



Building a Global Network  
of Supply Management Experts

# Certification

CPSM®/CPSD®/APSM®



## Candidate Handbook

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# How to Use this Handbook

This handbook provides detailed information on Institute for Supply Management®'s Certification Programs. ISM suggests that all certification applicants read the entire handbook.

The features of this handbook allow you to:

- Gain a general understanding of each certification program and how the exams are created
- Review eligibility requirements
- Review suggested study plans and resources
- Evaluate learning methods
- Learn how to apply for an exam
- Learn how to apply for recertification
- Review important policies and procedures

## Certification Contact Information

For general information about ISM's Certification Programs, contact us at:

Phone: +1 480.752.6276

Fax: +1 480.752.7890

[membersvcs@ismworld.org](mailto:membersvcs@ismworld.org)

Visit [www.ismworld.org/certification-and-training/certification/](http://www.ismworld.org/certification-and-training/certification/) for more information.

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# Introduction and Purpose of ISM Certification Programs

## About Institute for Supply Management® (ISM®)

Institute for Supply Management® (ISM®) is the first and leading not-for-profit professional supply management organization worldwide. Its community of more than 50,000 in more than 100 countries around the world manage about US\$1 trillion in corporate and government supply chain procurement annually. Founded in 1915 by practitioners, ISM is committed to advancing the practice of supply management to drive value and competitive advantage for its members, contributing to a prosperous and sustainable world. ISM empowers and leads the profession through the ISM® *Report On Business*®, its highly-regarded certification and training programs, corporate services, events and the ISM® Supply Chain Capability Model. The ISM® *Report On Business*®, Manufacturing and Services PMI®, are two of the most reliable economic indicators available, providing guidance to supply management professionals, economists, analysts, and government and business leaders. For more information, please visit: [www.ismworld.org](http://www.ismworld.org).

## Purpose of ISM Certification Programs

For more than 40 years, ISM has offered best-in-class certifications to supply management professionals around the world. ISM recognized the challenges and demands within the supply management industry and sought to create a certification program that encompassed the skills needed to stay current in a fast-moving industry.

In 2008, ISM introduced the Certified Professional in Supply Management® (CPSM®) certification program. Built on an in-depth analysis of supply management functions across industries, the CPSM program addresses the realities of supply management, as well as such workplace complexities as globalization, use of technology, and expanded competencies that procurement and supply management professionals employ to drive value in their organizations.

In 2010, ISM introduced the Certified Professional in Supplier Diversity® (CPSD®) certification program. It is one of the few certifications that exists for this growing and highly desired specialization. Many companies engage in supplier diversity to be socially responsible and/or meet customer or federal requirements, but don't understand its true profit potential. As a CPSD, you'll be the guiding hand with the knowledge and training to show an organization how supplier diversity can improve the bottom line and accelerate innovation by becoming more efficient and gaining exposure to new customer bases.

In 2023, ISM introduced the Associate Professional in Supply Management® (APSM®) certification program. Geared toward preparing and engaging university students, the APSM is available to active ISM student members. The APSM exam (Supply Management Core) is the same Supply Management Core exam it takes to become CPSM certified. This makes the APSM a step toward CPSM certification, for those starting out in their supply management career.

## Certification Return on Investment (ROI)

The salary difference with and without a certification, according to the ISM's 2018 *Salary Survey*, reveals that the cost of obtaining a certification quickly pays for itself. Based on the average 14-percent increase certification holders achieve, expenses for study materials, exam fees and application fees will be offset within a few months.

Knowledge gained through certification helps supply management professionals engage strategically within their organizations, which provides an aggregate ROI of more than 700 percent, according to CAPS Research benchmark data.

Earning an ISM certification continues to provide long-term benefits regarding salary. Whether it's a CPSM or CPSD, certification resulted in an average salary that exceeds that of a non-credentialed practitioner. According to ISM's 2018 *Salary Survey*, holding one or more ISM certifications translated to at least a 12.8-percent boost in average salary for supply management professionals.

ISM's CPSM Certification continues its strong positive impact on average salaries. In recent years, respondents with a CPSM earned 14.7 percent more on average than those without a certification. Likewise, CPSD holders earned an average of 14 percent more than noncertified respondents.



# Certified Professional in Supply Management® (CPSM®)

## CPSM Certification Overview

The CPSM is globally recognized as the gold standard of excellence for supply management professionals, in both the manufacturing and non-manufacturing sectors. The designation is transportable across industries, job roles and regions, providing designation holders with flexibility and mobility.

The CPSM is for forward-thinking supply management professionals who desire to demonstrate a broad understanding of the components of the profession. The program emphasizes the major competencies of supply management. Those earning the CPSM will attain a greater understanding of the supply management ecosystem and be better positioned to positively impact their organization.

## CPSM Eligibility Requirements

Earning a CPSM designation requires you to take and pass three exams, which can be taken in any order:

- Supply Management Core
- Supply Management Integration
- Leadership and Transformation in Supply Management

Candidates must have three years of full-time, professional supply management experience (nonclerical and nonsupport) with a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution or international equivalent or five years of full-time, professional supply management experience (nonclerical and nonsupport) without a qualified bachelor's degree.

All applicable experience must be in a professional position where the primary function is supply management. Professional experience is usually defined as positions with decision-making authority and where independent judgement is exercised. ISM does not require a candidate to work in all areas of supply management or be in a management position. Proof of work experience is not required from those with a current C.P.M. certification.

ISM will evaluate work experience for candidates unsure if their current or previous positions are considered applicable. The evaluation is optional, and there is a nominal charge.

The work-experience evaluation process allows a candidate to submit work experience documentation prior to taking exams. ISM will return an evaluation to the candidate indicating if the experience is acceptable. Candidates with acceptable experience should submit the evaluation with their original certification application after they have passed the exams.

## CPSM Resources

ISM offers a variety of robust resources and tools to assist candidates in their pursuit of the CPSM Certification. In addition, ISM offers several different options for study plans so candidates can select their preferred learning method.

## Self-Study – CPSM® Learning Systems

The CPSM Learning System is a comprehensive professional-development and exam-preparation solution. Its easy-to-use dashboard and navigation provide all the resources and tools needed to prepare for all three CPSM Exams. You can purchase the study materials for all three exams all at once in the CPSM Learning System, or tackle your preparation exam by exam if you purchase a learning system for an individual exam.

Online Learning Systems include:

- *Study Guide*
- *ISM® Professional Series*
- *Diagnostic Practice Exam*
- *ISM® Glossary of Key Supply Management Terms*
- Interactive study tools such as flashcards and games
- Practice exam questions

Visit [www.ismworld.org/certification-and-training/certification/cpsm/](http://www.ismworld.org/certification-and-training/certification/cpsm/) for more details.

## Self-Study – CPSM® Learning System (Print Version)

The CPSM Learning System is also available in print version however, it does not include access to the online resources and tools.

The printed version of the Learning System includes:

- *Study Guide* for each exam
- *ISM® Professional Series* for each exam
- *Diagnostic Practice Exam* for each exam

## Guided Learning

This unique, self-directed online course offers activities and live webinars to keep you on track to earn your CPSM Certification. Study at home, in the office or anywhere that works for you. Get access to an ISM subject matter expert who can answer your questions and provide one-on-one assistance throughout the course(s). The course is available for each individual exam or bundled together to accelerate the program.

View upcoming course dates at [www.ismworld.org/certification-and-training/training/education-calendar/](http://www.ismworld.org/certification-and-training/training/education-calendar/)

## Classroom-based – ISM Corporate Services

ISM Corporate Service empowers organizational success by enhancing every team member's professional development. On-site and virtual CPSM training are offered. Gain a “hands-on” approach with the on-site experience. By having your team complete a practice exam prior to training, content can be customized to focus on areas where knowledge gaps are present.

Get even more convenience with virtual training. These sessions are high-impact and are best when travel time and cost is a training obstacle. It's easy to keep your study momentum going with these shorter sessions.

Contact ISM Corporate Services to get started today at [corpinfo@ismworld.org](mailto:corpinfo@ismworld.org).

# CPSM Study Plan

To start your study plan, begin by setting your goals and selecting your exam date(s). Take the *Diagnostic Practice Exam(s)* included with the Learning System(s). Use your score report from the practice exam (or a previous exam) to develop a customized study plan to focus on areas that need improvement — areas in which you scored less than 75 percent.

On the following pages you can review the blueprints for the exams. You will be able to review each competency, associated tasks you need to master and the number of questions in the exam associated with that task.

- Look over the supplemental reading list and/or supply management college textbooks to find additional content to assist in your studies
- Take supply management courses at a local college or university
- Read various procurement, supply chain, business and trade publications for further material

Regardless of your chosen study method, please be aware of the need to use a variety of sources for study. The CPSD® and CPSM® study materials provide only a general overview of the subjects covered in the exams. They are not meant to serve as a substitute for major textbooks in the field. The exams may include material NOT covered in detail in the study materials.





