Constructed Response
Exams guidance

Level 4 Diploma in Procurement and Supply
Level 5 Advanced Diploma in Procurement and Supply
Level 6 Professional Diploma in Procurement and Supply

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Across all of our diploma level qualifications there are several different types of CR question format. The following guide will help CIPS students to understand how to approach CR essay style questions which you will be asked in the Level 4, 5 and 6 exams.

**You will be required to:**

A. Demonstrate your knowledge and understanding about the subject area.
   
   And

B. Show that you can adhere to instructions when answering questions.

In a CR exam you are required to ‘construct’ a response to the questions presented to you. The following modules will be examined by Constructed Response exams.

### Level 4 Diploma in Procurement and Supply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CORE Scope and Influence of Procurement and Supply (L4M1)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORE Procurement and Supply in Practice (L4M8)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Diploma OR questions are worth 1 mark each. All Diploma CR questions are worth 25 marks each and may include a scenario.

### Level 5 Advanced Diploma in Procurement and Supply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CORE Managing Teams and Individuals (L5M1)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORE Advanced Contract and Financial Management (L5M4)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Advanced Diploma OR exams include:

44 questions worth 1 mark each • 2 questions worth 8 marks each

L5M1 CR questions are all worth 20 marks each and may include a scenario

L5M4 CR questions are all worth 25 marks each and may include a scenario

### Level 6 Professional Diploma in Procurement and Supply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CORE Strategic Ethical Leadership (L6M1)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORE Global Commercial Strategy (L6M2)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORE Global Strategic Supply Chain Management (L6M3)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORE Future Strategic Challenges for the Profession (L6M4)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Professional Diploma OR exams include:

40 questions worth 1 mark each • 2 questions worth 10 marks each

All Professional Diploma CR questions are worth 25 marks each and may include a scenario.
Structure of Constructed Response (CR) exams

You will find that some questions will use a scenario or data sources to introduce you to a situation, or give you context, this should be used when answering the question. Always remember to demonstrate what you know throughout your answers. The person marking your exam does not know you, so you need to show your knowledge in a similar way to approaching a job interview - you have to help them to recognise that you know your material, and if you don't the examiner will not make any allowance for what you missed out.

A CR exam allows you to show your extensive knowledge.

These are standard CR questions where you will be expected to construct your answer.

At Level 4 the standard question maybe split into two parts for you.
Some questions will use a **scenario** or **data source** to introduce you to a situation or give you context. You should try to refer back to this when answering the questions.

**Scenario questions:**

Assess a range of measures that the new Procurement Director could utilise to improve the supply chain.

**Data source questions:**

Describe five distinctive features of capital procurements, using examples from INFONT scenario.
Preparing for an exam using Constructed Response (CR) questions...

at levels 4, 5 and 6

Timing is everything

- Spend 5 minutes reading the instructions and questions through at least twice – it is worth reading all the questions on the exam so that you have an overall picture of what is being asked, before you focus attention on each of the questions, some of which may have several parts. This is so that you can make sure that you have established the focus of each question, and avoid straying into material that you might need to use in other questions. Some questions may contain a scenario or data source.
- You will need to decide how to allocate your time for each question. Be ready to stop writing your answer when your allocated time runs out! If you do not move on to the next question, you are likely to run out of time and fail to gain marks overall. If you are struggling with completing your first and second answers in the time you have allocated, then you will need to review your plans for the other questions, in order to make sure you complete as many answers to questions as possible.

Reading the questions and planning your answers

As you read through the paper, identify what is being asked of you in each question. Remember, there will be one question for each of the learning outcomes from the syllabus:

- Determine which part of the syllabus the question relates to.
- Consider what key issues the question is asking you to write about, so that you are sure you fully understand the demands of the question. Format, context, task and outputs are very important.
- Check the number of marks allocated to each question or part of a question; this helps you to work out how much information the assessors are expecting you to include in your answer to each part.
- Take careful note if the question asks you to provide a specific number of examples or ideas – make sure you provide the number required.
Simple questions to help you practise

Example
Discuss FOUR advantages and FOUR disadvantages of a win-lose approach to negotiation. (16 marks)

Make sure you give four of each, no less. Two marks are allocated for each one, so you cannot earn marks if you do not provide the required number, no matter how detailed your discussion may be of the advantages/disadvantages you include.

• Next, highlight the command words in each question or part of a question.
  • Make sure you understand exactly what you are being asked to do: ‘Explain’ means you must not just describe something; ‘Compare and contrast’ means you should look for points of similarity and difference in the items given – it is all too easy to forget this once you start writing. See guidance on command words in the ‘Guide to CIPS Examinations’.

Example
Explain, with examples, the difference between direct and indirect costs. (10 marks)

If you do not give examples to illustrate your explanation, you will fail to gain marks. In the example given here, failure to include any examples would likely cost you 50% of the marks available.

• Make sure that, even if a question sounds familiar to one you may have practised, you have checked the intent of the question on the paper – a difference in the command word may require a completely different type of answer from the one you have practised. Be careful not to simply repeat answers you have already prepared previously and remembered: make sure you answer the specific question asked, using your knowledge and understanding.

Confidently prepare for exam success using all of the study resources available in the Student Zone.
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