

Certification: Why should I obtain Certification? Will it help improve my skills, my Career?:

What Certifications are available from the Institute for Supply Management?

The Institute for Supply Management ® (ISM) offers two certifications: The Certified Professional in Supply Management ® (CPSM) and the Certified Professional in Supplier Diversity ® (CPSD)

Note that within both certifications, the word Professional appears. This would mean, should you obtain the certification, that you have obtained an understanding of your profession that will translate into valuable skill sets that employers are looking for to assist their companies.

Are the Certifications valid?

ISM uses a 3rd party professional learning organization that is respected on a global basis to certify the certification testing content as applicable to the supply management profession and the management of supplier diversity programs. In 2018, ISM is going to recertify the CPSM exams with the aforementioned 3rd party certification authority, in order to update the exam material and bring the content in line with current practice. This means that as of June 1, 2018, the CPSM exam currently in use will be replaced with a new program and all prior study materials will no longer be available.

In addition, for the new exam, study materials will be available for purchase as of September 1, 2018 through two methods. The first method will be as a hard copy bundle for all 3 exams. You will no longer be able to purchase individual test material separately. The 2nd method will be online electronic copies for use on your laptop or mobile device. ISM-Philadelphia will be purchasing 2 complete sets of the CPSM study materials for our lending library which ISM-Philadelphia members can borrow at no cost as long as you return them. All prior copies will be destroyed as of Feb 28, 2019.

Any member who is currently pursuing their CPSM and has not completed all three exams but has at least completed one exam will, upon exception review with ISM (contact the ISM national office for information), be able to register for the other two current exams, but must do so by August 31, 2018. All exams must be completed by February 28, 2019 in order for their results to be validated and be awarded their CPSM. The CPSD certification program is unaffected at this time.

Will attaining a certification improve my skills?

The CPSM is a very comprehensive series of three exams covering the broad scope of supply management and is designed to test your current knowledge regarding procurement, sourcing, category management, supplier contract negotiation, supplier contract management, legal contract terms, project management, forecasting, demand management/planning, warehousing, logistics, transportation, customer delivery, people management, supply management technology and reverse logistics among others.

By understanding the concepts related to the above functions, you become a valued employee to your organization. In order to understand the concepts listed above you, while studying for the exams, will obtain sufficient knowledge about the functions that you could very well have served in a rotational capacity for those functions over time. Some may say that that is an exaggeration, however I have found that it is indeed the case. The learning that occurs while you are studying is very valuable. It will not make you a subject matter expert of the business function but it will certainly enable you to be conversant in the topics while engaged with your team members who work in that function.

Since the CPSD program is validated by the same organization, I have to believe that the same would apply. I have reviewed the requirements for that certification in Supplier Diversity and found them to be very comprehensive, given my experience with that function. So much so, that I would not take the exam unless I was able to study for it.

Note that the CPSM and CPSD programs will not make you experts in the field, (the exams are designed at the proficient competency level for each skill tested for based on the ISM Mastery model) but they will provide you with sufficient tools to take the next step in your career. In addition, obtaining one or both certifications can mean a significant increase in pay, possibly as high as 10%, although that is extreme. The average increase is around 6% for most companies. Note though, that it is entirely up the individual as to how much they apply the skills they obtain to their daily work. Employers will be looking to see how much you can apply once you complete the program and obtain your certifications.

Also, any member who has already attained their CPSM or CPSD, can contact the office and register to become a certified trainer for either exam. Training will be made available during the two days prior to the conference in Nashville or online based on the published schedule. By becoming a certified trainer, you can then give back to your affiliate by volunteering to provide training to members who are working towards their certification. ISM Philadelphia will provide the venue.

Thank you.

Jim Moran, C.P.M.; CPSM, President