## CPSM Exam Specifications

# Supply Management Core Exam

TASK # TASK

NUMBER OF QUESTIONS

### SOURCING

1-A-1	Assess stakeholder needs and organize into sourcing plans	5
1-A-2	Analyze and advise on feasibility of internal customer requests	3
1-A-3	Analyze potential sources of products or services	7
1-A-4	Determine methods to process requirements for goods or services based on cost, timing, existing contracts and competitive bidding, as appropriate	5
1-A-5	Conduct analyses to develop insourcing or outsourcing strategy	5
1-A-6	Identify and implement technologies to support supply management	4
1-A-7	Leverage spend through the identification, development and execution of sourcing strategies	5
1-A-8	Implement strategic sourcing plans aligned with organizational and stakeholder objectives	5
1-A-9	Prepare solicitations for competitive bids, quotations and proposals with pertinent specifications, terms and conditions	6
1-A-10	Evaluate competitive offerings to identify the overall best offer for a product or service	5

### CATEGORY MANAGEMENT

1-B-1	Create a category management plan to meet the organization's key objectives	5
1-B-2	Execute a category management plan	5

### NEGOTIATION

1-C-1	Prepare negotiation plan that aligns with organizational objectives	5
1-C-2	Prepare and develop strategies and tactics for negotiations	4
1-C-3	Lead, conduct and support negotiations with suppliers	5

### LEGAL AND CONTRACTUAL

1-D-1	Manage the preparation of contracts/purchase orders	5
1-D-2	Award contracts to suppliers	3
1-D-3	Administer contracts and/or purchase orders from award to completion or termination	5
1-D-4	Perform or obtain legal review of contracts and other supply management documents	4
1-D-5	Generate and follow supply management processes to ensure legal compliance	4

TASK #	TASK	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS
<b>SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT</b>		
1-E-1	Develop supplier qualification plans to assure components, materials and suppliers meet specified requirements	4
1-E-2	Develop and manage effective relationships with suppliers	7
1-E-3	Conduct supplier performance evaluations	5
1-E-4	Conduct regular business reviews with suppliers	4
1-E-5	Identify opportunities and benefits for rationalizing the supply base	4
1-E-6	Identify opportunities to drive supplier innovation	3
1-E-7	Develop and implement supplier exit strategies	3
1-E-8	Review supplier performance against negotiated service level agreements (SLAs)	4
1-E-9	Resolve invoice and payment problems	2
1-E-10	Act as a liaison between suppliers and functional areas to ensure accurate information, documentation and product flow	4
1-E-11	Work with suppliers to identify constraints and implement value-added processes	3
<b>COST AND PRICE MANAGEMENT</b>		
1-F-1	Develop cost management program strategies for purchases	5
1-F-2	Perform cost/benefit analyses	4
1-F-3	Conduct spend analysis to determine strategies for specific categories	5
1-F-4	Track and validate cost savings and cost avoidance	4
<b>FINANCIAL ANALYSIS</b>		
1-G-1	Prepare and/or administer a supply management department budget	3
1-G-2	Develop financing strategies for purchases	3
1-G-3	Verify that sufficient reporting exists	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>180</b> (including 15 unscored*)

\* Included are 15 statistical data research questions which are unscored (not included in your final exam score)

# Supply Management Integration Exam

TASK # TASK

NUMBER OF QUESTIONS

## SUPPLY CHAIN STRATEGY

2-A-1	Develop and/or implement a material or service standardization program	5
2-A-2	Implement requirements planning to align supply management activities with organizational strategy	7
2-A-3	Implement operations planning, scheduling and inventory control processes to ensure optimum use of resources	6
2-A-4	Structure the supply chain in support of the organization's business strategy	7

## SALES AND OPERATIONS PLANNING – DEMAND PLANNING

2-B-1	Incorporate the use of sales, inventory and capacity forecasts in the planning of materials production to better meet strategic objectives and goals	6
2-B-2	Conduct demand planning	4

## SALES AND OPERATIONS PLANNING – FORECASTING

2-C-1	Analyze and report on market conditions, benchmarks and industry trends to internal stakeholders	5
2-C-2	Develop supply forecasts in light of economic and technological trends	5
2-C-3	Plan and communicate sourcing and supply strategies based on forecasted data	6
2-C-4	Manage forecasted data with suppliers	5
2-C-5	Calculate and report forecast accuracy	4

## SALES AND OPERATIONS – PRODUCT AND SERVICE

2-D-1	Participate in new product or service development in support of marketing efforts	5
2-D-2	Participate in product-service ramp-up and/or ramp-down strategies and implementation	5
2-D-3	Create systems and process improvements to help the organization meet sales goals	5

## QUALITY MANAGEMENT

2-E-1	Develop and/or administer a supplier quality certification program	4
2-E-2	Develop measurements for quality improvement	4
2-E-3	Implement continuous improvement processes within the supply chain	6

### LOGISTICS AND MATERIAL MANAGEMENT

2-F-1	Design transportation and distribution policies and procedures to ensure optimum flow of materials	4
2-F-2	Manage transportation, invoicing and documentation functions to ensure regulatory compliance	4
2-F-3	Manage the resolution of delivery/receiving problems	4
2-F-4	Analyze supplier transportation costs	5
2-F-5	Develop and/or implement a warehouse management system	5
2-F-6	Conduct network design and optimization to support the business model, increase productivity and lower operating costs	5
2-F-7	Oversee the day-to-day operations of a warehousing function	4
2-F-8	Develop and/or implement an inventory management system	5
2-F-9	Coordinate and/or monitor the movement of equipment and assets within the organization	3
2-F-10	Expedite/de-expedite orders	3
2-F-11	Develop and/or execute plans and metrics to reduce risk of shortages	4
2-F-12	Identify cost-effective packaging that meets requirements	3
2-F-13	Conduct investment recovery activities for surplus/obsolete materials	4

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT

2-G-1	Perform project management activities	8
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<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>165</b> <b>(including 15 unscored*)</b>
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\* Included are 15 statistical data research questions which are unscored (not included in your final exam score)

# Leadership and Transformation in Supply Management Exam

TASK # TASK

NUMBER OF QUESTIONS

## LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS ACUMEN – STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

3-A-1	Participate in organization-wide objective setting	5
3-A-2	Participate in organization-wide budgeting	4
3-A-3	Develop, implement, revise and support business plans and operating policies and procedures	5
3-A-4	Participate in company mergers, acquisitions and/or divestitures	4

## LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS ACUMEN – STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

3-B-1	Develop and evaluate supply management relationships with internal departments	5
3-B-2	Lead or participate in cross-functional and/or multifunctional teams	6
3-B-3	Disseminate information and promote training related to supply management policies and procedures	4
3-B-4	Market the value of strategic sourcing and sourcing strategies and initiatives to management and internal stakeholders	5
3-B-5	Represent supply management in meetings with corporations, government agencies, professional associations and/or other organizations	5

## LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS ACUMEN – PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT AND COACHING

3-C-1	Evaluate the supply management organizational structure and modify as necessary in order to achieve the optimal structure	5
3-C-2	Conduct role design evaluation and potential job redesign	4
3-C-3	Develop criteria for evaluating the overall supply management department performance	6
3-C-4	Hire, develop, retain, promote and/or dismiss supply management personnel	5
3-C-5	Conduct and/or authorize job training for the professional development of the staff	5
3-C-6	Evaluate supply management employee performance	5
3-C-7	Supervise and lead supply management employees	5
3-C-8	Create and manage a succession plan	4

## SYSTEMS CAPABILITY AND TECHNOLOGY

3-D-1	Incorporate the use of technology-driven processes to analyze data and make more informed business decisions	5
3-D-2	Conduct ongoing research of the market, current competition, company imperatives, recent trends and emerging capabilities that will provide competitive advantage	6

TASK #	TASK	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS
<b>RISK AND COMPLIANCE</b>		
3-E-1	Implement a risk management program	5
3-E-2	Develop risk mitigation plans that align with organizational risk tolerance	5
3-E-3	Implement a claims management program	2
3-E-4	Implement and maintain a system of data retention	3
3-E-5	Manage the storage and disposal of hazardous and/or regulated materials	3
3-E-6	Develop tools and processes to measure, report and improve compliance with supply management policies and regulations	4
3-E-7	Analyze and resolve issues raised in supply management audit reports	4
3-E-8	Assess, manage and monitor the risk of doing business with third parties and their subcontractors	4
3-E-9	Investigate and/or verify fraudulent or non-compliant employee purchases	3
<b>CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY</b>		
3-F-1	Develop and implement a code of business conduct for the supply management function	5
3-F-2	Develop and/or implement a supplier diversity program	4
3-F-3	Establish and monitor programs for sustainability and environmental responsibility	4
3-F-4	Implement, monitor, and promote organizational and supply chain health and safety policies and procedures	4
3-F-5	Establish and monitor social responsibility programs including corporate citizenship and community outreach	3
3-F-6	Implement policies to prevent discrimination and harassment	4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>165</b> <b>(including 15 unscored*)</b>

\* Included are 15 statistical data research questions which are unscored (not included in your final exam score)

### Length of Time and the Number of Questions on the CPSM Exams

Exam Title	Number of Questions	Length of Time
Supply Management Core	180	180 minutes
Supply Management Integration	165	165 minutes
Leadership and Transformation in Supply Management	165	165 minutes

Please allow 15 minutes extra for tutorial review when factoring the exam seat time at the testing center.

