
Unit 2: Customer Service in Travel and Tourism

[AS level, mandatory, internally assessed]

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1 OVERVIEW OF THIS UNIT

This unit will investigate customer service principles as applied by travel and tourism organisations to improve the delivery of the products and services provided by those organisations and develop confidence in candidate performance of customer service activities.

The work will be a natural progression from GCSE Leisure and Tourism and will encompass many of the features of customer service which candidates will need to apply and demonstrate their skills in other units of the AS and A2 qualification, such as Organising Travel, Hospitality, Working Overseas, Tourist Attractions, Guided Tour and Event Management. The knowledge which candidates acquire in this unit is fundamental in relation to the ways in which travel and tourism organisations operate and will be relevant to all jobs within the travel and tourism industry.

Candidates will need to study the basic principles of customer service as stated in the [Unit Specification](#), and the consequences to the organisation of not fulfilling basic principles of customer service. Candidates need to study how these are applied to the needs of both internal and external customers, as well as the purpose of these for the management of customer service by various travel and tourism providers. To do this, candidates will not only need to understand the differences between internal and external customers but also the varying needs of all the different types of customers.

In order to improve or develop the management of customer service, organisations will set practices and procedures which employees should follow when undertaking any form of customer service. Candidates will need to identify the practices and procedures of their chosen organisation and evaluate how these operate in reality in order to identify areas for further development or improvement in the practices and procedures. These practices and procedures may include the use of mystery shoppers, benchmarking, analysis of comments and complaints etc. For their assessment they will have to study the practices and procedures of **one** travel and tourism organisation in particular – how it meets the needs of internal and external customers, how it sets practices and procedures to monitor the performance of customer service within that organisation, and analyse any improvements or developments which could be made to these practices and procedures, as well as an evaluation of how the organisation actually performs in relation to its customer service provision. It is important that candidates are directed to suitable travel and tourism organisations where relevant information can be obtained or taken on structured visits to suitable organisations where input on systems can be given.

As quality of customer service is integral to the unit, candidates will need to develop their own performance of customer service and demonstrate ability to deal with a variety of customers in a variety of situations, including the handling of a complaint. This practical work is important and would be better organised through relevant travel and tourism work experience, though it is realised this is not always feasible within teaching programmes. However, the importance of practical customer service performance must be emphasised as this will form the basis of understanding which candidates will need to demonstrate in many of the other units of the qualification as both AS and A2 levels and for single or double awards. The criterion requires candidates to demonstrate performance of customer service to a minimum of **two** customer types in a minimum of **two** ways, but in order to achieve higher marks, the

more examples of providing customer service to a wider range of customers in a wider range of ways would be expected. These customer service situations must be performed realistically, in an appropriate environment using relevant scenarios if undertaken through simulation. The supporting evidence, in terms of documents used during the process (such as telephone messages taken, booking enquiry forms, completed booking forms etc.), plus observation records and/or witness testimonies are important elements of the evidence and should be included within portfolios. If video or tapes are also taken at the time of the simulation, these should also be clearly indexed with the name of candidate, position on the taped evidence, and included with submissions of sample work requested. If candidates do not reach expected levels of performance at the time of assessment, further situations may be undertaken, in order to reach the minimum standard required to achieve the criterion. It is also necessary for candidates to consider and evaluate their performance if they are aiming towards mark bands 2 or 3.

2 WHEN TO TEACH THE UNIT AND SUBMIT FOR MODERATION

For a single 3-unit AS candidate, dependent on timetable structures and staffing within centres, this unit can be delivered alongside Unit 1: *Introducing travel and tourism*, during the first term of the course, or could be delivered as an ongoing unit throughout year one of the programme. For those candidates who are attempting a 6-unit AS qualification, it would be recommended to study this unit during the first term, so that the fundamental understanding of customer service is ensured prior to work on optional units where customer service theory will be applied to new situations. Opportunities for moderation of the portfolio work would be available in January and June, so work could be submitted at the most appropriate time for each candidate.

3 SUGGESTED DELIVERY PLAN WITH TEACHING STRATEGIES

3.1 Introduction to the Unit

Set out aims and focus of the unit, and types of activities which will be undertaken.

