



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Skills for Customer Care (SCQF level 4)

CODE F38W 10

SUMMARY

This Unit may be delivered as part of a National Qualification Group Award or as a free-standing Unit. The Unit is intended for candidates who wish to develop skills, knowledge and understanding of customer care. Candidates will consider how to identify customers, their needs and how these needs can be met. Procedures for dealing with dissatisfied customers are also considered. The practical nature of this Unit allows candidates to gain a real insight into customer care.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Explain the importance of customer care to an organisation.
- 2 Establish the needs of external customers.
- 3 Provide information to external customers.
- 4 Respond to dissatisfied external customers in specified circumstances.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would be expected to have good communication and interpersonal skills.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 1 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4*).

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Administrative Information

Superclass: BA

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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CORE SKILLS

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

Opportunities for developing aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in *Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Unit*.

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.

OUTCOME 1

Explain the importance of customer care to an organisation.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify examples of internal and external customers in an organisation.
- (b) Explain the positive effects of good customer care to an organisation.
- (c) Explain the negative effects poor customer care would have on an organisation.

OUTCOME 2

Establish the needs of external customers.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify needs of external customer through appropriate questions.
- (b) Maintain a positive and helpful attitude and appropriate tone throughout customer interactions.
- (c) Follow organisational customer care procedures throughout interactions.

OUTCOME 3

Provide information to external customers.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify relevant information to meet the established needs of external customers.
- (b) Communicate this information clearly and accurately using appropriate communication methods.
- (c) Maintain a positive and helpful attitude and appropriate tone throughout customer interactions.
- (d) Follow organisational customer care procedures throughout interactions.

OUTCOME 4

Respond to dissatisfied external customers in specified circumstances.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify the reasons for dissatisfaction of specific customers.
- (b) Explain clearly to customers the organisational procedure for dealing with customer dissatisfaction.
- (c) Respond appropriately to specific customer problems, in line with organisational policy and procedures.
- (d) Maintain a positive and helpful attitude and appropriate tone throughout customer interactions.
- (e) Follow organisational customer care procedures throughout interactions.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Performance evidence and written/oral recorded evidence which covers all the Outcomes and Performance Criteria is required.

Outcome 1

Candidates are required to provide written or oral recorded evidence to demonstrate that they are able to:

- ◆ give examples of internal and external customers in an organisation
- ◆ provide an explanation of the positive effects of good customer care on that organisation and the negative effects poor customer care would have on it

This assessment should take place in controlled open-book conditions. Where the candidate answers orally, the assessor must complete an assessor checklist.

Outcomes 2, 3 and 4

Candidates will be required to demonstrate evidence through performance that when dealing with customers that they are able to:

- ◆ ask relevant questions to identify the needs of an organisation's customer
- ◆ identify information to meet the needs of an organisation's customer and communicate it clearly to the customer using appropriate communication methods
- ◆ identify the reasons for the dissatisfaction of an organisation's customer, explain the organisation's procedure for dealing with the customer's dissatisfaction and respond appropriately to the customer, clearly explaining the next steps. This will involve a customer problem or complaint in circumstances specified by the centre
- ◆ maintain a positive and helpful attitude and appropriate tone while interacting with these customers

The information to be provided may be about a product or service of the organisation. Communication may be oral (eg by telephone or face-to-face) or in writing (eg e-mail).

Performance evidence can be produced through a range of real or simulated practical scenarios, either in a realistic working environment or a workplace environment. An assessor observation checklist must be used to provide evidence of performance. Questioning may be used to supplement performance evidence. For Outcome 4, the circumstances should be specified by the centre and candidates will demonstrate that they can explain and follow the organisation's procedure for dealing with dissatisfied customers.

National Unit Specification: support notes

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This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes 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

It is important that content of this Unit is contextualised for candidates.

Outcome 1 considers the importance of good customer care to an organisation. Both internal and external customers of an organisation should be identified, for example, colleagues in another part of the organisation or external customers using the organisation's products and/or services. Candidates should be asked to draw on their own experience as customers to gain an appreciation of their expectations of good customer service. The importance of customers to the success of an organisation should also be explored.

Outcome 2 offers the opportunity to establish the needs of different types of customer by asking appropriate questions. These could be oral in a face-to-face situation or on the telephone, or in writing, for example via e-mail. Various ways of establishing customer needs should be considered and candidates should practise appropriate methods of identifying exactly what the customer requires.

In Outcome 3, candidates are required to meet customers' needs by providing appropriate information about a product or service of the organisation. Candidates should look at different types of information that customers commonly require, for example, the quality and features of the organisation's products and/or services and how they are delivered to the customer. Different ways of gaining this information should be considered, with respect to access, time and organisational procedures.

In Outcome 4, candidates examine how to identify the reasons for customer dissatisfaction and the organisation's procedure for dealing with this. Having identified the reasons for the customer's dissatisfaction, which could be a problem or complaint, candidates will explain the organisation's procedure for dealing with such a situation and respond appropriately to the customer.

Outcomes 2, 3 and 4 are also concerned with the need to follow organisational procedures (which could be in the form of an organisational policy or guidelines — and may cover personal appearance — at all times in a customer care setting. Candidates should understand that a consistent level of good practice is required in maintaining good customer care, and should maintain a positive and helpful attitude and appropriate tone while dealing with customers. Non-spoken communication, eg, the effects of positive and negative body language on customers, should be considered.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

This Unit may be delivered as part of a National Qualification Group Award or as a free-standing Unit.

It is important to contextualise the content to make it as relevant as possible to the candidate's area of study. A range of delivery techniques can be employed, including group discussion, and candidates should be encouraged to draw on any experience they have in the workplace — both as customers and of delivering customer care. The use of real or fictional case studies/scenarios will aid them to put their learning into a practical context. It would be advantageous for candidates to be able to experience a real or simulated customer service environment. Alternatively, candidates could role play similar situations. It may be possible to link this Unit with any relevant work experience which the candidate undertakes as part of their programme of study.

It would be helpful for candidates to visit an organisation with a good reputation for customer care as part of their studies. Good practice could be identified and used as discussion points within the class. It may be useful for a speaker from a relevant industry to talk to candidates about how their organisation plans, implements and improves customer care.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

In this Unit, candidates will carry out practical activities that involve interacting with customers. These are good opportunities for developing communication and problem solving skills.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The practical assessment for this Unit could take place in a customer care environment and effort should be made to make the situation as real as possible. It may be possible to link this assessment to work experience which the candidate carries out as part of the programme of study. Alternatively, a role play situation could be used. It may be possible to develop scenarios in which candidates could provide the evidence for Outcomes 2, 3 and 4. These could be in the form of role plays or case studies. Questioning may be used to supplement performance evidence

Restricted response questions may be used to gather evidence of the underpinning knowledge needed. This assessment should take place in controlled open-book conditions.

Opportunities for the use of 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 communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).