# Certified Professional in Supplier Diversity® (CPSD®)

## CPSD Certification Overview

The CPSD is a professional designation for supply professionals who demonstrate knowledge, skills and expertise in supplier diversity. CPSD is also for business professionals with responsibility for strategic diversity initiatives. This professional designation demonstrates to your employer, your colleagues, your suppliers and your customers that you are serious about helping your organization and diverse suppliers succeed.

Supplier diversity is an organization's efforts to include different categories of suppliers in its sourcing process and active supply base. In addition, it addresses the opportunities and challenges that arise from differences and similarities. Supplier diversity is a proactive business process that seeks to provide diverse suppliers equal access to purchasing opportunities. It promotes supplier participation reflective of a company's diverse customer base and the diverse business community.

Successful organizations maintain an edge, especially in a competitive marketplace. The value of supplier diversity provides a distinction that shows your commitment to diversity through strong relationships with your suppliers and all stakeholders. A solid supplier diversity program creates opportunities to partner with innovative or otherwise untapped resources and markets. Additionally, having the CPSD designation is instant recognition that you and your organization are on the right track.

## Dual Purpose for the Supply Management Core Exam

Passing the Supply Management Core Exam is a requirement for both the CPSM and CPSD designations. Although it was originally created during the CPSM job task analysis, during the subsequent CPSD job task analysis, it was deemed an important CPSD component as well.

### CPSM Exams

Supply Management Core Exam

Supply Management Integration Exam

Leadership and Transformation in Supply Management Exam

### CPSD Exams

Supply Management Core Exam  
(waived if the candidate holds a current CPSM or C.P.M.)

Essentials in Supplier Diversity Exam

*\*Exams may be taken in any order.*

## CPSD Eligibility Requirements

Earning a CPSD designation requires you to take and pass two exams, which can be taken in any order:

- Supply Management Core
- Essentials in Supplier Diversity

If you hold a current CPSM or C.P.M. designation, you only need to take and pass the Essentials in Supplier Diversity Exam, and you may apply for the CPSD designation. Once you pass the exam, you will receive 20 Continuing Education Hours (CEHs) toward your current CPSM or C.P.M. recertification.

Candidates must have a minimum of five years of professional (nonclerical, nonsupport) supplier diversity or supply management experience (which does not need to be your primary function\*), or three years of professional (nonclerical, nonsupport) supplier diversity or supply management experience if the candidate has a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university.

\*Supply management or supplier diversity does not need to be the primary function; it may be a secondary component of the job. Professional experience is usually defined as positions with decision-making authority where judgment is exercised. Proof of work experience is not required from those with a current C.P.M. or CPSM Certification.

## **CPSD Resources**

ISM offers a variety of resources and tools to help you prepare for the CPSD Exams.

### **Self-Study – CPSD® Learning System**

The CPSD Learning System is a comprehensive solution to prepare for the two exams required to obtain the CPSD.

It includes:

- *Diagnostic Practice Exams* for the Supply Management Core Exam and the Essentials in Supplier Diversity Exam
- *Study Guide* for the Supply Management Core Exam and the Essentials in Supplier Diversity Exam
- *ISM® Professional Series* for the Supply Management Core Exam and the Essentials in Supplier Diversity Exam
- *ISM Glossary of Key Supply Management Terms*

To learn more about the CPSD Learning System [click here](#).

### **Candidates Pursuing a CPSD with a Current CPSM or C.P.M. Certification**

Study for just the Essentials in Supplier Diversity Exam with the Essentials in Supplier Diversity Learning System.

### **CPSD Study Plan**

To start your study plan, begin by setting your goals and selecting your exam date(s). Take the Diagnostic Practice Exam(s) included with the Learning System(s). Use your score report from the practice exam (or a previous Exam) to develop a customized study plan to focus on areas that need improvement — areas in which you scored less than 75 percent.

On the following pages you can review the blueprints for the exams. You will be able to review each competency, associated tasks you need to master and the number of questions in the exam associated with that task.

- Look over the supplemental reading list and/or supply management college textbooks to find additional content to assist in your studies
- Take supply management courses at a local college or university
- Read various procurement, supply chain, business and trade publications for further material

Regardless of your chosen study method, please be aware of the need to use a variety of sources for study. The CPSD® and CPSM® study materials provide only a general overview of the subjects covered in the exams. They are not meant to serve as a substitute for major textbooks in the field. The exams may include material NOT covered in detail in the study materials.



# CPSD Exam Blueprint Exam Specifications

## Supply Management Core Exam

TASK #      TASK NUMBER OF QUESTIONS

### SOURCING

1-A-1	Assess stakeholder needs and organize into sourcing plans	5
1-A-2	Analyze and advise on feasibility of internal customer requests	3
1-A-3	Analyze potential sources of products or services	7
1-A-4	Determine methods to process requirements for goods or services based on cost, timing, existing contracts and competitive bidding, as appropriate	5
1-A-5	Conduct analyses to develop insourcing or outsourcing strategy	5
1-A-6	Identify and implement technologies to support supply management	4
1-A-7	Leverage spend through the identification, development and execution of sourcing strategies	5
1-A-8	Implement strategic sourcing plans aligned with organizational and stakeholder objectives	5
1-A-9	Prepare solicitations for competitive bids, quotations and proposals with pertinent specifications, terms and conditions	6
1-A-10	Evaluate competitive offerings to identify the overall best offer for a product or service	5

### CATEGORY MANAGEMENT

1-B-1	Create a category management plan to meet the organization's key objectives	5
1-B-2	Execute a category management plan	5

### NEGOTIATION

1-C-1	Prepare negotiation plan that aligns with organizational objectives	5
1-C-2	Prepare and develop strategies and tactics for negotiations	4
1-C-3	Lead, conduct and support negotiations with suppliers	5



TASK #	TASK	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS
<b>LEGAL AND CONTRACTUAL</b>		
1-D-1	Manage the preparation of contracts/purchase orders	5
1-D-2	Award contracts to suppliers	3
1-D-3	Administer contracts and/or purchase orders from award to completion or termination	5
1-D-4	Perform or obtain legal review of contracts and other supply management documents	4
1-D-5	Generate and follow supply management processes to ensure legal compliance	4
<b>SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT</b>		
1-E-1	Develop supplier qualification plans to assure components, materials and suppliers meet specified requirements	4
1-E-2	Develop and manage effective relationships with suppliers	7
1-E-3	Conduct supplier performance evaluations	5
1-E-4	Conduct regular business reviews with suppliers	4
1-E-5	Identify opportunities and benefits for rationalizing the supply base	4
1-E-6	Identify opportunities to drive supplier innovation	3
1-E-7	Develop and implement supplier exit strategies	3
1-E-8	Review supplier performance against negotiated service level agreements (SLAs)	4
1-E-9	Resolve invoice and payment problems	2
1-E-10	Act as a liaison between suppliers and functional areas to ensure accurate information, documentation and product flow	4
1-E-11	Work with suppliers to identify constraints and implement value-added processes	3
<b>COST AND PRICE MANAGEMENT</b>		
1-F-1	Develop cost management program strategies for purchases	5
1-F-2	Perform cost/benefit analyses	4
1-F-3	Conduct spend analysis to determine strategies for specific categories	5
1-F-4	Track and validate cost savings and cost avoidance	4
<b>FINANCIAL ANALYSIS</b>		
1-G-1	Prepare and/or administer a supply management department budget	3
1-G-2	Develop financing strategies for purchases	3
1-G-3	Verify that sufficient reporting exists	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>180</b> <b>(including 15 unscored*)</b>

\* Included are 15 statistical data research questions which are unscored (not included in your final exam score)