Candidates give good and bad examples of customer service they have experienced. Discuss why these were good and bad and effect of this experience on them as consumers. Would they use that organisation again? Would they tell others of their experiences? What sort of customer service would they expect to receive?

3.2 Principles of Customer Service

Develop discussion points from introduction by identifying why customer service is important to organisations. Ask candidates to suggest reasons which apply to external customers and put ideas on spider diagram, then explain each benefits and effects of these in full. Cover all bullets in the [Unit Specification](#).

Collect articles or advertisements from the national press relating to public image and edge over competition, or details of loyalty programmes (such as HHonors from Hilton Hotels, National Trust membership scheme) league tables of tour operators or travel

agents market share (as in support materials for [Unit 6: Organising travel, appendix 2](#)) to highlight changes in sales.

Invite speaker from local T&T organisation to discuss importance of good customer service in relation to that business and how they try and achieve it.

Benefits to employees

How can a more efficient workforce be achieved? Ongoing training practices, provision of equipment to enable them to do the job more efficiently. Input on Welcome for Excellence (ex Welcome Host) schemes, or candidates undertake Welcome Host training day organised with local Regional Tourist Board to obtain development theory.

Increased job satisfaction – opportunities for in-house training, training on new equipment or procedures, involvement with discussions on new procedures, gaining qualifications, promotion; arrangements if working unsocial hours (e.g. hotel providing room if on late duty), subsidised or free meals for employees, any other methods to improve job satisfaction.

If any candidates are in part-time jobs ask them to prepare presentation on how the organisation helps them provide better service or improve their job satisfaction.

Consequences of poor customer service

Look again at poor customer service experiences provided by candidates in the introduction to the unit. List these experiences then ask candidates to list four consequences of poor customer service for an organisation. Ask them to explain why there are consequences to the organisation for each example given. Aggregate list should include features such as:

- customers cannot get information they need
- loss of income to the organisation because of cancellations or customers not returning
- increased costs to organisation if they have to attract repeat business or new customers
- high staff turnover because employees do not feel valued
- inefficient and unhappy workforce
- implementation of new systems without consultation with employees
- not meeting customer needs or expectations, therefore fewer customers visiting organisation
- lack of customer loyalty – no incentives to return, or products stale, as well as changing trends and organisation not keeping up to date with these
- poor public image – effect of negative publicity on organisation (see [Appendix 1](#))

3.3 Needs of External and Internal Customers

Candidates need to be able to distinguish between internal and external customers of organisations. Using the following examples, put candidates into groups, with each group studying one or two organisations from the list below so all are covered. They should identify the internal and external customers of that type of organisation.

- airport or major train company
- hotel with conference centre and gymnasium
- travel agency
- theme park or museum or similar attraction
- tour operator
- tourism development department of local authority or region

Each group then presents a display identifying internal and external customers for their chosen organisation type(s).

Consolidate groups' responses giving full lists of different types of external customer and internal customer

External Customers

Taking consolidated list from previous activity, identify the needs for each of the customer types. Ensure discussion covers all communication, physical, behavioural needs of:

- individuals (single rates, security, independent traveller, assistance, information, etc.);
- groups (discounts, one free place per x passengers, business meetings, tour groups, educational visits, etc.);
- different age groups (such as families, elderly, teenagers);
- different cultural groups (diet, facilities, behaviour);
- tourists whose knowledge of English is limited or non-existent (information, directions, communication);
- people with specific needs (e.g. wheelchair-bound, sensory disabilities, people with young children);
- facilities for members and non-members (such as members of RCI or National Trust, etc);).

This could be approached by different groups of students looking at one or two of the bullet points above and preparing a presentation for the rest of the class on the needs of each of the identified groups and how these might be met by different types of organisations.

Use the video [Talk](#) to identify disabled needs, or activity with one student in wheelchair for a morning/afternoon, identifying problems as regards access, behaviour of others to their situation, difficulties experienced. (See Resources section below for details.)

See table in [Appendix 2](#) for examples of types of needs.

