

NCFE Level 2

Certificate in Understanding Excellence in Customer Service for Hospitality

CUSTOMER NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

EFFECTIVE TEAMWORKING

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Workbook 1

How to use your learning materials

This course is delivered on a flexible learning basis. This means that most of your study will take place away from your Assessor/Tutor. It helps to carefully plan your studying so that you get the most out of your course. We have put together some handy tips for you below.

Study Guidance

Try to plan an outline timetable of when and where you will study.

Try to complete your work in a quiet environment where you are unlikely to be distracted.

Set realistic goals and deadlines for the various elements of your course.

Plan what you are going to study during each session, and try and achieve this each time.

After each session, reflect on what you have achieved and plan what you hope to complete next time.

Remember that not only do you have the support of your Assessor/Tutor, but it is likely that your family, friends and work colleagues will also be willing to help.

Assessor/Tutor Support

Your Assessor/Tutor will be available to support and guide you through the programme. They are experts in your area of study and are experienced in helping many different types of learners.

They can help you to improve the standard of work you submit and will give you useful feedback on areas in which you have excelled, as well as where you can improve.

Remember to listen to, or read, their feedback carefully. Ask if you are unsure about any of the feedback you receive as your Assessor/Tutor is there to help.

Make note of any tips they give. Refer to the learning materials as they contain the information you need to complete the end-of-unit assessments.

Look out for areas in which you can improve, and set yourself an action plan to make sure you complete the required work.

Take positive feedback on board; this demonstrates you are doing things right and have a good understanding of the subject area.

Use the feedback to avoid repeating any mistakes you may have made.

Enjoy your studies!

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Workbook 1

Workbook Contents

In this workbook, you will learn about different customer types and their needs and expectations, thinking about how expectations can be affected by cultural factors and how to anticipate, respond to and manage them. You will look at how to build good relationships with customers, using clear communication, giving accurate information and treating customers as individuals, and at how to deal with their complaints, collect and use their feedback. You will learn about organisational policies and procedures and the importance of following them. You will also learn about effective teamwork, thinking about how to build good relationships within a team and the possible outcomes of both effective and ineffective teamwork. You will look at ways to deal with customer service actions and when to pass on responsibility to colleagues, considering team and personal objectives and reflecting on your own development goals.

Contents

This workbook contains three sections:	Page
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Each section has a corresponding assessment that must be completed in order to achieve this part of the programme.

The assessments for this workbook can be found in:

Assessment 1

When you have completed this workbook, you should attempt the assessment. Your Assessor/Tutor will then give you detailed written feedback on your progress.

Remember that your assessment answers should be written in your own words. You should not copy answers directly from the workbooks.

NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Excellence in Customer Service for Hospitality

Assessment 1

Learner contact details

Name: _____

Contact address: _____

Postcode: _____ Contact number: _____

Email: _____

Learner declaration

I confirm that the answers in Assessment 1 were completed by me, represent my own ideas and are my own work.

Learner signature: _____ Assessment date: _____

If you need any help in completing these Assessments, refer to the relevant section within Workbook 1, or contact your Assessor/Tutor.

Please tick one of the boxes below to show what your status will be when you complete this course.

EMP 3 In paid employment for 25 hours or more	GAP 1 Gap year before starting HE
EMP 4 In paid employment for less than 25 hours per week	EDU 1 Traineeship
EMP 5 Self-employed for 25 hours or more per week	EDU 2 Apprenticeship
EMP 6 Self-employed for less than 16 hours per week	EDU 3 Supported Internship
NFE 1 Not in paid employment, looking for work and available to start work	EDU 4 Other FE* (Part-time)
NFE 2 Not in paid employment, not looking for work and/or not available to start work (including retired)	EDU 5 Other FE* (Part-time)
VOL 1 Voluntary work	EDU 6 HE
	OTH # (please state)

Upon successful completion of this qualification, learners will be awarded the NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Excellence in Customer Service for Hospitality: 603/2778/9. This qualification is certificated by the Awarding Organisation NCFE.

Section 1: Principles of customer service in the hospitality sector

In this section, you will learn about different types of customer and the needs and expectations of customers. You will consider how to develop good customer relationships and how to deal effectively with complaints. You will also learn how to collect customer feedback and how this can be used to prevent problems occurring in the future.

Different customer types

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 1.

The obvious customers of the hospitality sector are individuals who use the services such as restaurants and hotels, but our definition of customers is much wider than this. Anyone that you come into contact with in your role should be considered as a customer. This means that the same levels of customer service should be provided to all those you interact with in your work role.