# Essentials in Supplier Diversity Exam

TASK #	TASK	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS
<b>DEVELOPING BUSINESS CASE/OBTAINING EXECUTIVE SUPPORT</b>		
SD-A-1	Integrate supplier diversity into the organization's mission, vision and commitment statements or the overall business strategy	6
SD-A-2	Consult with and advise senior management on developing and integrating supplier diversity strategies into business practices	5
SD-A-3	Integrate supplier diversity with corporate diversity, supply management and other business initiatives	5
<b>DEVELOPING A SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROGRAM</b>		
SD-B-1	Develop, implement and integrate short-term and long-term supplier diversity programs and initiatives	5
SD-B-2	Create a company website, database and/or directory of diverse suppliers	3
SD-B-3	Establish annual supplier diversity goals in alignment with supply management and business goals	6
SD-B-4	Develop strategies and procedures for integrating diverse suppliers into supply management and sales enablement processes	4
SD-B-5	Develop and implement supplier diversity best practices and standards	5
SD-B-6	Develop and implement supplier diversity initiatives for prime suppliers	4
<b>PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROFESSIONALS</b>		
SD-C-1	Perform project management activities	3
<b>INFLUENCING AND PARTNERING WITH INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS</b>		
SD-D-1	Consult with and advise stakeholders on developing and integrating supplier diversity initiatives into business practices and identifying new opportunities for diverse suppliers	4
SD-D-2	Provide training on diverse supplier sourcing practices (including organizational and government requirements) to internal stakeholders	4
SD-D-3	Manage internal stakeholder concerns and opposition, and resolve conflicts pertaining to supplier diversity	4
SD-D-4	Develop cross-functional internal advocates and alliances pertaining to supplier diversity	4
<b>ESTABLISHING DIVERSE SUPPLIER CERTIFICATION PROCESS</b>		
SD-E-1	Determine and develop diverse supplier certification requirements	2
<b>ESTABLISHING DIVERSE SUPPLIER QUALIFICATION PROCESS</b>		
SD-F-1	Establish qualifications and create systems for screening diverse businesses	4
SD-F-2	Identify and recommend diverse suppliers to the organization's sourcing team	8

TASK #	TASK	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS
<b>DEVELOPING DIVERSE SUPPLIERS</b>		
SD-G-1	Provide training on business priorities, supply management processes and business development to diverse suppliers	3
SD-G-2	Design and oversee mentoring programs for diverse suppliers	3
SD-G-3	Develop multi-tier initiatives for diverse suppliers (including training of prime suppliers)	2
<b>MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS WITH DIVERSE SUPPLIERS</b>		
SD-H-1	Develop and maintain relationships with diverse suppliers, including resources, coaching and mentoring in continuous improvement, lean and business development	5
SD-H-2	Monitor progress toward meeting goals and objectives, measure success, and recommend directional changes or actions for diverse suppliers	4
SD-H-3	Review diverse supplier performance and take actions to resolve issues and improve future performance	4
<b>FINANCING AND BUDGETING</b>		
SD-I-1	Define and justify Return on Investment (ROI) for supplier diversity programs to appropriate stakeholders	5
SD-I-2	Develop budget and financial support for organizational diversity initiatives	5
<b>ESTABLISHING METRICS AND REPORTING</b>		
SD-J-1	Design, deploy, maintain and report metrics to measure the performance of diverse suppliers throughout the sourcing process	4
SD-J-2	Benchmark with peer organizations regarding supplier diversity practices and strategies	3
SD-J-3	Report diversity spend to top management and internal stakeholders	4
SD-J-4	Prepare data on supplier diversity for reports to stakeholders or regulatory agencies	4
<b>PERFORMING ADVOCACY AND MARKET OUTREACH</b>		
SD-K-1	Identify and attend industry and supplier diversity conferences and other functions to source qualified diverse suppliers	4
SD-K-2	Develop communication plans, marketing tools, and rewards/recognition systems to promote supplier diversity	4
SD-K-3	Plan, organize, and conduct diversity presentations and events	4
SD-K-4	Represent the organization's supplier diversity efforts with advocacy groups, boards and other external organizations	4

TASK #	TASK	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS
<b>SUSTAINABILITY, SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICS FOR SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROFESSION</b>		
SD-L-1	Design, develop, and execute a sustainability and/or social responsibility program for the organization and suppliers	2
SD-L-2	Lead and manage sustainability and social responsibility efforts with suppliers	2
SD-L-3	Track and monitor performance toward goals for sustainability and social responsibility throughout the supply chain	2
SD-L-4	Implement, monitor and promote organizational and supplier safety policies and procedures	2
SD-L-5	Implement, monitor, manage and promote a code of business conduct and/or ethics for the supply management organization and for suppliers	2
SD-L-6	Implement, monitor, manage and promote policies and procedures to prevent discrimination and harassment within the organization and the supply chain	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>150</b>

### Length of Time and the Number of Questions on the CPSD Exams

Exam Title	Number of Questions	Length of Time
Supply Management Core	180	180 minutes
Essentials in Supplier Diversity	150	150 minutes

*\*Please allow 15 minutes extra for tutorial review when factoring the exam seat time at the testing center.*

# Associate Professional in Supply Management® (APSM®)

## APSM Certification Overview

The APSM certification allows active ISM student members to take control of their career development. The APSM emphasizes the major competencies of supply management including:

- Sourcing
- Category Management
- Negotiation
- Legal and Contractual
- Supplier Relationship Management
- Cost and Price Management
- Financial Analysis

The APSM exam (Supply Management Core) is the same Supply Management Core exam it takes to earn a CPSM certification. This makes the APSM a step toward earning a CPSM.

Once individuals have earned an APSM and meet CPSM requirements, they will only need to take and pass the remaining two CPSM exams to earn their CPSM certification. The APSM is valid for five years and recertification is not available for the APSM. During the five year valid time period, APSM certified individuals can gain the work experience need to earn the CPSM certification (please see *CPSM Eligibility Requirements* section for more information).

## APSM Eligibility Requirements

Earning an APSM designation requires you to take and pass one exam:

- Supply Management Core

Candidates must be an active ISM student member. To become an ISM student members, individuals must be enrolled full-time in an accredited community college or four-year college or university. Full-time is defined as 12 or more credit hours for undergraduate students, and six or more hours for graduate students. They must indicate their estimated date of graduation on their application and include their advisor's email address for verification of their full-time status.

## APSM Resources

ISM offers a digital individual exam learning system to assist candidates in their pursuit of the APSM certification.

## Self-Study – ASPSM® Learning System

The APSM Learning System is a comprehensive professional-development and exam-preparation solution. Its easy-to-use dashboard and navigation provide all the resources and tools needed to prepare for the APSM Exam.

Online Learning System includes:

- Study Guide
- ISM® *Professional Series*
- *Diagnostic Practice Exam*
- ISM® *Glossary of Key Supply Management Terms*
- Interactive study tools such as flashcards and games
- Practice exam questions

Visit [ismworld.org/apsm](http://ismworld.org/apsm) for more details.

# APSM Study Plan

To start your study plan, begin by setting your goals and selecting your exam date(s). Take the *Diagnostic Practice Exam* included with the Learning System. Use your score report from the practice exam (or a previous exam) to develop a customized study plan to focus on areas that need improvement — areas in which you scored less than 75 percent.

On the following pages you can review the blueprint for the exam. You will be able to review each competency, associated tasks you need to master and the number of questions in the exam associated with that task.

- Look over the supplemental reading list and/or supply management college textbooks to find additional content to assist in your studies
- Continue to take supply management courses at a local college or university
- Read various procurement, supply chain, business and trade publications for further material

Regardless of your chosen study method, please be aware of the need to use a variety of sources for study. The CPSD®, CPSM® and APSM® study materials provide only a general overview of the subjects covered in the exams. They are not meant to serve as a substitute for major textbooks in the field. The exams may include material NOT covered in detail in the study materials.

