

CUSTOMER SERVICE PRACTITIONER APPRENTICESHIP



The role of a customer service practitioner is to deliver high quality products and services to the customers of their organisation. These services may be delivered from the workplace, digitally or through going out into the customer's own locality. Duties may be one-off or routine, and typically include dealing with orders, payments, offering advice, guidance and support, meet-and-greet, sales, fixing problems, after care, service recovery or gaining insight through measuring customer satisfaction.

They are often the first point of contact, and their actions will influence the customer experience and satisfaction with the organisation. They will demonstrate excellent customer service skills as well as product and/or service knowledge when dealing with customers.

Customer interactions may cover a wide range of situations and can include face-to-face, telephone, post, email, text and social media. These team members provide service in line with the organisation's customer service standards and within appropriate regulatory requirements.

Entry

Apprentices will be required to have or achieve level 1 English and maths and to have taken level 2 English and maths tests prior to completion of their Apprenticeship.

Duration

The apprenticeship will take a minimum of 12 months to complete.

Progression

Completion of this apprenticeship will lead to eligibility to join the Institute of Customer Service as an Individual member at Professional level.

Level

This apprenticeship standard is set at level 2.

Functional Skills

To complete the apprenticeship the employee must pass level 1 English and maths (or have the appropriate exemption certificate) and work towards and attempt level 2 before undertaking their end point assessment.

End Assessment

To achieve this apprenticeship standard, the employer, training provider and apprentice will agree when the apprentice is ready and competent to undertake the independent end assessment.

HIT Professional Trainers

Each apprentice will be assigned a designated Trainer by HIT who will visit them and their line manager bi-monthly at their workplace throughout the apprenticeship. On alternate months, the HIT Trainer will be in contact with the apprentice to coach, mentor and discuss progress.

For more information contact us at:

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	Knowledge
Knowing your customers	Understand who customers are
	Understand the difference between internal and external customers
	Understand the different needs and priorities of your customers and the best way to manage their expectations, recognising and knowing how to adapt style to be highly effective
Understanding the organisation	Know the purpose of the business and what 'brand promise' means
	Know your organisation's core values and how they link to the service culture
	Know the internal policies and procedures, including any complaints processes and digital media policies that are relevant to you and your organisation
Meeting regulations and legislation	Know the appropriate legislation and regulatory requirements that affect your business
	Know your responsibility in relation to this and how to apply it when delivering service.
Systems and resources	Know how to use systems, equipment and technology to meet the needs of your customers
	Understand types of measurement and evaluation tools available to monitor customer service levels
Your role and responsibility	Understand your role and responsibility within your organisation and the impact of your actions on others
	Know the targets and goals you need to deliver against
Customer experience	Understand how establishing the facts enable you to create a customer focused experience and appropriate response
	Understand how to build trust with a customer and why this is important
Customer experience	Understand the products or services that are available from your organisation and keep up-to-date

	Skills
Interpersonal skills	Use a range of questioning skills, including listening and responding in a way that builds rapport, determines customer needs and expectations and achieves positive engagement and delivery.
Communication	Depending on your job role and work environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication skills, along with summarising language during face-to-face communications; and/or ▶ Use appropriate communication skills, along with reinforcement techniques (to confirm understanding) during non-facing customer interactions
	Use an appropriate 'tone of voice' in all communications, including written and digital, that reflect the organisation's brand
Influencing skills	Provide clear explanations and offer options in order to help customers make choices that are mutually beneficial to both the customer and your organisation
Personal organisation	Be able to organise yourself, prioritise your own workload/activity and work to meet deadlines
Dealing with customer conflict and challenge	Demonstrate patience and calmness
	Show you understand the customer's point of view
	Use appropriate sign-posting or resolution to meet your customers needs and manage expectations
	Maintain informative communication during service recovery

	Behaviours / Attitude
Developing self	<p>Take ownership for keeping your service knowledge and skills up-to-date</p> <p>Consider personal goals and propose development that would help achieve them</p>
Being open to feedback	<p>Act on and seek feedback from others to develop or maintain personal service skills and knowledge</p>
Team working	<p>Frequently and consistently communicate and work with others in the interest of helping customers efficiently</p> <p>Share personal learning and case studies with others, presenting recommendations, and improvement to support good practice</p>
Equality – treating all customers as individuals	<p>Treat customers as individuals to provide a personalised customer service experience</p> <p>Uphold the organisations core values and service culture through your actions</p>
Presentation – dress code, professional language	<p>Demonstrate personal pride in the job through appropriate dress and positive and confident language</p>
"Right first time"	<p>Use communication behaviours that establish clearly what each customer requires and manage their expectations</p> <p>Take ownership from the first contact and then take responsibility for fulfilling your promise</p>



INDEPENDENT END POINT ASSESSMENT

The end point assessment will only commence once the employer, apprentice and HIT Trainer are confident that the apprentice has developed all the knowledge, skills and behaviours defined in the apprenticeship standard and clearly evidenced by the on-programme progression review meetings and records.

The independent end assessment ensures that all apprentices consistently achieve the industry set professional standard and can commence at any point once the apprentice is competent after the twelve-month minimum period of learning and development. Prior to independent end assessment the functional skills English and maths components of the apprenticeship must be successfully completed.

Summary of independent end point assessment process

The apprentice will be assessed to the apprenticeship standard using three complementary assessment methods. The assessment is synoptic, i.e. takes a view of the overall performance of the apprentice in their job. The assessment activities will be completed by the independent end point assessment organisation as follows:



Apprentice showcase

The apprentice showcase is compiled after 12 months of on-programme learning. The apprentice showcase enables apprentices to reflect and present examples of their development over the whole on-programme period. With guidance from the

employer and/or training provider the apprentice will select appropriate evidence from the on-programme portfolio to demonstrate the minimum requirements of the standard at the final stage of the programme as an 'Apprentice Showcase'.



Practical observation

The practical observation will be pre-planned and scheduled to when the apprentice will be in their normal place of work and will be carried out by the Independent Assessor. The observation

should enable the apprentice to evidence their skills, knowledge and behaviour from across the standard to demonstrate genuine and demanding work objectives.



Professional discussion

The professional discussion will be a structured discussion between the apprentice and the Independent Assessor, following

the observation, to establish the apprentice's understanding and application of knowledge, skills and behaviours.



Completion

Independent end assessor confirms that each assessment element has been completed. The overall grade is determined by the independent end assessor based on the combination of performance in all assessment activities.

For a distinction to be awarded, apprentices must also achieve a distinction in each assessment method, as outlined in the Assessment plan.

Independent end point assessment organisations

Approved assessment organisations are registered on the SFA Register of apprenticeship assessment organisations. Assessment organisations are responsible for ensuring assessments are conducted fairly and that assessments are valid, reliable and consistent. To access the list and find an assessment organisation visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/using-the-register-of-apprentice-assessment-organisations>.

The employer will approve and appoint the assessment organisation to undertake the independent end assessment of the apprentice.