

Level 1 N/SVQ in Customer Service

**National occupational
standards and
assessment requirements**

Version 1 – March 2004

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Foreword

This document provides details of the requirements specific to this N/SVQ qualification which includes

- the requirements for occupational competence for all those involved in assessing and verifying performance
- specific assessment requirements and
- the National Occupational Standards.

This document is designed to be used in conjunction with:
the *N/SVQ Candidate Guide* (stock reference TS-11-0001)
and
the *N/SVQ Centre Guide* (stock reference EN-11-0001).

Check the City & Guilds website: www.city-and-guilds.co.uk, for latest version.

Packs of multiple copies of the recording forms are also available from Publications Sales (Recording forms for N/SVQs, stock reference TS-22-0001).

In the case of any inconsistency between the *N/SVQ Centre Guide* or the *N/SVQ Candidate Guide* and this N/SVQ specific document, this document shall prevail.

For details of centre and scheme approval refer to the document: 'Providing City and Guilds qualifications' (stock code EN-00-1111) available free of charge from the Sales Department or your regional/national City & Guilds office (details in *Further information* section of this document).

Details of general regulations, registration and certification procedures, including fees, are included in the City & Guilds Directory of N/SVQ Awards. This information also appears on City & Guilds web site <http://www.city-and-guilds.co.uk>

Introduction

The Structure of the level 1 NVQ in Customer Service

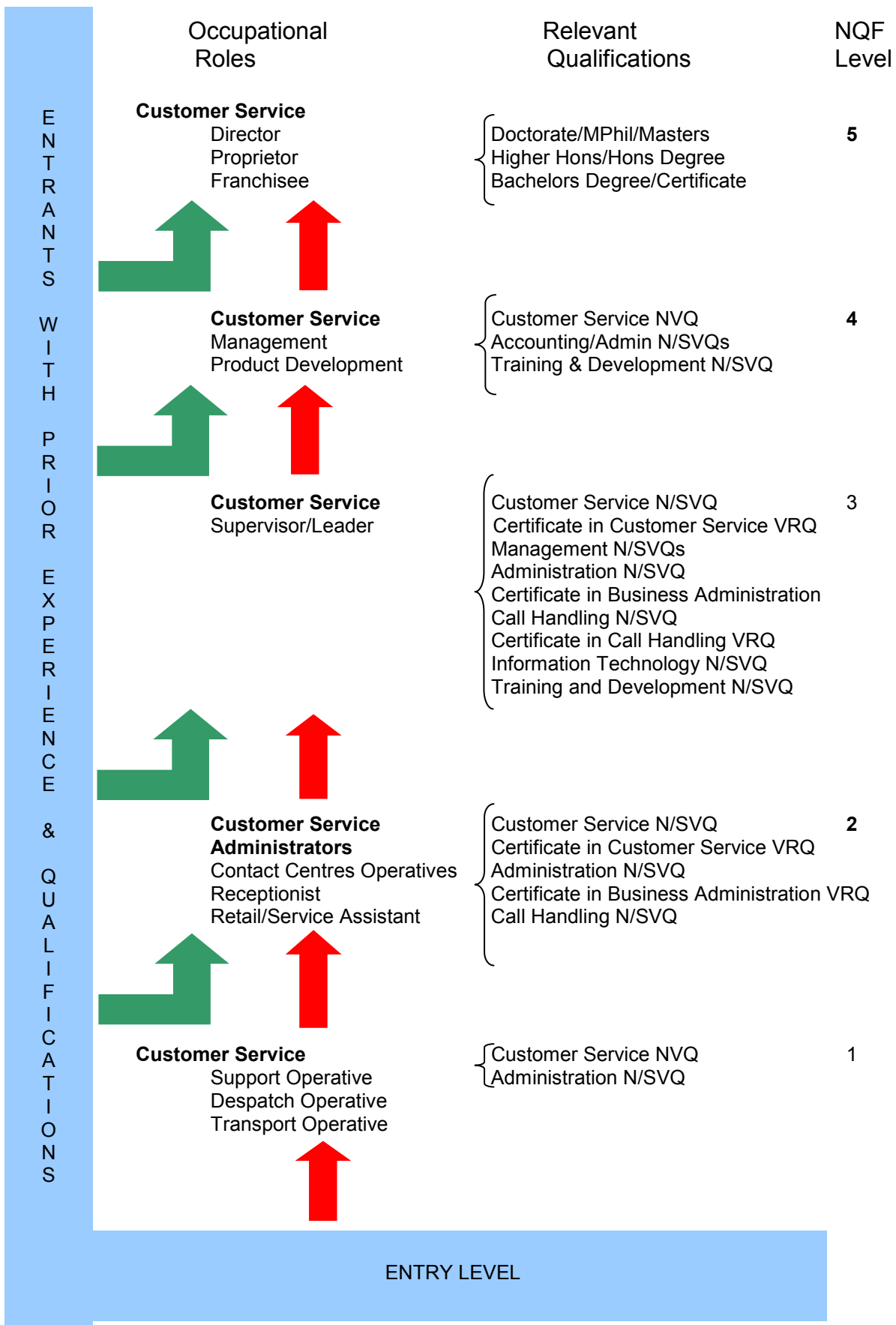
The Level 1 NVQ Customer Service is a **six unit** qualification. Candidates must achieve all of the mandatory units (1-6).