## APSM Exam Specifications

### Supply Management Core Exam

TASK #	TASK	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS
<b>SOURCING</b>		
1-A-1	Assess stakeholder needs and organize into sourcing plans	5
1-A-2	Analyze and advise on feasibility of internal customer requests	3
1-A-3	Analyze potential sources of products or services	7
1-A-4	Determine methods to process requirements for goods or services based on cost, timing, existing contracts and competitive bidding, as appropriate	5
1-A-5	Conduct analyses to develop insourcing or outsourcing strategy	5
1-A-6	Identify and implement technologies to support supply management	4
1-A-7	Leverage spend through the identification, development and execution of sourcing strategies	5
1-A-8	Implement strategic sourcing plans aligned with organizational and stakeholder objectives	5
1-A-9	Prepare solicitations for competitive bids, quotations and proposals with pertinent specifications, terms and conditions	6
1-A-10	Evaluate competitive offerings to identify the overall best offer for a product or service	5

TASK #	TASK	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS
<b>CATEGORY MANAGEMENT</b>		
1-B-1	Create a category management plan to meet the organization's key objectives	5
1-B-2	Execute a category management plan	5
<b>NEGOTIATION</b>		
1-C-1	Prepare negotiation plan that aligns with organizational objectives	5
1-C-2	Prepare and develop strategies and tactics for negotiations	4
1-C-3	Lead, conduct and support negotiations with suppliers	5
<b>LEGAL AND CONTRACTUAL</b>		
1-D-1	Manage the preparation of contracts/purchase orders	5
1-D-2	Award contracts to suppliers	3
1-D-3	Administer contracts and/or purchase orders from award to completion or termination	5
1-D-4	Perform or obtain legal review of contracts and other supply management documents	4
1-D-5	Generate and follow supply management processes to ensure legal compliance	4
<b>SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT</b>		
1-E-1	Develop supplier qualification plans to assure components, materials and suppliers meet specified requirements	4
1-E-2	Develop and manage effective relationships with suppliers	7
1-E-3	Conduct supplier performance evaluations	5
1-E-4	Conduct regular business reviews with suppliers	4
1-E-5	Identify opportunities and benefits for rationalizing the supply base	4
1-E-6	Identify opportunities to drive supplier innovation	3
1-E-7	Develop and implement supplier exit strategies	3
1-E-8	Review supplier performance against negotiated service level agreements (SLAs)	4
1-E-9	Resolve invoice and payment problems	2
1-E-10	Act as a liaison between suppliers and functional areas to ensure accurate information, documentation and product flow	4
1-E-11	Work with suppliers to identify constraints and implement value-added processes	3



## COST AND PRICE MANAGEMENT

1-F-1	Develop cost management program strategies for purchases	5
1-F-2	Perform cost/benefit analyses	4
1-F-3	Conduct spend analysis to determine strategies for specific categories	5
1-F-4	Track and validate cost savings and cost avoidance	4

## FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

1-G-1	Prepare and/or administer a supply management department budget	3
1-G-2	Develop financing strategies for purchases	3
1-G-3	Verify that sufficient reporting exists	3

## TOTAL

**180**  
(including 15 unscored\*)

\* Included are 15 statistical data research questions which are unscored (not included in your final exam score)

## Length of Time and the Number of Questions on the APSM Exam

Exam Title	Number of Questions	Length of Time
Supply Management Core	180	180 minutes

*Please allow 15 minutes extra for tutorial review when factoring the exam seat time at the testing center.*

## Job Task Analysis Process

ISM conducts a job task analysis — a massive research project on the job roles covered in certification designations — every three to five years. This is done to obtain a thorough understanding of job responsibilities, competencies, tasks and the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform those roles. Professionals are interviewed, job descriptions are collected, and large-scale surveys are performed. ISM programs are statistically valid and based upon real-world, practical knowledge. They are designed for practitioners, created with input from thousands of practitioners.

## How the Exams are Constructed

As a prime example of an occupational test, it is important to note that the exams are not “final exams” in the field of supply management. The exams are not designed to cover the content of any specific course or curriculum around supply management. Rather, they are designed to reflect the knowledge areas needed to perform the important occupational duties of professionals within the industry. In developing exam specifications, ISM draws upon the knowledge, expertise and skill sets of professionals at the manager level or above from organizations around the world, from a variety of sectors and industries. The programs are built upon input from thousands of practitioners around the globe.

## Scoring, Equating and Scaling

While the content of the exams remains consistent from form to form, questions used in the exams are written by industry professionals and continually updated. This means that a test form taken on one occasion will contain different questions from a test form taken on another occasion. Because of this, the level of difficulty will vary slightly from form to form. To compensate for these variations, a statistical procedure known as “test equating” is used to correct for differences in test-form difficulty.

Example: There may be two forms of Exam 1, Form A and Form B. In this example scenario, it is established that to pass Form A, a person must get 100 out of 150 questions correct. Form B in this example is somewhat easier than Form A. To compensate for this difference, the passing score for Form B is adjusted to prevent any advantage being given to candidates taking Form B. Thus, it may be established that a candidate must get a score of 110 out of 150 on Form B to pass. This holds candidates to the same standard in terms of difficulty, regardless of the form taken.

Scaling on the CPSM and CPSD exams converts all scores to a scale from 100-600, with the passing score set at 400 for each of the three CPSM exams and 480 for the CPSD Essentials in Supplier Diversity exam. Scores received from ISM are reported as scaled scores in increments of 10. If your scaled score on any of the three CPSM exams is from 100-390, you’ve failed that exam. If your scaled score is 400 or above for any of the three CPSM exams, you’ve passed that exam. If your scaled score on the CPSD Essentials in Supplier Diversity exam is from 100-470, you’ve failed that exam. If your scaled score on that exam is 480 or above, you’ve passed.

## Weighting Process for Exam Tasks

For each of the exams, a group of practitioners and subject matter experts (SMEs) met and determined the weight of each task area compared to all other task areas in the exams. The final weight assigned to each task area determines the number of questions on the exam from each task area.

## Value of Each Exam Question

All exam questions are worth the same weight, regardless of their length. Candidates receive one point for a correct answer and zero points for an incorrect answer. All questions within each exam are presented in random order. Included are fifteen statistical data research questions which are unscored (not included in your final exam score). Candidates are advised to answer every exam question, even if they are unsure of the correct answer.

## What if I Fail?

Your score report will indicate “pass” or “fail” for each exam taken. The score report includes a scaled score and the number of questions answered correctly out of the total number possible for each task. On an exam you failed, review your score and devote additional study time anywhere you scored less than 75 percent in a given task area. Reference the CPSM study materials for areas that need improvement. You may choose to purchase additional study materials offered through ISM to supplement your study materials. By doing so, it may help in planning a course of study during the required 30-day waiting period to retest.

## Types of Questions on Exams

All the questions in the exam are multiple choice, with four options per question (labeled A, B, C and D). Only one option is correct. There are, however, several variations on this type of question appearing in the exam. The most commonly used formats are:

- 1) Closed-stem item:** This question is characterized by a stem that is a complete sentence which concludes with a question mark. The options may be complete or incomplete sentences.

**Example:**

Which of the following is a statement from a shipper listing contents of multiple shipments?

- A. A manifest
- B. An independent inspection certificate
- C. A commercial invoice
- D. A dock receipt

**Answer: A**

- 2) Sentence completion item:** This question is characterized by an incomplete sentence, followed by options that represent conclusions to that sentence.

**Example:**

Leading supply management organizations typically include continuous improvement clauses within their contracts, to target cost, quality and

- A. innovation enhancements
- B. customer responsiveness
- C. cycle times supplier performance
- D. supplier performance

**Answer: D**

- 3) Most/best format:** This type of question requires the candidate to identify which option is better than the others.

**Example:**

Which of the following forms of payment for international purchases is generally MOST favorable to the buying organization?

- A. Cash in advance
- B. Draft
- C. Letter of credit
- D. Open account

**Answer: D**

## Exam Process Levels

In addition to the variety of question formats described above, the exam presents test questions at varying levels of difficulty or learning. These levels range from questions that require only recall of material to questions that require the candidate to apply their knowledge to a situation. A description of each of these levels, along with sample questions, appears below.

**Remember:** This is the lowest or easiest level of learning. Questions written at this level are those that demand the remembering of ideas, material or experiences related to the topic of interest. The process used to correctly answer such questions is the certification candidate's memory of the material.

Questions in this category ask individuals to define, identify and select information.



**Example:**

The type of document used to enter into an interim agreement pending a definitive contract, to permit the start of delivery, is called a

- A. Letter of intent
- B. Purchase order
- C. Customized contract
- D. Standard contract

**Answer: A**

To correctly respond to the question above, the candidate must recall the definition of a letter of intent.

**Understand:** The second level of questions deal with questions that test for understanding. Questions in this category require the candidate to grasp the meaning of the material presented in some novel way. The question testing for understanding describes some principle or fact in words different from those used in textbooks, and often uses some novel situation to present an idea. To get it right, the candidate must recognize the principle demonstrated in the question; memory alone will not be sufficient for getting the correct answer.

**Example:**

A supply management professional decides to issue a separate purchase order for each of several items, instead of combining the items on a single purchase order. The probable result of this policy will be a decrease in the:

- A. Overall number of purchases made by the organization
- B. Average cost of processing a purchase order
- C. Number of purchasing errors
- D. Amount of staff needed by purchasing

**Answer: B**

To correctly answer the question in the example above, the candidate must recognize the consequences of using separate purchase orders. The candidate is asked to make an estimate or prediction based on the circumstances described in the question.

**Apply:** Apply questions measure the understanding of ideas or content to a point where the candidate can apply it to an entirely new situation. The objective of these questions is to test whether the candidate can use the knowledge in an appropriate manner in a real-life situation.

