

Public Sector Commercial Level 4

Profile for Public Sector Commercial Role

Those achieving Public Sector Commercial Level 4 will develop commercial capability that is vital in the public sector and valued across every sector. In the public sector a commercial professional's role is to support the transformation of the way that the best quality public services are delivered, whilst securing value for taxpayers' money. Experience will be gained working on high-profile, high-value, high-risk projects that affect millions of people and are worth billions of pounds each year.

The work of commercial professionals in the public sector includes the process of procurement, or buying goods and services; however, a commercial role is much broader than just procurement. This role extends to a huge range of related commercial activity such as influencing commercial policy, financial analysis, engaging in contract law, and developing strategy to deliver public services. In the public sector the variety of goods and services that commercial professionals are responsible for is vast: goods could range from buying a tank or submarine for the military, to negotiating new trains on behalf of Transport for London. Securing services could include: finding new and innovative IT systems, outsourcing translation services for a local magistrate court or closing a deal on a construction project for a new school or prison.

A good commercial professional will support their organisation in sourcing and negotiating the best deals on goods and services. To fulfil this role an individual must develop skills and knowledge across all three aspects of the commercial lifecycle: pre-procurement, sourcing and contract management. Responsibilities in pre-procurement may include analysis of suppliers in the market and consideration of the best strategy to deliver the good or service. The sourcing process involves securing a contractual agreement with a supplier who is to provide the good or service. Finally, a contract management role comprises of day-to-day management of existing contracts; ultimately ensuring the good or service is being delivered to an acceptable standard. Achieving Level 4 in Public Sector Commercial will enable an individual to use their breadth and depth of experience to position themselves as a fully effective commercially skilled professional with career options that span from public to private and charity sectors.

The Following tables explain the skills, knowledge and behaviours **required** from a successful apprentice **on completion of the programme**.

Knowledge	A Level 4 Commercial Professional Must be Able to <i>Know and Understand</i>
Context of Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The commercial life-cycle: pre-procurement, sourcing and contract management, and be aware of how these stages fit into the organisation's structure. - The difference between private and public sector procurement.
Pre-procurement and Early Market Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The market, supplier and service landscape before beginning the tendering process, e.g. understand the effect of market competition and concentration. - Different commercial and contractual models e.g. use of SMEs, mutuals and joint ventures. - Commercial and sustainability risks and opportunities associated with sourcing decisions.
Sourcing and Contract Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How business needs are captured and shape commercial decisions; be aware of how such business objectives are articulated in contractual agreement and procurement specifications. - How public money is managed and spent, including the host organisation's own rules on setting and managing budgets. Cost and pricing models and associated financial commercial concepts and how they influence supplier behaviours, e.g. profit, open book accounting etc. - Selection and award criteria commonly applied when sourcing requirements from external suppliers and how supplier bids are evaluated against these criteria. - Realise the use of the different types of documentation and terminology that frequently form part of the commercial procurement process for the supply of goods and services. - Have sufficient awareness of both national and EU contractual and procedural procurement law. Recognise the use of legal terms that should regulate commercial agreements.
Contract and Supplier Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The concept of 'adding value' through commercial relationships. - The main types of contractual and supply chain risks and difficulties that may arise. - Have a working understanding of how the terms and conditions and contractual obligations affect the delivery of a contract and supplier performance.

Category Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How specific areas of procurement spend can be organised into appropriate categories (groups of similar requirements, e.g. IT, estates etc.). - Appreciate the main components, benefits and constraints to taking a category management approach across all three stages of the commercial life-cycle.
Skills	A Level 4 Commercial Professional Must be Able to Do
Pre-procurement and Early Market Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop market and commodity intelligence, making use of internal and external data. - Assist with conducting pre-procurement market engagement ensuring the requirement is deliverable, clear and attractive to suppliers whilst also offering the maximum value for money. - Use analytical and problem-solving skills to understand the key information from market intelligence and customer requirements and use this analysis to support the development of a robust business case.
Sourcing and Contract Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply a set of appropriate tools/techniques that procurement professionals use e.g. LEAN sourcing to help develop ideas, make decisions and manage risks; and be able to apply these to real contracting situations. - Support the preparation of pre-tender and tender (public sector procurement) documents. - Be able to use the organisation's IT systems and procurement specific IT e.g. e-sourcing tools. - Recognise the impact that decision-making has on costs and identify opportunities to save money or deliver services in the most effective or efficient way. Evaluate costs by comparison with industry standards or high performers (benchmarking). Have a level of financial awareness that enables a focus on achieving financial efficiencies and continuous improvement. - Identify approaches to achieve negotiated agreements with external and internal organisations and internal stakeholders including developing the main communication skills that can be used to positive effect in a commercial negotiation. - Contribute towards information requests as required, ensuring accurate, robust responses.
Contract and Supplier Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be able to confidently display contract and supplier relationship management skills including managing relationships with internal stakeholders and the wider public sector. - Use a range of contract and supplier performance monitoring, management and reporting techniques to ensure cost, service, quality and sustainability objectives are being achieved.
Behaviours	How a Level 4 Commercial Professional Must Behave
Thinking Commercially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider the objective of achieving value for the taxpayer's money whilst maximising quality in all commercial decisions. Maintain an economic, long-term focus in all activities. - Aware of and understand the organisation's commercial strategy and the policies, procedures and governance mechanisms that drive it.
Changing, Improving and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be responsive, innovative and seek out opportunities to create effective change. - Must have a strong commitment and be self motivated to develop and learn.
Communicating and Collaborating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create and maintain positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders within and outside the public sector. Maintain effective partnerships with suppliers and customers through the commercial process to achieve business objectives.
Working Efficiently and Effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make objective and accurate judgments using sound evidence and knowledge. - Work with energy to appropriate timescales and take responsibility and accountability for quality outcomes.
Commitment to Deliver Quality Public Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep the objective of delivering and improving a quality public service at the forefront of decision-making. - Always take account of diverse customer needs and requirements.
Additional Information	
Duration:	The apprenticeship will typically take 2 years to complete.
Qualifications:	Prior to the end point assessment there is a requirement to achieve the Chartered Institute for Procurement and Supply Diploma in Procurement and Supply Operations (CIPS Level 4).
Professional Registration:	On completion of CIPS level 4 candidates are eligible for Diploma level membership of the Chartered Institute for Procurement and Supply. CIPS Level 4 is a necessary <i>pre-requisite</i> for MCIPS (Level 6), which enables full professional registration and potential for chartered status.
Review:	The standard will be reviewed after 3 years (from date of approval).