Needs of Internal Customers

Again using consolidated list of internal customers from the earlier activity, identify how organisations meet the different needs of internal customers, ensuring that the class considers:

- colleagues (people with whom you work closely);

- management and supervisors (organisation management structure and roles/responsibilities of and to these);
- staff teams (need for good communication and working relationships, project work);
- employees of other organisations providing services or products (kept informed of developments/changes).

Consider why organisations need to take account of needs of internal customers and good working relationships in order to provide:

- delivery of high levels of customer service;
- good levels of communication between departments;
- smooth operation of the organisation;
- happy and efficient workforce;
- employee loyalty.

They could consider employee loyalty awards, how information is circulated to all departments of the organisation (using school or college as a starting point), how all branches/divisions should aim to meet the same standards, training on new systems and procedures to improve service provision, effect of IT on service provision.

See table [Appendix 2](#) for examples of types of needs of internal customers.

3.4 Preparation and Development of Assessment Evidence for AO1

Candidates should select **one** travel and tourism organisation to research and identify the internal and external customers of that organisation, their needs, and how these are met by the organisation. They should aim to contrast the organisation's approach to meeting the different needs of each. There should be some attempt at conclusions as to how the organisation benefits from realising the different needs and aiming to meet them. Candidates may undertake some initial research and investigation but may prefer to commence the final assessment work when they have developed their research for AO3 and AO4.

3.5 Customer-Service Skills and Personal Presentation

Candidates need to develop personal skills to prepare for practical customer service performance. These should include use of appropriate language, listening skills, positive body language, diplomacy, sensitivity, self-confidence.

One approach to introduce this could be with use of video showing examples of good and bad customer service. Candidates can then discuss aspects of these skills to highlight good practice. Use of case studies from the Springboard UK Travel and Tourism Programme (www.springboarduk.org.uk/TTP).

Examples of activities and exercises to address these are provided in *GCE AS Travel and Tourism Single Award for OCR*, (J. Smith, A. Rowe, H. Blackman & S. Stewart, 2005). Others are given in [Appendix 3](#).

The more candidates can practice personal and operational skills the more confident they will become and more prepared for simulation or role-play activities.

Telephone skills

Telephone skills can be developed with candidates sitting back to back in pairs (so that they cannot see the facial expressions or body language of their partner). Starting with simple telephone calls, develop confidence by taking more complicated messages or dealing with angry customers. Ensure that candidates change roles frequently or even change partners, to add variety.

Telephone message forms should be taught as to the type of information to be recorded, and candidates should complete these for all the activities undertaken. (See [Appendix 4](#) for an example of a telephone message form but these are also obtainable from office stationery suppliers.) Aim for brevity and clarity. These practical exercises would not be used as evidence for the assessment, but would help develop necessary skills prior to assessment. If telephone calls can be taped, then candidates can identify inappropriate use of slang or jargon or examples of lazy, hesitant speech.

Written Communication

Candidates need to understand the different types of written communication and their purposes or end users (letters, fax, email, memos, message forms, booking forms, etc.). They will also need to develop skills in producing various types of documents to prepare them for their assessment.

They will already have looked at message forms and the need to take concise messages. This could then be developed into response via fax and email. Emphasise the need for material to be fit for purpose (i.e. spelling and punctuation should be appropriate, as should tone of message).

Develop letter writing skills, starting with simple acknowledgement letters to those with more content such as specific requests for information, responding to enquiries giving relevant details, working towards composing letters in response to complaints. See Appendix A.5 for possible topics for correspondence.

Selling skills and product knowledge

This can be approached in various ways. For example, candidates assisting at Open Evenings, explaining to prospective students and parents the benefits of the Travel and Tourism course and the type of work undertaken. This type of exercise must be supported by detailed individual observation statements outlining the skills demonstrated and competence in these skills. (See Appendix 6 for an [Observation Report](#) form.)

Another way of developing these skills is through role play with one candidate taking the part of a customer enquiring about a holiday and the other candidate is a sales consultant advising on suitable accommodation, features of the destination, to encourage the customer to make a booking. Body language and communication skills are important for both these exercises.