Customers can be grouped into two different types:

- **Internal** – people who work for the same organisation or other departments within your organisation, including support and administration staff and departments, managers and colleagues.
- **External** – the individuals using the service for food, drink or accommodation.

External customers using hospitality services include:

- individuals
- couples
- groups
- families
- businesses



Did you know?

The term 'customer expectations' is used to refer to the things that people expect from a service. To provide high-quality service, one of the things you need to consider is how to meet customer expectations.

Section 1: Principles of customer service in the hospitality sector

Customer needs and expectations

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 2.

Customers have expectations and generally want:

- **efficient and polite service** – before, during and after buying or using a product or service
- **good quality products and services** – in line with the standards promised in catalogues, brochures, websites, customer charters, company policies, etc.
- **complaints and problems to be dealt with properly** – politely and quickly, with an effective outcome
- **their opinion to matter** – when dealing with staff, when giving feedback or when discussing a problem

Customer needs

Customer needs can be described as problems that customers intend to solve with the purchase of goods or services. Here are some examples of customer needs:

- Iqra works for a registered charity and needs an event for a fundraising dinner for 100 people. There will be varying food preferences and dietary needs, so she needs a menu offering at least three choices. There will also be some disabled guests, so she needs to be sure that there will be wheelchair access and that staff can offer appropriate support for visually and hearing impaired guests.
- Helga has a nut allergy and needs to be sure that there are dishes that are prepared without nuts and away from any possible contamination from nuts.
- Sophie and Andrew have a limited budget but need a meal for themselves and three children on their journey to meet family. They need a children's menu and family-friendly surroundings, including a highchair.

Section 1: Principles of customer service in the hospitality sector



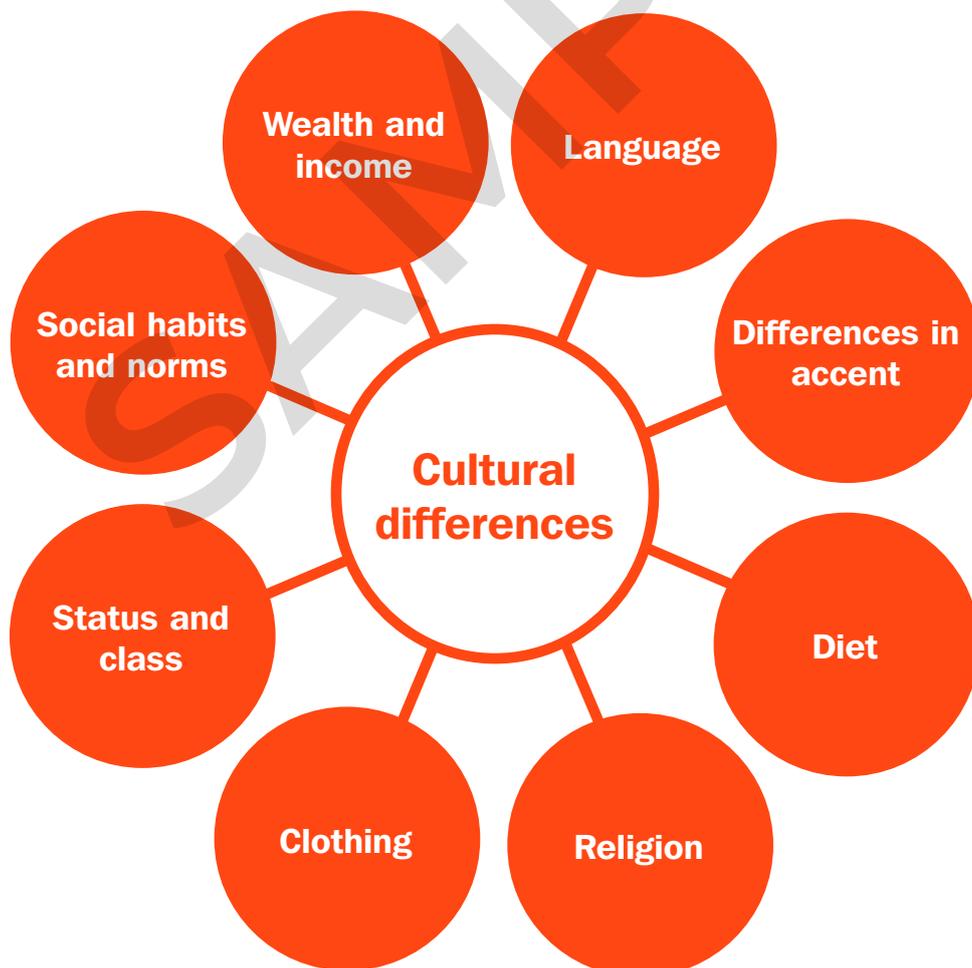
Did you know?

