



## National Unit Specification: general information

**UNIT** Skills for Customer Care (SCQF level 5)

**CODE** F38X 11

### 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 knowledge and understanding of customer care. The Unit is suitable for those wishing to learn how to deliver good customer care and designed to enable the candidate to recognise the importance of customer care within a work environment. Candidates will consider the key principles of good customer care and how this affects the success of an organisation. The importance of developing relationships with customers, various different communication techniques and ways of establishing a rapport with customers are considered. The Unit also allows candidates to consider the importance of gathering, recording and acting upon customer feedback.

### OUTCOMES

- 1 Explain the key principles of customer care in an organisation.
- 2 Demonstrate customer care skills in routine interactions.
- 3 Demonstrate customer care skills when dealing with dissatisfied customers.
- 4 Explain the importance of feedback from customers to improving customer care in an organisation.

### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Standard Grade English at General level
- ◆ Intermediate 1 English at Intermediate 1
- ◆ English or Communication Unit(s) at Intermediate 1

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#### Administrative Information

**Superclass:** BA

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## **National Unit Specification: general information (cont)**

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### **CREDIT VALUE**

1 credit at Intermediate 2 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5\*).

*\*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.*

### **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**

### **UNIT Skills for Customer Care (SCQF level 5)**

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

#### **OUTCOME 1**

Explain the key principles of customer care in an organisation.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Describe the needs of both internal and external customers of an organisation.
- (b) Explain the importance of good product /service knowledge in meeting customer needs.
- (c) Describe ways in which customer needs can be met and exceeded in an organisation.
- (d) Explain how customer relationships are established and maintained.

#### **OUTCOME 2**

Demonstrate customer care skills in routine interactions.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Use rapport building techniques and empathy in the initial stages of customer interaction to help establish the relationship.
- (b) Use effective communication methods, adopting an appropriate tone and style to maintain a positive relationship throughout the interaction.
- (c) Seek relevant information from the customer and provide information to meet customer needs.
- (d) Conclude the interaction on a positive note, clearly outlining the next steps.
- (e) Follow organisational procedures throughout the interaction.

#### **OUTCOME 3**

Demonstrate customer care skills when dealing with dissatisfied customers.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Seek information on the nature of the problem through effective questioning.
- (b) Identify and confirm with the customer the reasons for dissatisfaction.
- (c) Explain clearly the organisation's procedure for dealing with customer dissatisfaction.
- (d) Take appropriate action to resolve the customer's problem and explain clearly the next steps.
- (e) Maintain a positive and helpful attitude and appropriate tone throughout the interaction.
- (f) Follow organisational procedures throughout the interaction.

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)**

### **UNIT Skills for Customer Care (SCQF level 5)**

#### **OUTCOME 4**

Explain the importance of feedback from customers to improving customer care in an organisation.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Describe methods of gathering qualitative and quantitative feedback from customers on the levels of customer care experienced in an organisation.
- (b) Explain how customer feedback can be used to improve customer care in an organisation.
- (c) Explain the overall importance to the organisation of obtaining customer feedback.

#### **EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT**

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

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

#### **Outcomes 1 and 4**

Candidates are required to provide written or oral recorded evidence on a single assessment occasion. The evidence must include:

- ◆ a description of the needs of internal and external customers of an organisation
- ◆ an explanation of the importance of good product or service knowledge in meeting customer needs
- ◆ a description of ways of meeting and exceeding customers' needs
- ◆ an explanation of how to establish and maintain customer relationships
- ◆ a description of methods of gathering and recording qualitative and quantitative customer feedback
- ◆ an explanation of how customer feedback can be used to improve customer care in an organisation
- ◆ an explanation of the overall importance to the organisation of obtaining customer feedback

#### **Outcomes 2 and 3**

Candidates will be required to demonstrate by practical activity on a minimum of **one** occasion that they are able to:

- ◆ use rapport building techniques and empathy in the initial stages of customer interaction to help establish the relationship
- ◆ use effective communication skills in interactions with customers
- ◆ seek relevant information from the customer and provide information to meet customer needs
- ◆ conclude the interaction on a positive note

## National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

### UNIT Skills for Customer Care (SCQF level 5)

Candidates will be required to demonstrate the use of customer care skills on a minimum of **one** occasion when dealing with dissatisfied customers. Candidates will be required to demonstrate that they are able to:

- ◆ use effective questioning to seek information on the nature of the problem
- ◆ identify and confirm with the customer the reasons for dissatisfaction
- ◆ explain clearly the organisation's procedure for dealing with customer dissatisfaction
- ◆ take appropriate action to resolve the customer's problem
- ◆ explain clearly the next steps

Candidates must maintain a positive and helpful attitude and appropriate tone while interacting with these customers and follow the customer care procedures of the organisation throughout. These procedures could be in the form of guidelines or an organisational policy. 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).

Outcomes 2 and 3 will be assessed through observation of the candidate in different customer care situations in real or simulated practical scenarios, either in a realistic working environment or real workplace. Observation checklists must be completed by the assessor. Candidates must be observed on at least two separate occasions. If necessary, questioning may be used to supplement performance evidence if this does not fully cover the requirements of the Outcomes.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes**

### **UNIT Skills for Customer Care (SCQF level 5)**

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**

This Unit is intended for candidates who wish to develop knowledge and understanding of customer care which is recognised as an important area in a work environment.

This Unit is expressed in generic terms but should be related to a context which the candidates are familiar.

Outcome 1 covers the key principles of customer care. These are defining your customers and understanding their needs in order to meet and exceed them. Both internal and external customers should be discussed and their different expectations and needs considered. The importance of knowledgeable staff should be considered. Candidates should look at ways of gaining knowledge of products and services.

Outcome 2 is intended to allow candidates to explore the need for building relationships with customers. The benefits of building good customer relations should be highlighted. The need for empathy with customers needs should be considered. Appropriate communication techniques for building a rapport with customers should be discussed. All aspects of communication in relation to dealing with customers should be explored, for example, face-to-face communication, using the telephone, written communication, body language, active listening skills, conversational skills and effective questioning techniques.

Outcome 3 involves dealing with dissatisfied customers, which is common in a customer care environment. Consideration should be given to how best to approach customer complaints in line with any organisational guidelines and respecting confidentiality. Potential reasons for customer complaints should be recognised and appropriate methods for dealing with them implemented.

Outcome 4 is principally about the importance of gathering and using customer feedback to continually improve provision of customer service. The need for continual improvement should be discussed. Candidates should look at ways of gathering feedback, both qualitative and quantitative methods (eg customer comment cards or customer surveys). The differences between these should be identified. The way in which this data is recorded and how the information may be used should be discussed.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

### **UNIT Skills for Customer Care (SCQF level 5)**

#### **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 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.

Candidates should also be encouraged to investigate current industry standards and organisational policies through research carried out on the Internet and other sources

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 assessment should be contextualised.

Outcome 1 may be assessed through a series of restricted response questions. The questions should cover all Performance Criteria in the Outcome. The assessment should take place in open-book controlled conditions on a single occasion.

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 two scenarios in which candidates could provide the evidence for Outcomes 2 and 3 — one involving role play and the other a case study. If necessary, questioning may be used to supplement performance evidence if this does not fully cover the requirements of the Outcomes.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

### **UNIT Skills for Customer Care (SCQF level 5)**

#### **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)*.

#### **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](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).