Unit Support Notes — Travel and Tourism: Customer Service (National 4)

Contents

Introduction

These support notes provide advice and guidance to support the delivery of Travel and Tourism: Customer Service (National 4). They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

♦ the Unit Specification
♦ the Course Specification
♦ the Course Support Notes
♦ the template and guidance for Unit Assessment Exemplification

Unit Support Notes are not mandatory but provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Unit. If the *Unit Support Notes* have been developed for a Unit which is not part of a Course, then it is only necessary to read them in conjunction with the *Unit Specification*.

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to allow learners to develop the skills and knowledge to enable them to meet the needs of customers. Learners will be able to develop communication skills and learn about promoting products and services and how to deal with customer issues.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

1 Establish and respond to customer needs in a travel and tourism environment.
2 Promote a range of products and/or services from the travel and tourism industry.
3 Deal with a customer issue in a travel and tourism environment.

Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that could be included in this Unit.

The main purpose of this Unit is to introduce learners to the importance and principles of Customer Service and to identify and develop the skills and qualities required to meet customer expectations in a travel and tourism environment. Outcome 1 focuses on establishing and responding to customer needs, dealing effectively with routine customer interactions. Outcome 2 focuses on promoting a range of travel and tourism products and/or services, identifying features and benefits and exploring different ways of promoting these to customers. In Outcome 3 the learner will use communication and problem solving skills in dealing with, and resolving, customer issues.

Learners might explore who are our customers in a range of travel and tourism contexts, and their possible needs and requirements, including particular needs (may include: customers with disabilities; families; business travellers; overseas visitors). Learners could explore also the different skills and qualities necessary in providing good customer service, reflecting on their existing personal strengths and weaknesses and identifying areas for improvement and development. This may link in to Outcome 3 of the Unit Travel and Tourism: Employability where learners are asked to evaluate their own potential for a chosen job in the travel and tourism industry.

In Outcome 1 learners will be asked to develop and demonstrate communication skills, using appropriate types of questioning, both open and closed, while responding to a customer, as well as effective listening skills. Learners should explore verbal communication and interaction. By selecting appropriate types of communication learners will appreciate that they can be of much greater value to the customer as they will have been able to learn more about the needs of the customer and therefore be able to respond in an appropriate manner. Learners will be asked also to demonstrate relevant personal qualities and could be encouraged to observe and assess customer service interactions and seek to replicate positive examples.

Learners will be asked to respond to customer enquiries with relevant information, and might therefore wish to explore sources of information available and build up reference material either on an individual or group basis. Such activities may present an opportunity for cross Unit working with Travel and Tourism: Scotland and Travel and Tourism: UK and Worldwide.

In Outcome 2 learners will be asked to demonstrate that they have effectively researched products and/or services available from the travel and tourism industry, identifying the features and benefits of those selected and demonstrating knowledge of a suitable method of promoting these. Learners could be encouraged to build up their knowledge of a variety of travel and tourism products/services (holidays, short breaks, travel, accommodation, attractions, events, etc) their features (quality, cost, key features, and comparison with similar products) and benefits/advantages, which can then be applied to given situations. Research sources might include websites, paper resources (brochures, leaflets, maps, travel guidebooks), familiarisation visits to relevant tourism businesses. The information gathered might be used in Outcome 1 where candidates are asked to use information in meaningful customer interactions, matching suitable products and/or services to meet customer needs. Independent and group activities will demonstrate the learners' ability to gather, process and present information.

In Outcome 3 learners are asked to deal effectively with customer issues in a travel and tourism environment, building further on the communication skills (listening and talking) and personal qualities demonstrated in Outcome 1 and developing awareness of possible customer problems and issues which might arise, exploring both how best to deal with these issues and possible practical solutions to achieve customer satisfaction. The use of video/DVD and online resources such as review websites may be helpful in identifying real customer issues. Work experience and/or role play would provide learners with the opportunity to practice and enhance their skills.

An understanding of the importance and impact of customer service underpins the delivery of practical skills and case study examples might help learners explore the positive impacts of customer service (repeat customers, recommendations, increased sales, job satisfaction, etc) as well as the negative impacts of poor customer service (increase in number of complaints, lack of job satisfaction, poor reputation, loss of business, fewer jobs).