Mandatory units

Candidates must achieve all six units

City & Guilds number		ICS number
Unit 101 Element 101.1 Element 101.2	Prepare yourself to deliver good customer service Describe the customer service of your organisation to customers and/or colleagues Describe your organisation's products or services to customers and/or colleagues	1
Unit 102 Element 102.1 Element 102.2	Maintain a positive and friendly attitude Show the right attitude for customer service Display appropriate and positive behaviours to customers	2
Unit 103 Element 103.1	Communicate effectively with customers Communicate effectively with customers	3
Unit 104 Element 104.1	Do your job in a customer friendly way Do your job in a customer friendly way	4
Unit 105 Element 105.1 Element 105.2	Provide customer service within the rules Follow organisation procedures Follow external regulations and legislation	5
Unit 106 Element 106.1 Element 106.2	Recognise and deal with customer queries, requests and problems Recognise and deal with customer queries and requests Recognise and deal with customer problems	6

Customer Service Progression Routes



The Assessment Requirements

Occupational Competence - Key Requirements

Detailed specifications for the occupational competence of assessors and internal verifiers are shown at appendices 1 and 2 with suggestions regarding how this competence may be proved.

Appendices 3 and 4 set out questions for new and existing assessors and internal verifiers.

Workplace Performance and Simulation - Key Requirements

The candidate must be assessed for the following three units of the qualification through working with real customers in a real work environment. These units are:

Unit 102 Maintain a positive and friendly attitude
Unit 103 Communicate effectively with customers
Unit 104 Do your job in a customer friendly way

Ideally the following three Units should also be assessed in a real work environment, however, if this is not possible simulation can be used:

Unit 101 Prepare yourself to deliver customer service
Unit 105 Provide customer service within the rules
Unit 106 Recognise and deal with customer queries, requests and problems

If simulation is used the candidate may be assessed by using one or more of the following methods:

- role play
- project work
- video/audio application and feedback
- question and answer (unit 101 only)

To carry out simulated activities centres must adhere to the ICS Guidelines on the use of simulation for assessing units 1, 5 and 6 of the N/SVQ in Customer Service at Level 1 shown at Appendix 5.

The ICS has proposed the use of simulation to give opportunities for those:

- who are preparing to find work, start work experience or work placement
- whose job is so limited that they are struggling to find work-based evidence for units 1,5 or 6
- who may have various learning or behavioural difficulties

The assessment for unit 1 can be achieved by the use of oral question and answer, as it is primarily knowledge based. This unit has been included in this way because of an overwhelming demand from employers for candidates to give an 'explicit' demonstration of key knowledge requirements (specified by the employers) on which to build their customer service experience.

101 Prepare yourself to deliver good customer service

- 101.1 Describe the customer service of your organisation to customers and/or colleagues
- 101.2 Describe your organisation's products or services to customers and/or colleagues

About this unit

This unit is all about how your organisation works, what it does and where you fit into that.

