



INSTITUTE OF ACTUARIAL
& QUANTITATIVE STUDIES

Subject: Business finance

Chapter: Unit 2

Category: Practice question

MCQ Questions

1. CB1 September 2021 Q4

A quoted company has had a policy of reinvesting profits in ongoing expansion and has paid relatively small dividends. The company is now entering a phase where it no longer requires funds for expansion. The directors therefore intend to start paying out a larger proportion of profits as dividends.

Which of the following would be the most suitable approach to implementing this new policy?

- A. Announce the policy change at the time of the next dividend announcement.
- B. Announce the policy change well before the next dividend announcement.
- C. Continue with the present dividend policy and allow cash to accumulate.
- D. Increase dividend payments without announcing a change in policy.**

Answer – B

2. CB1 April 2022 Q3

A quoted company is making a rights issue. Which of the following statements is correct?

- A. Shareholders are required to exercise their rights.
- B. The new shares could be issued at a premium to the present market price.
- C. The new shares could be issued at a price that is less than their nominal value.
- D. The share price could increase after the issue.**

Answer – D

3. CB1 April 2022 Q4

A company is obtaining a stock exchange quotation through an offer for sale by tender.

Which of the following statements is correct?

- A. All applicants will receive shares.
- B. All shares will be issued at the same price.
- C. Applicants making low tenders will depress the share price.
- D. The size of the issue will be decided after the tender process.**

Answer - B

4. CB1 September 2022 Q5

A quoted company has 100 million \$1.00 shares in issue that have a market price of \$11.00 per share. The board plans to raise \$270 million through a \$9.00 rights issue in order to finance a project that has an estimated net present value of \$140 million. What is the company's expected share price after the rights issue?

- A. \$10.54

B. \$11.62

C. \$13.70

D. \$15.10

Answer – B

5. CB1 April 2024 Q10

Company T's earnings per share is £3.00 and its dividends per share is £1.20. What is the company's dividend cover?

A. 0.4

B. 0.6

C. 1.5

D. 2.5.

Answer – D

6. CB1 September 2024 Q4

A company has offered its shareholders the option to take a scrip dividend as an alternative to a cash dividend. What are the implications of accepting this option?

A. A scrip dividend is identical to a share repurchase.

B. Accepting the scrip dividend will reduce the shareholders' wealth.

C. Shareholders can avoid tax by accepting the scrip dividend.

D. The share price will be affected by the numbers who accept the scrip.

Answer – D

Long Questions

1. CT2 September 2010 Question 14

Explain why a company's gearing ratio calculated from the company's annual accounts might not be sufficient on its own to provide an interested party with an understanding of its capital structure.

2. CT2 September 2010 Question 20 (part)

Koolclean plc was founded several years ago by the inventor of an innovative consumer product. The product has been very successful in the UK and the inventor has decided to seek a quote on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM). At present 60% of Koolclean plc's shares are held by the inventor and the remaining 40% are held by a venture capitalist who is keen for the company to list in this way so that his block of shares can be sold.

The company has been managed by the inventor herself, assisted by a part-time

director appointed by the venture capitalist. The part-time director will step down when the venture capitalist's block of shares is sold.

- i. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of seeking the initial funding for a new business in the form of equity from a venture capitalist rather than borrowing.

3. CT2 April 2011 Question 18

The directors of a quoted company have the opportunity to invest in a profitable project, but will be unable to raise sufficient finance in the required timeframe unless they substantially reduce the next dividend payment compared with that paid in previous years.

Discuss the implications of reducing the dividend under these circumstances.

4. CT2 September 2012 Question 20

Hatton is a quoted company in the entertainment industry. The company's directors are extremely ambitious and strive to maximise Hatton's rate of growth. The directors have identified the availability of finance as the company's biggest constraint.

The directors have been offered the opportunity to invest in two projects, each involving the development of a new games console. The projects involve competing products and so they are effectively mutually exclusive because there would be no commercial justification in investing in both.

Project A requires an investment of £20 million and has a projected net present value of £80 million. Project B requires an investment of £50 million and has a projected net present value of £200 million. Hatton does not have any spare cash and so it will have to raise finance in order to invest in either project.

The directors of Hatton are unable to decide which of the two investments is better for the company. Each is relatively risky, but the two projects are exposed to virtually the same factors that will determine success or failure and, in that sense, the risks are virtually identical.

