OPEN-BOOK POLICY

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Responsibility	Assessment Manager
Ratification	EDEX Committee

Preamble

Open-book resources are intended for **occasional reference**. They do not replace the learning, preparation and understanding required by the syllabus. Candidates should enter the examination already familiar with the prescribed material and able to identify and apply the relevant principles. Excessive searching through textbooks or legislation during the examination may significantly reduce the time available to analyse questions and construct complete answers.

Candidates should therefore use reference materials primarily to:

- confirm a legislative provision or regulatory requirement;
- verify a principle, definition or technical detail;
- locate an exact statutory requirement;
- check a governance provision; or
- support the application of knowledge already understood.

Candidates who are unfamiliar with open-book examinations are strongly encouraged to practise using permitted resources under timed examination conditions.

Effective preparation may include:

- becoming familiar with the structure of prescribed legislation and textbooks;
- using tabs and permitted annotations to identify important sections;
- practising locating provisions quickly;
- completing past or practice questions under timed conditions; and
- developing the ability to distinguish between information that should be known and information that needs occasional verification.

Candidates should not assume that an open-book examination requires less preparation than a closed-book examination. The examination may require a higher level of interpretation, analysis and application because candidates have access to specified reference material.

1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out the rules governing the use of prescribed reference materials in open-book examinations administered by the Chartered Governance Institute of Southern Africa (CGISA).

The purpose of an open-book examination is to assess a candidate's ability to understand, interpret and apply knowledge to practical situations. It is not intended to test a candidate's ability to locate or reproduce information from reference materials.

This policy aims to ensure that:

- all candidates are treated fairly and consistently;
- only authorised materials are used;
- candidates understand the limits of the open-book examination format;
- examination integrity and security are maintained; and
- invigilators have clear authority to inspect materials and address suspected breaches.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all CGISA examinations designated as open-book examinations. Candidates must comply with this policy together with all other CGISA examination rules, candidate instructions and disciplinary requirements. Where the examination instructions for a particular subject impose additional or more restrictive requirements, those requirements will apply.

3. General principle

An open-book examination does not mean that candidates may bring unrestricted material into the examination venue. Only the materials expressly authorised by CGISA for the relevant subject may be used.

Any material that is not expressly permitted is prohibited.

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that all materials they bring into the examination venue comply with this policy.

4. Permitted materials

4.1 Prescribed materials

Candidates may bring into the examination venue only prescribed textbooks and prescribed readings as follows:

- textbooks expressly prescribed in the syllabus for the relevant subject;
- legislation, codes, regulations, standards or other documents expressly authorised for that subject;
- authorised pocket guides or legislation handbooks where specifically permitted

The fact that a publication relates to the subject being examined does not make it permissible. It must be specifically prescribed or authorised by CGISA.

4.2 Printed electronic documents

Where CGISA permits candidates to download legislation, regulations, governance codes or other documents in PDF format, candidates may bring a **printed copy** of the authorised document into the examination venue.

5. Annotation of permitted materials

Candidates may use prescribed textbooks and other prescribed materials that they have annotated during their studies. Clean copies are not required.

Permitted annotations include:

- highlighting or underlining existing text;

- brief handwritten notes in margins or available spaces on existing pages;
- tabs or sticky notes used to identify or navigate sections;
- cross-references to other pages, sections or provisions; and
- short headings or keywords used to locate information.

Annotations must remain incidental to the original material. They must not effectively convert a permitted publication into a set of study notes or model answers.

Candidates may therefore **not**:

- insert additional pages of handwritten or typed notes;
- attach summaries, memoranda, model answers or worked solutions;
- add pages of notes to the front or back of textbooks, legislation or files;
- insert loose pages containing study material;
- attach printed slides, summaries or extracts from study material;
- paste substantial amounts of additional study material onto existing pages; or
- use annotations designed to reproduce prepared answers to likely examination questions.

Where there is uncertainty about whether an annotation is permissible, the invigilator's decision at the examination venue will apply for purposes of that examination.

6. Photocopies and copyright

Candidates may not bring unauthorised photocopies or reproductions of textbooks or other copyright-protected publications into the examination venue. The unauthorised copying of textbooks may constitute a breach of copyright. Such material may be confiscated.

This restriction does not prevent candidates from printing legislation, regulations, governance codes or other documents where CGISA has expressly authorised candidates to download and print those documents.

7. Prohibited materials

Unless expressly authorised by CGISA for the particular examination, the following are prohibited:

- personal study notes;
- summaries;
- lecture notes;
- tutorial notes;
- model answers;
- past examination answers or memoranda;
- assignment answers;
- worked examples prepared separately from an authorised textbook;
- additional textbooks or reference books not prescribed for the subject;
- dictionaries, glossaries or reference works not expressly permitted;
- loose pages containing notes or study material;
- any other material not expressly authorised by CGISA.