Many organisations will set out their own values or require staff to work to a published set of values, such as those identified in this section. These values will form a part of your work responsibilities.

How cultural factors can affect customers' expectations

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 3.

Culture is a set of beliefs and values that are shared by most people within a group. Culture determines how an individual behaves and has a significant effect on an individual's buying habits and choices. Culture includes beliefs, habits and principles which are developed from family status and background.



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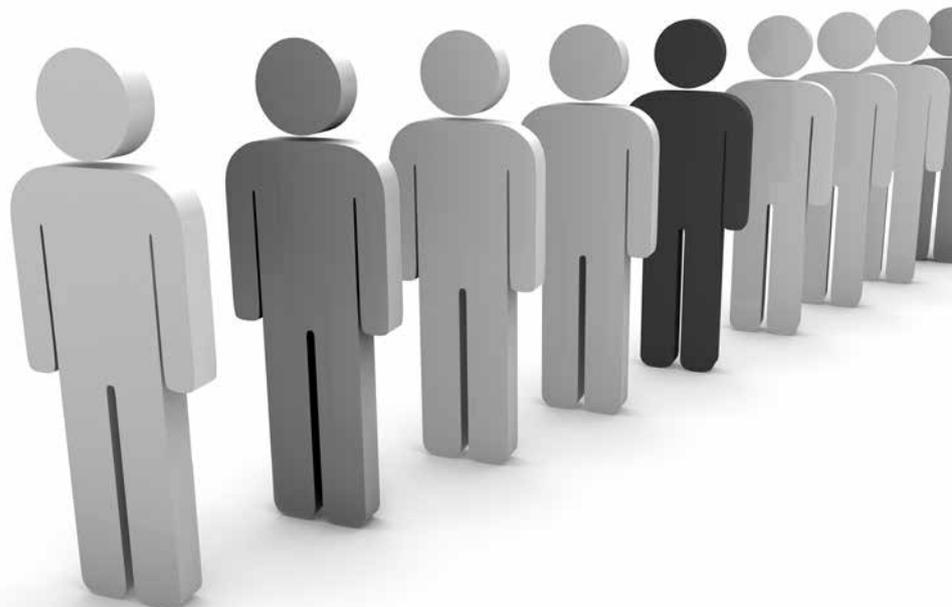
Cultural

Customers' expectations can be heavily influenced by cultural experience, and organisations take this into account when delivering their service offer and managing expectations.

Cultural factors that need to be considered include, for example:

- **language** – e.g. English not being the first language; different traditions about tone of voice; cultural traditions about the formality of language communication styles
- **nationality** – e.g. established traditions that reflect national culture
- **age** – e.g. cultural traditions about how people of different ages treat each other
- **religion and beliefs** – e.g. affecting food and drink choices; different holy days; religious festivals; fasting periods
- **social attitudes and behaviours** – e.g. the formality and type of greeting
- **body language** – e.g. personal space; touching and gestures; showing feet
- **values** – e.g. ethics and perception of right and wrong; lifestyle; attitudes to environmental and animal welfare issues

As we know, customers all expect good quality products and services, and excellent customer service. In addition to these expectations, we need to add cultural awareness as it is an important part of treating each customer as an individual.



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The following table gives some examples about topics that may affect customers' expectations and how an organisation might address these:

Cultural factor	Possible effects on customers' expectations	When considering cultural values, organisations might:
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● unable to check if needs can be satisfied ● not understanding the details about the service offer, leading to disappointment or surprise ● finding communication with customer service staff difficult and embarrassing ● fear about asking questions ● offended by the words and tone of voice used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● print product information in different languages ● train staff to speak slowly and clearly and be prepared to repeat ● encourage staff to use gestures and diagrams to communicate when necessary ● have access to translation services ● use a formal approach when greeting customers – if their culture expects this ● reassure staff that customers from certain cultures do not use 'please' and 'thank you' as we do in the UK – although considered rude here, this is seen as normal in many countries
Nationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● want to find familiar products and services that reflect their nationality and traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● do different versions of products for different nationalities – e.g. flags and souvenirs sold at international sporting events ● offer national dishes and drinks – e.g. haggis for a Scottish New Year party ● offer imported products and brands – e.g. Polish tiger bread or German bratwurst sausages
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● expect to be treated in a certain way for their age ● might have preconceptions about staff being much older or younger than them – and unable to deal with their queries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● treat older customers more formally – if their culture expects this ● use formal forms of address for adults ● amend their service offer for children and young people ● research a person's cultural expectations for different age groups

