**Global Standard for Competency in Purchasing and Supply
as Administered by IFPSM**

Guidance for applicants
Developed November 2011

Global Standard for Professional Competence in
Purchasing and Supply administered by IFPSM

Reviewed February 2012

Introduction

In order to serve purchasing and supply management professionals and the companies for which they work worldwide, the Global Standards Board (GSB) has created a Global Standard for Competency in Purchasing and Supply Management as Administered by IFPSM (GSPSM) that reflects a mix of knowledge, learning and skills appropriate to the profession. The GSPSM gives recognition to programs of learning, which are of Bachelor degree level or equivalent and which are typically of three to four years duration. The GSB will assess degree equivalent programs from around the world against the standard's criteria for content, delivery and assessment. Programs which meet these criteria will be recognized and certified by the GSB.

Principles of the GSPSM

- Transparency
    - o Essential information regarding the content of the standard and the approach to assessing a program, including the criteria for assessment against that standard is available and accessible to all parties.
- Openness
    - o Participation is open to all organizations that have the potential to meet the standard.
- Impartiality
    - o The GSB and any assessors appointed by the GSB will remain impartial and no one interest or party will be favored over another.
- Effectiveness and relevance
    - o The standard is relevant and appropriate to the characteristics expected of a purchasing and supply management professional and will be updated

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periodically. The standard reflects regulatory and market needs as well as development in the body of knowledge.

- Outcomes based
    - o The standard is outcomes based and does not prescribe detailed program design, delivery or assessment.

What type of programs can be recognized?

The aim of the GSB is to formally recognize as wide a variety of learning programs, designations and awards as possible. The GSB will consider full-time, part-time and distance learning programs for recognition. The GSB will also consider programs that are delivered in partnership with other institutions and at multi-site locations. In addition to formally recognized and certified programs of learning which take individuals through specific prescribed content, the GSB can also consider awards which are achieved through experiential learning, or through a combination of accredited and experiential learning.

What does GSB recognition mean?

GSB recognition means that the program of learning has met the criteria for the GSPSM established by the GSB. This means that the GSB has evaluated and determined the learning program to be appropriate to equip students with the knowledge, skills, attributes and characteristics of a purchasing and supply management professional. A purchasing and supply management professional will be an individual who has:

- Gained a base knowledge and understanding of the tools, techniques, models and methodologies of purchasing and supply management.

- A clear and comprehensive knowledge, understanding and expertise – up, down and across the fields of strategic supply chain management.

- Extensive knowledge at a strategic level in purchasing and supply management.

- Applied this knowledge and understanding within a work context, thereby adding value to the organization.

The benefits of GSB recognition

Organizations that have programs of learning recognized as meeting the standard of the GSPSM are able to refer to this in any marketing and promotional materials. The GSB will support this by issuing a formal certificate of recognition and through the inclusion of details of the recognized program on the IFPSM website and any associated professional body websites. Programs meeting the standard and referring to this in any marketing or promotional activities will need to abide by the style and usage guidelines determined by the GSB.

Meeting the standard

Programs of learning submitted for recognition against the GSPSM should be at the same level as a Bachelor's degree or equivalent and as such the extent of the program should be sufficient to ensure that the program is of similar breadth and depth. Typically, there is an expectation that programs are likely to be of three or four years' duration, though this is not a mandatory requirement provided that the program demonstrably achieves the appropriate breadth and depth in order for it to be considered to be at the same level as a Bachelor's degree.

The GSB considers the following eight topic areas to be the core of the GSPSM and all programs of learning, including awards achieved by experiential learning, must include all of these topics.

1. Pre-contract

2. Sourcing

3. Contracting/legal issues

4. Supplier management/performance

5. Relationships

6. Technology

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7. Professionalism/Management/Ethics/CSR

8. Strategy/strategic issues

In addition to the above, which should comprise a minimum of 70% of the overall program of learning, there are a number of further themes which are more general business disciplines of which one might also expect a purchasing and supply management professional to have some knowledge. Some illustrative examples of these themes or disciplines are included in the following list. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but it is indicative of the types of areas which would be considered appropriate.

1. Marketing

2. Storage and distribution

3. Operations management in the supply chain

4. Sustainable procurement

5. Project Management

6. Finance

There may be other topics and areas of study which could be equally appropriate for purchasing and supply management professionals in particular industry sectors or geographical areas and organizations are encouraged to include these in their application for recognition where appropriate. These should be accompanied by a clear rational and justification for their inclusion.

