



Frequently Asked Questions about Category Management Certification

Certification is an option for individuals who want to clearly communicate their industry experience and knowledge. Read on to learn more about industry certification and if it is the right choice for you or your team.

What is Category Management Certification?

In 2009, the Category Management Association (CMA) developed category management certification standards, and is the only organization certifying coursework and individual category management professionals according to these recognized industry standards.

The CMA is a global category management community, enabling professionals to connect with peers around the world and further their careers with the latest in best practices and certification. They serve as an unbiased, central source for industry information and is unparalleled in its sole focus on category management.

The CMA certifies individuals in category management at different designation levels. These certification designations are the industry-wide standard that qualifies the skill level of individual category management professionals. Their certification program has been embraced by the category management industry because it resonates so well with both the retailer and manufacturing community.

What are the different levels of certification and requirements for each level?

There are 3 levels of certification, corresponding roughly with different levels of experience in category management:

- * **Certified Professional Category Analyst (CPCA): 1-2 years**
- * **Certified Professional Category Manager (CPCM): 3-5 years**
- * **Certified Professional Strategic Advisor (CPSA): 6+ years**

To become certified, you must pass the online, proctored exam for each level of certification (fees are paid directly to the CMA). The experience, plus successfully passing the proctored exam at that level, will give you certification for that level.

What is the format of the certification exam at each level?

Certified Professional Category Analyst (CPCA) Exam:

The CPCA exam is a proctored, multiple choice exam administered by the CMA that consists of 50 questions. Individuals are given 75 minutes to complete the exam.

The CPCA exam is segmented and questions are asked for all Learning Programs (based on the CPCA certification requirements as defined by the CMA).

Certified Professional Category Manager (CPCM) Exam:

The CPCM exam is a proctored, multiple choice exam administered by the CMA that consists of 75 questions. Individuals are given 90 minutes to complete the exam.

The CPCM exam is segmented and questions are asked for all Learning Programs (based on the CPCM certification requirements as defined by the CMA).

Certified Professional Strategic Advisor (CPSA) Exam:

The CPSA online exam is structured differently, with essay type questions being asked and a longer time to complete the exam.

How do I know what level of certification I qualify for?

First of all, consider the number of years of experience required for each level. Second, you should review the [professional certification standards](#) at each level (available from the CMA's website).

If you have a deficiency in or need additional help in any of the standards, you can purchase training in those specific areas, and we can help you choose which courses will help you meet your goals.

You can also choose to take our Discovery Exam to help identify where you are in terms of understanding at the CPCA and CPCM levels. This will give you a good gauge for what training and/or preparation you need and what level you should strive for.

What is the cost for certification with the CMA?

You pay for each certification level at the time you take your exam. There are separate costs for each of the following:

- * **Registration fee (one-time fee)**
- * **Certified Professional Category Analyst (CPCA) exam fee**
- * **Certified Professional Category Manager (CPCM) exam fee**
- * **Certified Professional Strategic Advisor (CPSA) exam fee**
- * **Annual renewal fee, after the initial certification year**

Note: An additional fee will be charged if you fail an exam and need to retake it

It's important to note that you must pass each certification exam (starting with CPCA) before you can move to the next level. For example, you cannot take the CPCM exam without successfully passing the CPCA exam, and you cannot take the CPSA exam without having successfully passed both the CPCA and CPCM exams.

[Certification costs for each level](#) can be found on the CMA's website.

How do I get started in the process for certification with the CMA?

1. **Sign up to register with the CMA.**
2. **Register for certification (and pay the administrative fee).**
3. **Schedule the CPCA certification exam 3 days prior to writing (and pay the certification fee). A link is provided for each candidate to access their exam.**
4. **Log into the CMA's proctored site (meaning that someone is on the other side monitoring you while you write your exam).**
5. **Wait for the results, which are tabulated and shared with you after the exam. 7 days later you will receive an official certification status report from the CMA.**

The process is similar at each level of certification, save that the initial registration fee is payable only once. Of note, if you want to write the certification exam for CPCM, you will need to successfully pass the CPCA exam first. If you want to write the certification exam for CPSA, you will need to have successfully passed both the CPCA and CPCM exams.



How does CMKG help me or my team attain certification?

The CMA Certification Exams are intended to test your skills in the learning areas identified in the CMA standards for that level. Once you have completed the appropriate training, you can also choose to prepare specifically for your exam with Certification Prep & Practice Materials.

Our Practice exams are similar to those that you will take with the CMA, but will provide feedback on each question – either a Right or Wrong response – and you will learn how you scored in each of the areas of the exam.

CMKG is an accredited training company that helps simplify the certification approach for individuals, teams and organizations through:

- * **Discovery exams to understand what level of certification is appropriate for you**
- * **CPCA & CPCM Practice exams**
- * **Exam Prep & Practice materials to make you a confident certification candidate**
- * **CPCA, CPCM & CPSA Certified Training**

Practice exams include 3 attempts at the CPCA and/or CPCM levels, including mini-exams for each learning requirement with Right / Wrong; indicators plus feedback on why the answer is right or wrong. You also have access to our 600-term glossary, training videos, and downloadable resources within our Online Training and Resource Center as well as a study tool that is available for your mobile device to help with terms, formulas and definitions.

Learn more about [CMKG's Certification Training, Prep & Practice solutions](#) on our website.