The Unit should provide opportunities for self reflection, and for the development of social skills and self confidence in preparation for employment in customer facing roles.

Progression from this Unit

Learners who complete this Unit may progress to:

♦ Other Units in Travel and Tourism Skills for Work (National 4)
♦ Travel and Tourism: Customer Service (National 5)
♦ Other Units in Travel and Tourism Skills for Work (National 5)
♦ NC Travel and Tourism (SCQF level 5)
♦ Other Travel and Tourism Units and/or Courses
♦ Employment
♦ Further education or training

Hierarchies

Hierarchy is the term used to describe Courses and Units which form a structured sequence involving two or more SCQF levels.

It is important that any content in a Course and/or Unit at one particular SCQF level is **not repeated** if a learner progresses to the next level of the hierarchy. The skills and knowledge should be able to be applied to new content and contexts to enrich the learning experience. This is for centres to manage.

This Unit sits in a hierarchy with the following Unit:

Travel and Tourism: Customer Service (National 5)

Approaches to learning and teaching

The Unit is intended to help the learner develop an understanding of customer service in travel and tourism and to develop practical customer service skills to meet and exceed the needs and requirements of customers.

Outcomes 1 and 3 of this Unit involve the development of practical skills in customer service within the travel and tourism industry, interacting with customers and providing appropriate responses/solutions to meet customer requirements. With this focus on practical skills, it is desirable that learners are provided with a realistic environment within which to practice skills and where they will experience workplace conditions, deal with colleagues and customers, learn about working as part of a team and generally develop a good work ethic. This may be achieved through a partnership approach with local businesses enabling learners to gain practical work experience or work shadowing within a travel/tourism environment. Alternatively, and/or in addition, learners may, with tutor guidance, set up their own simulated customer service environment. This would enable learners to develop skills in establishing the physical environment to support the delivery of customer service and, as a group activity, provide opportunities for cooperative working, innovation and creativity.

A work placement in the context of this Unit might also provide opportunities for evidence to be generated for Travel and Tourism: Employability (National 4) and either Travel and Tourism: Scotland or Travel and Tourism: UK and Worldwide (National 4).

Outcome 2 involves learners in researching products/services available from travel and tourism businesses. A range of resources, both electronic and paper, could be made available with learners also encouraged to create their own bank of information. The information sourced could be retained in a folio and used in responding to customer needs to meet the requirements of Outcomes 1 and 3. There is the opportunity also for this aspect of the Unit to link with Travel and Tourism in Scotland (National 4) and Travel and Tourism: UK and Worldwide (National 4).

It is recommended that the main approaches to learning in the Unit should be experiential and learner centred. It is suggested that a range of learning and teaching approaches are employed. These should be flexible and adaptable to meet the differing needs of learners and may include:

♦ Teacher/tutor presentations
♦ Independent student activities
♦ Group work/activities
♦ Discussions
♦ TV/DVD
♦ Visits to travel/tourism businesses (eg Tourist Information Centres, Travel Agencies, Visitor Attractions, transport hubs)
♦ Guest speakers from the travel and tourism industry
♦ Case studies
♦ Role play
♦ Video

♦ Self and peer review

In terms of developing customer service skills and personal qualities it is suggested that learners should be exposed to and observe a wide range of customer interactions, perhaps through work experience, work shadowing or independent or group visits to travel/tourism businesses. Feedback from observations could be used to build examples of best practice with learners subsequently given plenty of opportunity to implement and develop their skills within either a real or simulated environment. Video might be used to encourage learners to assess and reflect on their own performance in practical exercises. Peer feedback may be a helpful tool in promoting individual and/or group learning.

