



Objective Response

Exams guidance



Level 2 Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations

Level 3 Advanced Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations

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Objective Response questions (OR)

Level 2 – Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations

Level 3 – Advanced Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations

Studying for Objective Response (OR) questions requires a special method of preparation distinctly different from an essay question. OR questions ask a student to recognise a correct answer amongst a set of options, rather than asking a student to produce a correct answer entirely. This guide provides you with useful techniques when answering OR questions and guidance on the types of OR questions there will be in the Level 2 and Level 3 exams.

What should I expect in the exam?

2

Level 2 Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations

Five CORE modules make up the required 18 credits

CORE Introducing Procurement and Supply (L2M1)	72 QUESTIONS	6 CREDITS	2 HOURS
CORE Procurement and Supply Operations (L2M2)	36 QUESTIONS	3 CREDITS	1 HOUR
CORE Stakeholder Relationships (L2M3)	36 QUESTIONS	3 CREDITS	1 HOUR
CORE Systems Technology (L2M4)	36 QUESTIONS	3 CREDITS	1 HOUR
CORE Inventory, Logistics and Expediting (L2M5)	36 QUESTIONS	3 CREDITS	1 HOUR

3

Level 3 Advanced Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations

Four CORE modules make up 24 of required credits

CORE Procurement and Supply Environments (L3M1)	72 QUESTIONS	6 CREDITS	2 HOURS
CORE Ethical Procurement and Supply (L3M2)	72 QUESTIONS	6 CREDITS	2 HOURS
CORE Contract Administration (L3M3)	72 QUESTIONS	6 CREDITS	2 HOURS
CORE Team Dynamics and Change (L3M4)	72 QUESTIONS	6 CREDITS	2 HOURS
Choose one ELECTIVE module to make up the final six required credits			
ELECTIVE Socially Responsible Procurement (L3M5)	72 QUESTIONS	6 CREDITS	2 HOURS
ELECTIVE Socially Responsible Warehousing and Distribution (L3M6)	72 QUESTIONS	6 CREDITS	2 HOURS

OR questions are used in all modules for Level 2 Certificate in Procurement and supply operations and the Level 3 Advanced Certificate in Procurement Supply Operations.

There are 5 core modules in Level 2. In Level 3 you need to complete 4 core modules and choose 1 elective module.

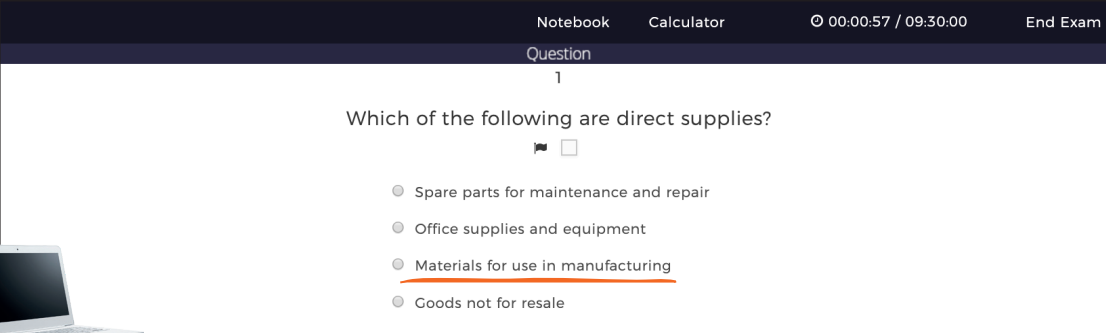
OR questions on a computer-based exam (CBE) will be sat under exam conditions at a CIPS CBE approved centre.