Product knowledge can be developed through work experience or part-time jobs where candidates are demonstrating the knowledge of the products the organisation has. Evidence to support any work-experience or part-time job performance can be

supported by a signed Witness Testimony (see [Appendix 6](#) for an example). This could form part of the evidence to support AO2.

Effective IT skills and awareness of developments in IT

These can be demonstrated and practised through the preparation of portfolio work but candidates also need to know how IT affects working practices. Using examples such as hotels and travel agencies, identify uses for IT in a variety of situations – using different IT packages, such as word processing, spreadsheets, databases and search engines.

Consider how information is transferred from restaurant to customer's account in a hotel; use of IT in guest rooms via TV access to different facilities/stations; stock control; booking systems in travel agencies via GDS, etc.

Dealing with Complaints

Candidates need to develop the skill of handling complaints effectively – this may have been introduced when dealing diplomatically or sensitively with situations, but this needs to be developed. Complaints can be dealt with in a variety of ways, and candidates who are in part-time jobs or work experience can be asked what the procedures are for their organisations or you can study the complaints procedure at your centre. These can be discussed as a group, and the group should then set out a procedure for handling complaints:

- face to face;
- in writing (letter, email, fax);
- on the telephone.

Practical activities should take place to develop confidence of candidates in handling complaints, referring where necessary to supervisors or managers and giving careful consideration to appropriate compensatory actions

Personal Presentation

Refer to visits made for Unit 1: *Introducing travel and tourism*, videos watched for customer service, own experiences at travel and tourism organisations, pictures in brochures and highlight features of personal presentation. Consider dress codes, personal hygiene and personality. Identify good points of personal presentation and importance of this for organisations in relation to customer satisfaction, loyalty, and impressions of organisation. Emphasise the need for candidates to demonstrate personal presentation skills for practical performance for AO2.

Legal considerations

This section is best delivered in a more formal way, though examples from case studies or the press can be used to explain features of legislation and consumer protection.

- **Health and Safety at Work Act** as well as duty of care to customers: candidates need to know how this relates to working places or care of customers visiting organisations. They do not need to know all the clauses but how it relates to care for customers and what actions organisations must take in relation to HASAWA risks.
- **Security** – for money paid by customers or goods kept for safe keeping (e.g. in hotel baggage storage areas or safety boxes, airport security systems and purposes, what can be carried on aircraft, use of security cameras at attractions, transport terminals etc.) need to be explained as it may affect quality of customer service provided or confidence of customers using organisations.
- **Trade Descriptions Act** as it refers to details in brochures, on leaflets/posters etc., when describing services to be offered to customers – candidates need to understand that information should be reliable and valid.
- **Consumer Credit Act** – as it refers to any payment for goods and services made by credit cards or on hire purchase. Principles of act need to be considered in relation to security of money of customers and payments made.
- **EU Package Holidays Directive** – revision of coverage for Unit 1: *Introducing travel and tourism*, looking at how this relates to products provided by tour operators and travel agents.

3.6 Preparation and Development of Assessment Evidence for AO2

Candidates need to demonstrate the ability to perform customer service to a **minimum of two** different customer types (individual, group, different ages, different cultures, tourists with limited English, customers with specific needs, members and non-members of organisations). The situations in which this customer service is demonstrated must also be of a **minimum of two types** (face-to-face, by letter, on the telephone for example) and **one** must involve dealing with a complaint or problem. The more effective the demonstration over a wider range of customer types and situations will lead candidates towards Mark Band 2 and 3, providing these are supported by relevant documentation and evidence and the candidate has evaluated their own performance. Evidence can come from work experience, part-time jobs, but there must be at least one example from the travel and tourism industry if work experience or part-time job is not within a travel and tourism organisation.

3.7 Assessment of the Quality of Customer Service in Travel and Tourism

Using examples of mission statements from textbooks, Springboard UK, organisations providing work experience or part-time jobs, school or college, examine these to identify main aims and objectives of organisations and how these relate to employee performance.

Using these examples as a base, identify quality criteria which the various organisations might use to set the standards of performance. You should ensure you cover:

- Price/value for money – would customers perceive the product/services offered to be priced appropriate and give value for money?

