
Overview

This unit is about procuring supplies – either products or services – from external suppliers.

In larger organisations there are often specialist departments which handle the supply-chain management and procurement functions across the organisation, working to specialist supply-chain management standards.

However, in many smaller organisations, non-specialist managers are required to procure the products and services necessary for the activities for which they are responsible – the function described in this unit. To do so effectively, managers need a good understanding of their organisation’s procurement policy and procedures (where these exist) and the relevant statutory and sector-specific requirements. They also need the cognitive skills to be able to assess which supplies and suppliers are likely to provide the best value for money and the interpersonal skills to negotiate with suppliers and maintain effective working relationships with them over time.

The unit is for non-specialist managers who are required to procure supplies from external suppliers. It is not intended for purchasing and supply-chain management specialists, for whom specialist supply-chain management standards are available.

This unit is linked to units:

E16 Select suppliers through a tendering process

E17 Outsource business processes

in the overall suite of National Occupational Standards for Management and Leadership.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 comply with relevant organisational procedures and legal and ethical requirements when procuring supplies
- P2 seek support from colleagues or procurement or legal specialists on any aspect of procuring supplies about which you are unsure
- P3 consult with others involved to identify your requirements for supplies, drawing up detailed specifications, where necessary
- P4 source supplies which meet your requirements, where possible identifying a diverse range of supplies and/or suppliers so you can compare alternatives
- P5 select supplies and suppliers which offer the optimal mix of quality, costs, timeliness and reliability
- P6 negotiate with selected suppliers to reach an agreement which offers good value for money and is acceptable to both parties
- P7 agree a contract which clearly states
 - P7.1 quality and quantity of supplies
 - P7.2 timescales and costs
 - P7.3 terms and conditions
 - P7.4 consequences if either party fails to comply with the contract.
- P8 monitor the performance of suppliers in terms of the quality, timeliness and reliability of supplies, and take prompt action to resolve any problems, in line with the terms of the contract

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

General knowledge and understanding

- K1 the importance of following relevant organisational procedures and legal and ethical requirements when procuring supplies
- K2 the importance of consulting with others involved to identify your requirements for supplies, drawing up detailed specifications where necessary
- K3 how to draw up detailed specifications for procuring supplies
- K4 how to source supplies which meet your requirements, where possible identifying a diverse range of supplies and/or suppliers so you can compare alternatives
- K5 how to select supplies and suppliers which offer the optimal mix of quality, costs, timeliness and reliability
- K6 how to negotiate with selected suppliers to reach an agreement which offers good value for money and is acceptable to both parties
- K7 the importance of agreeing a contract, and how to do so which clearly states quality and quantity of supplies, timescales and costs, terms and conditions, and consequences if either party fails to comply with the contract
- K8 how to monitor the performance of suppliers in terms of the quality, timeliness and reliability of supplies
- K9 the importance of taking prompt action to resolve any problems with the performance of suppliers, in line with the terms of the contract, and how to decide what action should be taken and when

You need to know and understand:

Industry/sector specific knowledge and understanding

- K10 industry/sector requirements for procuring supplies

You need to know and understand:

Context specific knowledge and understanding

- K11 relevant organisational procedures and legal and ethical requirements for procuring supplies
- K12 sources of advice, guidance and support from colleagues or procurement or legal specialists on any aspect of procuring supplies about which you are unsure
- K13 the limits of your own knowledge, skills and competence
- K14 who to consult with to identify your requirements for supplies, drawing up detailed specifications where necessary
- K15 sources of supplies and/or suppliers which meet your requirements

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Additional Information

Behaviours

1. You listen actively, ask questions, clarify points and rephrase others' statements to check mutual understanding.
2. You present information clearly, concisely, accurately and in ways that promote understanding.
3. You comply with, and ensure others comply with, legal requirements, industry regulations, organisational policies and professional codes.
4. You act within the limits of your authority.
5. You show integrity, fairness and consistency in decision-making.
6. You confront performance issues and resolve them directly with the people involved.
7. You clearly agree what is expected of others and hold them to account.
8. You work towards win-win solutions.
9. You make best use of available resources and proactively seek new sources of support when necessary.
10. You take timely decisions that are realistic for the situation.

Skills

Listed below are the main generic 'skills' that need to be applied in procuring supplies. These skills are explicit/ implicit in the detailed content of the unit and are listed here as additional information.

Assessing
Communicating
Consulting
Decision-making
Evaluating
Influencing
Monitoring
Negotiating
Problem-solving
Thinking strategically

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