Hatton is heavily geared. The company's equity has a book value of £900 million and its debt has a book value of £350 million. Hatton made a large share issue last year and the directors do not believe that they could seek further equity in the short term. The company's debt includes a major loan from a commercial bank that carries a debt covenant under which the loan is repayable in the event that gearing (measured as debt as a percentage of total finance) exceeds 30%.

Hatton's marketing director is keen to proceed with Project B on the basis that it offers the greatest opportunity to enhance the company's share price.

Hatton's chief executive is keen to proceed with Project A on the basis that it will be possible to finance that project without taking the company to the very brink of its debt covenant.

Hatton's finance director has urged caution and recommends refusing both opportunities on the grounds that the only cost of doing so is the opportunity cost. His reasons for this recommendation is that the company is already heavily involved in the games business and it might be better to diversify into other areas of entertainment. In his opinion, refusing the projects will not risk harm to Hatton's share price.

- (i) Outline the reasons why a bank might impose a debt covenant such as that affecting Hatton's borrowing capacity.
- (ii) Discuss the risks associated with Hatton permitting its borrowings to rise to the maximum gearing level agreed with its bank.
- (iii) Discuss the validity of comments made by the finance director that:
 - a. the share price will not be harmed by the opportunity cost associated with turning down an investment project with a positive NPV.
 - b. the share price could be improved by Hatton diversifying its investment base.

5. CT2 September 2013 Question 12

A quoted company has a policy of making relatively small dividend payments, with profits being reinvested in the business. A period of slow growth in the industry has left the company with a substantial cash surplus as a result of this policy.

Discuss the advantages to the company and shareholders of reducing this surplus by means of a share buyback rather than a dividend payment.

6. CT2 April 2014 Question 15

A company's current share price is £2.70. The company has written to shareholders to offer a choice between a cash dividend of £0.50 per share or a scrip dividend of two fully paid shares for every nine shares held.

Discuss the factors that shareholders would have to take into account when deciding whether to take the cash or the scrip dividend.

7. CT2 September 2014 Question 19

Trevor and Simone have taken early retirement. Their retirement package has left each of them with a lump sum that is substantial, but they have decided to start a business together in the hope of accumulating significant wealth before reaching normal retirement age in eight to ten years.

They have identified an opportunity to import consumer electronics from the Far East. They have established that there is a substantial niche market in the UK

for products such as mobile phones and tablet computers that are produced for the Chinese market and which are rarely exported.

Trevor and Simone have negotiated the exclusive UK rights to import a new line of products that is presently in the final development stage. They have a few months to establish their company and to ensure that all of their distribution lines are in place. Their retirement payments will only provide approximately 60% of their funding requirements. They are unsure whether to raise additional funds by inviting investors to become minority shareholders in this venture, or to seek a bank loan, or a combination of the two.

- i. Discuss the relative merits of the bank loan or additional equity from minority shareholders for Trevor and Simone's company.
- ii. Discuss the difficulties associated with determining the optimal gearing level for Trevor and Simone's company.

8. CT2 April 2015 Question 14

A quoted company has had a difficult year and the directors believe that it may be too risky to maintain previous levels of dividend. However, they are considering maintaining the dividend in order to preserve stock market confidence.

Describe the implications for the directors of maintaining the dividend in these circumstances.

9. CT2 April 2016 Question 11

Describe the role of tax in determining whether an individual shareholder would prefer to receive a dividend or a capital gain.

10. CT2 September 2016 Question 17

Jolt is a quoted company that has pursued a policy of reinvesting profits in order to fund growth. As a result, the company has attracted a body of shareholders whose tax positions tend to favour capital gains over dividends. Jolt's industry faces some difficulties that will inhibit investment opportunities for the next three or four years. Explain:

- a. whether Jolt is likely to change its dividend policy over the period of limited investment opportunities.
- b. how it should communicate this change.

11. CT2 April 2017 Question 13

Describe why some individual taxpayers may prefer to receive investment returns in the form of capital growth rather than dividend.

12. CT2 April 2017 Question 15

Describe why a company might buy back its own shares rather than make a distribution in the form of a dividend.

13. CT2 April 2017 Question 16

Explain why the maximum acceptable level of gearing ratio might vary from country to country.

14. CT2 April 2018 Q20

Mountain plc is a quoted company with a year end of 31 December. The directors have traditionally published the financial statements in the second week of February following the year end and have always announced the dividend for the year alongside the publication of the financial statements.