You need to know how your organisation works to provide good customer service. This means understanding who does what and being able to explain it to customers or colleagues. It also means you must understand what your role is within the organisation and what is expected of you. Each organisation offers a different package of products and services to its customers so you must understand and be able to explain what yours offers.

To provide good customer service you need to know and understand these things and use that knowledge skilfully.

Element 101.1

Describe the customer service of your organisation to customers and/or colleagues

Performance criteria

You need to show that you are able to:

1. explain what your organisation does and the types of customers it has
2. describe who's who and who does what to provide customer service
3. describe who to go to for information or help when dealing with customer service issues
4. give examples of the kinds of information your colleagues may need from you so that they can give good service to customers
5. give examples of the ways an organisation could build a good reputation and the ways a reputation could be damaged
6. explain why company procedures are important to good customer service

Element 101.2

Describe your organisation's products or services to customers and/or colleagues performance criteria

You need to show that you are able to:

1. list your organisation's products or services
2. answer simple customer questions about your organisation's products or services
3. explain why good customer service is important for your organisation
4. explain the effects of providing poor customer service
5. explain how your job is important in providing good customer service
6. explain how you keep information about products or services updated
7. describe how you would know when a new or additional product or service is available

101 Prepare yourself to deliver good customer service

Knowledge and understanding

You need to show that you know and understand:

1. what your organisation does
2. what products or services your organisation provides
3. what the key features of your organisation's product or services are
4. what the key benefits of your organisation's product or services are
5. what the structure of your organisation is
6. what a customer is
7. who your organisation's customers are
8. what building an organisation's reputation means
9. what can damage an organisation's reputation
10. what customer service is
11. how customer satisfaction depends on customer expectations and service delivery
12. how customer service affects the success of your organisation
13. the key customer service requirements of your job
14. how company procedures contribute to consistent and reliable customer service
15. the kinds of information your organisation keeps about your customers

102 Maintain a positive and friendly attitude

102.1 Show the right attitude for customer service

102.2 Display appropriate and positive behaviours to customers

About this unit

Your attitude and the way you behave towards customers affects customer satisfaction. Simply following procedures is not enough to provide good customer service. Customers like to deal with organisations whose staff show that they are willing and keen. They like to think that you want to help and you can show this by being friendly and positive and giving them your complete personal attention by adding that 'personal touch'.

Element 102.1

Show the right attitude for customer service

You need to show that you:

1. speak to customers and put them at their ease
2. recognise how customers are feeling and establish a rapport with them
3. show customers that you are willing and enthusiastic at all times
4. recognise that each customer is different and treat them as individuals
5. show customers respect at all times and under any circumstances
6. show customers and colleagues that you can be relied on

Element 102.2

Display appropriate and positive behaviours to customers

You need to show that you:

1. recognise and respond when a customer needs attention
2. greet customers politely and with enthusiasm
3. focus on your customer and ignore distractions which are not important to your customers
4. react appropriately to situations that are important enough to interrupt your work with a customer
5. thank customers for the information they have given or for doing business with your organisation
6. help colleagues when they need it to provide customer service

102 Maintain a positive and friendly attitude

Knowledge and understanding

You need to show that you know and understand

1. the difference between internal and external customers
2. signs that a customer gives when seeking attention
3. what rapport looks, sounds and feels like
4. what unimportant distractions are
5. what is important enough to interrupt your work with a customer
6. positive and negative body language and facial expressions
7. understand that individual differences include peoples age, culture and personalities

103 Communicate effectively with customers

103.1 Communicate effectively with customers

About this unit

Effective customer service involves exchanging information between you and your customers. You need to understand what your customers want and how they feel. Your customers need to understand what you are telling them and what you are able to do for them. Communication is an essential skill for delivering good customer service.