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<p>Religion and beliefs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● want foods that are prepared in a special way ● want products and services required by their specific religion ● want products and services available at correct time for religious holidays, festivals, fasts, etc. ● expect respect and tolerance for their beliefs, or lack of beliefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● offer alcohol-free options ● offer vegetarian, kosher, halal and pork-free options ● set aside an area for prayer ● target service offers at religious festivals and respect fasting periods ● be aware of having to separate men and women at certain events ● make sure that there are no offensive images or symbols on show – e.g. covering up a cross at a crematorium when there is a non-Christian funeral ● making sure that staff dress appropriately – covering areas which may cause offence in some cultures
<p>Social attitudes and behaviours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● some expect to be served by a person of their own gender ● expect products and services associated with certain social situations to be available ● expect staff to respect or follow their own traditions and cultural behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● be aware that some cultures treat males and females differently – amending the service offer if appropriate ● avoid interruptions and shouting – considered to be very rude in some cultures ● be aware of types of customer service that people from other cultures may be used to



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<p>Body language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● some expect staff to display body language that is acceptable in their own culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● train staff about not standing too close to people or touching them – if this will be considered offensive ● encourage eye contact with some cultures, but discourage it for others ● check which gestures are acceptable or offensive ● make sure that staff know how to greet people from different cultures – e.g. whether to shake hands, bow, remain silent or be very relaxed and chatty
<p>Values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● some customers will not choose products and services that do not support their values ● customers expect claims about the organisation's values to be genuine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● provide a range of ethically sourced goods to give customers choice ● be members of associations and schemes that identify with their values – e.g. the Soil Association, Fairtrade, Assured Food Standards (British Red Tractor logo) ● offer vegetarian options ● offer approved options – e.g. halal or kosher meat ● make sure that their service offers reflect different lifestyles ● make sure that their image and behaviours support their values

Section 1: Principles of customer service in the hospitality sector

In the customer service role, staff can do several things to embrace and respect cultural diversity. They can, for example:

- **observe, understand and respect different dress codes and symbols** – e.g. customers wearing a cross, a hijab or a turban
- **be respectful and aware of how different genders can be treated in other cultures** – e.g. some cultures can seem quite sexist to us in the UK, with the husband making all of the decisions during a transaction, for instance
- **be sensitive to the person's gender** – e.g. in some cultures, it may not be appropriate for a female to converse with a male member of staff
- **be very discreet and allow privacy**
- **learn about festivals and customs for other cultures** – so that they understand the main points and can hold an informed conversation with the customer
- **be polite, courteous and friendly at all times**
- **speak clearly and slowly, moderate strong regional accents and avoid local sayings** – especially if English is not the customer's first language
- **repeat very clearly if requested** – maybe using different words, gestures or a diagram to help the customer understand something
- **stay calm when they are not sure about how to handle the situation**

If an organisation deals with customers from the same cultures all of the time, staff with a customer service role will soon learn about the details of the cultures. This will enable them to relax and engage with customers on a wide variety of subjects.

If staff find that they do not understand the cultural differences and do not know how to act, they should just stay calm and remain polite and courteous. They should not make assumptions about the customer's needs and expectations. They should ask the customer, in a polite way, about what they can do to help.

The main thing is to treat every customer as an individual, with respect and patience, whatever their background or culture.

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Consider how the following cultural differences can affect customers' expectations

In some cultures, it is the norm that children stay up later and eat with the family. Some families may therefore expect provision for children, whereas other people from other cultures have children cared for at home when socialising at night.

In some religions, certain foods are forbidden and some customers may expect their dietary needs to be catered for.

Food preferences differ greatly between cultures and this may mean that some customers request different dishes or accompaniments.

The amount of money a customer has may affect what they expect from a meal; a customer on a lower income who treats themselves to a more expensive meal than they would normally choose may have much higher expectations in terms of portion size and quality, for example.

A customer may expect a menu to be provided in their language, or may expect that staff can converse with them in their own language.



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The importance of anticipating and responding to different customers' needs and expectations

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 4.