Approaches to learning and teaching should recognise the varied customer service roles in travel and tourism which might include:

♦ Tourist Information Centre advisor
♦ Travel agent/advisor
♦ Cabin crew
♦ Resort representative
♦ Tour guide
♦ Tourist Guide
♦ Visitor attraction reception/guide
♦ Airport ground crew

The needs and requirements of customers encountered within these different job roles will vary and, although learners will be required to develop generic customer service skills, centres may however wish to focus, depending on the needs of individual learners or groups of learners, on particular job roles. It is recognised that it is unlikely that all of these job roles will be available locally and, although links with local travel and tourism providers will help place learning in context, this should not limit the learners' experience where certain elements are not available, particularly where learners have a specific interest in developing customer service skills within a particular job role, for example working as Air Cabin Crew or as a Resort Representative. Tutors may wish to explore the possibility of a simulated work environment to support this learning and implement a range of the learning and teaching activities outlined above. This would also provide opportunity to produce evidence for the Travel and Tourism: Employability Unit.

Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Learners are expected to develop broad generic skills as an integral part of their learning experience. The *Unit Specification* lists the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that learners should develop through this Course. These are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and must be built into the Unit where there are appropriate opportunities. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Unit.

The Unit exists to support learners in developing practical Customer Service Skills for work in the travel and tourism industry. Opportunities for learners to build on *Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* may be as follows:

Literacy

1.1   Reading
1.2   Writing
1.3   Listening and talking

Skills in reading and writing could be further developed through the learner's research into tourism products/services and through the possible provision of written information to meet customer needs. There will be a strong focus on and the opportunity for further development in listening and talking as learners identify and practice skills in interacting with customers, listening and asking questions to determine requirements and responding verbally with appropriate information.

4   Employability, enterprise and citizenship

4.1   Employability
4.4   Enterprise

Learners may have the opportunity for work experience or work shadowing providing them with experience of workplace conditions, dealing with colleagues and customers and learning about working as part of a team. The Unit offers opportunities for developing transferable practical customer service and communication skills and building self confidence. Skills in innovation could be further developed through Identifying, and presenting, information, products and services to meet customer needs and identifying opportunities for sales.

5   Thinking skills

5.2   Understanding
5.3   Applying
5.5   Creating

Learners could develop their understanding of the importance and impact of customer service, exploring and understanding customer needs and requirements and apply knowledge by matching available information, products and services to meet the identified needs of customers. Learners may become more aware of creating an impression, including personal presentation and developing the physical customer service environment. They could develop creative ways of presenting products to customers.

Approaches to assessment and gathering evidence

Evidence should be gathered at appropriate points throughout the Unit under open-book conditions, ie learners should have access to their notes, books, the internet etc. Evidence could be retained in a folio.

Outcome 1 requires learners to demonstrate that they can establish and respond to customer needs in a positive and helpful manner. Performance evidence will be required which demonstrates, on one occasion, that the learner has established customer needs using effective communication skills and has responded to them in an appropriate manner.

In Outcome 3 the learner is required to deal with a customer issue. Performance evidence will be required which demonstrates, on one occasion, that the learner has dealt with an issue.

Performance evidence could take the form of a role play within a simulated environment or be evidenced under supervision in a realistic working environment.

For both of these Outcomes performance could be recorded on an assessor observation checklist. If necessary, questioning may be used to supplement performance evidence if this does not fully cover the requirements of the Outcomes. This should be recorded and retained as evidence.

 Assessment may be holistic with the Outcomes assessed concurrently, (for example, the performance evidence for Outcomes 1 and 3).

For Outcome 2 written and/or orally recorded evidence is required identifying the features and benefits of two selected products and/or services and of a further two complementary or alternative products/services. A folio of evidence could be produced by each learner. Evidence for the folio could be gathered throughout the Unit as learners research the products and services offered in the travel and tourism industry and methods of promoting these. Performance, product or written and/or orally recorded evidence demonstrating a suitable method of promoting these products and /or services is required.

Evidence can be presented in a variety of formats, allowing the leaner to choose a format or combination of formats which suits them best. This could include:

♦ E-portfolio
♦ Written descriptions
♦ PowerPoint presentation
♦ Personal blog or wiki
♦ Poster/display
♦ Video or broadcast
♦ Talk

The information researched in Outcome 2 may be evidenced in assessment for Outcome 1 where learners are required to provide relevant information in response to customer needs. Learners may be able to demonstrate knowledge of specific products and methods of promotion during customer interactions. Where such events occur these could be recorded and retained as performance evidence.