Element 103.1

Communicate effectively with customers

You need to show that you:

1. listen effectively to what customers are saying
2. identify the most important things that customers are telling you
3. respond appropriately to what customers are telling you
4. check that you understand what customers are telling you and make sure it is really what they mean
5. summarise information for customers
6. explain in a way that is clear and does not cause offence when you cannot help a customer
7. use appropriate body language when communicating with customers
8. deal with customers in a sensible, helpful and professional way at all times

103 Communicate effectively with customers

Knowledge and understanding

You need to show that you know and understand:

1. the difference between hearing and listening
2. how to listen effectively
3. how to read and use body language
4. how to use questions to check that you understand what customers are telling you
5. the difference between negative and positive language
6. how to summarise
7. why it is important to speak clearly
8. why it is important to use words the customer will understand
9. how to communicate with customers who have language or dialect differences to your own
10. why the way you say things and your tone of voice is so important

104 Do your job in a customer friendly way

104.1 Do your job in a customer friendly way

About this unit

The customer service your organisation gives is affected by the way you do your job. Whatever job you are doing, customers expect you to do it properly. They also expect you to consider their wishes and feelings while you are doing it.

This unit has been designed to cover how you do your job with the customer in mind. It is designed to help people understand the parts of their jobs that are most important to Customer Service.

Element 104.1

Do your job in a customer friendly way

You need to show that you:

1. make a good first impression
2. follow the dress code of the organisation and present the right personal image to your customers
3. do the tasks that make up your job correctly and in a way that shows you know what your customers expect
4. show consideration to customers when carrying out the tasks required in your job
5. respond willingly to routine requests and questions from customers
6. share information with customers about how delivery of the product or service is going
7. work flexibly to help individual customers without reducing the level of service you give to others
8. share information with colleagues when they need it to provide good customer service

104 Do your job in a customer friendly way

Knowledge and understanding

You need to show that you know and understand:

1. your organisation's dress code
2. how to do the tasks that you need to do as part of your job
3. how long parts of the job take to do and how this may affect your customers
4. how to organise your own work in a sensible way
5. what your customers expect of you and your work
6. what you are allowed to do and not allowed to do for customers

105 Provide customer service within the rules

105.1 Follow organisation procedures

105.2 Follow external regulation and legislation

About this unit

There are rules in organisations which limits what you can and cannot do for customers. Some rules are set by your organisation and some are defined by law and apply to everybody's jobs. Other rules are set by regulations that apply to particular industries. You need to know your organisation's rules and procedures and how these limit what you can do for customers. You also need to be aware of the wider laws and regulations which are set outside of your organisation and how they apply to you and your job.

Element 105.1

Follow organisation procedures

You need to show that you:

1. follow organisational procedures and instructions in a willing and helpful way
2. recognise the limits of what you are allowed to do
3. refer to somebody in authority when you need to
4. work in a way that protects the security of customers and their property

Element 105.2

Follow external regulation and legislation

You need to show that you:

1. work in a way that is safe for your customers and your colleagues
2. respect confidentiality relating to customers and the organisation
3. work in a way that shows you are aware of the areas of your job that are covered by law and the things you must not do
4. work in a way that shows you are aware of the main regulations that apply to your job and the things you must not do

105 Provide customer service within the rules

Knowledge and understanding

You need to show that you know and understand:

1. organisational procedures that relate to your job
2. limits of what you are allowed to do
3. what might endanger customers or their property
4. what health and safety risks and hazards might be faced by your customers
5. why it is important to respect customer and organisation confidentiality
6. the main regulations that apply to your job
7. the main things you must do and not do in your job under laws covering:
 - a equal opportunities
 - b disability discrimination
 - c data protection
 - d health and safety
 - e employment responsibility and rights
 - f consumer protection
8. the security arrangements of your organisation and how they apply to your job role

106 Recognise and deal with customer queries, requests and problems

106.1 Recognise and deal with customer queries and requests

106.2 Recognise and deal with customer problems

About this unit

Providing service to customers generally involves routine jobs that you do so it is important to add that 'personal touch' that makes each customer feel special. Sometimes customers ask different questions and request special treatment. You may be able to help them yourself and you certainly need to know who to ask for help if necessary. Some customers may be dissatisfied with the service and may present a problem. Your job is to recognise that there is a problem and make sure that the appropriate person deals with it.