To be a successful business, it is not enough to just meet customer expectations; you need to anticipate what they need and want, and how their needs and expectations may change as time goes on. If you don't anticipate and respond to their needs, customers may move on to competitors who have already done so. Anticipating needs means looking at what your customers might be wanting several months from now.

You need to look at your sales information to find out what customers are buying, or what services they are using. If trends are developing, you need to be ready to provide modified or completely new goods and services. It is also important to listen to your customers, to find out what they are asking for. If a few customers start to ask for similar things, you need to make a move to provide it, so you don't lose business to other businesses that are already providing it. It is also important to carry out research into what your competitors are providing; this may give you ideas about the market and customer demand, such as products on sale, special offers, special events and pricing. It is also advisable to keep an eye on the websites of your suppliers and producers as this will inform you of products they are promoting as 'the next big thing', or products that they will be bringing out in the near future. This will give you ideas about the types of products that customers may start asking for.

Think about how changes in society could bring about changes in customer needs, for example:

- In times of slow economic growth, hospitality businesses have to compete harder with competitors for their share of the market as customers only have a certain amount of disposable income – businesses may need to compete for this disposable income by way of special offers and incentives, so that customers feel they are getting value for money.
- Health trends could mean there is demand for menu changes to provide for particular types of diet or dietary issues that are of particular importance or popularity at a certain time.
- Busy lifestyles and less time to spend on leisure time may mean customers want faster service, and this may mean looking at the way you operate.

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- Demographics means looking at the age of customers and what their needs are. For example, in an ageing population, it might be important for businesses with a relatively high percentage of older customers to cater for them by offering reduced price and smaller portion menus. If there is a growing number of younger people dining out than previously, they may prefer more casual options.
- Technology and the need for convenience mean businesses may need to look at providing mobile ordering and payment options. Social media is becoming more important to many customers, along with information provided on websites and loyalty programmes using technology.
- Trends change what customers want and hospitality businesses need to consider what is currently in fashion, especially if they have a younger customer base.

Here are some trends that have been highlighted and predicted in recent years:

- increase in vegan food
- desire for better quality casual dining
- desire for lesser-known cuisines, such as Korean and Portuguese
- desire to see more British produce
- more demand for fresh food cooked using fresh ingredients
- customer desire for less formal settings
- customers wanting local food, and wanting to know where the food comes from
- customers wanting to see less food waste
- diners wanting to see seasonal produce
- need for dining experiences for customers with less time
- increased demand for healthy breakfasts
- need for lower sugar dishes



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The Midway Grange Hotel serves meals to non-residents and a large number of their customers are elderly. There have been a number of requests for smaller portions or a senior citizens menu, but previously, it has been decided that it is easier to have one main menu. Some customers have been mentioning the prices and it has become obvious that quite a few of the regular group have stopped coming. A decision has been made to produce a two course menu from 12-6pm, when the restaurant is typically quieter, for a set price and to also introduce a loyalty card, which gives a free coffee or tea after six meals are purchased. After sending out details of the offer and promoting the menu, regular customers return and there is an overall increase in custom during the day.

The Black Bull Hotel is a popular venue for evening meals and drinks amongst a fairly young customer base, and they have two main competitors in the town. There have been a number of customers asking for prosecco and cocktails, which aren't on the menu. Trade has been down for six months and it is seen that one competitor is offering cocktail menus, along with a special '2 for 1' on Friday evenings, and the other competitor is promoting prosecco and cocktails. The manager decides to produce a drinks menu and buy in prosecco and attracts customers with some special offers initially to encourage them to return.

The importance of managing customers' expectations

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 5.

Working in a customer service role, you have a responsibility towards your customers. Where you don't meet customer expectations, customers may feel that they have had a poor service even if all their needs have been met. Failing to maintain standards can impact on you as a member of staff, the customer and the organisation. The negative impacts of not managing customers' expectations include:

- failing to meet the customers' expectations, leading to upset and disappointment for the customer
- loss of reputation for the organisation if customers leave bad reviews on social media sites
- loss of repeat business
- disciplinary action against the member of staff
- legal action against the organisation in extreme cases

Part of meeting customer expectations is about not making promises that can't be fulfilled, as this will falsely raise customer expectations.

ORGANISATIONAL STANDARDS

Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained within this learning material is accurate and reflects current best practice. All information provided should be used as guidance only, and adapted to reflect local practices and individual working environment protocols.

All legislation is correct at the time of printing, but is liable to change (please ensure when referencing legislation that you are working from the most recent edition/amendment).

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