

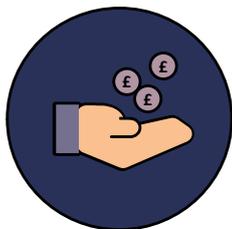


Who should do this qualification?

The need for high levels of customer service skills is evident across all sectors. In particular the Retail, Financial Services, Contact Centre, Hospitality, Sport and Recreation, Health and Social Care, Telecommunications and Travel and Tourism sectors have the particularly high levels of customer service apprentices. Furthermore, many other sectors, such as Local Government, Motor Vehicle, Power & Energy, Housing and Manufacturing also benefit from Customer Service Apprenticeships.

There are many job roles that apply to customer service intermediate apprentices. These will include job roles which are dedicated to customer service such as:

- Customer Service Trainee
- Customer Service Assistant
- Customer Service Advisor
- Customer Service Representative
- Customer Service Agent



Benefits to the Business

Customer-facing staff play a key role in determining the quality of the customer experience and in increasing customer loyalty. In an increasingly service-led economy, customer demand for better and more individualised service is set to continue to increase. Therefore there is a need to raise customer service standards and increase the supply of people with customer service skills. Employers across all sectors, regardless of whether their main business is customer service or if they wish to train staff to undertake customer service as part of their job role, need to up skill their current workforce and recruit new staff.

Customer service apprenticeships have a major role to play in this by helping employers address the skills gaps and shortages that they are experiencing, and by providing a vehicle for introducing and raising customer service skills in the workplace.



Benefits to the Learner

An intermediate apprentice would learn and how to apply customer service knowledge and skills to the workplace including:

- communicating with customers
- building relationships with customers
- resolving problems
- promoting products and/or services
- using appropriate communication channels
- keeping records
- gathering customer feedback
- working in a team



Components of the Apprenticeship

Duration: The apprenticeship will take a minimum of 12 months to complete

Entry requirements: 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.

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

Knowledge

Knowing your customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
Product and service knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the products or services that are available from your organisation and keep up-to-date.

Skills

Interpersonal skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to organise yourself, prioritise your own workload/activity and work to meet deadlines.
Dealing with customer conflict and challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take ownership for keeping your service knowledge and skills up-to-date. • Consider personal goals and propose development that would help achieve them.
Being open to feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act on and seek feedback from others to develop or maintain personal service skills and knowledge.
Team working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat customers as individuals to provide a personalised customer service experience. • Uphold the organisations core values and service culture through your actions.
Presentation – dress code, professional language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate personal pride in the job through appropriate dress and positive and confident language.
“Right first time”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 your promise.