Element 106.1

Recognise and deal with customer queries and requests

You need to show that you:

1. deal with queries and requests from customers in a positive and professional way
2. seek information or help from a colleague if you cannot answer your customer's query or request
3. obtain help from a colleague if you are not able to deal with your customer's request
4. always tell your customer what is happening

Element 106.2

Recognise and deal with customer problems

You need to show that you:

1. recognise when something is a problem from the customer's point of view
2. do not say or do anything which may make the problem worse
3. deal with a difficult customer calmly and confidently
4. recognise when to pass a problem on to an appropriate colleague
5. pass the problem on to your colleague with the appropriate information
6. check that the customer knows what is happening
7. check that your colleague is dealing with the situation

106 Recognise and deal with customer queries, requests and problems

Knowledge and understanding

You need to show that you know and understand:

1. who in the organisation is able to give you help and information
2. limits of what you are allowed to do
3. what professional behaviour is
4. how to speak to people who are dissatisfied
5. how to deal with difficult people
6. what customers normally expect
7. how to recognise a problem from what a customer says or does
8. what kinds of behaviours/actions would make situations worse
9. the organisational procedures you must follow when you deal with problems or complaints
10. understand the types of behaviour that makes a problem worse

Key/core skills signposting

CUSTOMER SERVICE LEVEL 1 signposted to KEY SKILLS LEVEL 1

- WILL PROBABLY provide dual evidence opportunities
- MAY provide dual evidence opportunities
- IS UNLIKELY TO provide dual evidence opportunities

KEY SKILLS STATEMENTS

Abbreviated customer service units and element titles		Interpret straightforward information	Carry out straightforward calculations	Interpret results and present findings	Take part in a discussion	Read and obtain information	Write different types of document	Find, explore and develop information	Present information	Confirm targets	Follow plan	Review progress and achievements	Confirm problems and identify options	Plan and try out options	Check and describe results	Confirm what to do	Work towards objectives	Identify progress
		N	N	N	C	C	C	IT	IT	LP	LP	LP	PS	PS	PS	WO	WO	WO
		1.1	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.3
1	Prepare yourself to deliver good customer service	1.1 Describe customer service of your organisation	1.2 Describe your organisation's products or services															
2	Maintain a positive and friendly attitude	2.1 Show the right attitude	2.2 Display appropriate and positive behaviours															
3	Communicate effectively	3.1 Communicate effectively																
4	Do your job	4.1 Do your job in a customer friendly way																
5	Provide customer service within the rules	5.1 Follow organisation procedures	5.2 Follow external regulations and legislation															
6	Recognise and deal with queries, requests and problems	6.1 Recognise and deal with customer queries and requests	6.2 Recognise and deal with customer problems															

APPENDIX 1

Occupational Competence - Assessors

	ICS requirement for the Occupational Competence of Assessors	Some ways in which Awarding Bodies can meet these requirements
1	<p>The Assessor must have:</p> <p>a thorough understanding of the National Occupational Standards for Customer Service especially at Level 1 with the ability to interpret them within the environment and sectors they are assessing in</p>	<p>explanation and putting the National Occupational Standards in the contexts they are assessing in demonstrating a knowledge and understanding of the ICS Course Outlines and the ICS Glossary of Customer Service Terms developed for the Customer Service Technical Certificates (<i>please note this is not compulsory and for those in Scotland it is understood that this may not be possible</i>)</p> <p>responding appropriately to ICS recommended questions (see Appendix 4)</p>
2	<p>knowledge of current practice and emerging issues in the VQ area</p>	<p>participation in briefings about the new qualification requirements</p> <p>receiving Customer Service Newsletter to keep up to date with the latest issues regarding VQs (supplied via the Awarding Body)</p>
3	<p>experience and a working knowledge of the operational and Assessment processes specifically for Customer Service S/NVQs</p>	<p>having a successful track record of assessing or verifying the current Standards across a variety of organisations</p> <p>achieving or be working towards a Technical Certificate in Customer Service (<i>please note this is not compulsory and for those in Scotland it is understood that this may not be possible</i>)</p> <p>responding appropriately to ICS recommended questions (see Appendix 4)</p>
4	<p>relevant and credible Customer Service experience across the level and breadth of the Standards and S/NVQs and especially at Level 1</p>	<p>demonstrating that they have at least 2 years experience of delivering Customer Service as part of their job</p> <p>responding appropriately to ICS recommended questions (see Appendix 4)</p>
5	<p>knowledge of current Customer Service practice and emerging issues in the Customer Service arena</p>	<p>attending Awarding Body conferences or workshops where Customer Service is on the agenda</p> <p>attending ICS seminars/ workshops/ conferences</p> <p>joining ICS</p> <p>reading Customer Service publications/articles</p> <p>keeping up to date with business news regarding Customer Service</p> <p>regularly visiting the ICS Website for the latest developments</p>
6	<p>Assessor qualifications approved by the regulatory authorities</p>	<p>holding or working towards Assessor qualifications approved by the regulatory authorities in an agreed timeframe</p>
7	<p>high levels of communication and interpersonal skills</p>	<p>feedback from candidates</p>