**Example:**

A certain by-product of GHI Corporation's manufacturing process is expensive to dispose of and does not decompose easily. GHI's supply management professional is tasked with identifying ways to reduce disposal costs associated with this by-product. Given this situation, which of the following is the BEST course of action for the supply professional to take?

- A. Re-engineer processes to eliminate production of the by-product
- B. Sell the by-product to another manufacturer who has a need for it
- C. Organize a team to identify potential uses for the by-product in-house
- D. Solicit competitive bids to identify recyclers who are more cost-competitive

**Answer: B**

The distinguishing characteristic of application questions is that they present specific situations that the candidate has not encountered previously and cannot solve based on general knowledge alone. The problem presented in the question above is a novel situation; rather than relying on memory or comprehension alone to answer it, the candidate must draw on knowledge and experience to identify the solution to the problem.

This is to ensure that those who receive the ISM designations will have demonstrated an ability to apply their knowledge and skills to real-life work situations.



## Technical Properties of the Exams

The exams are constructed, administered and scored in accordance with the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (2014), published jointly by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association and the National Council on Measurement in Education. The following principles are heeded in the development of these examinations:

**Validity:** The most important characteristic of a test is its validity, which is defined as the degree to which the test measures what it purports to measure. As is typically the case with occupational-qualification examinations, the exam was developed to be a content-valid test, meaning that the exam content reflects the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) associated with a level of manager and above. These KSAs were determined through a job analysis that outlined the major tasks performed by a supply management professional in a variety of settings. The KSAs needed to perform each task were identified by a committee of experts representing various industries at the manager level or above, and the tasks and KSAs were used to construct the exam specifications.

Concern for exam validity and job relevancy dictated the methodology that was used to develop the ISM qualification program. These steps include:

- Conducting a job analysis of the supply management professional position to determine the nature of the profession
- Developing a set of exam specifications based on the results of this job analysis
- Writing and reviewing of exam questions based on those exam specifications by a panel of experienced supply management professionals

**Reliability:** Another major characteristic of a test is its reliability, which is defined as the consistency of the exam scores. The reliability of the exam is computed and expressed in several ways, including the KR-20 reliability, the standard error of measurement and the reliability of the pass/fail decision.

**Passing Scores:** The passing scores for each module were determined using a procedure for criterion-referenced test standard setting. The standard-setting committees were composed of supply management professionals from a variety of industry sectors.

## Writing/Reviewing Exam Questions

Exam questions are written by subject matter experts with a supply management background who represent all industry sectors (including supply management education). All questions are reviewed for their efficacy and fairness by committees of supply management experts. Consideration is given to the composition of these committees with regard to specialty, gender and race.

The committee makes every effort to see that exam questions do not represent subjective opinions relevant only to specific supply management situations. The review committee ensures that the correct answer to each question represents the consensus of the panel of experts as to the appropriate course of action, or the best possible answer to the specific problem posed in the question. Exam questions do not represent a personal bias or opinion.

ISM also employs the use of quantitative item analyses to determine the effectiveness of the exam questions. Item analyses are statistics collected after the administration of a test to tell (1) the difficulty of a question, (2) the “correctness” of the intended answer and (3) the effectiveness of the incorrect options, or “distracters.” In this way, ISM ensures that the exam questions not only are acceptable to the review committee of supply management experts, but also are valid for the test candidates.

An additional way in which questions are reviewed is through comments (in the case of the computer-based exam, electronically entered) obtained from candidates. While taking the test, candidates are encouraged to make comments on exam questions. This approach has been particularly useful and has often yielded sound suggestions for improving questions.

## Exam Registration and Administration

### Length of Exam Eligibility

Exam registrations are valid for six months from the date of purchase. Candidates must schedule and complete their exams within a six months' timeframe or the exam fee is forfeited. A 30-day extension will be granted, if request prior to the exam eligibility expiration is made. Cost for the 30-day extension for members is \$115 and for nonmembers is \$195.

### Length of Exam Validity

CPSM and CPSD exams are valid for four years. The APSM Core Exam is valid for five years from the date in which a passing score is achieved. APSM recertification is not available, however, APSM holders may earn their CPSM by taking the Supply Management Integration and Leadership and Transformation in Supply Management exams within the five year APSM certification period.

### Exam Languages

The CPSM and APSM exams are administered in English, Chinese, and Korean.  
The CPSD exams is administered in English.

### Exam Delivery Options

ISM makes their exams available in the following locations:

- Pearson VUE testing centers
- OnVUE online testing
- On-site exams at your location (with five or more candidates per exam)

If you have a team of five or more individuals at your location, ISM can bring the exam to you. Please email ISM Corporate Services at [corpinfo@ismworld.org](mailto:corpinfo@ismworld.org) for more information. If you have a group of students wanting to take the APSM, please contact Member Services at [membersvcs@ismworld.org](mailto:membersvcs@ismworld.org) for more information.

### Pearson VUE Exams

Pearson VUE is a worldwide provider of technology-based solutions for testing and certification needs. Some locations have weekend or evening hours available; online exams are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Visit <https://www.pearsonvue.com/us/en/ism.html> for details.

To take your individually scheduled exam at a Pearson VUE location or online, you must first register and pay for your exams with ISM. Registration is available in the following ways:

**Online:** [www.ismworld.org/certification-and-training/certification/](http://www.ismworld.org/certification-and-training/certification/)

**Phone:** Call ISM Member Services at +1 480.752.6276, option 8. Please have credit card number and ISM Member identification number ready.

## Computer Exam Confirmation

After ISM receives your registration, you will receive an email confirmation within one or two hours containing the following:

- Scheduling instructions with Pearson VUE testing centers
- Your candidate ID number
- Instructions for items needed to take the exam (please read carefully)

## Making Your Appointment

Once you receive your confirmation from ISM, please wait at least 24 hours before attempting to schedule your exam(s). Appointment dates are given on a first-come, first-served basis. To schedule an online exam, select the “Home or Office” option. We recommend you schedule your appointment as soon as you are able in order to get your desired date.

To schedule your exam, please use the Pearson VUE scheduling link provided to you in your confirmation email. You may also call Pearson VUE toll-free at 888.273.2971. When calling to schedule, please have your ISM candidate ID number that was provided in your confirmation.

**Note:** Pearson VUE conducts other tests unrelated to ISM and can experience heavy volume during certain months. Plan to schedule well in advance for your exam, especially if you are planning to take multiple exams in one day.

Registrations are valid for six months from the date you register with ISM. If exams are not taken within six months, the exam fees will be forfeited.

## Computerized Testing

**Q:** How much computer experience is needed to test?

**A:** No experience is necessary. Candidates receive an online tutorial on the testing process. There is also a test center administrator available.

**Q:** Can I review my answers during the test?

**A:** Candidates may flag questions to be reviewed after all questions have been answered. If time remains, you may return to questions marked for review and you may change an answer. All marked and unmarked questions are graded when the test ends, even if the candidate has not marked a response to each question.

## Special Accommodation Arrangements (ADA Accommodations)

ISM will provide reasonable accommodations for test candidates with disabilities that are covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. If you have a disability that would prevent you taking the CPSM Exam under standard conditions, you may request special accommodations. Please contact ISM Member Services for more information at [membersvcs@ismworld.org](mailto:membersvcs@ismworld.org).

## Admission Policy

You are required to show one (1) valid, non-expired form of personal ID with photo and signature. For a list of acceptable IDs, please refer to the confirmation letter you received from ISM and the identification requirements section below.

**Note:** When you arrive for your exam at the Pearson VUE testing facility, the full name on your personal ID must exactly match the full name on your ISM registration.

Please contact ISM at least 24 hours in advance of your test date to make any changes. If your name does not exactly match on these two documents, you will be refused admission to the exam. You will not be able to test that day, and your exam fees will be forfeited.



We ask that you arrive at the test center 30 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment time. This will give you adequate time to complete the necessary sign-in procedures.

No personal items may be taken into the testing room. This includes all bags, books not authorized by the sponsor, notes, phones, pagers, watches and wallets.

## Reschedule Policy

If you wish to reschedule your exam, you must contact Pearson VUE at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled test start time (local testing center time). If you do not reschedule in time, or if you do not show-up for an exam, exam fees will be forfeited. Pearson VUE will charge a fee for any appointment that is canceled or rescheduled 48-hours prior to the scheduled testing time. This fee is paid directly to Pearson VUE. Contact information can be found on the Pearson VUE website: <https://www.pearsonvue.com/us/en/ism.html>

Scheduled and rescheduled examinations will be confirmed by email. If you do not receive an email within 24 hours of the rescheduled appointment, please contact Pearson VUE.