Mountain plc's dividend has grown by between 3% and 5% each year for the past eight years.

During September 2016 the directors updated their projections of Mountain plc's financial position. They realised that it would probably not be prudent to increase the dividend compared to last year. Indeed, it may be desirable to reduce the dividend by 5% compared to that for the year ended 31 December 2015.

Mountain plc continues to be profitable. However, a large loan has been negotiated in order to fund expansion. If the market's expectations concerning the dividend for the year ended 31 December 2016 are met then the company's projected gearing ratio will be at the upper limits of the terms specified by the lender. The directors themselves would be uncomfortable with a gearing ratio that was that high.

The directors are debating the best way to address the question of the dividend. Three suggestions have been made:

- Announce the expected reduction in dividend immediately (i.e. in September 2016) with a clear explanation of the reasons.
- Wait and announce the reduced dividend, again with an explanation of the reasons, at the publication of the financial statements (i.e. in February 2017).

- Maintain the dividend growth, but organise a rights issue in order to ensure that there is sufficient equity to maintain the gearing ratio at an acceptable level.
- (i) Explain why both the lender and Mountain plc's directors would wish to set an upper limit for the company's gearing ratio.
- (ii) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of announcing the proposed reduction in the dividend in September 2016 or in February 2017.
- (iii) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of conducting a rights issue to raise equity in order to continue the trend of dividend growth.

15. CT2 September 2018 Q14

Discuss the assertion that a company's optimal gearing ratio could be affected by its line of business.

16. CB1 April 2019 Q20 (part)

Central is a major quoted company which manufactures highly specialised equipment for use in the mining industry. Central has very limited scope for expansion. It dominates the markets for its equipment and there is no real scope to develop sales in alternative markets. Central has been highly profitable and it has amassed significant retained earnings and has a large cash balance.

Central's board has sought advice about the most efficient use of that cash balance. Three main options are under consideration:

- The first possibility is that the cash might be retained for the foreseeable future, so that Central has the necessary funding in place if any new opportunities arise.
- Alternatively, the board could use the funds in order to diversify into a completely different line of business. Central's cash reserves are large enough to fund the creation of a significant business in another industry, such as leisure.
- Finally, Central could implement a share buyback under which Central would buy shares back using the surplus funds.

(iii) Discuss the suitability of a share buyback to Central's circumstances.

17. CB1 April 2020 Q18

A private company's directors collectively own 100% of the company's share capital. For the past 3 years the company has paid an annual dividend equal to the annual profit after tax. Describe the implications of this dividend policy.

18. CB1 April 2021 Q20

Drentel is a quoted company that manufactures bicycles and was established many years ago. It has been making losses for the past 5 years because its products have not kept up with consumer tastes and sales have been declining.

Despite the losses, Drentel has continued to pay a steady dividend each year.

Drentel's Board is considering a proposal to sell a range of battery-powered electric bicycles, which is a major growth area in the bicycle market. Drentel's current range of bicycles is suitable for modification to carry an electric motor. This would require a significant investment in order to acquire the rights to use patented manufacturing processes and also to acquire the specialised machinery that would have to be built to Drentel's specifications. The investment required is equivalent to approximately 25% of the company's market capitalisation.

Drentel's beta is currently 1.8. The Board believes that the beta will fall to 1.6 if the company proceeds with the electric bicycle project.

(i) Evaluate the relevance of the decline in Drentel's beta for the decision to invest in electric bicycles.

(ii) Discuss Drentel's policy of maintaining its dividend payments despite losses.

19. CB1 September 2021 Q12

The directors of a quoted company plan to make a major investment in a factory that will be used to manufacture a new product that is in development. This will be financed by a rights issue. The company's Finance Director believes that the share price will fall below the theoretical ex-rights weighted average price and has warned the board of this.

Explain the factors that would determine the share price after the rights issue.

20. CB1 September 2021 Q17

Explain whether businesses should aim to keep their working capital cycles as short as possible.

21. CB1 April 2023 Q12

M is an unquoted company with 20 shareholders, none of whom take an active interest in its management. M usually pays an annual dividend that increases in response to inflation. M's board is concerned that the company cannot afford to pay the expected dividend this year because an important piece of manufacturing equipment is due for replacement.

Explain the impact of suspending the dividend in order to fund the replacement, paying particular attention to the fact that M is unquoted.

