

Customer Service Practitioner

Apprenticeship Level 2

Excellent customer service is vital to the success of any organisation. Making customers feel valued and ensuring that they have the best possible experience is important for retaining loyal customers and developing successful relationships with new ones. Ensuring your staff have good customer service skills is therefore essential. An apprenticeship is a smart, cost-effective way to recruit new customer service staff and to upskill your existing staff.

By the end of this apprenticeship, your apprentice will demonstrate excellent customer service skills and behaviours as well as product/service knowledge when communicating with your customers. They will provide a service in line with your organisation's standards and within appropriate regulatory requirements.

Key Areas of Study

Your apprentice will cover essential knowledge, skills and behaviours on their programme. The full menu of options for what can be covered is outlined in this document, and you can select the areas of most importance for your organisation.

Quick Information:

New Apprenticeship Standard designed by employers for employers

Sector:

Relevant to all employment sectors

Who is it for?

New recruits and existing staff

Start date:

Flexible to suit employers

Level:

Level 2

Duration:

Minimum 12 months

How does it work?

Delivered in your workplace with one-to-one training and tutor visits every 4 weeks

Content:

Menu of options that can be tailored to your business

Assessment:

Practical assessment and coursework during and at the end of the programme

Qualification:

Customer Service Practitioner
Apprenticeship

Additional qualifications:

Those who complete will be eligible to join the Institute of Customer Services.



Knowledge

Knowing your customers

- Understand who your 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 expectations, recognising and knowing how to adapt his/her 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.

Role and responsibility

- Understand their role and responsibility within your organisation and the impact of their actions on others.
- Know the targets and goals you need to deliver against.

Customer experience

- Understand how establishing the facts enables them to create a customer-focused experience and appropriate response.
- Understand how to build trust with a customer and why this is important.

Product & service knowledge

- 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 the job role and work environment:
- 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 to help customers make choices that are mutually beneficial to both the customer and your organisation.

Personal organisation

- Be able to organise themselves, prioritise their own workload/activity and work to meet deadlines.

Dealing with customer conflict and challenge

- Demonstrate patience and calmness.
- Show understanding of 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

- Take ownership for keeping their service knowledge and skills up-to-date.
- Consider personal goals and propose development that would help achieve them.

Being open to feedback

- Act on and seek feedback from others to develop or maintain personal service skills and knowledge.

Team working

- Frequently and consistently communicate and work with others in the interest of helping customers efficiently.
- Share personal learning and case studies with others, presenting recommendations, and improvement to support good practice.

Equality – treating all customers as individuals

- Treat customers as individuals to provide a personalised customer service experience.
- Uphold your organisation's core values and service culture through their actions.

Presentation – dress code, professional language

- Demonstrate personal pride in the job through appropriate dress and positive and confident language.

'Right first time'

- Use communication behaviours that establish clearly what each customer requires and manage their expectations.
- Take ownership from the first contact and then take responsibility for fulfilling their promise.

Training, Tutoring and Assessment

The whole programme takes a minimum of 12 months to complete, at which point your apprentice can start their end point assessment. The pace at which the apprentice progresses will be driven by you and the apprentice. We will work closely with you to plan and deliver appropriate support and training. Your apprentice will mainly learn on the job, but training and one-to-one tutoring are a key part of the new apprenticeship standards, not just assessment, with more time on tutoring as part of the 20% off-the-job training.

You will carry out joint reviews with us at regular intervals, where progress will be discussed. You can use your normal performance management processes to monitor the progress of the apprentice, provide feedback and guide development. Your apprentice will be expected to keep a portfolio to track their learning and development throughout the apprenticeship.

End Point Assessment

In conjunction with us, you will be asked to formally sign-off that the apprentice has met the minimum requirements for knowledge, skills and behaviours within the apprenticeship standard and confirm they are ready to move on to the end assessment, which will be measured as follows:

Apprentice Showcase (worth 65%) – with guidance from their tutor, the apprentice will select appropriate evidence from their on-programme portfolio to demonstrate minimum requirements of the standard. This will evidence professional competence at the relevant level. The showcase will be reviewed and assessed by an independent assessor against the key areas of study outlined above.

Practical Observation (worth 20%) – this one-hour observation will be pre-planned and scheduled to take place in the apprentice's normal place of work. The observation should enable the apprentice to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and behaviour.

Professional Discussion (worth 15%) – a structured discussion between the apprentice and an independent assessor following the practical observation, to establish the apprentice's understanding and application of knowledge, skills and behaviours. The discussion will be based on set criteria to ensure standardisation and consistency.

For more information on the assessment for Customer Service Practitioner Apprenticeship please see the full assessment plan in the Apprenticeship Standard documentation. We will arrange the end point assessment.

Apprenticeship Entry Requirements

Apprentices will be required to have or to achieve a Level 1 in English and Maths and to have taken Level 2 English and Maths tests prior to completion of their apprenticeship. If English and Maths tuition is required, we will provide this.

Future/Other Opportunities

- Level 3 Apprenticeship Customer Service
- Level 3 Apprenticeship Customer Service Specialist (*New Apprenticeship Standard)
- Marketing CIM Award Customer Experience L4

More Information

To find out more about the opportunities and financing of apprenticeships and to discuss your particular requirements, please email employer@sheffcol.ac.uk or call **0114 260 2600** to speak to one of our friendly employer advisors.

Why choose The Sheffield College?

As one of the region's largest providers of apprenticeships, The Sheffield College is more than just your local provider; we deliver the dedicated support you need to source, train and get the best out of your apprentice.

We appreciate how difficult and time consuming it can be to recruit staff. That's why, when you recruit an apprentice with us, our dedicated apprenticeship recruitment service, Job Connect, will advertise the vacancy, engage your candidates and even pre-screen them to make the process as easy as possible for you.

We help you get the best deal by finding the right funding and we handle the paperwork to make the process of arranging an apprenticeship training programme as smooth as possible. Our employer partnership team, apprenticeship tutors and assessment staff are experts, and we invest time and money in training and upskilling them regularly so their knowledge is up-to-date and industry standard.

At The Sheffield College we go above and beyond; we know that every business is different and we help to develop apprentices who will meet the needs of your business.

Get In Touch

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