The types of learning objectives which include all of the above themes are included in Appendix One. These are for guidance only and programs submitted for recognition should not necessarily attempt to replicate the content and indicative learning outcomes of the GSPSM. However, these do provide a guide to the type of content that the GSB would consider appropriate and which it might expect to see in a program.

Additional areas for consideration

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In addition to the specific topics and themes which make up the content of the program, the following list indicates areas which will be of particular interest when reviewing an application:

- The background to program development, including any external consultation.
- The extent to which the program is specialized.
- Assessment strategies.
- Extent of organizational involvement with industry.
- Industrial or commercial experience of the program team.

In addition to these areas, the application should also provide, through a process of self- assessment, evidence that the program and its assessment can:

- Enable the acquisition of sound specialist knowledge of purchasing and supply management.
- Provide opportunities to identify, analyze and formulate purchasing and supply management problems and approaches to solving these problems, with the aid of research, literature and practical application.
- Provide opportunities to conduct analytical and developmental tasks which take into account the technical/academic components of purchasing and supply management, in particular through the use of purchasing and supply chain models, processes and theories.
- Develop an awareness of social and ethical responsibilities in the context of purchasing and supply management and the profession, including professional ethics and principles.
- Reflect current and foreseeable specialist developments in purchasing and supply management.
- Has employer support and engagement in both program development and also in the learning process, for example through presentations, visiting speakers or work placement activity.
- Has clear links with purchasing and supply management professional practice.
- Develops individuals who will be well prepared for the profession whether just entering the workforce or are currently employed.

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Where any of the above are provided by a program of certified learning which is an integral part of the program being assessed against the GSPSM, (for example by a degree or graduate program which forms part of the entry requirements), then the assessor will need to be satisfied that any such program is itself appropriately recognized and accredited by relevant and acceptable accrediting institutions.

The application process

The GSB will appoint an assessor who will review your application on its behalf. The assessor will be assigned to you throughout the period of your application process and if appropriate, as your application develops. All applications will be considered in two parts. Part A of the application provides an opportunity for the organization to demonstrate its legitimacy to operate and to offer and ensure the delivery and assessment of programs at the appropriate level. The assessor will review Part A of the application and make a recommendation to the GSB regarding the organization's eligibility to make a program application. Applicants can expect a decision on eligibility within six weeks of the application being received, provided that all of the required information has been made available to the assessor. Once Part A of the application has been approved, the application for Part B must be received within six months from the date of this approval otherwise Part A will expire.

Part B of the application is then program specific and enables the organization to demonstrate that the content, assessment and outcomes of the program meet the GSPSM.

Part A of the application process

Eligibility criteria

There are six key areas with which the assessor will be concerned:

1. Corporate governance

2. Equal opportunities

3. Integrity of assessment

4. Appeals

5. Continuous improvement

6. Development of qualifications and awards and assessment methodologies

1. Corporate governance

The application should include an overview of the organization and the GSB will require the organization to inform it of any changes to corporate governance, including changes to the ownership of the organization and any partnership arrangements during the life of any recognition. The GSB may withdraw recognition if it considers that any such changes could compromise the integrity of the organization or its programs. The overview of the organization should include the following information as a minimum.

1.1. The background to your organization and an overview of your corporate strategy.

1.2. The organization and management structure, including appropriate organizational charts.

1.3. Details of any potential conflict of interest (and how they are managed) arising out of any activities the organization carries out. There must be clear distinctions between those parts of the organization making awards and other functions within the organization. This is to ensure that those responsible for making decisions about valid and fair assessments leading to any awards are not influenced by any commercial interests.

1.4. Details of the information technology capability, infrastructure, resources and facilities are required to ensure that there are adequate facilities in place to support the program and maintain the program.

1.5. Evidence to demonstrate that the organization is financially sound.

1.6. Evidence of the organization operating to an ethical code, with ethical policies in place.

2. Equal opportunities

The application should include evidence to demonstrate that equal opportunities are offered to all learners and provide evidence of the following:

1.1. An equal opportunities policy with evidence that this is available to all learners.

1.2. The processes in place to ensure that all learners have access to fair assessments, making specific reference to how you ensure any adjustments do not offer any learners an unfair advantage.

1.3. The monitoring procedures and processes in place.

3. Integrity of assessment

The application should include evidence of policies and processes in place to minimize the opportunities for fraud and for dealing with any cases where the integrity of the assessment could be compromised. This might include:

1.1. The arrangements for ensuring that questionnaires and learners' assessments are secure at all times.

1.2. The arrangements for identifying how risks are identified and mitigated against.

1.3. The procedures that ensure the authenticity of learners' work.

1.4. The monitoring and evaluation processes for instances of fraud with details of sanctions that can be applied in different circumstances.

