

Assessment Strategy

Customer Service in the Financial Services Sector at SCQF Level 6

Developed by: SQA

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This is the Assessment Strategy specific to Customer Service in the Financial Services Sector at SCQF Level 6.

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Introduction

This appendix supplements the Overarching Assessment Strategy for competence-based qualifications.

The following sections align to the corresponding sections of the Overarching Assessment Strategy and set out requirements specific to the qualification **Customer Service in the Financial Services Sector at SCQF level 6**.

1. Purpose and use

This qualification is designed to recognise competence in the delivery of customer service in the Financial Services sector. It requires that the learner is engaged in a customer service role within the Financial Services sector and that work-based learning, aligned to and assessed against the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria, is the primary method by which learners develop and evidence the knowledge, skills, behaviours and meta-skills set out in this qualification. Work-based learning is a partnership between learner, employer and learning provider, and all learners must have the support of an employer in undertaking this qualification.

2. Generic requirements for competence-based qualifications

2.1 Quality assurance requirements

External Quality Assurance of Assessment

The requirements for the external quality assurance of assessment are set out in section 2.1 *External Quality Assurance of Assessment* of the overarching Assessment Strategy for competence-based qualifications. There are no further requirements specific to this qualification.

Workplace Assessment

The qualification will primarily be delivered and assessed in the workplace. This is the environment in which the learner will routinely support customers. It is also the environment in which the learner will most easily engage with the products and services provided by the employer.

Learners are expected to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of this qualification and are competent in a customer service role within the Financial Services sector. Learners will gather evidence of their competence in the workplace and this will be assessed within an awarding body approved centre by qualified and experienced staff.

It is a general requirement that Awarding Body arrangements ensure that competence can be demonstrated over a period of time, rather than simply for the purposes of a single assessment.

It is unlikely however that performance evidence alone will provide enough evidence of competence in this area. In particular, where the learner's knowledge and understanding is not apparent from performance evidence, it must be assessed by other methods and be supported by suitable evidence.

Knowledge and understanding can be demonstrated in a number of different ways, but it is suggested that the most appropriate methods for this qualification are oral questioning, professional discussion and reflective accounts. Assessors should ask enough questions to be able to determine that the learner has an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding as required by the unit(s).

It is therefore recommended that learners undertaking **Customer Service in the Financial Services Sector at SCQF level 6** develop a portfolio of work to evidence their competence that includes:

- direct observation of performance in the workplace by a qualified assessor
- testimony from an expert witness to the activity being assessed
- reflective accounts of performance from the learner. This qualification requires regular reflective practice supported by professional discussion to evidence the development and application of meta-skills. Ideally these discussions should take place at intervals no greater than 3 months and, as a minimum, 4 such discussions must be undertaken. This reflection could align with Personal Development Review conversations naturally occurring between a learner and line manager.
- evidence of work plans and work-based products produced by the learner.

This approach will allow the learner to:

- collect evidence of achievement
- understand and reflect on work practice
- build and develop learning plans that provide frequent opportunities for:
 - reviewing their own performance
 - setting new learning objectives based on review, and
 - recognising ways their work is facilitating skills acquisition, including meta-skills, and supporting behavioural change.

Expert witnesses

The requirements of expert witnesses are set out in section 2.1 *Expert witnesses* of the overarching Assessment Strategy for competence-based qualifications. There are no further requirements specific to this qualification.

Simulation in a Realistic Work Environment

There are no mandatory simulations for this qualification, and simulation is permissible only as set out in section 2.1 *Simulation in a Realistic Work Environment* of the overarching Assessment Strategy for competence-based qualifications.

In these circumstances, assessment must be carried out in a realistic work environment and under conditions which replicate those of the workplace, and Assessors must ensure that competence is fully transferable to the workplace.

In this qualification simulation is most likely to be considered in relation to complaints handling. Not all learners working in Financial Services will experience the complaints process end-to-end, for example in organisations where complaint handling is managed as a specialist function. Even in these circumstances, all learners in a customer service role would expect to hear and record complaints over a period of time and to escalate these for resolution, and some learners may also be able to secure a temporary placement in a complaints handling team. Where this is not the case, any use of simulation to produce performance evidence must be carried out in a realistic work environment and under conditions which replicate those of the workplace, and Assessors must ensure that competence is fully transferable to the workplace.

2.2 Occupational expertise and qualification requirements for those undertaking quality assurance of assessment

Occupational Expertise of Assessors

The requirements of assessors are set out in section 2.2 *Occupational Expertise of Assessors* of the overarching Assessment Strategy for Competence-based Qualifications. There are no further requirements specific to this qualification.

Occupational expertise of Internal Verifiers

The requirements of Internal Verifiers are set out in section 2.2 *Occupational expertise of Internal Verifiers* of the overarching Assessment Strategy for competence-based qualifications. There are no further requirements specific to this qualification.

Occupational expertise of External Verifiers

The requirements of External Verifiers are set out in section 2.2 *Occupational expertise of External Verifiers* of the overarching Assessment Strategy for competence-based qualifications. There are no further requirements specific to this qualification.

3. Meta-skills

A key aspect of this qualification is the expectation that learners develop meta-skills and that they become aware of the importance of these skills – both in the provision of effective customer service, and for their personal and career development.

To support this, each unit in this qualification signposts meta-skills that are likely to be required or demonstrated in order to meet the outcomes and reflection on performance and on skills developed is a key theme for this qualification. This signposting is indicative, and learners may identify other, non-signposted, meta-skills as having been applied - provided they are able to example this in the context of the relevant work situation.

The unit **Develop professional relationships through collaboration to meet customer needs and business objectives** requires learners to *Reflect on your own performance to improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery*, and the unit **Provide Customer Service in the Financial Service Sector** requires learners to *plan to develop the skills, including meta-skills, to be effective in a providing customer service role in the financial services sector*.

Regular reflective accounts of the skills utilised or developed through work activities are the key source of assessment evidence for these outcomes and for the development of meta-skills. These reflective accounts must be supported by professional discussion with an assessor, supervisor or work colleague who can:

- observe and offer constructive feedback
- encourage self-reflection by the learner
- encourage and promote professional discussion
- provide challenge for the learner's learning and development.

In relation to meta-skills the minimum requirement for this qualification is that:

- reflective discussion on skills developed/to be developed takes place on a minimum of four occasions, and
- these discussions include at least one meta-skill from each the three categories and a minimum of six meta-skills in total (see [here](#) for more detail on meta-skills and categories).

Skills Development Scotland have additionally produced a range of tools which may be used to support assessment.

- Meta-skills self-profiling tool
- Meta-skills self-assessment tool
- Meta-skills development plan
- QA Guidance for Meta-skills Delivery
- Guidance on level of reflective practice expected for different SCQF levels

The meta-skills tools are available from Skills Development Scotland by request to apprenticeshipdevelopment@sds.co.uk