Structure of Objective Response (OR) exams

There are MCQs, which allow you to select a an answer from a list of possible options

Another type of OR question would be to fill in the blanks by choosing the answer from a drop down menu or dropping the answer into a response box

Multiple-Choice questions



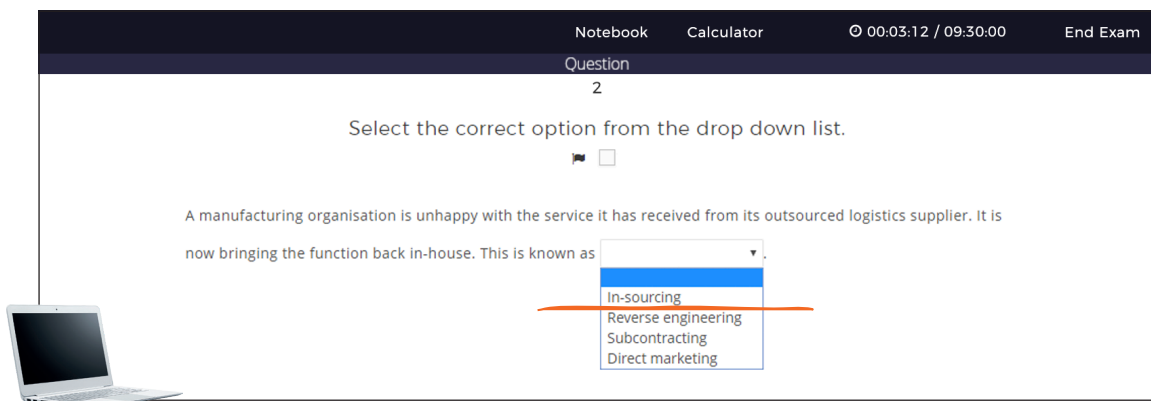
The screenshot shows an exam interface with a dark header bar containing 'Notebook', 'Calculator', '00:00:57 / 09:30:00', and 'End Exam'. Below the header, the word 'Question' is centered. The question number '1' is displayed above the question text: 'Which of the following are direct supplies?'. There are four radio button options: 'Spare parts for maintenance and repair', 'Office supplies and equipment', 'Materials for use in manufacturing' (which is underlined in red), and 'Goods not for resale'. A small laptop icon is visible on the left side of the screenshot.

First read through the question and the four options. Identify the focus of the question and any particularly important words. Here the question is focused only on 'direct supplies'. Through your study you will know that procurement related expenditure can be broadly broken down into direct and indirect spend. So, to answer this question correctly you will need to know the meaning of 'direct supplies' and some examples of such items. Broadly, direct spend will be on items that are directly incorporated into a product being manufactured, whereas indirect spend relates to other items, for example to support business operations. From the choices available, only 'materials for use in manufacturing' fit the definition of 'direct supplies' (option 3). All the other options are not directly incorporated into the end (manufactured) product and so are 'indirect supplies'.

There will only be ONE correct answer for each question so you should try to eliminate the other options using your knowledge of the topic area. The process of elimination is very important in terms of OR so you must apply logic and sense along with your knowledge of the subject.

