

## **Vocational Qualifications (QCF, NVQ, NQF)**

### **Principles of Customer Service**

Principles of Customer Service Level 1 Award – **10334**

Principles of Customer Service Level 2 Certificate – **09628**

Principles of Customer Service Level 3 Certificate – **09629**

### **OCR Report to Centres – September 2015**

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates, which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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# Levels 1, 2 and 3 Principles of Customer Service 09628 – 10334

## Overview:

The vast majority of centres use the OCR evidence sheets for their learner to complete. The main issues have been with insufficiency of evidence where learners have been asked to provide two or three examples and they have only provided one; and/or where the requirement is to explain the effect on the customer or the organisation and the learners have instead stated how a particular situation may have made a customer feel. Other issues were in connection with legislation and centres are not ensuring that learners are researching the most up-to-date legislation associated with their job role. For example, some learners are still referring to equal opportunities when in fact the new legislation is the Equality Act 2010.

There have been some examples of very good practice where centre assessors have clearly encouraged their learners to research their job role and the organisation for which they are working. This has resulted in evidence that confirms the learner has a good understanding of the requirements for good customer service within their organisation, as well as its importance to the organisation's continued success.

## General Comments

### Level 1 Award in Principles of Customer Service

Overall, the level 1 award has had few issues. Centres are reminded that they must ensure that the moderator can understand the responses provided by the learners. There have been some situations where units have had to be withdrawn due to incomplete sentences or sentences that do not make sense. Once learners have expanded on or corrected their evidence, the unit concerned has been awarded.

### Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Customer Service

There are some areas that are still causing problems to learners and they tend to be based on terminology and the lack of understanding as to what it means. For example, 'service offer' and 'service chain'. OCR has produced a number of resources to support centres in the delivery of these qualifications including examples of service chains and service offers. It is recommended that centres access these resources and use them with their learners. Other areas of weakness include the identification of the most up-to-date legislation and/or regulation with many learners quoting out-of-date legislation that has been subsumed by new legislation. It is important learners are encouraged to research into the legislation and/or regulation relevant to their job role and organisation and be able to identify the most current version.

The majority of learners had good understanding of the importance of communication to the customer service role and could provide very good examples of using a wide range of communication skills effectively.

### Level 3 Certificate in Principles of Customer Service

Again legislation appeared to be the main issue arising from submissions this year. Learners must refer to the most current legislation and/or regulation in order to successfully achieve the unit in which it is referenced.

As with level 2 learners, there have also been learners who do not fully understand terminology such as 'service chain' and/or 'service offer'. This lack of understanding has been the main cause of learners not achieving unit 4.

Learners at level 3 also demonstrated good overall understanding of the importance of communication to their customer service role and how it could be used effectively with colleagues and customers.

The vast majority of learners were apprentices and were therefore completing the level 2 and level 3 certificates as part of their apprenticeship framework. Learners were therefore in appropriate working environments where they had to deal with a variety of customers on a daily basis.

Overall, learners were on the appropriate level qualification for their job role and working environment. Sometimes, learners are placed on the higher level qualification based on the requirement of their apprenticeship programme and yet they are not actually in a job role or working environment that allows them develop the higher level of knowledge and understanding required. In these situations it is recommended that centres encourage learners to research appropriate job roles and environments and use the results of their research to provide the evidence for the level 3 units.

## **Comments on Individual Units**

### **Level 1 Award in Principles of Customer Service**

#### **Unit 1 Customer expectations of customer service**

LO1 – AC1.1 – there are still some learners who are incorrectly identifying an example of an external customer even though they have stated correctly that this is someone who does not work for their organisation and purchases/uses the products and/or services that they provide. It is important that learners do not purely quote a definition that they have learnt, but that they can also identify different external customers based on that definition.

LO1 – AC1.2, AC1.3 and AC1.4 – learners are required to identify the expectations of internal and external customers and how these are linked to customer satisfaction. If learners do not correctly identify an external customer, then this will have a knock-on effect on their responses for these assessment criteria. Learners will usually identify correctly the expectations of customers but sometimes do not fully understand how these are linked to customer satisfaction. This is more of an issue with internal customers as opposed to external customers.