22. CB1 April 2023 Q19

The information provided below has been obtained from R's draft financial statements, which have not yet been finalised.

R

Statement of changes in equity for the year ended 30 June 2022

	Share capital	Retained earnings	Total
	\$000	\$000	\$000
Opening balance	1,000	480	1,480
Loss for year		(211)	(211)
Closing balance	1,000	269	1,269

R

Statement of financial position as at 30 June

	2022	2021
	\$000	\$000
Property, plant and equipment	1,864	2,078
Current assets	60	49
	1,924	2,127
Share capital	1,000	1,000
Retained earnings	269	480
Total equity	1,269	1,480
Non-current liability	600	600
Current liabilities	55	47
	1,924	2,127

R is an unquoted company.

The non-current liability is a loan that falls due in seven years. However, there is a restrictive covenant on the loan entitling the lender to seek immediate repayment if the gearing ratio, calculated as $\text{debt}/(\text{debt} + \text{equity})$, ever exceeds 30%. R's board is concerned because this ratio has increased from 29% last year to 32%, which breaches the covenant.

R's property, plant and equipment include a large office building in the business district of a major city. The building was purchased 12 years ago for \$1,100,000 and has never been revalued. The building has been depreciated at 2% of cost each year since its acquisition. The board is considering revaluing the office in order to reduce the gearing ratio.

(i) Calculate the value that would have to be attached to the office building to reduce R's gearing to 30% as at 30 June 2022.

(ii) Explain whether it would be acceptable to revalue the office building in order to reduce the gearing ratio to less than 30%.

(iii) Explain how R's board should manage the breached debt covenant, assuming that the office building is not revalued.

(iv) Explain the implications for R's shareholders of continuing reported losses.

23. CB1 September 2023 Q17

Company W is a quoted company. Company W's Board has offered shareholders a scrip dividend as an alternative to a cash dividend.

Explain how Company W's shareholders should decide whether to accept the scrip as an alternative to cash.

24. CB1 April 2020 Q19

Parent is a major quoted financial services company. It has a wholly-owned subsidiary (Sub) that provides actuarial services to the other companies in the group. Sub employs 94 qualified actuaries, plus 110 support staff. These numbers include 18 senior managers who are responsible for Sub's management. Sub operates from an office space within Parent's head office.

Sub's annual running costs are approximately \$20 million, including an annual internal charge of \$2.5 million made for the use of the office space.

Sub's senior management team has held an initial meeting with Parent's Board to discuss the possibility of a management buyout of the subsidiary by its senior managers. Parent's Board has agreed, subject to the following terms:

■ The senior management team would pay \$4 million for Sub.

- Sub would continue to provide all of Parent's actuarial services under contract for 4 years, at an annual fee of \$16 million. That contract would be renegotiated at the end of year 4.
- Sub would be permitted to remain in the office space for 18 months without charge but would be required to vacate the space at the end of that time.
- Sub would retain all the IT equipment and office furniture.

The senior management team could raise \$1.8 million by investing \$100,000 each from their personal savings and by remortgaging their homes. They will each take equal shares in the company and will retain 100% ownership between them.

- (i) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this management buyout arrangement to Sub's senior management team.
- (ii) Describe the advantages and disadvantages of this management buyout arrangement to Parent.
- (iii) Discuss whether it would be preferable to permit Sub's other employees to buy shares in the company.

25. CB1 April 2021 Q12

Describe the difficulties in deciding whether a particular quoted company is a suitable acquisition target for a larger quoted company.

26. CB1 September 2021 Q13

A quoted company merged with a slightly smaller competitor as part of an expansion strategy, but the acquisition has failed to deliver the planned synergies.

Outline possible reasons that would explain the problems associated with this merger.

27. CB1 April 2022 Q20

S is a major quoted transportation company that operates 2,500 Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), delivering goods on behalf of several hundred customers, including manufacturers and supermarkets. In addition to 5,000 drivers, S employs 300 administrative staff, most of whom are based in the company's operations centre. The operations centre uses sophisticated computer software to track the navigation systems in S's HGVs, and to schedule collections and deliveries, to maximise operating efficiencies.

