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## Learning Plan

CSA01

VTCT (Skillsfirst)

Principles of  
Customer Service  
(RQF)

**Level 1**

# Contents

1 Programme Overview	2
2 Qualification Information	3
2.1 Qualification aim and design	3
2.2 Progression opportunities	3
3 Qualification Structure	4
4 Centre requirements	5
4.1 Resources	5
4.2 FSkillsCfA	5
4.3 SkillsCfA and the Institute of Customer Service (ICS)	6
4.4 Employer direct model	7
4.5 Continous professional development (CPD)	7
4.6 Total Qualification Time (TQT)	8
5 Assessment	9
5.1 Summary of assesment methods	9
5.2 Aseessment principles	9
5.3 Characteristics of assessment guidance	10
5.4 Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	11

# 1 Programme Overview

Qualification title	VTCT (Skillsfirst) Level 1 Award in Principles of Customer Service (RQF)
Qualification number	600/0044/2
Product code	CSA01
Age range	There are no age limits attached to learners undertaking this qualification, unless this is a legal requirement of the process or the environment.
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	55
Guided Learning (GL) hours	47
Assessment	To be awarded this qualification, learners must successfully achieve the following assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portfolio of evidence</li> </ul>
Entry requirements	There are no formal entry requirements for learners undertaking this qualification; however centres must ensure that learners have the potential and opportunity to gain evidence for the qualification in the work place.
Legal considerations	There are no formal entry requirements for learners undertaking this qualification however, centres must ensure that learners have the potential and opportunity to gain evidence for the qualification in the work place.
Support materials	Support materials can be found on the website (if applicable)

## 2 Qualification Information

### 2.1 Qualification aim and design

This qualification covers the basic knowledge required to deliver reliable customer service through an understanding of customer expectations and needs. It also provides you with the knowledge to deal effectively with customer queries, problems and complaints.

### 2.2 Progression opportunities

As well as progression to further qualifications, this qualification also provides a sound base for progression into employment within the customer service industry as well as a tool to progress within different aspects of the business sector. This qualification provides progression to the following qualifications:

- VTCT (Skillsfirst) Level 1 Certificate in Principles of Customer Service (RQF)
- VTCT (Skillsfirst) Level 2 Diploma in Customer Service (RQF) or the
- VTCT (Skillsfirst) Intermediate Apprenticeship in Customer Service (Level 2)

### 3 Qualification Structure

To be awarded the VTCT (Skillsfirst) Level 1 Certificate in Skills for Employment (RQF) learners must achieve all mandatory units. A minimum of 15 credits must be achieved from Group A and/or Group B and/or Group C and/or Group D, of which a minimum of 8 credits must be at Level 1.

Certain units have been shown as “barred” from being taken with other units which cover the same or similar areas of learning, or have a significant overlap in content. For units marked \* refer to ‘Barred units table’.

The minimum TQT required to achieve this qualification is 150.

Product Code	Unit title	Level	GLH	Unit reference number
Mandatory units (Group M):				
CSP01	Principle of customer service	1	47	Y/501/4375

For units marked \* refer to ‘Barred units table’.

## 4 Centre Requirements

### 4.1 Resources

Centres must possess the physical resources needed to support the delivery of the programme and the assessment of knowledge and skills, which should therefore be of industry standard. Where specific resources are required these have been indicated in individual units.

### 4.2 SkillsCfA

This handbook provides details from the ICS's assessment strategy, which centres will need to apply in order to assess and quality assure the Level 1 Award in Principles of Customer Service (RQF) and includes:

- occupational expertise of those who assess performance, and moderate and verify assessments
- continuous professional development
- summary of assessment methods

The complete assessment strategy is available for view and to download from the ICS website [www.instituteofcustomerservice.com](http://www.instituteofcustomerservice.com)

### 4.3 SkillsCfA and the Institute of Customer Service (ICS)

The Level 1 Award in Principles of Customer Service (RQF) is based on the unit developed by the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) who were the sector skills council during its development. The sector skills council is now SkillsCfA and their contact details are:  
SkillsCfA

Unit 110 Linton House 164 - 180 Union Street London

SE1 0LH

Tel: 0207 091 9620

[info@skillscfa.org](mailto:info@skillscfa.org)

## **4.4 Occupational expertise of those who assess performance, and moderate and verify assessments**

Deliverers, assessors and internal verifiers (IVs) are appointed by the recognised centre and approved by Skillsfirst through the external verifier (EV).

### **4.4.1 Deliverers, Assessors and internal verifiers**

Staff delivering these qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they meet the following occupational expertise requirements. They should:

- be technically competent in the areas for which they are delivering training and/or have experience of providing training. This knowledge must be at least to the same level as the training being delivered
- have recent relevant experience in the specific area they will be assessing
- have credible experience of providing training

While the assessor/verifier (A/V) and the assessor/internal quality assurance (TAQA) units are valued as qualifications for centre staff, they are not currently a requirement for the qualifications.

Centre staff should have verifiable relevant experience and current knowledge of the occupational working area at, or above, the level they are assessing or verifying. This experience and knowledge must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when judging learner competence or

verifying assessment processes and decisions. This could be verified by:

- curriculum vitae and references
- possession of a relevant qualification
- corporate membership of a relevant professional institution

Centre staff may undertake more than one role, e.g. tutor and assessor or internal verifier, but must never internally verify their own assessments.

