

PLEASE HELP OUR TRADEMARK ATTORNEY REST EASY

The Proper Use of IMCA's CIMA[®], CIMC[®], and CPWA[®] Marks

By The Professional Review Board and Robert E. Frankel, Esq.

You are now authorized to use IMCA's Certified Investment Management Analyst[®] (CIMA[®]) designation after your name.

Maybe you recognize the above statement? It is a paraphrase from the welcome letter you received from IMCA[®] when you passed the CIMA[®] certification exam. Those who attained CIMC[®] and CPWA[®] certifications received similar statements in their welcome letters.

Please note the careful wording in the statement—namely, you “are now authorized to use.” It’s a crucial distinction to understand, because use of the marks is licensed for only your use, subject to IMCA’s *Rules and Guidelines for Use of the CIMA[®] and CPWA[®] Marks*.¹ In addition, the proper use of the marks is governed by IMCA’s *Code of Professional Responsibility, Standards of Practice, and Disciplinary Rules and Procedures*.

The proper use of the CIMA, CIMC, and CPWA marks is crucial. When properly used, these marks represent IMCA’s highest standards of excellence for investment management consulting and wealth advising services and demonstrate IMCA’s certificants’ commitment to upholding these standards. The CIMA, CIMC, and CPWA marks are registered certification marks and, as such, must be used in compliance with trademark and certification mark law. If marks are used improperly, they eventually can lose their exclusive status. If this were to happen to the CIMA, CIMC, and/or CPWA marks, you and all of IMCA’s designees would lose the value and differentiation of these certifications.

Use in Promotional Materials

When you use any of the marks in any promotional materials describing your background and credentials, you must always keep in mind the need to maintain professional courtesy and fairness that promotes respect for professional designations. It is for this reason that aside from the trademark and certification concerns, proper use of the marks is governed by the *Standards of Practice Standard 4a*, which states: “Consultants have a responsibility to use care in promoting their professional designations, including the CIMA[®] [, CPWA[®],] and CIMC[®] designations.”

Correct Usage

One requirement imposed on IMCA as a certification mark owner is to maintain quality control over the use of its proprietary certification marks by its designees. Accordingly, IMCA has issued a list of terms as a convenient way to ensure uniform and proper use of the marks. Basic rules on the use of the marks include the following:

- Generally always use the marks as an adjective, not a noun.
- The one exception to the first bullet is that marks may follow a person’s name, similar to an education degree.
- As an adjective, always follow the marks with one of the approved nouns: certificant, designee, professional, consultant, advisor, certification, designation, or mark.
- Use proper punctuation and formatting. Always use capital letters and never use periods between the four letters in CIMA, CIMC, or CPWA.

- The registration symbol (®) is a necessary notice that mark rights are claimed, so always use the registration symbol at the end of the CIMA[®] or CPWA[®] mark (at least in the first reference to the mark).

To illustrate, contrast the following examples to illustrate the proper and improper ways to use the marks:

Correct Use

Jane Doe, CIMA[®] or Jane Doe, CIMA (if not first use)

Jane Doe is a CIMA[®] professional specializing in investment management consulting.

The CPWA[®] professionals’ seminar was sold out.

Incorrect Use:

Jane Doe, C.I.M.A.

Jane Doe is a CIMA[®].

The CPWA[®]’s seminar was sold out.

Partner Universities

Related to these matters, certificants must correctly reference the education process for attaining the CIMA, CIMC, or CPWA certifications. It is important that you do not mislead the public into believing that by attaining either certification, you earned a degree from one of IMCA’s partner universities. Therefore, certificants should use the following wording as a model when referencing the relationship between IMCA, the certification, and the education providers:

Mr. Doe holds the Certified Investment Management Analyst[®] (or CIMA[®]) certification,

administered by Investment Management Consultants Association¹ and taught with The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.

The Final Note

IMCA spends a great deal of time and effort enforcing the *Rules and Guidelines* because the integrity of its designations is of the utmost importance to certificants. Designees have worked hard to earn their certifications, and they would not want anything to diminish their value. As IMCA

grows, quality control efforts on the proper use of the marks and educating certificants as to how to avoid misleading statements regarding the credentialing process will continue to be a challenge.

The proper way to use the CIMA, CIMC, and CPWA marks is described in detail in the *Rules and Guidelines for Use of the CIMA[®] and CPWA[®] Marks* that is available on the IMCA website as a PDF at <http://www.IMCA.org/pages/standards-legal>. If

you have specific questions or need further assistance concerning the use of the marks, please contact Robert E. Frankel, Esq., or the IMCA Communications Department at communications@IMCA.org. ●

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Endnote

1. The rules also apply to the CIMC designation.