CIPS Level 4 Diploma in procurement and supply

The Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) Level 4 Diploma in procurement and supply is a vocationally related qualification. It is recognised by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual), CCEA and Qualifications Wales in the UK and appears on the Register of Regulated Qualifications. The qualification accreditation number is 600/6858/9.

The Level 4 Diploma is a valuable management tool for those moving into junior and middle management procurement roles or those supervising the procurement function to provide the relevant knowledge, skills and understanding. It focuses on organisational procedures and processes including negotiating, planning, risk management and data analysis.

This qualification is designed for those working within the following typical job titles; Buyer, Procurement / purchasing executive, Procurement specialist, Contract officer, Supply chain / inventory / logistics analyst, Supply chain / inventory / logistics planner.

There are no age restrictions in relation to this qualification.

This qualification has been designed in conjunction with employers, study centres, higher education institutions and other key professionals and stakeholders to ensure it is relevant to current working practices within the procurement and supply sector. In addition, the content of the qualification is based on the CIPS Global Standard for Procurement and Supply – a comprehensive competency framework to enhance an individual’s procurement performance leading to excellent organisational performance. Further information on the global standard can be found here.

Both the global standard and qualification are kept under regular review and updated when necessary to ensure relevance is maintained.

Entry requirements
This is the highest entry point to our diploma qualifications and therefore, in order to complete this qualification, learners will require a minimum of at least two A-levels (or international equivalent) or a CIPS Advanced Certificate qualification. Alternatively you need a minimum of two years' experience in a business environment. Some unit exemptions or a bypass may be applicable under the CIPS Exemption policy. Further information on the exemption policy and possible exemptions can be found here.
Structure
The Diploma consists of five compulsory units. There are no optional units. All units are assessed via a CIPS externally set and marked examination which focuses on assessing the learning outcomes of each unit. Examinations are available on timetabled dates throughout the year. Information on examination dates and administrative arrangements can be found here.

The qualification is structured as follows:

CIPS LEVEL 4 DIPLOMA IN PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit code</th>
<th>Unit title</th>
<th>GLH</th>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>Exam type</th>
<th>Number questions per LO</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>Contexts of procurement and supply</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Practical long answer (25 mark) questions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>Business needs in procurement and supply</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Practical long answer (25 mark) questions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>Sourcing in procurement and supply</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Unseen case study (500 words) and five questions each worth 20 marks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>Negotiating and contracting in procurement and supply</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Practical long answer (25 mark) questions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D5</td>
<td>Managing contracts and relationships in procurement</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Practical long answer (25 mark) questions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pass criteria
- Distinction 75 - 100%
- Merit 60 - 74%
- Pass 50 - 59%
- Fail 0 - 49%

The focus of each of the units is as follows:

Compulsory units:
D1 Contexts of procurement and supply: on completion of this unit, the learner will be able to offer advice and guidance to main stakeholders on the application of the sourcing process. Understand supply chains which organisations operate in.

D2 Business needs in procurement and supply: on completion of this unit, the learner will understand practices that help achieve value for money solutions in procurement. This unit explores a variety of elements that underpin the development of criteria. It also considers the options that should be explored when procurement and supply personnel are involved in defining requirements.

D3 Sourcing in procurement and supply: on completion of this unit, the learner will be able to apply a set of appropriate tools and techniques that can assess sourcing options available to organisations when procuring goods, services or works from external suppliers. This unit identifies sound approaches to sourcing activities that assess the commercial and technical capabilities of organisations to help achieve the right choice of supplier.
D4 Negotiating and contracting in procurement and supply: on completion of this unit, the learner will be able to identify approaches to achieve negotiated agreements with external organisations. Recognise the use of legal terms that should regulate commercial agreements.

The creation of formalised agreements is a critical part of the work of personnel in procurement and supply. This unit analyses approaches to the negotiation of agreements made with external parties and the formation of legally binding contracts. After contracts have been entered into, there can be conflict over performance issues and on costs, timing and quality of supplies. This should involve negotiation to achieve required outcomes.

D5 Managing contracts and relationships in procurement and supply: on completion of this unit, candidates will be able to apply methods to improve supplier performance, recognising the need for a structured approach when dealing with performance and relationship issues. The unit concentrates on approaches to contract and supplier relationship management involving stakeholders in these processes. Personnel involved in creating contracts and relationships with external organisations need to ensure outcomes that achieve organisational requirements including costs, quality, risk management and timing.

Click here for the full unit content guide.

All units within the CIPS qualifications are assessed by an examination. Sample examination question papers for all units can be found here.

Learners are expected to undertake 50 guided learning hours per unit of the Diploma qualification, with an additional and recommended 70 hours of self-study per unit.

The number of hours assigned to the Diploma qualification for Total Qualification Time (TQT) is 600. TQT is the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time could reasonably be expected to be required in order for a learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of a qualification. This means that the learner would be expected to undertake 600 hours in terms of the Total Qualification Time, which can consist of 50 guided learning hours per unit (a total of 250 guided learning hours) and a recommended 70 hours of self-study, per unit, which includes a wider reading of the subject areas and revision to give the learner the best preparation for successfully achieving the certificate, the 3 hour assessment time, per unit, will be included within this.

Each Diploma unit has a credit value of 12 credits per unit.

The Level 4 Diploma in procurement and supply forms part of the CIPS ladder of qualifications and supports progression within employment and also to further learning including to the Level 6 Professional Diploma level. The qualification also provides an opportunity to demonstrate continuing professional development (CPD).

For further information regarding the CIPS qualifications ladder, click here.

From the academic year of 2016/2017, Advanced Learning Loans are available for individuals aged 19 or above to undertake approved qualifications at Levels 3 and 4, at an approved provider in England. Advanced Learning Loans give individuals access to financial support for tuition costs similar to that available in higher education and are administered by Student Finance England.

Advanced Learning Loans are paid directly to the college or training organisation on behalf of an individual.

For more information, please refer to the Skills Funding Agency website.