

Level 4 SBM Programme Aspiring Applicants - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Who is an aspiring SBM?

If you wish to train to become a School Business Manager (SBM) but are not employed in a school as a SBM or in a similar role, e.g. Finance Manager, Buildings Manager, HR Officer, Administration Manager, Administration Officer, then you are referred to as an '**aspiring SBM**'. This FAQ guidance document has been produced to assist aspiring applicants who wish to apply for the Level 4 Diploma for School Business Managers.

The role of a typical school business manager has been changing in recent years and has often become a more complex role involving supervision or management across many day-to-day business activities in a school. The new 2018 ILM Diploma programmes for school business managers reflect these latest changes to the role.

Who can apply to join the Level 4 SBM programme?

The Level 4 Diploma for School Business Managers is aimed at school-based applicants and also those not working in a school or education, i.e. aspiring applicants not currently working in school settings who are interested in changing direction and developing their career as a school business manager (or similar).

As an aspiring participant, not employed within a school, you should recognise that some tasks will be more of a challenge for you to complete. You may, on occasions, need to be resourceful in order to obtain the information needed to satisfy the programme requirements. This is why you need the support of a school committed to provide you with information and advice to help you with your assignments and other tasks.

You must also:

- confirm the support of the headteacher and chair of governors at the school supporting your application
- be able to commit to approximately 6-8 hours (or more at certain times) of personal study time per week

Do I have to attend an aspiring programme before joining an SBM programme?

The Aspiring SBM programme is highly recommended as the first step for aspiring applicants wishing to study the Level 4 Diploma for School Business Managers programme. The Aspiring SBM programme is an induction and support process, in which individuals with relevant transferable skills from industry and other sectors can learn about the SBM role and the education sector.

For further information on our Aspiring SBM programme please refer to the Aspiring page on our website www.sbmpartnership.org.uk. You should also review the Aspiring FAQ document located under key documents on the Aspiring SBM web page.

What are the costs?

See our SBM Partnership website www.sbmpartnership.org.uk for details of current prices. You will be invoiced two to three weeks before the start of the Level 4 programme and must settle the invoice before the programme begins.

Do I need a support school to study the Level 4 SBM Programme?

Yes. You will require a support school when you are applying for/studying the Level 4 or Level 5 Diploma programmes or individual unit(s). Your support school normally needs to be confirmed before you apply for the full Diploma programme or an individual unit – see below for more information on support (or link) schools.

As an aspiring applicant, which programme should I apply for?

As an aspiring participant we recommend that you begin with the Level 4 Diploma because this gives you an opportunity to explore the range of responsibilities of a SBM. The Level 4 programme covers the day to day operational responsibilities of the typical school business manager (or similar role). It is also the qualification that most schools look for when recruiting school business managers (or similar).

Should your transferable skills be based upon extensive experience outside of the education sector then it may be possible to successfully study the Level 5 Diploma programme without first completing the Level 4. In order to join the Level 5 Diploma programme you will have to find a support school that is willing to let you work closely with its Senior Leadership Team (SLT) as the assignments assume that you have this access.

Why do I need a support (or link) school when I study the full Diploma?

The assignments for each of the SBM programmes are usually based upon the activities of a SBM. The Level 4 Diploma for School Business Managers (an updated diploma programme first offered in early 2018) is a 'vocational' qualification in which tasks and evidence refer to the school context. Your support (link) school will provide the vital hands-on experience about how a school operates and, more importantly, an insight into the role of the SBM.

Support schools can coach and mentor an aspiring participant on how the school operates in key areas such as finance, budgeting, HR, risk, procurement and facilities management, as well as team leadership and strategic management, and much more.

When studying the SBM programmes you will need access to relevant school documentation, for example the school's budget as well as finance, procurement, HR, health & safety and safeguarding policies. Access to some school policies and procedures are essential to enable you to complete the assessed elements of the programme.