1.5. A code of ethics for the program and its assessment.

4. Appeals

The application should provide evidence of an appeals process. There should be published procedures that inform learners how they can appeal against an assessment or other related decisions.

5. Continuous improvement

The application should also demonstrate how it actively seeks feedback and comments from stakeholders. You should also demonstrate, where appropriate, how you then use this data to make improvements. The application might include the following:

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1.1. The procedures for gaining feedback from stakeholders.

1.2. Evidence of how information from stakeholders is used to facilitate improvements.

1.3. The procedures for evaluating learners' performance over time and across program awards and qualifications.

6．Development of qualifications and assessment methodologies

The application should enable you to explain how your organization develops any new qualifications, for example:

1.1. The procedures for the development of new programs, awards and qualifications.

1.2. The approval process for new programs, awards and qualifications.

1.3. The procedures for the development of assessment methodologies.

1.4. The procedures for the ongoing review of programs, awards and qualifications and associated assessment methodologies.

Part B of the application process

Once the GSB has confirmed that the organization is eligible to submit a program application, Part B of the application process can begin. The program leader may wish to have some preliminary informal discussions with the assessor before deciding whether or not to submit a formal application. If it is considered that the program has the potential for GSB recognition, then a formal application should be submitted (Appendix 3). The GSB will acknowledge receipt of the application within ten working days.

The first stage of the assessment process is the initial review of the documentation by the assessor. At this stage, the assessor is likely to make contact with the program leader to clarify any particular points and may request additional information in support of the application. The assessor will need to be satisfied that he or she has all of the information necessary in order to reach a judgment on the

appropriateness of the program for GSB recognition. The time taken for this stage is likely to vary from program to program and will be determined by the information provided by the organization, by the nature of the questions raised by the assessor and by the organization's responses to them. However, it would be the GSB's intention that the assessor will have completed this stage within six weeks to twelve weeks of the application being acknowledged, subject to all the required information being made available.

The second stage of the application process is likely to be a visit by the assessor. The purpose of the visit is for the assessor to get a deeper understanding of the program by meeting with the program leader and where relevant, specific module or subject leaders. Each program will have its own unique areas of specific interest to the assessor, but in general terms, the visit is likely to focus on the following areas:

- The background to program development.
- The overall structure and potential pathways through the program.
- Typical cohort characteristics and numbers.
- The special interests and research of the teaching team.
- Any potential future developments.

Following the visit any additional information will be reviewed and the assessor will submit a report, with recommendations, to the GSB. The final decision as to whether or not the program meets the criteria for the GSPSM will be made by the GSB.

The final stage of the process is for the GSB to feedback the outcomes of the review and the visit to the organization's program leader.

Potential outcomes of a program review and/or visit

The outcome of a review and/or visit will normally be one of the following:

1. The program of learning meets the criteria of the GSPSM and recognition is granted.

2. The program of learning meets the criteria of the GSPSM and recognition is granted subject to specific conditions being met. Conditions would typically specify a route through the program, for example by naming the combination of electives or optional modules that must be taken and may also, if relevant,

specify that any dissertation or project work be on a purchasing and supply management related theme.

3. The program of learning does not meet the criteria of the GSPSM and recognition cannot be granted at this time. In this case, the organization will be made aware of the reasons for this and if appropriate, given some guidance as to where the program might be developed should it wish to re-apply for recognition at a later date.

4. The program of learning does not meet the criteria for the GSPSM and the application is rejected.

A flow chart which summarizes the application process described above is included at Appendix 4.

Support from the assessor before and during the application process

Assessors are able to provide some initial support and guidance to organizations seeking recognition of their program against the GSPSM. However, there will be necessary limitations on the interactions between the applicant and the assessor and this will be agreed in advance with the assessor at the start of the application process. Any support given to applicants will be to help them better understand any of the specific more detailed criteria for assessment more fully and will not extend to any assistance with specific program development activities. Any advice provided by an assessor should not be seen as offering any form of guarantee of the success of an application for recognition. The final decision will be made by the GSB.

Duration of recognition

Programs of learning are recognized for a period of three years.

Monitoring

During the period of recognition, the GSB will require notification of any changes to the program. Any proposed changes must be approved by the GSB in order for the

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recognition to be continued. In addition, an assessor may undertake at least one monitoring visit throughout the recognition period.

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