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APPENDIX 2

Occupational Competence - Internal Verifiers

	ICS requirement for the Occupational Competence of Internal Verifiers	Some ways in which Awarding Bodies can meet these requirements
1	<p>The Internal Verifier must have:</p> <p>a thorough understanding of the National Occupational Standards for Customer Service especially at Level 1 with the ability to interpret them within the environment and sectors they are verifying in</p>	<p>explanation and putting the National Occupational Standards in a variety of contexts feedback from a variety of employers and centres demonstrating a knowledge and understanding of the ICS Course Outlines and the ICS Glossary of Customer Service Terms developed for the Customer Service Technical Certificates (please note this is not compulsory and for those in Scotland it is understood that this may not be possible) responding appropriately to ICS recommended questions (see Appendix 5)</p>
2	<p>knowledge of current practice and emerging issues in the VQ area</p>	<p>participation in briefings about the new qualification requirements receiving Customer Service Newsletter to keep up to date with the latest issues regarding VQs (supplied via the Awarding Body)</p>
3	<p>experience and a working knowledge of the operational and Assessment processes specifically for Customer Service S/NVQs</p>	<p>having a successful track record of assessing or verifying the current Standards across a variety of organisations achieving or be working towards the Level 2 or 3 S/NVQ in Customer Service responding appropriately to ICS recommended questions (see Appendix 5)</p>
4	<p>relevant and credible Customer Service experience across the level and breadth of the Standards and S/NVQs and especially at Level 1</p>	<p>demonstrating that they have at least 2 years experience of delivering Customer Service as part of their job responding appropriately to ICS recommended questions (see Appendix 5)</p>
5	<p>knowledge of current Customer Service practice and emerging issues in the Customer Service arena</p>	<p>attending Awarding Body conferences or workshops where trends and developments in Customer Service are on the agenda attending ICS seminars/ workshops/ conferences joining ICS reading Customer Service publications/articles keeping up to date with business news regarding Customer Service possession of a Customer Service Technical Certificate regularly visiting the ICS Website for the latest developments</p>
6	<p>Internal Verification qualifications approved by the regulatory authorities</p>	<p>holding or working towards Internal Verifier qualifications approved by the regulatory authorities in an agreed timeframe</p>
7	<p>high levels of communication and interpersonal skills</p>	<p>feedback from EVs and Assessors</p>

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Potential Assessor Questions

- A1 Supply an example of sustained change in Customer Service that you have been largely responsible for. How would a third party know this?
- A2 Which elements of the Customer Service Level 1 Standards strike a particular chord with you as a result of your previous experience? Why?
- A3 Identify one or two elements which you think might be difficult to assess. Why would this be and how would you overcome these difficulties?
- A4 How would someone know you are good at drawing the best out of others, particularly if they are not confident or articulate? Give some critical incidents that can be easily verified.
- A5 Who else thinks you will make a good Assessor? Why?