## 4.5 Employer Direct Model

Where employers opt for an 'employer direct' model, the qualification requirements for assessors and internal verifiers may be waived. The 'Employer Direct' model is where colleagues, supervisors and/or managers in the workplace are involved in the assessment process. Under this model, the employer, with the agreement of Skillsfirst and CfA and the approval of the qualification regulators, may choose between:

- achieving the appropriate approved qualifications for assessment/verification
- demonstrating that their (the employer's) training and development activity undertaken to prepare, validate and review these assessment roles, maps 100% to the National Occupational Standards which these qualifications are based on. The mapping process must be agreed by Skillsfirst as providing the equivalent level of rigour and robustness as achievement of the approved assessment/verification qualification

Each application to use the Employer Direct Model will be considered on an individual organisation and qualification basis and agreed by the qualification regulators, including the sector skills council. Prospective organisations must be able to confirm that their in-house practices conform to the requirements of the standards in association with Skillsfirst.

## 4.6 Continuous professional development (CPD)

Centres are responsible for ensuring that deliverers, assessors and IVs plan and maintain their CPD.

Centres are expected to support their deliverers, assessors and IVs in ensuring that their knowledge remains current of the occupational area and of best practice in delivery, mentoring, training, assessment and verification, and that it takes account of any national or legislative developments. Centres may have generic criteria and personnel specifications in addition to the above.

## 4.7 Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Each qualification has a Total Qualification Time (TQT) value based on the total number of hours learning required to achieve it. The TQT value reflects the number of supervised learning hours required to achieve the knowledge and assessment requirements, plus the length of time a learner would need to take to achieve the skills and capabilities to be deemed competent. All RQF qualifications are subject to an evaluation process to determine their fitness-for-purpose.



## 5 Assessment

### 5.1 Summary of assessment methods

For the VTCT (Skillsfirst) Level 1 Award in Principles of Customer Service (RQF), learners will be required to provide a portfolio of evidence which meets all the assessment criteria within the unit.

### 5.2 Suggested delivery strategy

Deliverers should familiarise themselves with the structure, content and assessment requirements of the unit within the qualification before designing a learning programme. It is suggested that centres design learning programmes that:

- best meets the needs and capabilities of their learners
- satisfies the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the unit

### 5.3 Characteristics of assessment guidance

The learner may produce evidence from a range of examples (as outlined below) which should be recorded in some form. A record of evidence will confirm to the assessor their confidence in the learner's breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding in being able to competently meet the functional requirements of all the units.

The assessor will need to be assured that the learner can meet all the learning outcomes of a unit and pass all the assessment criteria of a unit.

An assessor may request additional evidence if they are not satisfied with the evidence presented by the learner. If this occurs, it may need to be agreed in partnership with the learner and the assessor.

## 5.4 Types of evidence

Evidence is not required in any pre-set format and may be of many types and from diverse sources.

Examples of types of evidence might include:

- learner statement
- notes
- letter
- e-mail
- application form annotated or highlighted text
- action plan
- Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- review and tutorial records
- report
- project plan
- job cards and advertisements
- diary
- worksheet
- expenditure record
- audio/video recorded discussion/presentation/interview
- photograph
- assessor observation
- witness statement
- picture
- poster
- leaflets
- map
- product
- screen dumps (print screen)

Please note that centres are not restricted to the types of evidence listed above

## **5.5 Professional discussion**

Professional discussion is encouraged as a supplementary form of evidence to confirm a learner's competence. Such discussions should not be based on a prescribed list of questions but be a structured discussion which enables the assessor to gather relevant evidence to ensure the learner has a firm understanding of the standard being assessed

## **5.6 Simulation and witness testimony**

Simulation or witness testimony is warranted where the centre can demonstrate that performance evidence has been impossible to obtain in the work environment.

### **5.6.1 Simulation**

Simulation can be used to assess learners where the opportunity to assess naturally occurring evidence is unlikely or not possible, for example assessment relating to a breach of confidentiality or privacy, health and safety, fire and emergency procedures. It should not include routine activities that must be covered by performance evidence. It should only be used when performance evidence is unlikely to be generated through normal working practices.

### **5.6.2 Witness testimony**

Skillsfirst recognise the use of witness testimony and expert witness testimony as appropriate methods for assessors to collect evidence on candidate's performance.

Witness testimonies can be obtained from people that are occupationally competent and who may be familiar with the national occupational standards, such as the learner's line manager. They may also be obtained from people who are not occupationally competent and do not have a knowledge of the national occupational standards such as other people within the learner's workplace, customers and suppliers.

The assessor must judge the validity of the witness testimony and these may vary depending on the source. Witness testimonies can only support the assessment process and may remove or reduce the need to collect supplementary evidence. However, centres must comply with Skillsfirst guidance over the occupational competence and briefing of witnesses in the use of witness testimony

## 5.7 Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

RPL is a method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a component of a qualification through knowledge, understanding or skills that they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning. Should any opportunities for RPL be identified, it is important that a complete process of recognising prior experience and learning is undertaken, by ensuring that:

- it covers relevant or appropriate experience for previous activities, as well as accredited learning and qualifications
- it is incorporated into the assessment planning, with details of how this will take place
- mapping of prior learning to the national occupational standards to identify gaps is documented and auditable
- assessment methods or processes for recognising prior experience and learning, are documented and made available to the external verifier
- the audit trail covers the whole process and methodology of RPL
- the authenticity and currency of presented evidence is established by the assessor

This evidence will need to be referenced clearly on recording documentation and will need to be appropriately authenticated and validated, perhaps by an employer or expert witness. Assessment must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of the award. The evidence gathered must meet the standards of the qualification or component and the assessment process must be subject to the same quality assurance procedures as any other assessment process. In summary, evidence submitted to the RPL process must:

- be authentic and prove conclusively that RPL is based on the learner's own work;
- meet the requirements of the current the skills and knowledge requirements and be appropriate to the content of the component or qualification being considered for RPL;
- be sufficient to conclusively prove consistency of learner performance in meeting the skills and knowledge requirements