- Consistency and accuracy of customer service performance – do all employees perform to the same level all the time?
- Reliability of service provided – is the same level of service provided in all departments to the same standard, at all times?
- Staffing levels and qualities of staff – are there sufficient staffing levels to meet peaks in demand (e.g. in a hotel in the morning during check-out periods, or evening during check-in periods, at airport check-in desks – are there sufficient open to deal with number of passengers)? Do staff have the necessary qualities to deal with the situation, have they been sufficiently trained on equipment, etc.?
- Enjoyment of experience – were customers satisfied with the experience and would they return?
- Health and safety – were customers considered at all times in relation to health and safety?
- Cleanliness/hygiene – how does the organisation ensure that the environment is clean at all times and hygiene levels maintained in all areas (e.g. washroom areas, restaurant)?
- It may be valuable to invite speaker from a local T&T organisation to explain the purpose of mission statements and quality criteria, or visit a local provider who could deliver explanation of quality criteria and how that organisation measures and monitors performance of customer service. (This would also assist candidates when preparing for Assessment Objectives 3 and 4.)

Accessibility and availability of products and services

Part of the quality criteria is accessibility and availability of products. When on their visit to the organisation or when speaker is in the centre, candidates could devise survey or questionnaire to obtain data on:

- availability of product or service
- breadth of access to it (online, direct sell, telephone, mail order, opening times and periods)
- physical accessibility (Can it be reached by all including customers with disabilities or wheelchairs, and can they enter the premises?)
- location of facility (signposting, high street/out of town, ease of car parking, map on website or publicity material etc.)
- choice of products/services (Is this wide enough to appeal to most target markets, or does organisation focus on specific market? What additional products/services does the organisation offer?)

Another way of opening discussion on this would be to use leaflets (obtainable from TICs, hotel display stands with leaflets or local attractions, or the attractions themselves) for attractions and facilities in the locality to establish answers to above questions. This could also develop understanding of basic marketing principles.

Customer service policies

Obtain examples of customer care policies for variety of organisations – some in textbooks, Springboard UK has range.

Discuss how these differ from mission statements. Candidates should be able to identify aims from mission statements and link these to policies for provision of customer service.

The speaker or educational visit made for quality criteria may also be able to provide an example of customer service policy. The more examples which can be obtained, the better understanding of features of customer service policies.

Monitoring provision of customer service (benchmarking)

This can be covered during an educational visit on quality criteria, or by a speaker from an organisation, and follows on naturally from quality criteria and accessibility of products and services as covered above.

Candidates need to identify methods of feedback organisations use to monitor the quality of customer service such as:

- Informal feedback (simple questions such as: Have you enjoyed your meal/stay? Was everything satisfactory?).
- Surveys (questionnaires/telephone calls designed to be used by organisations to assess views on service quality).
- Suggestion or comments boxes/books (may be on feedback form or available in room/reception).
- Focus groups (employee groups focus on specific topic e.g. reception to analyse needs/performance)
- Mystery shoppers (unknown visitor undertakes quality audit survey on behalf of organisation).
- Observation (employee being observed undertaking normal duties, appraisals).

How was feedback recorded? Was it a check-list, grading scale, numerical analysis? How were the findings used?

The case study on Manchester Airport in textbook *GCE AS Travel and Tourism Single Award for OCR* would assist candidates to identify methods used, and the [pro forma](#) in the support materials for Unit 6: *Organising travel* would guide candidates to some of the items that might be included in a suitable measurement tool for a mystery shopper at a travel agency. Candidates could also look at *Travel Trade Gazette* features on frontline performance of agency staff in a locality.

3.8 Preparation and Development of Assessment Evidence for AO3 and AO4

These criteria can be worked on together, with relevant research on how the chosen organisation monitors the effectiveness of its customer service (methods and procedures) and how it uses information to develop performance with the research evidence analysed effectively for mark band 3. Part of the research could be the candidate undertaking mystery shopper activity with a prepared measuring tool, and using findings from that to assist analysis for AO3 and evaluation for AO4, along with findings from other types of research.

Centres should realise that Quality of Written Communication skills are also to be considered when grading work for AO4.