You will also need to see other key documents, such as school accounts, procurement documentation and the school development plan (SDP). It is possible that occasionally you may need to access, or view, some information of a more confidential nature, but, you will receive some guidance on this within the Diploma programme.

Support school commitment

The number of times you will need to visit or contact the support school as an aspiring participant on the Level 4 programme will vary widely. You will probably need to arrange several meetings in the early stages of the programme (or individual unit) but may then be able to maintain contact and discuss your requirements remotely after that, with less frequent meetings. Sometimes, an aspiring participant may want to visit the school briefly once a week, or fortnightly, in the early stages, but this will entirely depend on circumstances.

Ideally the support school will provide you with a designated in-school mentor, preferably a member of the senior leadership team (or the school business manager), who will be able to guide you through important school documents. The main role of the mentor is to discuss with you how your projects and assessed pieces of work will fit the needs of the school as well as discussing your professional development.

Many of your tasks are used to compile a **portfolio of evidence** which you will maintain as you progress through the Level 4 Diploma programme. Your assessed tasks will form a part of the portfolio.

Please note that it is not possible to successfully complete the assignments without a support/link school. It is essential that your support school is able to commit to providing you with the information you require. See the relevant programme **FAQ document** (visit www.sbmpartnership.org.uk) which provides an overview of the content for each unit within the programme.

The four units studied within the full Level 4 programme (from 2018) are:

1. Leading Support Services
2. Finances in a School
3. Procurement in a School
4. Human Resources in Schools

Important: You should discuss the content of units to be covered in the programme with your support school so that they are aware of your requirements and the level of commitment they will need to make to yourself.

Further advice on support schools and their role is provided as an integral part of the Aspiring SBM programme; if you are unsure about how to approach a potential support school, etc., then we recommend that you should attend the Aspiring SBM programme first.

How do I find a support school once I am ready to apply for the full Diploma programme?

Before contacting any school, it is advisable to carry out some research about the school and the SBM role in general. We recommend that you review the school's website, research articles in the local press about the school and read its prospectus. Also read the school's most recent Ofsted report.

Please be aware that if a school is undergoing significant changes (e.g., a rebuilding project, new head teacher in post, academisation, or newly formed federation, etc.) or has a notice to improve, the staff may be too busy to act as a support school.

Further information about how a school might support you is included as part of the Aspiring SBM programme.

What is a DBS check and why do I need one?

The DBS check or *Disclosure and Barring Service Check* (previously CRB check) is a requirement for all adults who work with children in a school setting. Aspiring participants will need to regularly visit their support school so will need to complete a DBS check. The school will provide you with an application form; you cannot apply for this independently.

Once you have completed the application form you will need to return it to your support school along with proof of your identity. The school will then apply for your DBS check. As you will be working in your support school on a voluntary basis you should not normally be charged for the DBS check. More information about the DBS check can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview>

Further details, information and support will be provided as part of our Aspiring SBM programme – please refer to the relevant area on our website for further information.

To apply for the Aspiring or Level 4 School Business Manager programmes please visit: www.sbmpartnership.org.uk

See also our *SBM Terms and Conditions* document on our website for more information.

Why study with us?

- We are the leading national provider of SBM programmes
- All of our SBM full programmes are ILM accredited (accreditation is an option for individual units)
- Many thousands of SBMs have successfully gained their qualifications after studying with us - no other provider has our depth of experience
- We have consistently achieved a high pass rate on each accredited SBM programme.
- Our experience is unrivalled
- We have continued to design, develop and update all of the SBM programmes since 2004

How to contact us

For application enquiries contact the Serco SBM team on sbmpartnership@serco.com or T: 01452 727272 (office hours)

Alternatively, you can contact the Adfecto SBM team on sbmpartnership@adfecto.org.uk T: 01242 220684 (office hours)

The SBM Partnership (Serco, Adfecto, and ISBL) is the leading national provider of school business management (SBM) programmes

www.sbmpartnership.org.uk

Note that 'SBM' is an interchangeable acronym and is used as an abbreviation for both 'school business manager' and 'school business management' depending on the context.