

## Customer Service Specialist

Apprenticeship  
Level 3



## Quick Information

### New Apprenticeship Standard designed by employers for employers

**Sector**

Relevant to all employment sectors

**Who is it for?**

Individuals with more advanced inter- personal skills, experience of working with customers in some capacity

**Start date**

Flexible start to suit employers

**Level**

Level 3

**Duration**

Minimum 15 months and up to 3 months to complete End Point Assessment

**How does it work?**

Delivered in your workplace one to one with a training and assessment facilitator

**Content**

Menu of options that can be tailored to your business

**Assessment**

Practical assessment and coursework during and at your End Point Assessment

**Qualification**

Customer Service Specialist Apprenticeship

**Additional qualifications**

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

**Review**

The apprenticeship should be reviewed after 3 years

## Customer Service Specialist

The main purpose of a customer service specialist is to be a 'professional' for direct customer support within all sectors and organisation types. You are an advocate of Customer Service who acts as a referral point for dealing with more complex or technical customer requests, complaints, and queries. You are often an escalation point for complicated or ongoing customer problems.

As an expert in your organisation's products and/or services, you share knowledge with your wider team and colleagues. You gather and analyse data and customer information that influences change and improvements in service. Utilising both organisational and generic IT systems to carry out your role with an awareness of other digital technologies. This could be in many types of environment including contact centres, retail, webchat, service industry or any customer service point.



### Key Areas of Study

Your apprentice will cover essential knowledge, skills and behaviours on their programme. The full menu of what will be covered is outlined below.

## Knowledge

### Business Knowledge and Understanding

- Understand what continuous improvement means in a service environment and how your recommendations for change impact your organisation
- Understand the impact your service provision has on the wider organisation and the value it adds
- Understand your organisation's current business strategy in relation to customers and make recommendations for its future
- Understand the principles and benefits of being able to think about the future when taking action or making service related decisions
- Understand a range of leadership styles and apply them successfully in a customer service environment

### Customer Journey knowledge

- Understand and critically evaluate the possible journeys of your customers, including challenges and the end-to-end experience
- Understand the reasons why customer issues and complex situations sometimes need referral or escalation for specialist attention
- Understand the underpinning business processes that support you in bringing about the best outcome for customers and your organisation
- Understand commercial factors and authority limits for delivering the required customer experience

### Knowing your customers and their needs/ customer insights

- Know your internal and external customers and how their behaviour may require different approaches from you
- Understand how to analyse, use and present a range of information to provide customer insight
- Understand what drives loyalty, retention and satisfaction and how they impact on your organisation
- Understand different customer types and the role of emotions in bringing about a successful outcome
- Understand how customer expectations can differ between cultures, ages and social profiles

### Customer service culture and environment awareness

- Keep current, knowledge and understanding of regulatory considerations, drivers and impacts in relation to how you deliver for customers
- Understand your business environment and culture and the position of customer service within it
- Understand your organisation structure and what role each department needs to play in delivering Customer Service and what the consequences are should things go wrong
- Understand how to find and use industry best practice to enhance your own knowledge

## Skills

### Business-focused service delivery

- Demonstrate a continuous improvement and future focussed approach to customer service delivery including decision making and providing recommendations or advice
- Resolve complex issues by being able to choose from and successfully apply a wide range of approaches
- Find solutions that meet your organisations needs as well as the customer requirements

### Providing a positive customer experience

- Through advanced questioning, listening and summarising negotiate mutually beneficial outcomes
- Manage challenging and complicated situations within your level of authority and make recommendations to enable and deliver change to service or strategy
- Use clear explanations, provide options and solutions to influence and help customers make choices and agree next steps
- Explore and interpret the customer experience to inform and influence achieving a positive result for customer satisfaction
- Demonstrate a cost conscious mind-set when meeting customer and the business needs
- Identifying where highs and lows of the customer journey produce a range of emotions in the customer
- Use written and verbal communication to simplify and provide complex information in a way that supports positive customer outcome in the relevant format

### Working with your customers/customer insights

- Proactively gather customer feedback, through a variety of methods. Critically analyse, and evaluate the meaning, implication and facts and act upon it
- Analyse your customer types, to identify or anticipate their potential needs and expectations when providing your service

### Customer service performance

- Maintain a positive relationship even when you are unable to deliver the customer's expected outcome
- When managing referrals or escalations take into account historical interactions and challenges to determine next steps

### Service improvement

- Analyse the end to end service experience, seeking input from others where required, supporting development of solutions
- Make recommendations based on your findings to enable improvement
- Make recommendations and implement where possible, changes in line with new and relevant legislation, regulations and industry best practice

## Behaviours / Attitude

### Develop self

- Proactively keep your service, industry and best practice knowledge and skills up-to-date
- Consider personal goals related to service and take action towards achieving them

### Ownership/ Responsibility

- Personally commit to and take ownership for actions to resolve customer issues to the satisfaction of the customer and your organisation
- Exercises proactivity and creativity when identifying solutions to customer and organisational issues
- Make realistic promises and deliver on them

### Team working

- Work effectively and collaboratively with colleagues at all levels to achieve results.
- Recognise colleagues as internal customers
- Share knowledge and experience with others to support colleague development

### Equality

- Adopt a positive and enthusiastic attitude being open minded and able to tailor your service to each customer
- Be adaptable and flexible to your customer needs whilst continuing to work within the agreed customer service environment

### Presentation

- Demonstrate brand advocacy, values and belief when dealing with customer requests to build trust, credibility and satisfaction
- Ensure your personal presentation, in all forms of communication, reflects positively on your organisation's brand

## Training, Tutoring and Assessment

The whole programme takes a minimum of 15 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 6 hours per week 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:

- Practical Observation (with Q&As) - The apprentice must be observed, by an independent assessor, undertaking a range of day to day workplace activities. The observation should involve activities which allow the apprentice to demonstrate the full range of their knowledge, skills and behaviours required.
- Work Based Project (supported by an interview) Apprentices must submit a written report, on a project they have carried out, to their EPAO 2 weeks prior to an interview date. This date will be agreed when the apprentice passes through the Gateway process.
- Professional Discussion (supported by portfolio evidence) - 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

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



## Apprentice Entry Requirements

Apprentices will be required to have or achieve level 2 English and Maths prior to completion of their Apprenticeship.

## Future/Other Opportunities

- Team Leader / Supervisor Level 3

## More Information

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

## Get In Touch

### Email

[apprenticeshipsandtraining@sheffcol.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeshipsandtraining@sheffcol.ac.uk)

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## 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 suitable staff. That's why we will source, shortlist and prepare candidates before you meet them.*

*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.*