4 SAMPLE ASSIGNMENT

Scenario

You are employed in the Customer Service Department of a travel and tourism organisation and have been asked to undertake a review of the way the organisation deals with various types of customers, both internal and external.

This review will involve a study of how the travel and tourism organisation currently meets the needs of its internal and external customers, with some comparison of how it meets the two types of customer. Then you will study the current procedures used by that organisation to assess its provision of customer service and how improvements are highlighted through analysis of findings. Demonstrating your knowledge of customer service principles you will then evaluate how these principles are applied by the chosen organisation in order to develop its provision of customer service, making valid recommendations for improvement.

You should give careful thought to your choice of organisation as you will need to identify the internal and external customers of that organisation, obtain information as to its current methods and procedures for monitoring the provision of customer service, how it uses this to develop its provision, and be able to obtain the data to support your analysis and evaluation. You may choose an organisation you know well due to work experience, part-time job or personal contact, as it may then be easier to obtain the type of information needed to undertake the assessment, but the organisation must be in the travel and tourism industry.

You will also need to demonstrate your ability to perform customer service duties showing communication skills in a variety of situations to a variety of customers with some evaluation of your performance. One of the situations must be handling a complaint or problem. This practical work does not have to be related to the same organisation studied in detail for the rest of the assignment, but must be in the context of travel and tourism.

Task One (AO1)

Having chosen your organisation, you need to identify and explain the needs of external and internal customers of that organisation and identify how these needs are currently met by the organisation. You need to consider all types of external customers (individuals, groups, different age groups, different cultural groups, tourists with limited knowledge of English, those with specific needs and members/non-members of organisations) as well as all types of internal customers (colleagues, management and supervisors, staff teams and employees of other organisations with which the business regularly deals).

When you have obtained this basic information, you then need to prepare a comparison of how the organisation meets all these different needs of internal and external customers. You will also need to demonstrate ability to draw reasoned conclusions as to how the organisation benefits as a result of meeting these customer needs.

Task Two (AO3)

Organisations usually use quality criteria to monitor the provision of customer service. These may include:

- price/value for money
- consistency/accuracy
- reliability
- staffing levels/qualities to meet the demands of seasonality
- enjoyment of experience
- health and safety
- cleanliness and hygiene
- accessibility and availability of tangible products and services
- provision for individual needs

They may set performance standards for these quality criteria which have to be checked regularly to assess performance within the organisation. This is so that the organisation can monitor its performance and identify areas for improvement.

You should investigate the methods used by your chosen organisation to assess its provision of customer service. The research you undertake may be primary and/or secondary, and may involve the preparation of a questionnaire to use with management and/or employees of your chosen organisation to obtain details of methods currently used.

You should consider the feedback techniques used by the organisation such as informal feedback, surveys, suggestion boxes, focus groups, mystery shoppers and observation or any other method in operation. You then need to analyse how the organisation uses this information in order to adapt its products and services to changing customer needs and how it makes improvements to the provision of its customer service. Your research will need to be evidenced (either in a bibliography or appendix) to support your analysis.

Task Three – AO4

Having analysed the organisation's practices and procedures to assess the effectiveness of its customer service, you now need to consider how well it is actually performing to meet the needs of a range of different types of customer, both internal and external. To do this, you may decide to produce a *pro forma* which could be used by a mystery shopper to ascertain whether the organisation is actually meeting its quality criteria, and/or you may decide to obtain information some other way such as from customers of the organisation, but it will be easier to undertake an evaluation with some positive evidence on which to base your evidence.

You will produce a memorandum to the Manager of the Customer Service Department which critically evaluates how the customer service principles support the provision of customer service to a range of customers, ensuring that your conclusions are valid and substantiated with any recommendations for improvement supported by evidence from your findings.

You should ensure that you present your work (in an appropriate memo format) logically with effective use of appropriate terminology. The language used should be

sufficiently clear to ensure that the meaning is accurately conveyed to the reader, which in this case would be the manager of the Customer Services Department.

Task Four (AO2)

To demonstrate that you can communicate effectively with a variety of customers in a variety of situations you will need to provide evidence of customer service skills performance.

