

CFACSC4 (SQA Unit Code – H9YE 04)

Deliver customer service to challenging customers



Overview

This Standard is part of the Customer Service Theme of Handling Problems. This Theme covers the behaviours, processes and approaches that are most effective when handling customer service problems. Remember that customers include everyone you provide a service to. They may be external to your organisation or they may be internal customers.

Many organisations have a significant proportion of customers who are challenging to deal with. Your customer's attitude may be challenging because they believe that a threat or problem exists before they have contacted your organisation. They may become worried or angry when they discover that their expectations are not going to be met by your organisation. They may be very concerned or nervous about the outcome of dealing with your organisation. In either case, they are challenging to deal with and need your understanding. This Standard is about dealing directly with these customers and trying to reach a resolution that satisfies everybody or at least reduces the risk of dissatisfaction. You should choose this Standard only if you recognise the content as applying to a reasonable proportion of your exchanges with customers. Do not choose this Standard if it will be hard to find evidence because you only occasionally deal with customers you find challenging.

CFACSC4 (SQA Unit Code – H9YE 04)

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Performance criteria

Recognise when customers may be challenging to deal with

You must be able to:

- P1 recognise types of customer behaviour that are challenging to deal with
- P2 identify aspects of your organisation's services or products that make it challenging to deal with customers
- P3 identify the signs and signals that indicate a customer may be challenging to deal with
- P4 put yourself in your customer's position and see the situation from their point of view
- P5 identify reasons why your customers may be behaving in a way that is challenging to deal with
- P6 recognise the limits of challenging customer behaviour that your organisation will tolerate
- P7 identify things that you may do or say that will provoke challenging responses from your customer

Deal with customers who are challenging

You must be able to:

- P8 listen patiently to what your customer wants to tell you
- P9 use direct and factual questions about your customer's feelings and what has happened to identify what might satisfy them
- P10 check your understanding of your customer's concerns by describing your view of the situation and options that might be available
- P11 express empathy with your customer without necessarily admitting fault on the part of your organisation
- P12 give clear statements or explanations of your organisation's position
- P13 agree a way forward that balances customer satisfaction with the needs of your organisation
- P14 enlist help from colleagues if options for action are outside of your authority
- P15 summarise clearly actions to be taken and reasons for those actions to complete the customer transaction
- P16 advise your manager or the appropriate colleagues if your customer is likely to re-open the matter with them
- P17 take any necessary action to protect your own safety or that of other customers or colleagues when dealing with a customer who is challenging or difficult

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 the types of customer behaviour that you personally find challenging to deal with
- K2 reasons why some aspect of your organisation's services or products may provoke challenging behaviour from customers
- K3 reasons why your customer's own actions may cause them to behave in a way that is challenging to deal with
- K4 the meaning of having empathy for a customer's feelings
- K5 who can be asked for help when dealing with a challenging customer
- K6 the differences between assertive, aggressive and passive behaviour
- K7 the importance of not simply quoting your organisation's rules and procedures to counter your customer's challenging behaviour
- K8 your organisation's limits of what will be tolerated from challenging customers before the transaction or relationship is closed
- K9 the importance of giving your manager or the appropriate colleagues notice of any further approaches from a challenging customer
- K10 when it might be necessary to take action to protect your own safety or that of other customers or colleagues from a challenging customer

CFACSC4 (SQA Unit Code – H9YE 04)

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SQA Evidence Requirements to Support this Unit

This Unit is designed to assess the skills and knowledge of candidates in the workplace. Candidate evidence should be generated under workplace conditions (**either paid or voluntary**) and evidence must be generated with different customers on different occasions over a sufficient period of time.

Observation should be the primary and preferred source of evidence of competent performance wherever possible. Observation of candidate performance will be supported by other methods of assessment which may include:

- ◆ witness testimony
- ◆ questioning
- ◆ candidate statement
- ◆ professional discussion
- ◆ product and photographic evidence,
- ◆ relevant active documentation, reports, presentations and
- ◆ other valid evidence which relates directly to learner performance under workplace conditions

A combination of performance and knowledge evidence is required to enable the assessor to confirm that the learner is competent.

Simulation should only be used in exceptional circumstances and it should only be for small parts of the Unit. Simulated assessments **must** be undertaken in a realistic working environment (RWE). A RWE is 'an environment which replicates the key characteristics in which the skill to be assessed is normally employed'. The RWE must provide conditions that are the same as the normal day-to-day working environment, with a similar range of demands, pressures and requirements for cost-effective working. Guidelines for using RWE can be found in the Assessment Strategy for Customer Service SVQs at link: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/16732.html>

SQA's Guide to Assessment is designed to provide support for everyone who assesses for SQA qualifications. It looks at the principles of assessment, and brings together information on assessment in general as well as on best practice in assessment. The Guide to Assessment can be downloaded free from SQA's website www.sqa.org.uk

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Developed by	Skills CFA
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Relevant occupations	Customer Service Occupations
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Suite

Customer Service (2013)

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problem solving; handling problems; difficult customers; dissatisfaction; customer service; communication; problem solving; behaviours; work with others; teamwork; giving information; receiving information services; products