## Cancellation Policy

If you wish to cancel your exam, you must contact Pearson VUE at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled test start time (local testing center time). If you do not cancel in time, or if you do not show up for an exam, exam fees will be forfeited. Pearson VUE will charge a fee for any appointment that is canceled or rescheduled 48 hours prior to the scheduled testing time. This fee is paid directly to Pearson VUE. Contact information can be found on the Pearson VUE website: <https://www.pearsonvue.com/us/en/ism.html>

Pearson VUE will not be held responsible for expenses incurred beyond the cost of the exam, including but not limited to travel expense and lost wages on the day of the exam.

## Test Center Protocol and Dismissal from Exam

Plan to arrive 30 minutes prior to your exam time. If possible, to cut down on day-of-exam stress, ISM recommends that you drive to your specified testing location prior to the exam date so you are comfortable with where you are going and where to park. If you are more than 15 minutes late, you will be considered a nonrefundable “no show.” Candidates cannot bring personal items into the testing room. All electronic items such as smartphones, cellphones, watches, and smart glasses are strictly prohibited.

A candidate may be dismissed from the exam, at the discretion of the proctor, for improper or disruptive behavior. Grounds for dismissal include:

- Creating a disturbance
- Giving or receiving help
- Attempting to remove test materials or notes from the examination room
- Impersonating another candidate
- Falsifying identification

## Identification Requirements

Primary identification is required — before a candidate is turned away because of an ID issue, a program coordinator should be contacted through the test center support line.

**Note:** All forms of ID must contain a photo and signature. If the presented ID’s signature is not visible or is difficult or impossible to read, the candidate is required to present another form of acceptable identification with a visible, legible signature. You may NOT use an ID that is restricted from being photocopied, digitized, or captured on camera; examples include US Military IDs and Canadian Health Cards.





## Primary ID:

- Government-issued driver's license
- U.S. Department of State driver's license
- U.S. learner's permit (plastic card with photo and signature)
- National/state/country identification card
- Passport
- Passport cards
- Alien registration card (green card or permanent resident visa)
- Government-issued local language ID (plastic card with photo and signature)
- Employee ID
- School ID
- Credit card (A credit card can be used as a form of ID only if it contains both a photo and a signature and is not expired. This includes major credit cards, such as Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover. It also includes department store and gasoline credit cards.)

## Local Language

A government-issued local ID is acceptable as long as it meets the established Pearson VUE guidelines.

## Name-Matching Guidelines

Candidates with minor name discrepancies may be admitted at the administrator's discretion if all available IDs have been checked.

Acceptable discrepancies include:

- Discrepancies due to technical limitations (for example, name shortened)
- Typographical errors (such as minor misspellings)
- Traditional/cultural variations (abbreviated or shortened names, initials, missing middle names and the like)

## Biometrics

Pearson VUE uses biometrics in various test centers worldwide. Biometrics are automated methods of recognizing a person based on a physical characteristic and are primarily used to combat identity fraud. One method involves the candidate placing a palm on a scanner, which results in an electronic palm-vein print.

## Candidate Confidentiality and Nondisclosure Agreement

Below is the Candidate Confidentiality and Nondisclosure Agreement that all candidates must sign prior to starting any of ISM certification exams. If the candidate refuses to sign this agreement, testing will be terminated, and the candidate's exam fees will be forfeited.

*I acknowledge the confidential nature of the ISM Examinations (the "Exam") and hereby agree that I will not copy, retain Exam questions or disclose or transmit them in any form to any other person. I certify that I am working toward my professional designation, or I am retaking the exam for Continuing Education credits. I agree that taking the Exam for any other purpose is strictly prohibited. I also acknowledge that Exam review course instructors, trainers or individuals are prohibited by ISM from taking exams for the sole purpose of preparing students to take the Exam and/or for the creation of their course materials.*



*I expressly agree and understand that certification may be denied or revoked, or the Exam scores may be invalidated or withheld by ISM in the event that ISM determines that (A) I have (i) falsified or misrepresented information on the registration form or information provided is in error, including documentation of continuing education hours for recertification; (ii) participated in an unauthorized disclosure of Exam questions, information or materials; (iii) plagiarized questions and/or answers on the Exam; (iv) mailed, received, relayed in any fashion, or used copies of the Exam materials, questions, or answers without authorization from ISM; (v) retained the Exam materials after the examination; (vi) engaged in cheating or other misconduct or unprofessional behavior with respect to taking, administering, or preparation for the Exam; or (vii) failed to adhere to the Principles and Standards of Ethical Supply Management Conduct, or (B) (i) there is a testing irregularity with respect to the Exam; (ii) there is a reason to question the Exam score's validity; or (iii) that the Exam score was the result of unusual or questionable circumstances.*

*I agree to abide by the ISM Principles and Standards of Ethical Supply Management Conduct, whether or not I am a member of ISM. I grant ISM permission to make any and all inquiries, which are necessary to evaluate my credentials for certification or recertification/reaccreditation and agree to respond to requests for information related to any of the above. I further authorize ISM to maintain information about my certification and to make any and all inquiries, investigations, or other communications, which may be necessary for ISM to grant, deny or revoke certification, or to invalidate or withhold examination scores. I hereby certify that the information submitted on or with this form is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, and I agree to be bound by the terms and conditions set forth herein and by any and all policies and procedures of ISM applicable to the Certification Program or the Exam as may be amended from time to time.*

## **Exam Security Policy**

All of ISM's certification exams are administered under secure, proctored conditions. ISM does not release exam questions or justifications/answers to any of its exam items. This is standard certification industry practice, and doing so helps ISM to maintain the value of its certification programs. We reserve the right to decertify and or/bar from the examinations any individuals who republish or distribute our copyrighted certification exam questions.

## **Exam Theft and Exam Fraud**

Exam theft and exam fraud are strictly prohibited. Candidates agree not to engage in exam theft or exam fraud and report all exam theft or exam fraud observed.

The definition of exam theft includes any action or attempts by CPSM, APSM or CPSD candidates, proctors, suppliers or others to misappropriate protected exam materials before, during or after an exam administration, including but not limited to (1) possession and/or use of recording or communication devices during the administration of an exam, (2) reproduction of exam materials by any means, including reconstruction through memorization, (3) storage and use of exam materials to be used as exam preparation for candidates and (4) providing answers or inappropriate assistance to candidates before, during or after the exam administration.

Exam fraud includes any action or attempt by CPSM, APSM or CPSD candidates, proctors or others to subvert the exam process, including but not limited to (1) unauthorized access to secure exam materials, (2) attempting to remove exam materials or notes from the exam room, or taking exam materials through memorization or other means, (3) impersonating another candidate or falsifying identification, (4) taking the exam for purposes other than certification or recertification, (5) giving or receiving help before, during, or after the administration of the exam, (6) possessing and/or using unauthorized materials during the exam including notes, recording devices or communication devices, (7) altering exam scores, (8) falsifying score reports and (9) disclosing and/or distributing protected exam materials.

## **Reporting Violations**

Please notify ISM if you become aware of (1) any candidate, trainer or examination proctor impropriety, or (2) sharing of ISM copyrighted exam questions or exam preparation materials. Please report a potential violation via email at [membersvcs@ismworld.org](mailto:membersvcs@ismworld.org). Your assistance is greatly appreciated, and your confidentiality will be maintained.

# Certification Application

## Applying for Certification

ISM currently accepts certification applications online. Please visit ISM's website at [www.ismworld.org](http://www.ismworld.org) for information and instructions.

## Degree Documentation

For those with an applicable bachelor's degree, a copy of your diploma or transcript is acceptable documentation. ISM reserves the right to request validation of your school's accreditation status at the time your degree was earned. For degrees earned outside the U.S., ISM uses several well-established resources to determine equivalency. If equivalency cannot be determined by ISM, candidates may choose, at their own expense, to have the international degree evaluated by a third-party evaluator, such as ECE (Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc. — [www.ece.org](http://www.ece.org)). Please contact ISM at [membersvcs@ismworld.org](mailto:membersvcs@ismworld.org) with additional questions.

## Work Experience Documentation

CPSM and CPSD candidates must submit one letter per employer, on original organization letterhead, from a supervisor or human resources representative, verifying and describing all job titles and dates (month and year for both start and end date of each job) of employment claimed. ISM's policies regarding work experience do not allow for candidates to self-validate work experience.

- Credit is not given for less than six months in a position; however, movement from job to job without significant time interruption is treated as continuous experience.
- No experience credit is awarded for internships.
- We do not accept resumes or business cards as proof of job titles or responsibilities. They do not meet the documentation requirements for experience.

## How to Submit Your Degree and Work Experience Documentation

ISM accepts electronically submitted proof of education and work experience documentation, visit ISM's website for more information.

# Recertification

## Submit Recertification

ISM accepts electronically submitted Continuing Education Hours (CEHs). Please visit ISM's website or contact Member Services for further instructions.

Please note that candidates must retain all documentation pertaining to submitted CEHs in case of random audit.