This may be performed on work experience or in a part-time job, but must be fully evidenced with a witness testimony from a supervisor and details of the types of customers should be given. However, if the organisation you have been working for is not within the travel and tourism industry, you will also need to provide evidence of dealing with customers in this industry probably through simulation. If work experience or part-time job evidence is not possible, the customer service performance must be performed in realistic role play travel and tourism situations.

You will be expected to provide evidence of performance in a **minimum of two** different situations (e.g. face-to-face, on the telephone, in writing) for a **minimum of two** different customer types (e.g. individuals, groups, people with special needs, different ages, people whose knowledge of English is minimal etc.) which must include handling of a complaint or dealing with a problem. The more examples of provision of customer service you can produce, the more likely you are to achieve marks in the higher mark bands, providing this shows effective communication and customer service skills. All your evidence must be supported by witness testimony or observation record, and supporting documentation and you may also include evidence on tape or video.

When you have undertaken your practical customer service activities, you will then need to evaluate your performance in these situations, identifying areas where you consider you performed well. If there are any areas where you feel there is room for improvement you should identify how you intend to develop your skills to ensure better performance in future.

5 RESOURCES

<p>Organisations</p>	<p>Springboard UK Travel and Tourism Programme Enterprise House 127 Bute Street Cardif CF10 5LE www.springboarduk.org.uk Major tourist attractions, such as Alton Towers, Cadbury World Major hotel chains, such as Marriott. Hilton</p>
<p>Magazines</p>	<p><i>Travel Trade Gazette</i> (articles on performance of travel consultants in an area to compare quality of service) <i>Travel Trade Weekly</i></p>
<p>Textbooks</p>	<p><i>GCE AS Travel and Tourism Single Award for OCR</i>, J. Smith, A. Rowe, H. Blackman & S. Stewart, 2005, Heinemann, 0435446401 <i>GCE AS Travel and Tourism Double Award for OCR</i>, J. Smith, A. Rowe, H. Blackman & S. Stewart, 2005, Heinemann, 043544641X <i>Communication for Work</i>, C. Carysforth, 1998, Heinemann, 0435455427 <i>Customer Service for Dummies</i>, K. Bailey & K. Leland, USIDG 1999, 1568843917 <i>AVCE Travel and Tourism Student Book</i>, J. Rodgers, 2001, Heinemann, 0435455923 <i>Career Award in Travel and Tourism: Standard Level</i>, A. Rowe, J. Smith and F. Borein, 2002, Cambridge University Press, 052189235X</p>
<p>Websites</p>	<p>www.hilton.com www.ttglive.com www.welcometoexcellence.co.uk or local tourist board websites for training on Welcome Host</p>
<p>Videos</p>	<p><i>Talk</i>, issued by Disability Rights Commission <i>Keeping the customer satisfied</i>, TV Choice, PO Box 597, Bromley, Kent, BR2 0YB, tel 020 8464 7402</p>

APPENDIX 1: FUTURE OF AIRTOURS/MYTRAVEL

During 2003-4 *Mytravel* suffered from negative publicity due to the enormous debt the organisation had and losses it had made over a period of time. The company, formerly known as *Airtours*, had undergone structural changes and re-branded itself as *Mytravel*, but the costs far outweighed the income earned from the various forms of tour operations and services such as flights. Some staff had been made redundant during the transition and the various stages of cost cutting exercises. Others had seen their roles and duties changed to meet the changing needs of the reorganised business.

By November 2004, the company was in serious discussions with bondholders and stakeholders over further restructuring and its whole future was in the balance for some time. The national and financial press had given considerable coverage to the plight of *Mytravel* and its future within the industry.