Candidates may not conceal prohibited material within an authorised textbook, file, folder or other permitted resource.

8. Electronic and communication devices

Unless CGISA has expressly authorised a device for a particular examination, such as a calculator, candidates may not have access to electronic or communication devices during the examination.

Prohibited devices include:

- mobile phones;
- smart watches and other wearable smart devices;
- tablets and iPads;
- laptops;
- e-readers;
- iPods or other media devices;
- earphones, earbuds or headphones;
- electronic storage devices; and
- any other device capable of storing, retrieving, transmitting, receiving, recording or displaying information.

Devices must be switched off and stored as directed by the invigilator.

A candidate may not access the internet, email, messaging services, cloud storage, artificial intelligence tools or any other external information source during the examination.

9. Applicable versions of legislation and governance material

Legislation, regulations, governance codes, listing requirements and other regulatory material may be amended from time to time. CGISA will identify, through the syllabus, examination instructions or other official communication, the versions applicable to a particular examination sitting. Candidates are responsible for ensuring that they use the prescribed or applicable versions.

Where there is a conflict between an older publication and the version prescribed by CGISA for the examination, the version specified by CGISA will apply.

10. Inspection of materials

Invigilators are authorised to inspect any material or item brought into the examination venue.

Inspection may take place:

- before candidates enter the venue;
- before the examination begins; or
- during the examination.

Candidates must cooperate fully with an inspection. Invigilators may examine textbooks, legislation, files, annotations, sticky notes and any other permitted materials to establish whether they comply with this policy. The fact that material was not identified during an initial inspection does not make prohibited material permissible. Arguing with the invigilator or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action if it impacts the smooth running of the examination venue.

11. Removal of unauthorised material

An invigilator may require a candidate to remove prohibited material from the examination venue. Where the circumstances suggest that the material may have been brought into the examination venue deliberately to obtain an unfair advantage, the invigilator may:

- confiscate or secure the material as evidence;
- record the incident;
- report the matter in writing to the appropriate CGISA official; and
- take any other action permitted under CGISA examination rules.

Where appropriate, the candidate may be prevented from commencing or continuing the examination.

12. Examination misconduct

The possession, concealment or use of unauthorised material may constitute examination misconduct irrespective of whether the candidate actually used the material in answering an examination question.

Examples include:

- bringing unauthorised study notes into the examination venue;
- concealing notes in an authorised textbook;
- inserting prepared answers into legislation or prescribed material;
- communicating with another person;
- deliberately attempting to circumvent this policy.

Suspected breaches will be reported and dealt with in accordance with CGISA's applicable examination and disciplinary procedures. Sanctions may include cancellation of the examination result, disqualification from an examination sitting and restriction or exclusion from future CGISA examinations, subject to the applicable disciplinary process.

13. Candidates' responsibility

Candidates are personally responsible for ensuring that their materials comply with this policy. Candidates should check their books, files and other materials before entering the examination venue. A candidate should not assume that prohibited material is acceptable merely because it was inadvertently left inside an authorised textbook or file. "I did not know it was there" or "I did not use it" will not necessarily constitute an acceptable explanation for possession of unauthorised material.

Candidates who are uncertain whether particular material is permitted should obtain clarification from CGISA **before the examination date**.

14. Use of source material in answers

Candidates are expected to demonstrate understanding, analysis and application. Answers should therefore be expressed substantially in the candidate's own words and should address the particular facts or requirements of the examination question. Candidates should not simply copy substantial passages from textbooks, legislation, governance codes or other permitted materials.

Where a question requires application to a scenario, marks will be awarded for the candidate's ability to identify the relevant principles and apply them appropriately to the facts. Merely reproducing source material, without analysis or application, will not ordinarily demonstrate the required competence.

15. Equality and fairness

These rules apply equally to all candidates.

No candidate may use additional material because it was used during tuition, supplied by a lecturer or training provider, available online, used in the workplace or considered useful for the subject.

Only material authorised by CGISA is permitted.

Approved examination accommodations for candidates with disabilities or other recognised needs are governed separately and are not affected by this provision.

16. Candidate declaration

By entering a CGISA examination, the candidate is deemed to acknowledge that they:

- have read and understood the examination rules;
- understand which open-book resources are permitted;
- have checked the materials in their possession;
- will comply with instructions issued by invigilators; and
- understand that possession or use of unauthorised material may result in disciplinary action.

17. Interpretation of the policy

CGISA reserves the right to determine whether material falls within the categories permitted by this policy. The decision of the Chief Examiner or other authorised CGISA official on the interpretation of examination requirements will apply, subject to any formal review or appeal process provided for under CGISA's examination regulations.

Related policies

- Student Code of Ethics and Conduct during Examinations
- CGISA Disciplinary Policy