Existing Customer Service Assessor Questions

- A6 What Customer Service evidence can you offer that shows the candidate demonstrated both knowledge of systems and sensitivity to the customer at the same time?
- A7 Give an example of difficulty you had in judging evidence and giving feedback. How did you resolve this difficulty?
- A8 Demonstrate some examples that show candidates knew what to do with the feedback you gave them. How would someone know this?
- A9 Describe an example of your ability to enable candidates to self assess effectively. How would an EV and IV be able to judge the validity of your example?
- A10 Supply two critical incidents in assessing Customer Service that both involved discussion and reading. Why, specifically, did you choose these incidents?

Additional Questions for Assessors at Level 1

- A11 What is the relationship between customer expectations, service delivery and customer satisfaction? Give some examples to demonstrate this.
- A12 What would you do to ensure that a Customer Service Simulation reflects reality as closely as possible?
- A13 What are the key differences between a Level 1 Customer Service job and a Level 2 Customer Service job?
- A14 Why are Level 1 Customer Service jobs particularly important to any organisation? Give examples of this to show what you mean.

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Potential Customer Service IV Questions

- IV1 Supply an example of sustained change in Customer Service that you have been largely responsible for. How would a third party know this?
- IV2 Which elements of the Customer Service standards strike a particular chord with you as a result of your previous experience? Why?
- IV3 Identify one or two elements which you think might be difficult to assess. Why would this be and how would you advise an Assessor to overcome these difficulties?
- IV4 How would someone know you are good at drawing the best out of others. Give some critical incidents that can be easily verified.
- IV5 What do you think makes a good Verifier in Customer Service and what do you think will be the particular difficulties in verifying these qualifications?

Existing Customer Service IV Questions

- IV6 Show how you have interpreted Awarding Body policy relating to the Customer Service Standards in a manner that was appreciated by both Centre staff and the Awarding Body
- IV7 What specifically, have you done that improved Assessor practice and your own, in relation to the Customer Service Standards.
- IV8 Give some specific instances in which you gave feedback to Assessors about how they assessed Customer Service candidates. How would someone know that your feedback was motivational and perceived as useful by the Assessors?
- IV9 Cite some disagreement you have had with Assessors about the way Customer Service was being assessed. How did you resolve the disagreement?
- IV10 Demonstrate that you have fed back to your External Verifier ways in which the Assessment of Customer Service could be improved.

Additional Questions for Internal Verifiers at Level 1

- IV11 What is the relationship between customer expectations, service delivery and customer satisfaction? Give some examples to demonstrate this.
- IV12 What would you do to ensure that a Customer Service Simulation reflects reality as closely as possible?
- IV13 What are the key differences between a Level 1 Customer Service job and a Level 2 Customer Service job?
 - IV14 Why are Level 1 Customer Service jobs particularly important to any organisation? Give examples of this to show what you mean.

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Further information

Further information regarding centre/scheme approval or any aspect of assessment of the N/SVQs should be referred to the relevant City & Guilds regional/national office:

Region	Telephone	Facsimile
City & Guilds London and South East	020 7294 8139	020 7294 2419
City & Guilds Southern	020 7294 2677	020 7294 2412
City & Guilds South West	01823 722200	01823 444231
City & Guilds East Anglia	01480 308300	01480 308325
City & Guilds East Midlands	01773 842900	01773 833030
City & Guilds West Midlands	0121 503 8900	0121 359 7734
City & Guilds North East	0191 402 5100	0191 402 5101
City & Guilds North West	01925 897900	01925 897925
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City & Guilds Scotland	0131 226 1556	0131 226 1558
City & Guilds Wales	02920 748600	02920 748625
City & Guilds Head Office – Customer Service Enquiry Unit	020 7294 2800	020 7294 2405

Website <http://www.city-and-guilds.co.uk>

Further information regarding the national occupational standards and continuing professional development can be obtained from:

The Institute of Customer Service (ICS)

2 Castle Court
St Peter' Street
Colchester
CO1 1EW
Tel: 01206 571716
Fax: 01206 546688
Email: enquiries@instcustserv.com

Stock ref: SP(or CD)-xx-xxxx