Where this Unit is taken as part of the Travel and Tourism Skills for Work Course, practical settings and opportunities for the learner to develop and demonstrate their customer service skills could offer integration with the following Units:

♦ Travel and Tourism: Employability (National 4)
♦ Travel and Tourism: Scotland (National 4)
♦ Travel and Tourism: UK and Worldwide (National 4)

Combining assessment within Units

Where this Unit is taken as part of the Travel and Tourism Skills for Work Course, a learner involved in a work placement for this Unit may have the opportunity to generate evidence for Outcome 2 of the Unit Travel and Tourism: Employability.

Where this placement takes place in a Travel Agency there may be opportunities to gather evidence for Outcome 2 in Travel and Tourism: UK and Worldwide, whereas a placement within a Tourist Information Centre or perhaps a local Visitor Attraction may present opportunities to generate evidence for Outcome 2 of the Unit Travel and Tourism: Scotland.

E-assessment

E-assessment can play an important role in the design and delivery of the new National Courses and Units by supporting integration and personalisation and choice for learners. While it is important not to introduce new, additional ICT skills or knowledge, learners may be using ICT in working towards their assessment.

Evidence may be produced in a variety of formats, for example:

♦ Recording of interviews
♦ E-portfolio
♦ E-mails
♦ Blogs
♦ Assessor record of candidate responses
♦ Review sheets
♦ Electronic presentations
♦ Electronic journals
♦ Diaries
♦ Videos
♦ Photographs

Equality and Inclusion

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in this document is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Unit.

It is important that centres understand SQA's assessment arrangements for disabled learners and those with additional support needs when making requests for adjustments to published assessment arrangements. Centres will find more guidance on this in the assessment arrangements section of SQA's website: **www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html.**

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment to take account of the specific needs of learners can be used. However, the centre must be satisfied that the integrity of the assessment is maintained and where the alternative approach to assessment will, in fact, generate the necessary evidence of achievement.

For more information on assessment arrangements and when centres should seek SQA approval for alternative assessment arrangements, go to **www.sqa.org.uk/14976.html.**

Appendix 1: Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

This Unit has 6 SCQF credit points.

Within the SCQF, every 10 hours of learning equates to 1 SCQF credit point. Most National Units at SCQF levels 1 to 6 are made up of 6 SCQF credit points, or a notional 60 hours of learning.

At SCQF levels 1 and 2, some Units have 6 SCQF points or a notional 60 hours of learning. This will normally be 40 programmed hours of learning plus an additional 20 hours for further support.

At SCQF levels 3–6, many Units will have 6 SCQF credit points or a notional 60 hours of learning. Of these 60 hours, 40 involve programmed learning, such as class contact and assessment. The other 20 hours includes the time that an individual learner will be expected to contribute to his/her learning through independent study, such as reading and revision for assessment. For National Units at these levels, it is expected that learners require an additional half of the time required for programmed learning in order to prepare them to undertake a successful learning experience.

National Units at SCQF level 7, however, are made up of 8 SCQF credit points, or a notional 80 hours of learning. This reflects the fact that SCQF level 7 is the starting point for higher education in the framework, and this involves a higher and often deeper level of learning than that undertaken at the lower levels. As such, learning at SCQF level 7 and above places more demands on the learner, including the need for a higher proportion of independent study, which is reflected in the overall learning time.

Further information about SCQF levels can be found in the *SCQF Handbook: User Guide* (published 2009).

Appendix 2: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

♦ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications on SQA's website: **http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html**
♦ *Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work*
♦ *Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment*
♦ *Course Specifications*
♦ Design Principles for National Courses
♦ *Guide to Assessment* (June 2008)
♦ Overview of Qualification Reports
♦ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
♦ *Research Report 4 — Less is More: Good Practice in Reducing Assessment Time*
♦ *Coursework Authenticity — a Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*
♦ *SCQF Handbook: User Guide (published 2009)* and SCQF level descriptors (to be reviewed during 2011 to 2012): **www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html**
♦ *SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*
♦ *Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool*
♦ *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools*
♦ *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education*
♦ SQA e-assessment web page: **www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html**

Administrative information

Published: February 2013 (version 1.0)

Superclass: BA

History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Unit details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date