



Higher National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Customer Service: Introduction

Unit code: H482 33

Superclass: BA

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Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to enable learners to understand the principles of customer service as they are applied within an organisation. It provides knowledge and develops skills that will enhance the learner's awareness of customer service. The knowledge and skills could also assist learners in finding employment in clerical, administrative, or support positions within a range of organisations. It is also suited to those who wish to progress to undertaking business related courses at a more advanced level.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Explain why Customer Service Excellence is important to organisations.
- 2 Outline the key techniques used when providing Customer Service Excellence.
- 3 Explain how to identify customer dissatisfaction and deal with complaints.
- 4 Explain the methods used by an organisation to set and promote customer service standards and measure the effectiveness of their delivery.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 6: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6)

Recommended entry to the Unit

Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, it is recommended that learners have good written communication and numerical skills. These may be demonstrated by the achievement of the Core Skills of *Communication* and *Numeracy* at SCQF level 4 or equivalent.

Higher National Unit specification: General information (cont)

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Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

Context for delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html>).

Equality and inclusion

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Learners should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Explain why Customer Service Excellence is important to organisations.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Internal and external customers
- ◆ Customer Service Excellence
- ◆ Impact of good and less good customer service

Outcome 2

Outline the key techniques used when providing Customer Service Excellence.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Face to face service excellence techniques
- ◆ Telephone service excellence techniques
- ◆ Internet service excellence techniques

Outcome 3

Explain how to identify customer dissatisfaction and deal with complaints.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Indicators of customer dissatisfaction
- ◆ Methods of handling complaints
- ◆ Learning from customer complaints

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Outcome 4

Explain the methods used by an organisation to set and promote customer service standards and measure the effectiveness of their delivery.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Customer Service Standards/Customer Charters
- ◆ The use of service level agreements
- ◆ Types of customer feedback
- ◆ Methods of obtaining customer feedback

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills across all Outcomes by showing that they can:

- ◆ Explain the distinction between internal and external customers.
- ◆ Describe examples of Customer Service Excellence.
- ◆ Explain the impact of good and less good customer service on the customer and the organisation.
- ◆ Outline the techniques used to provide Customer Service Excellence in a face to face situation.
- ◆ Outline the techniques used to provide Customer Service Excellence by telephone.
- ◆ Outline the techniques used to provide Customer Service Excellence via the internet or other method where interaction is in writing.
- ◆ Explain the indicators that would suggest a customer is not satisfied with the service they have received.
- ◆ Explain the methods used to effectively handle complaints from a customer.
- ◆ Explain how an organisation can prevent complaints reoccurring in the future.
- ◆ Explain how an organisation can use complaints as a tool for improving customer service.
- ◆ Explain how complaints are disseminated within an organisation and how these may contribute to departmental action planning.
- ◆ Explain how organisations use Customer Service Standards and Customer Charters.
- ◆ Explain the use of service level agreements in the provision of internal and external customer service.
- ◆ Explain the types of customer feedback that an organisation can gather to measure the effectiveness of customer service delivery.
- ◆ Explain the methods that an organisation can use to gather customer feedback.

Evidence should be generated through an investigative project.



Higher National Unit Support Notes

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Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

The following guidance was written in January 2013. Centres should ensure that learners have used current information in their learning and that assessment content and assessment checklists reflect the current situation, which may, as a result, differ from the guidance below in terms of the procedures, products and/or services listed.

Outcome 1 looks at the basic principles of customer service. It should lay the foundations for learners so that they have a context in which to review different ways of providing excellence in customer service in subsequent Outcomes in this Unit.

It is expected that centres will cover the following topics:

- ◆ Types of customer — internal and external customer
- ◆ The extent to which the service needs of internal and external customer differs
- ◆ Examples of good and less good customer service
- ◆ The impact of good and less good customer service on the customer
- ◆ The impact of good and less good customer service on an organisation

Outcome 2 looks at the techniques that should be used to ensure that excellent service is provided to a customer regardless of the service delivery channel used. The focus should be on communication skills.