LO2 – AC2.4 – learners are required to outline how the behaviour of individuals in an organisation can affect the customer experience. When providing an example of a positive behaviour and a negative behaviour some learners tend to provide a good example of a positive behaviour and then present the opposite as a negative behaviour. Learners can then struggle on stating how it can affect the customer experience. It is recommended that assessors encourage learners to consider different examples for each.

LO2 – AC2.5 – this is similar to the issues identified above but in this assessment criterion, learners are referring to teamwork as opposed to individuals. This can be difficult for learners if they do not work in environments where they do not constantly work as part of a team. Learners would benefit from a discussion with the assessor to consider how the team could be the learner with other departments in order to, for example, get a delivery out on time; and how positive and negative behaviour of team members can have a positive and negative effect.

## **Unit 2 – Organisational procedures for delivering customer service**

LO1 is usually accurately evidenced by the majority of learners showing a clear understanding of the policies and procedures in place and their importance. In addition they are able to identify types of confidential information, how it should be stored and why.

LO1 – AC1.5 – the main issue for LO1 is where the learners are required to outline the importance of not discriminating against customers. Some learners tend to struggle with providing more than one example and for the second example provide something that is basically a rewording of their first example. Learners in these situations would benefit from a discussion with their assessor about the different forms of discrimination and how this can apply to their job role and working environment.

LO2 is usually completed very well by learners.

## **Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Customer Service**

### **Unit 1 – Understand the principles of customer service**

LO2 – AC2.2, AC2.3 – learners are required to explain the service offer of an organisation. If learners do not understand what is meant by the terminology 'service offer' then they will not be able to address fully the assessment requirements for LO2. Some learners also struggle with 'describing how the service offer shapes the expectations of customers'. This invariably links back to how well they understand what is meant by a 'service offer'. It is important that learners are provided with the opportunity to discuss different forms of service offer and consider how they shape the expectations of customers. An example could be that the service offer of the local supermarket is to be open 24 hours a day. This shapes the expectations of customers, as they will expect to be able to visit the supermarket at any time of the day or night and purchase the goods that they require.

LO3 – this particular learning objective is about learners showing how well they understand how the service chain supports the delivery of good customer service. If learners do not understand the terminology 'service chain' they are not going to be able to provide sufficient and accurate responses to meet the assessment criteria. Learners have to understand that the service chain includes the external links and is not just internal to their organisation. For assessment criterion 3.2 many learners are still submitting an organisational chart when in fact the requirement is to produce a flow chart showing the service chain of their organisation, which should include the external links as well as the internal links.

### **Unit 2 – Understand the rules of customer service**

The main problem area with this unit is in connection with the legislation and/or regulation section. Learners must be encouraged to research the latest legislation and/or regulation relevant to their job role and organisation. Learners who submit evidence quoting out-of-date legislation and/or regulation will have the unit withdrawn. In addition, learners must identify the legislation/regulation for themselves; the centre cannot give them the titles.

## **Level 3 Certificate in Principles of Customer Service**

### **Unit 4 – Understand the principles of customer service delivery to different sectors**

LO1 – AC2.1 – learners at level 3 should have a good understanding of how an organisation develops its service offer. In order to have this understanding they need to fully understand the terminology 'service offer' as well as 'ethical and value base' and 'service chain'. Without having a good understanding of the terminology identified they cannot effectively conduct the required analysis.

## **Unit 5 – Understand the principles of making improvements to customer service**

LO2 – if learners are in an appropriate job role and working environment, they will not have difficulty successfully achieving this unit. The main area of concern is again legislation and/or regulation, which can have an effect on customer service delivery. As previously stated, it is important that learners conduct research into the most up to date legislation and/or regulation relevant to their job role and organisation. They then need to consider how this can affect customer service delivery.

LO3 – unless learners are actually in a position to propose improvements or research into the concept, they will struggle with providing sufficient explanation as to the steps that should be taken when making a proposal, to analyse the effects on all parties concerned and how to involve others in the implementation of the changes.

### **Sector Update**

The new apprenticeship qualifications in Business Administration, Customer Service and Management and Leadership were launched in 2014. These qualifications at levels 2 and 3 combined the knowledge and competence components resulting in a single qualification. In order to achieve apprenticeship frameworks, learners must now be enrolled on the apprenticeship qualifications. The Principles of Customer Service qualifications at all levels will remain available for those centres that have learners not following an apprenticeship programme.

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