S's board is considering the acquisition of G, a competing quoted transportation company that operates 1,200 HGVs and employs 2,600 drivers and 170 administrative staff. G also has a computerised operations centre that tracks HGVs and schedules collections and deliveries. G's market capitalisation is currently roughly half that of S. Confidential meetings have taken place with G's directors, who have agreed to support the bid. S will issue new shares worth 15% more than G's present market capitalisation and will exchange those for 100% of G's equity. S's board is confident that synergies will bring about a significant increase in the overall value of the merged group.

G's directors will step down after the merger, in return for a generous financial settlement. The merged group will be managed by S's existing board, whose remuneration will increase in line with the increase in the size of the merged entity.

- (i) Discuss the expectation by S's board that this merger will bring about significant synergies.
- (ii) Evaluate the proposal that G's directors should receive a generous financial settlement when they step down.
- (iii) Evaluate the proposal that S's directors should be paid more in recognition of the increase in the size of the merged entity.

28. CB1 April 2023 Q13

A quoted company, Q, has identified a takeover target in a completely different industry. Q's board believes that the market has under-priced the target company's shares.

Explain whether it would make sense for Q to proceed with this acquisition.

29. CB1 September 2023 Q15

An actuarial consulting firm, X, wishes to expand rapidly and is considering the acquisition of a slightly smaller actuarial consulting firm, Y, in order to do so.

Explain the issues that should be considered with respect to the target firm before proceeding with the acquisition.

30. CB1 April 2024 Q20

Q is a quoted airline company that operates a network of intercontinental flights. Q has 100 million shares in issue and the company has a market capitalisation of \$1.1 billion.

Q's board plans to acquire 100% of L, a quoted hotel company. L owns hotels in many of the countries that are served by Q's flights. Q's directors believe that doing so will enable Q to offer holiday packages as well as flights and so will be more profitable.

L has 50 million shares in issue and the company has a market capitalisation of \$0.5 billion. Q's board plans to issue 50 million new shares and exchange one new share for each of L's existing shares.

Each of Q's directors is remunerated with a salary and a percentage of Q's annual profit.

- (i) Evaluate the planned acquisition of L as a means of creating growth for Q.
- (ii) Evaluate the agency implications for Q's shareholders of the proposal by Q's directors to acquire L.
- (iii) Discuss the possibility that L's directors will advise L's shareholders to reject Q's proposal once it has been announced.

31. Define each of the following terms:

- (i) Synergy; merger
- (ii) Horizontal merger; vertical merger; congeneric merger; conglomerate merger
- (iii) Friendly merger; hostile merger; tender offer; target company; acquiring company
- (iv) Operating merger; financial merger; equity residual method; market multiple analysis
- (v) White knight; white squire; poison pill; golden parachute
- (vi) Arbitrage
- (vii) Joint venture; corporate, or strategic, alliance
- (viii) Divestiture; spin-off; leveraged buyout (LBO); carve-out; liquidation

32. What are the different methods of achieving internal growth?

33. What are the different methods of achieving external growth?

34. When evaluating a potential target company, what factors might an acquirer consider?

- 35.** What are the uses of cash with reference to cash budgeting?
- 36.** How is credit policy managed?
- 37.** How is inventory policy managed?
- 38.** How are long term financial plans developed?
- 39.** You are being appointed as the financial manager of a Teak wood, a large manufacturing company of wood and wooden articles. The company has massive operations in the Southeast Asia and Middle East. The owners of the company is the kingdom of Abu Dhabi Explain in the current context what will be your objective as a financial manager and how will you achieve the same.
- 40.** Peter Group is an Indian multinational conglomerate headquartered in Ahmedabad, India. The member companies of the group have presence in Energy, Real Estate, IT, Steel and Automotive sectors. The group has been earned global recognition for more than 20 years. Most of the businesses of the group have grown organically in the recent times under the dynamic leadership of the Group CEO, Mr. Parker. Mr. Parker is looking to expand the business in Real Estate sector of its company RDJ Properties Ltd. by entering into a merger agreement / taking over Strange Properties Ltd.
- a. State the type of merger between RDJ Properties Ltd. and Strange Properties Ltd. Also, describe other types of mergers that Peter Group can enter into. What is the biggest risk if one of the member companies of Peter Group enters into a merger with Moon Pharma?
 - b. The potential merger of Peter Group with Strange Properties Ltd. is done in order to increase competitiveness and market share whereas the merger with Moon Pharma is with an aim to achieve diversification. Explain what could be the other major motives for merger?
 - c. The risk advisor of Mr. Parker has raised concerns over the idea of merger. What can be the potential problems with merger?