



# Body of Knowledge

by Ann Peshoff

## Updated test specs for public sector purchasing designations

The Universal Public Purchasing Certification Council (UPPCC) is an independent entity formed to govern and administer the Certified Public Purchasing Officer (CPPO) and Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) certification programs. The CPPO and CPPB programs are highly regarded and respected among procurement professionals and employers involved in the public sector. To date, the UPPCC has certified well over 10,000 professionals primarily within the US and Canada as well as in other nations. For more information on certification and up-coming program changes, please visit the UPPCC Online at [www.uppcc.org](http://www.uppcc.org).

**T**HE UNIVERSAL PUBLIC Purchasing Certification Council (UPPCC) is pleased to announce the newly updated *Body of Knowledge* for its two public purchasing credentials; the Certified Public Purchasing Officer (CPPO) and the Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB). Often appropriately referred to as “test specifications” or “content outline,” the *Body of Knowledge* will dictate the content for certification examinations beginning with the October 20-25, 2008 testing window. October 2008 will mark a significant milestone for the UPPCC as it has also earmarked that date for the rollout of many other program enhancements all designed to bring the organization one step closer to achieving ISO/IEC 17024 accreditation through the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

### Development of the *Body of Knowledge*

Periodically the UPPCC performs a job analysis study to ensure that the certification exams are aligned with the skills, knowledge and abilities needed for successful job performance in the public purchasing profession. The *Body of Knowledge* is the end result of the job analysis study. A job analysis consists of several activities: the development of a survey tool, survey dissemination, compilation of survey results, and finally, the development of the *Body of Knowledge*.

Thanks to the generous financial contributions of its founding members, the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) and the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, Inc. (NIGP), the

UPPCC was able to partner with professional testing consultants from Thomson Pro-metric to independently perform the 2006-2007 job analysis study.

In February 2007, a committee of 16 hand-selected public procurement professionals from across North America was convened to develop a comprehensive listing of common tasks and knowledge essential for successful job performance. Careful consideration was given in the selection of the committee members to ensure that all major sectors of the profession were represented. The listing of tasks and knowledge developed by the committee became the basis for a survey that was disseminated to 16,775 public purchasing professionals in April 2007. The purpose of the survey was to have a wider, more diverse sampling of the practicing pro-

fession to either agree or refute the initial work of the smaller Job Analysis Survey Committee. Each respondent was asked to rate the importance of each task and knowledge statement presented via the survey and how well the grouping of tasks and knowledge covered several aspects of the profession. The survey also provided respondents with the opportunity to suggest additional tasks or knowledge for inclusion.

The survey was made available for 5 weeks. A total of 1,848 completed responses were received (11 percent response rate) over that time. Once the data was compiled, a second committee of 15 public procurement professionals was convened to review the data and develop the *Body of Knowledge* (also called *Test Specifications*). To perform this assignment, the Test Specification Committee reviewed all the tasks and knowledge statements from the survey with the compiled importance ratings as well as any additional tasks or knowledge statements suggested by survey respondents. Any task or knowledge statement that did not reach an overall importance rating score greater than or equal to moderate importance or that could not be supported as moderately impor-



tant by the test specification committee was deleted from the final *Body of Knowledge*. After performing this three-step validation process, the new *Body of Knowledge* consisting of 92 total tasks and 108 total knowledge statements was complete. (2008 *Body of Knowledge* is available at [www.summitconnects.com](http://www.summitconnects.com) and [www.uppcc.org](http://www.uppcc.org))

## Participant demographics

Nearly 2,000 subject matter experts participated in the various stages of the study from a variety of locations, work settings, work experiences, career and education levels.

Input was received from every state in the US, 10 of the 13 provinces/territories of Canada and from other areas as distant as Australia and Northern Africa. The state of Florida took the lead representing the area with the most participation followed by the states of California and Texas.

