As you have these conversations with various stakeholders, choose words that emphasise the strategic need for the qualification.

Use:	Impact, efficiency, capabilities, risk reduction, productivity, value creation, goal alignment
Avoid:	"I really want this", "I feel like…", "I need this because…."
Example:	*"The CGMA qualification will help me deliver X more effectively, which supports Y goal of our organisation."*



How to respond to objections

Objections are normal and responding calmly shows maturity and preparedness — don't let a "no" deter you. The four most common objections would be around cost, workload, timing, and why this specific qualification.

Them: *"Budget is tight right now."*

You: *"If budget is a problem, I'm open to exploring partial funding or planning this endeavour for the next fiscal year."*

Them: *"What if you leave?"*

You: *"I'm very invested in growing here. Earning this qualification enables me to contribute at a higher level for the long term."*

Them: *"Why now? The timing doesn't feel right as workload is high."*

You: *"The timing aligns with our upcoming project on X. The skills I learn can be directly applied."*

Them: *"How will you handle studying with your workload?"*

You: *"Some employers offer dedicated study time during an employee's workday or a short time off to study. Remember, everything I learn can be translated back directly to my job. We can absolutely have future discussions about how to manage both my studies and work responsibilities."*

Them: *"Why the CGMA qualification?"*

You: *"The qualification is rooted in transferable skills. Professionals learn practical skills and competencies that can be directly applied to our workplace. I can build confidence in my abilities thanks to the curriculum's structure."*



"The CGMA [Finance Leadership Program] has allowed many of our team members to combine their studies with on-the-ground learning. Our team members value having a clear structure in front of them, aided by the support provided by the CIMA team, to allow them to plan their learning. The CGMA FLP has made combining work and studies more rewarding, and it is great to see so many availing of it."

— Vince O'Mahony, ACMA, CGMA, Consultant Finance, Dell Technologies





"[The qualification] is part of your CV. It's recognition that you've achieved something of a certain standard and quality that employers recognise … And it's helpful in your career."

— Carla Rossini, CGMA, CEO , LEA Global



Email templates — Elements for a winning email

Seeking employer funding should be face-to-face conversations — either in person or virtual, depending on your working environment — but you may still need to send a few emails, especially after the conversations take place.

As you write your emails, keep them clear and structured. Offer context, the business need, CGMA qualification alignment with projects or the organisation, and next steps. Below are two customisable email templates: one to initiate the conversation and the second to put conversation details in writing.

Email one: Conversation initiator

Subject: Exploring CGMA qualification support

Hello *[name]*,

I'm reaching out because I've been exploring ways to strengthen my contribution to our team — particularly around decision support and broader finance partnering. The Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA) qualification stands out to me because it aligns with the goals of our team, supports upcoming projects, and is designed for working professionals.

Before registering, I'd really value a conversation with you to understand what kind of employer support would be possible — funding, study time, or a combination. I can outline the business benefits, expected time commitment, and how the learning links to our organisation's priorities.

Could we set up 30 minutes to discuss? My timing is flexible and I can share a short overview in advance if helpful.

I'm excited to grow in my role and I appreciate you considering this.

Kind regards,

[Your name]



Email two: Conversation recap

Subject: Thank you and summary of our CGMA discussion

Hi *[name],*

Thanks again for taking the time to chat with me about the CGMA Professional Qualification. I really appreciated the guidance you shared.

As agreed, here's a quick summary of what we covered and potential next steps:

What we discussed:

- The CGMA qualification's relevance to our team's goals, including stronger decision-making and future leadership capabilities
- My expected study commitment and how I'll manage my workload
- Potential funding options and the internal processes for seeking approvals from necessary teams

Next steps:

- I'll write a short business-focused summary.
- You will connect with respective teams, including HR, to confirm available budget and the approval route.
- Once confirmed, we'll align on timelines and any requirements such as a repayment agreement.

Please reach out if I've missed anything or if you'd like me to expand on any part of the proposal. I'm excited to build these skills and apply them directly to our work.

Your support means a lot. Thank you.

Best,

[Your name]



Guidance for wherever you're at in the process

We get it: Having these kinds of conversations with senior managers and leaders are difficult. But you completed one of the hardest steps: You chose to invest in your own professional development and found a qualification aligned with your career ambitions. That's no easy feat.

For these next steps, you have the support of CIMA.

1. If you're ready to move forward, you can start registering for the CGMA qualification.
2. A little extra support can go a long way. Speak with a CIMA adviser who can answer your questions and provide you with any additional information you may need.
3. Ready for the conversations? Review the toolkit assets and schedule the conversations with your manager.

You're in control of the path you take. Continue at your own pace and know you have the support to take next steps when you're ready.

Need more support? Get in touch so we can help.

Telephone: **+44 (0)20 8849 2251** and select **option 2** from the menu



© 2026 The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants. All rights reserved. CIMA and The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants are trademarks of The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and are registered in the United Kingdom and other countries. The design mark is a trademark owned by the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants and licensed to CIMA. 2606-727758