It is expected that centres will cover the following topics:

- ◆ Face to face customer service: greeting customers, management of queues, privacy and respect where transactions are confidential, image and appearance, application of listening and questioning skills
- ◆ Telephone customer service — listening skills, speaking skills, tone, showing interest, managing the call length taking account of both the customer and organisations needs
- ◆ Internet customer service — application of reading and written communication skills

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Outcome 3 looks at the techniques that should be used when there are lapses in the provision of customer care.

It is expected that centres will cover the following topics:

- ◆ Indicators of customer dissatisfaction: written indicators, verbal indicators (language used, tone of voice), non-verbal indicators (body language)
- ◆ Methods of handling complaints when these are made — minor complaints, complaints that require further investigation; complaints that require to be investigated and reported to other bodies; Front Line Resolution — the importance of taking ownership of the complaint; the importance of keeping the customer informed when a complaint is being investigated; dealing with unwarranted complaints
- ◆ Methods of future prevention of complaints reoccurring — recording the causes of complaints, communicating causes internally, use of quality improvement activities to establish long term solutions to recurring complaints

Outcome 4 looks at the methods organisations use to set and monitor standards of customer care and the techniques they use to get regular feedback from customers about the service they are receiving.

It is expected that centres will cover:

- ◆ Customer Service Standards — their typical content and the use of Customer Charters to communicate standards to customers
- ◆ Service Level Agreements — their use and typical content
- ◆ Types of feedback — quantitative feedback, qualitative feedback
- ◆ Methods of obtaining customer feedback — internal and external surveys, focus groups, online feedback; the advantages and disadvantages of each methods

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

This Unit is likely to form part of a Group Award designed to provide learners with technical or professional knowledge and skills for employment within the Financial Services sector. It supports pre-employment learning for learners who have not yet entered the workplace and are studying in colleges and learning for employees who are new to the sector.

The Unit has been designed to enable learners to complete it, regardless of what country they are based in and regardless of the specific operations of financial services institutions in these countries. Centres should ensure that the learning covers this generic material. It would also be appropriate for centres to illustrate their teaching by contextualising it to the specifics of the operations, products and services of their country's financial services institutions.

Higher National Unit: Support Notes (cont)

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Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of instruments of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

This Unit could be assessed by a single instrument of assessment that requires learners to complete an investigative project based around a series of questions relating to the provision of customer service in an organisation.

Assessment could be delivered as an e-assessment if desired.

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There are no Core Skills embedded in this Unit. However, there are opportunities for developing skills in the Written *Communication* component of the Core Skill *Communication* at SCQF level 5.

Communication — Written Communication at SCQF level 5

All four Outcomes provide learners with the opportunity to develop their written communication skills. Where learners undertake an investigative report, they may present their evidence in writing. The report would have to be in a logical and effective order with appropriate subdivisions/headings.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for learners

Unit title: Customer Service: Introduction

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This Unit is designed to introduce you to, and to enable you to understand the basic principles of customer service as they are applied within customer facing organisations.

The Unit provides knowledge and develops skills that will enhance your awareness of the customer service. The knowledge and skills could also assist you in finding employment in retail, clerical, administrative, or support positions within organisations. It is also suited to you if you wish to progress to undertaking business related courses at a more advanced level.

In Outcome 1 you will learn about the reasons why organisations pay attention to the customer service they give.

In Outcome 2 you will learn about the ways you can use to provide excellent customer service. You will also learn how these differ when the customer is with you face to face, on the telephone or contacting you by writing or via the internet.

In Outcome 3 you will learn how you can identify when a customer is not satisfied with the service they have received and how you can handle complaints and take steps to avoid them happening in the future.

In Outcome 4 you will learn how organisations set the standards of customer service they are going to provide and how they advise customers of these standards. You will also learn how organisations can measure whether they are meeting these standards.

This Unit may be assessed by one assessment covering all four Outcomes. This assessment could consist of an investigative project in which you answer a series of questions about the provision of customer service within an organisation of your choice.