Other profile features of survey respondents were identified by the most frequently occurring responses, such as:

- Number of years worked in public purchasing: 16 to 25 years (27.49 percent)
- Current work role: director/manager of purchasing (24.92 percent)
- Current work setting: state/provincial government (25.77 percent)
- Size of organization/agency: 1,001 to 5,000 employees (33.35 percent)
- Size of procurement department/unit staff: 1-5 employees (30.91 percent)
  - Highest degree attained: Bachelor's degree (31.24 percent)
  - Gender: female (59.17 percent); male (40.83 percent)
  - Age: 46 to 55 years (44.86 percent)

## Notable changes

The most notable change to the *Body of Knowledge* is that it is far more detailed and consists of only one overarching *Body of Knowledge*, rather than one for the CPPO and one for the CPPB. You will also note that individual tasks or knowledge that applies to only one program is identified immediately following the task and/or knowledge as either "CPPO ONLY" or "CPPB ONLY." If there is no indication for a specific program, the task and/or knowledge apply to both the CPPO and CPPB.

For the CPPO, "Materiels management" was added as a new topic area and "personnel issues" was renamed "human resources/personnel." A significant increase was noted in the amount of the CPPO exam that will cover "administration aspects of purchas-

ing" (up to 15 percent from 10 percent) and "forecasting and strategies," while a decrease was noted in the area of "solicitation and evaluation of bids/proposals."

For CPPB, "inventory management" and "materiel flow" were combined into one new category called "materiels' management" to apply to both goods and services. The "miscellaneous" category was deleted and two new categories, "human resources/personnel" and "forecasting and strategies," were added. As with the CPPO, a significant increase was noted in the amount of the CPPB exam that will cover "administration aspects of purchasing" (up to 19 percent from 7 percent) and "solicitation and evaluation of bids/proposals," while a decrease was noted in the areas of "materiels management" and "negotiation."

Additional data analysis was performed on the tasks and knowledge importance ratings of the Canadian constituency and compared them to the same ratings for the total survey population. The findings for both comparative groups were in agreement with one another. Therefore, the job analysis study supports the fact that a country-specific exam is not needed.

## Updated exam format

Beginning with the October 2008 examinations, a variety of changes will take effect with regard to the format of the examinations. Format changes are as follows:

- Computer-based testing through nearly 400 professional testing centers throughout the US and Canada
- One single assessment consisting of 175 multiple-choice questions for CPPB
- One single assessment consisting of 175 multiple-choice questions for CPPO – no oral exams
- 3.5 hours of testing permitted, no break
- Both examinations will consist primarily of situational questions

## Timeline and implementation dates

The official implementation of the new *Body of Knowledge* will coincide with the first computer-based examinations in October

2008. Until that time, the current *Body of Knowledge* for CPPO and CPPB will remain in effect. Individuals interested in applying and taking the certification exam under the current *Body of Knowledge* must apply no later than March 30, 2008. UPPCC implemented a fee increase on January 1, 2008.

All candidates that apply under the current program however, must successfully complete written exam requirements no later than July 31, 2008. Candidates pursuing CPPO certification must successfully complete the written examination by July 31, 2008 to be considered eligible to take the final oral examination. Successful written exam candidates will be permitted to take the oral examination through the end of 2008 or until their application expires, whichever occurs first. If candidates under the current program do not successfully complete exam requirements by the required deadline, their candidacy will be converted to the new program and exam requirements for the remaining time left on their application. Passing only the written examination for CPPO certification under the current program **will not** satisfy the CPPO exam requirements under the new program.

Individuals interested in testing via the first computer-based exam when the new *Body of Knowledge* goes into effect, must submit a valid application by July 21, 2008 to be considered. The UPPCC began accepting applications for the October 2008 exams as of January 1, 2008. The next testing opportunity following October 2008 will occur in May 2009. Applications must be submitted no later than February 2, 2009 for testing in May.

Examinations for the current bridging opportunity available to CPMs to UPPCC certifications ends December 31, 2008, but will not be impacted by the new *Body of Knowledge* or computer-based testing. *mm*

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