



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Skills for Customer Care (SCQF level 6)

CODE F38Y 12

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 enhance their knowledge and understanding of customer care which is recognised as an important area in a work environment. The Unit is designed to enable the candidate to recognise and develop effective customer care within a work environment. The Unit enables the candidate to gain an understanding of who customers are, both internal and external and the requirement for product knowledge, and for meeting and exceeding customers' needs in a competitive environment. The Unit also provides candidates with an opportunity to evaluate customer care in specified interactions in an organisation. They will use their knowledge to develop a customer care plan for an organisation, setting clear and achievable standards and will develop understanding of how to achieve continuous improvement in customer care.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Explain how customer needs can be met and exceeded in an organisation.
- 2 Evaluate levels of customer care in specified interactions in an organisation.
- 3 Produce a customer care plan to meet the needs of a specific 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 Credit level
- ◆ English at Intermediate 2
- ◆ English or Communication Unit at SCQF level 5
- ◆ Skills for Customer Care at SCQF level 5

Administrative Information

Superclass: BA

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**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

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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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Explain how customer needs can be met and exceeded in an organisation.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Define the organisation's internal and external customers.
- (b) Explain the expectations and needs of both internal and external customers of an organisation.
- (c) Explain why good product/service knowledge is essential in order to meet customer needs.
- (d) Explain other aspects of customer care which are essential to meet customer needs.
- (e) Explain ways in which customer needs and expectations can be exceeded in an organisation.

OUTCOME 2

Evaluate levels of customer care in specified interactions in an organisation.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Explain how far customer needs and expectations were met in the interaction.
- (b) Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of customer care in the interaction.
- (c) Evaluate the impact on the organisation of the level of customer care given in the interaction.
- (d) Identify from the interaction areas for improvement in customer care.

OUTCOME 3

Produce a customer care plan to meet the needs of a specific organisation.

Performance Criteria

- (a) The plan is comprehensive and includes the main components of customer care to be addressed.
- (b) Clear, achievable standards of customer care, appropriate to the organisation, are set out in the plan.
- (c) Appropriate methods of obtaining qualitative and quantitative customer feedback to help to improve customer care are described.
- (d) Appropriate methods of achieving continuous improvement in customer care are described.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Written and/or 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.

For Outcome 1, candidates are required to provide written or oral recorded evidence on a single assessment occasion. The evidence must include:

- ◆ a full definition of the needs of internal and external customers of an organisation
- ◆ a clear explanation of the expectations and needs of these customers
- ◆ a full explanation of the importance of good product or service knowledge in meeting customer needs
- ◆ an explanation of other aspects of customer care which are essential to meet customer needs
- ◆ an explanation of ways of exceeding customers' needs and expectations in an organisation

For Outcome 2, candidates are required to provide written or oral recorded evidence which demonstrates the evaluation of at least **two** interactions with customers in an organisation. The evidence must include, for each interaction:

- ◆ an explanation of the extent to which customer needs and expectations were met
- ◆ an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of customer care in the interaction and of the impact on the organisation of the level of customer care given in the interaction
- ◆ identification of areas for improvement in customer care

The interactions to be evaluated could be real or simulated practical scenarios, for example, the candidate could watch and evaluate videos of real or simulated interactions involving themselves or others, or could evaluate scenarios involving actual correspondence or a case study. Where the candidate provides evidence orally, the assessor must complete an assessor checklist.

Outcome 3 may be assessed by candidates undertaking a contextualised assignment. The assignment will cover all Performance Criteria in Outcome 3. Candidates will be asked to consider a real/fictional customer care scenario and develop an appropriate customer care plan for the given organisation.

The customer care plan must be comprehensive and must include:

- ◆ the main components of customer care to be addressed:
- ◆ clear achievable standards of customer care appropriate to the organisation
- ◆ a clear description of appropriate methods of obtaining qualitative and quantitative customer feedback to help to improve customer care
- ◆ a clear description of appropriate methods of achieving continuous improvement in customer care

The assessment will be completed under open-book conditions.

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

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

Outcome 1 covers how to meet and exceed the needs of an organisation's internal and external customers. The needs of both internal and external customers should be considered, and a link should be made between good internal customer service and the impact of this on external customers. The importance of not only meeting but exceeding customers' expectations should be discussed and relevant industry examples can be used to illustrate this. The need for staff to be knowledgeable should be considered, as should ways in which staff can gain appropriate knowledge of the organisation's products or services.

Outcome 2 allows candidates to evaluate interactions with customers. Various forms of communication should be looked at, including face to face, using the telephone, written communication, body language, active listening skills, effective questioning techniques and the need for empathy with customers. Time should be spent considering the impact on an organisation of excellent, acceptable and poor customer care. Case studies, video and discussion of experience would all be suitable to allow candidates to understand what leads to excellent customer care.

Outcome 3 offers candidates the opportunity to develop a customer care plan. Candidates should examine current standards in their industry relating to customer care. Mission statements and organisational objectives should be looked at. Benchmarking should be considered here. Candidates should explore methods of obtaining and using customer feedback to aid continuous improvement of the organisation should be explored.

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 candidates 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.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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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. Videos may also be useful in the delivery of this Unit.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

In this Unit, candidates will develop a customer care plan and identify areas for improvement in customer care. These are good opportunities for developing communication and problem-solving skills.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Outcome 1 may be assessed through a series of 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.

Outcome 2 requires the candidate to evaluate levels of customer care in specified interactions. These could be real or simulated scenarios, and could involve the candidate evaluating the level of customer care they personally have provided in interactions, or could involve observing others. Videos of real or simulated interactions could be used, as could actual correspondence or case studies. Where the candidate provides evidence orally, the assessor must complete an assessor checklist.

Outcome 3 is assessed through a contextualised assignment where the candidate will develop a suitable customer care plan for a given organisation. The assessment for Outcome 3 will take place in 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)*.

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)*.