## Recertification Requirements

Designation	Term	CEHs Needed Each Term
CPSM	3 years	60
CPSD	3 years	60
APSM	5 years	Recertification is not available for the APSM
C.P.M.	5 years	84
A.P.P.	5 years	42

## Categories for Earning Continuing Education Hours

At least two-thirds of the hours must be educational in nature. One-third may be earned in the professional contribution's category. Please submit your application for recertification no earlier than 120 days prior to the expiration date on your current certificate.

### College Courses

Semester-long university courses in purchasing, materials management, supply management, management or other business-related subject matter (accounting, marketing, IT/computers, economics, law, engineering, traffic management, communications, finance, statistics, physical sciences and behavioral sciences) are worth 14 Continuing Education Hours (CEHs) per credit hour. Most other semester-long university courses are worth seven CEHs per course. Quarter hours are two-thirds of a semester hour. Other units of time need to be carefully documented and explained (by the institution) so ISM can determine the equivalent number of CEHs for each course. The applicant must document coursework using a transcript or grade report issued by the educational institution from which the course was taken. Please make sure transcripts include an explanation of the unit (for example, semester hours, trimester hours and quarter hours). If claiming courses taught, obtain a letter, signed by your supervisor from the appropriate institution, which includes all information necessary to determine CEHs. Please note, only 20 CEHs may be earned as a contribution to the profession.

### Continuing Education

Public seminars, education and training offered by your organization, conferences and other educational programs are eligible for CEHs. Educational events are eligible for consideration if (1) the subject matter was purchasing, materials management, supply management, management or another business-related subject matter, and (2) the event was at least an hour in length. Documentation for each continuing educational event submitted by the applicant must include (1) applicant's name, (2) title of program, (3) date(s) of program, (4) name of sponsoring institution, (5) length of event in educational contact hours and (6) signature of program director/instructor or supervisor.

ISM does not need to approve these in advance. If credit is being sought for teaching a course, obtain a letter detailing the pertinent information from your supervisor at the institution. Lunch and break periods may not be used as part of the educational content hours claimed.

**Note:** Hours not used for the current recertification period and earned within 120 days of the current certificate expiration date may be applied toward the next recertification period. Articles in peer-refereed journals are eligible for 14 CEHs. Substantive, well-developed articles published in established purchasing or trade magazines (those with an editorial review board identified in the magazine) exceeding one page in length, as well as articles published in conference proceedings, are eligible for seven hours per article. Include a copy of each article being claimed for CEHs and a copy of the editorial review board page.

### Contributions to the Profession

(May Not Exceed One-Third of Total CEHs)

Individuals who hold office in ISM may claim CEHs in this section. Each annual job assignment as an officer, director, group chair or chair of a committee (nonsocial or nonrecreational) for an ISM chapter earns seven CEHs. At the discretion of the ISM chapter leadership, CEHs may be awarded to all deserving volunteers, whether they are chairpersons, officers or directors. Documentation consists of a completed service award form or letter from an appropriate officer certifying the organization, position and dates the office was held. Contributions to the profession includes, but is not limited to, teaching, participation in surveys (including the ISM® *Report On Business*®) and exam item writing.

ISM members are eligible for three CEHs per each year of active ISM membership during the current certification period.

## Examination Scores

A CPSM Exam may only be retaken during the last year of CPSM Certification or in the one-year grace period following certification expiration. Retaking and passing any CPSM Exam or a CPD Exam is worth 20 CEHs.

## Low-Cost Ways to Earn Continuing Education Hours

ISM has several low-cost options to keep certification current; some are free.

ISM presents free web seminars throughout the year on trends that affect supply management. You can participate from anywhere in the world and earn one CEH each time you attend the live program. You earn three CEHs for every year as an active ISM member during your current certification period.

CEHs can also be obtained by:

- Completing Self-Paced eLearning courses
- Attending ISM chapter meetings
- Taking or teaching business-related training through your employer
- Taking a personal career-development course
- Writing an article in a supply management-related magazine or journal
- Attending or presenting at an ISM conference or seminar, or another industry-related conference or seminar; CEHs are granted per class hour of attendance

Contact ISM at [membersvcs@ismworld.org](mailto:membersvcs@ismworld.org) if you are interested in becoming an instructor/presenter and earn CEHs for sharing your subject matter expertise.

Active certification holders can join ISM's exam writing team. One CEH is granted for each approved item written. Please send an email notifying ISM of your interest, along with a copy of your CV or resume, to [membersvcs@ismworld.org](mailto:membersvcs@ismworld.org).

## Recertification Audit Process

Each year, ISM randomly samples a percentage of certified individuals who report Continuing Education Hours to conform with ISM's CEH policy. If you are selected for an audit, you will be required to submit the CEH certificates that provide evidence for the hours reported. If you fail to participate, your status will be considered lapsed and you will be in your grace period.

## Grace Period

A grace period of up to one year is available for all designations in which candidates may apply for reinstatement. During this one-year period, the applicant is required to meet existing requirements for continuing education, as applicable, to be reinstated. However, during the grace period, and prior to reinstatement, the individual may not use the designation.

Candidates who apply for recertification/reaccreditation after their qualification has lapsed, but in the grace period will be renewed based upon the previous expiration date.

After the grace period has expired for the CPSM or CPSD designation, an applicant must retake the required exams in order to reinstate their designation. The candidate will need to reapply for certification. The subsequent certificate to be issued will be treated as an original Issue. The applicant is treated as a new CPSM or CPSD. The applicant will not be required to resubmit experience documentation or proof of degree since both were previously verified by ISM.

After the grace period has expired for the C.P.M. or A.P.P., the candidate is not able to retest and, therefore, not eligible to reapply.

## **Lifetime Status**

Since the profession is continuing to increase in complexity, continuing education will play a major role in making sure supply management professionals stay current on the latest trends and best practices. Lifetime status is not available for the CPSM or CPSD designations.

Current C.P.M. or A.P.P. holders may apply for lifetime status once they are able to document their applicable 18 years of supply management experience and apply for their designation.

# **Additional Information**

## **Appeal Process and Procedure**

Applicants may appeal ISM's decisions regarding certification applications, eligibility, examination, test administration and results. Appeals must be submitted in writing by the applicant no more than 90 days after the date of rejection. Appeals submitted by anyone other than the applicant will not be reviewed. All appeals must be in writing and directed to the Manager of Certification at ISM. The appeal should include sufficient verifiable information to provide a basis for the appeal. Appeals will be reviewed based on existing policy. All appeals will be responded to in writing within 30 days from date of receipt at ISM and the final written ruling.

## **Candidate Use of Designation**

Once qualified and approved, ISM grants each CPSM, CPSD, APSM, C.P.M., A.P.P. the right to use the service mark initials after his or her name on social media platforms, correspondence, business cards, and so forth, for as long as the candidate's certification remains current and in good standing. For multiple sets of initials, the order should be:  
CPSM, CPSD, APSM, C.P.M., A.P.P.

Use of the CPSM, CPSD, APSM, C.P.M. and A.P.P. is an excellent way to announce the individual has joined a select professional group widely acknowledged by peers and management alike to be among the best prepared in today's competitive world of purchasing and supply management.

Once a current certification/accreditation has lapsed, the individual may no longer use the designation's initials.

## **Credentials Verification**

Any current ISM credentials can be verified on the ISM website by adding the first and last name of the individual in the search-criteria fields. For candidate confidentiality purposes, only one candidate at a time may be searched. The information provided may not be accurate due to the time factor in processing applications and recertifications/reaccreditations. If you have questions about the results, or believe them to be inaccurate, please contact ISM at [membersvcs@ismworld.org](mailto:membersvcs@ismworld.org).

## **ISM Diversity and Non-Discrimination Statement**

In principle and in practice, ISM values and seeks a diverse workforce. Individual viewpoints and contributions are pursued and respected. ISM believes that all persons are entitled to equal employment opportunity and does not discriminate against its employees, applicants, or members because of race, gender, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, veteran status or on any other basis protected by law. For ISM, diversity is valuing and respecting individual strengths, viewpoints, and contributions. ISM ensures our workplace is free of artificial barriers and diversity is viewed as a positive asset in ISM's growth and success.

## **GDPR Privacy Policy**

As a responsible, forward-looking association, ISM recognizes at senior levels the need to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and ensure that effective measures are in place to protect the personal data of our customers, employees and other stakeholders, and to ensure that it is processed lawfully, fairly and transparently.

Commitment to the security of personal data extends to all levels of the organization and is demonstrated through relevant policies and provision of appropriate resources to establish and develop effective data protection and information security.

As part of meeting legal obligations, ISM has established a comprehensive program to understand and validate use of personal data and to confirm the lawful basis of our processing. Please visit [ismworld-terms of services](#).