

WE ARE HERE TO HELP APPRENTICES BEE WHAT THEY WANT TO BEE

Customer Service Specialist Apprenticeship

1 The Apprenticeship

A customer service specialist is a role designed to be a 'professional' for direct customer support within any and all sectors and organisation types. The role requires you to be an advocate of Customer Service, acting as a point of contact for more complex or technical customer service requests, complaints, and queries.

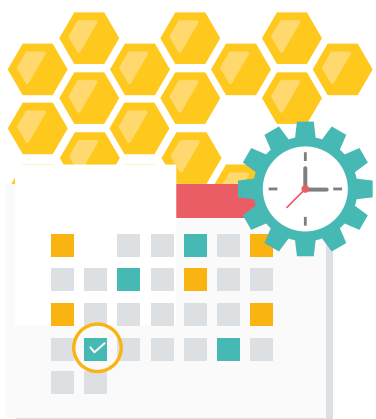
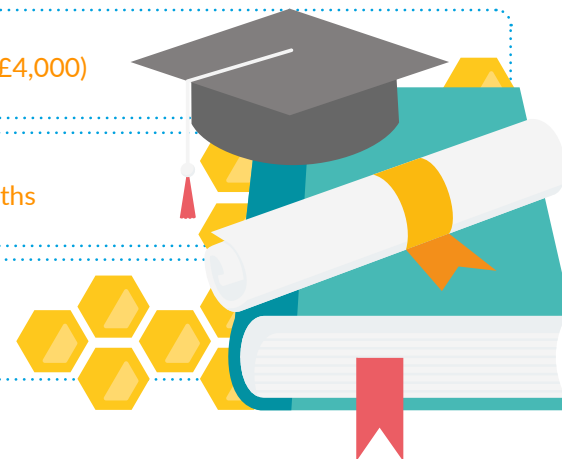
An apprentice looking to take on the role of the Customer Service Specialist will often develop into a position of being the escalation point for complicated or ongoing customer problems. As an expert in your organisation's products and/or services, you will share your knowledge with your wider team and colleagues. This role requires you to 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.

For more information on this apprenticeship standard, visit the [Institute for Apprenticeships](#).

Funding Band: 6 (£4,000)

Duration: 15 months

Level: 3



2 Initial Assessment Plan

Employers will set their own entry requirements in order to start on this apprenticeship. This will include:

- Level 2 Award in Functional Skills English
- Level 2 Award in Functional Skills Mathematics



3 On-the-job and Off-the-job training

This is where all the apprentices training and development takes place. They will be busy making sure they have packed all the essential items to complete their journey. This may include a qualification if it is identified as a requirement in the standard.

Formative assessment of skills, knowledge and behaviours is required in the delivery of the standard and this will be outlined in the assessment plan. Mathematics and English are required (level varies according to the standard).

4 Gateway

In order to enter into this phase, the apprentice will need to have passed all the relevant knowledge, skill and behaviour criteria as set out in the apprenticeship standard. It will be the employers decision to place an apprentice through End-Point Assessment.



In order to pass, the apprentice must have achieved:

- Level 2 in Mathematics and English
- Level 2 Award in Functional Skills Mathematics

If all the above has been completed, employers can feel confident that they are putting forward apprentices who are in the best shape to pass their End-Point Assessment.

5 End-Point Assessment

The synoptic end-point assessment will consist of three equally-weighted components.



Practical Observation with Q&A	Work-based Project (supported by Interview)	Professional Discussion (with Portfolio of Evidence)
<p>The Practical Observation is a 60 minute (+/- 10%) work-placed observation in which the Apprentice must be observed by an End-Point Assessor. They must undertake and perform a range of day to day work activities allowing them to demonstrate a range of knowledge, skills and behaviours which are required as part of the standard assessment. During the observation, the Apprentice should be able to move from one area/function of the business to another when necessary, in order to best demonstrate their skills in a realistic work environment. The Observation will conclude with a question and answer session between the Apprentice and their End-Point Assessor.</p> <p>Pass/Distinction</p>	<p>Customer Service Specialist Apprentices must submit a 2,500 word written report (+/- 10%), on a project they have carried out, at least 2 weeks prior to an interview date. All work on the project will be undertaken following the Gateway process over a two-month period. The subject of the project report should be agreed with the End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) with guidance from the employer in order to allow them to comment on appropriateness for their business but the EPAO must make a decision to ensure consistency. The project should cover a specific high-level challenge (such as a complaint or difficult situation) that the Apprentice has dealt with and include what it was, actions, solutions and details of any changes to policy/process.</p> <p>The supporting interview will take approximately 60 mins (+/- 10%) and comprise of 10 competency based questions which will focus solely on the project submitted by the Apprentice. The interview can take place either face-to-face or via online video conferencing, if appropriate whilst the EPAO must ensure that the interview and questioning elements are conducted in a suitably controlled environment.</p> <p>Pass/Distinction</p>	<p>The professional discussion will last 60 minutes (+/- 10%) and will include evidence from the on-programme portfolio of evidence which must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the professional discussion. The apprentice will extract, from their portfolio, evidence which is suitable for supporting them in their professional discussion. This evidence will consist of between 10 and 15 pieces of evidence related to the standards which apply to the professional discussion.</p> <p>The evidence can include witness statements, customer feedback such as emails or letters and manager feedback from a one-to-one or alike, however, the portfolio itself is not directly assessed. The date of the discussion will be agreed when the apprentice passes through the Gateway process and can be either face-to-face or via online video conference, if appropriate.</p> <p>Pass/Distinction</p>

Grading

The apprenticeship can be given one of three grades: fail, pass or distinction.

Apprentice cannot achieve the apprenticeship without gaining at least a pass in every assessment element. Once the apprentice has achieved at least a pass in each assessment element the final grade can be calculated as follows:

Practical Observation with Q&A	Work-based Project (supported by Interview)	Professional Discussion (with Portfolio of Evidence)	GRADE
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
		Distinction	Pass
	Distinction	Pass	Pass
		Distinction	Pass
Distinction	Pass	Pass	Pass
		Distinction	Pass
	Distinction	Pass	Pass
		Distinction	Distinction



6 Completion and Certification

Once the assessor verifies you've successfully completed all End-Point Assessments, TQUK will initiate the certification process. Working with the Education and Skills Funding Agency, we will ensure the apprentice receives their certificate in recognition of completing their apprenticeship.

7 Occupational competence

Upon completion of this Customer Service Specialist apprenticeship standard, the apprentice will be eligible to join the Institute of Customer Service as an Individual member at Professional level.

Should the apprentice choose to progress on a Customer Service career path, they may be eligible for further professional membership including management.