Structure of Objective Response (OR) exams

Drop-down

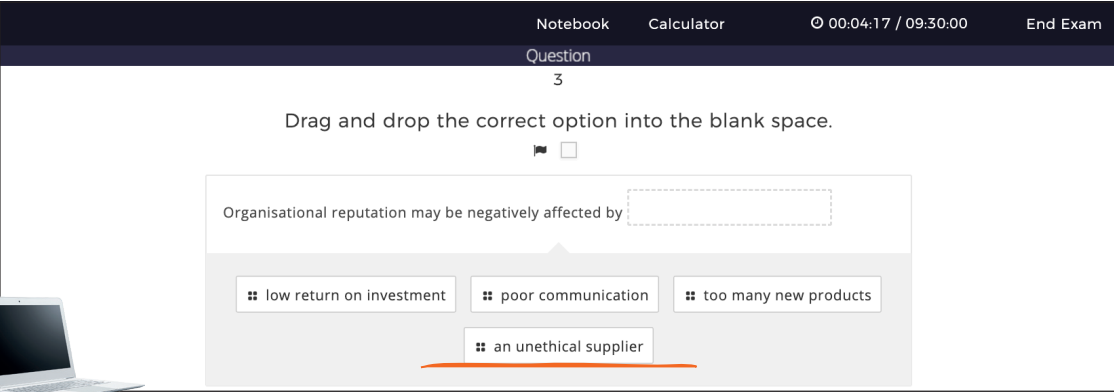


The screenshot shows an exam interface with a dark header bar containing 'Notebook', 'Calculator', '00:03:12 / 09:30:00', and 'End Exam'. Below the header, the text 'Question 2' is displayed. The main question area contains the instruction 'Select the correct option from the drop down list.' followed by a flag icon and a text box. The question text reads: 'A manufacturing organisation is unhappy with the service it has received from its outsourced logistics supplier. It is now bringing the function back in-house. This is known as'. A drop-down menu is open, showing four options: 'In-sourcing' (highlighted in blue), 'Reverse engineering', 'Subcontracting', and 'Direct marketing'. A red horizontal line is drawn under the 'In-sourcing' option. To the left of the exam interface, a small icon of a laptop is visible.

Again, first read through the question and the four options. Identify the focus of the question and any particularly important words. Here you need to understand that the organisation has previously made the decision to outsource its logistics operation to a third-party supplier. Because of the poor performance of that supplier the manufacturer has decided to revert to its original modus operandi by returning responsibility for logistics in-house, ie by creating its own logistics function again. To answer the question you must understand the term 'outsourcing' and, through your study, you will also know that bringing an outsourced operational process back in-house is known as 'in-sourcing'. Reverse engineering is when a product is deconstructed to understand its workings and design. Subcontracting is the use of a third party to carry out a service or provide a product. Direct marketing is an approach of communicating with or selling products directly to customers.

Structure of Objective Response (OR) exams

Drag and drop



The screenshot shows an online exam interface. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the text 'Question 3'. Below this, the instruction 'Drag and drop the correct option into the blank space.' is displayed. The main content area contains a question: 'Organisational reputation may be negatively affected by' followed by a dashed rectangular box. Below the question, there are four options in white boxes with a double-checkmark icon: 'low return on investment', 'poor communication', 'too many new products', and 'an unethical supplier'. The option 'an unethical supplier' is highlighted with a red underline. To the left of the main content area, there is a small icon of a laptop.

Again, first read through the question and the four options. Identify the focus of the question and any particularly important words. Here the focus is on 'organisational reputation' and any actions that might have an adverse impact on an organisation's reputation. To answer the question you must understand the concept of 'organisational reputation' and, through your study, you will know that it is generally more focused on the perspective of external stakeholders, ie how the market (including customers) perceives the organisation due to its actions. It could be argued, to an extent at least, that any of these options might have some impact but not in all circumstances. For example, customers would not necessarily even be aware of a low return on investment or poor communication in which circumstances there would be no impact on the organisation's reputation. In all cases using 'an unethical supplier' would always be very high risk and would leave the procurement organisation exposed to potential reputational damage.

Preparing for an exam using Objective Response (OR) questions:

Do not assume that Objective Response (OR) questions are easier than other formats. Whilst it is true that the correct answer is guaranteed to be among the options (so it is possible to gain marks from a lucky guess), nevertheless, OR exams can be very difficult.

- OR exams contain many questions, so they require you to be familiar with a very broad range of material
- OR exams expect you to be familiar with facts, definitions and details: it is not easy to “bluff” in an OR exam.

To prepare for an OR exam try the following:

- Pay particular attention to fundamental terms and concepts. These are the items that more commonly appear in OR questions
- If the CIPS syllabus highlights specific vocabulary or key definitions, be sure that you understand them. Do not simply memorise definitions. Most assessors will rephrase things to their own words as they write OR questions, so you must be sure that you really know what the definitions mean
- If you can, brainstorm possible questions with several other candidates who are also taking the course

Objective Response (OR) questions

Tips and hints for answering:

Navigate through the exam, answering the questions you know first.

Go over the exam a second time and answer any questions you may have flagged first time round.

Watch your timing. If you feel you are spending too long on a question, flag the question and come back to it later. Spending too long on a few questions could throw you off track in terms of time.

Do not try to find a pattern of answers throughout the paper – this will not help, and you can be sure that our examiners will not have set a question where (for example) 'b' is the correct answer all the way through, or where the correct answers follow any pattern.