Discuss the effect of negative publicity in relation to:

- sales of package holidays
- employees within the company at all levels
- customer loyalty
- public perception of the company and its products

APPENDIX 2: NEEDS OF EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CUSTOMERS

External	Internal
Location and access	Safe working environment
Reliable information	Access to appropriate current information to give to customers
Range of products and services	Product knowledge and training on products and services offered
Prompt handling of complaints or queries	Practices and procedures for handling of complaints and queries
	Access to supervisors and management to handle complaints
Efficient handling of enquiries	Training on equipment and documentation
Rewards for repeat business	Job satisfaction, motivational awards, discounts on products and services
Recognise employees	Uniform and/or name badges with job role provided
Consideration of individual needs	Being respected as an individual but also part of a team
Specified products and services being available when required	Suppliers made aware of delivery schedules and paid promptly for goods and services

APPENDIX 3: ADDITIONAL EXERCISES FOR DEVELOPING CUSTOMER SERVICE PERSONAL SKILLS

Language

One candidate describes route to college/school reception from present location, as if to someone who knows buildings well. Then describes same route as if to a person whose English is not their primary language, or to a child, who does not know the building well. Why and how were the two descriptions different? Was slang or jargon used in either case? Were instructions clear? Was tone appropriate for the specific audience?

Body language

Two candidates role play a heated discussion on a situation. The rest of group divide into two groups, with one watching one candidate closely, and the second group watching the other candidate. Each group must identify the positive and negative body language used by the candidate they are watching, considering facial expressions, gestures, stance etc. As a group, discuss various aspects of body language shown.

Discuss as a group what body language gives the impression of:

- boredom or lack of interest;
- aggression;
- helpfulness;
- approachability;
- anger.

Study the body language of members of the class and identify the body language they are using and what you interpret from it. Discuss whether the impression given is always accurate. For example someone could be slouching at the desk (boredom?) but facial expressions demonstrate interest. Discuss possible conflicting evidence – e.g. facial expression shows approachability but stance demonstrates keeping distance. Get students to try to smile and frown at the same time – this is an impossibility but emphasises how facial expressions can affect tone of voice. Good practice for later exercises on telephone skills.

Listening skills

Read a description of a hotel from a tour operator brochure aloud to the class. They must not make notes during the reading. At the end ask them to write down all the features they remember. Which candidate identified the most? Were there any features which none remembered? How accurate were the details they recorded.

Repeat the exercise, allowing them to make notes as you are reading. Were more features listed then? Does this demonstrate the importance of taking notes while listening? For example a travel consultant would need to be able to recall all the customer's requirements when investigating possible holidays and would probably take notes during the discussion.

Development of listening skills is important, particularly when candidates have to deal with telephone calls in role play or work situations.

Diplomacy

You are a representative for a tour operator and have to visit the apartments of a group of youths who have caused disturbance late at night to other residents. You need to ask them to keep noise levels down late at night, without offence.

You are working in a restaurant which is non-smoking, but there are no notices informing customers of that. A customer who has finished the meal lights a cigarette. You have to tell them of the no-smoking rule and ask them to put the cigarette out or go outside to have the cigarette.

Sensitivity

You are an assistant at a theme park ride which has height restrictions. A mother and child have queued for some time, but the child is too tall for the ride. Inform them as sensitively as possible that the child is too tall for the ride.

APPENDIX 4: TELEPHONE MESSAGE FORM

Below is an example of a telephone message form to be used when candidates receive phone calls and to support evidence in portfolio. Similar forms can be obtained from office stationery suppliers.

TELEPHONE MESSAGE FORM	
Message for _____	Dept _____
Date _____	Time _____
Name of caller _____	
Organisation _____	
Telephone number _____	Extension No _____
Telephoned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Returned your call	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left a message	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please return call	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please arrange appointment	<input type="checkbox"/>
MESSAGE _____	

Taken by _____	Dept _____

APPENDIX 5: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS – LETTER WRITING DEVELOPMENT

Enquiry: write to a coach company requesting prices for a 50-seater coach to a tourist attraction from your centre, departing 8.0am and returning 5.30pm, on a specific day.

Response: write as if the coach company responding to this enquiry, giving full details of costs for this journey and details of availability.

Confirmation: write to tourist attraction confirming telephone booking of tickets for 46 students and four staff on specified day for an educational visit which includes a presentation by their Customer Services Officer. Give estimated time of arrival at attraction and ask for details of coach parking, exact timing of presentation by their CS Officer and estimated length of presentation.

Letter of complaint: write as if a customer of a rail company whose journey on a particular day had been subject to a 90-minute delay, and there had been no trolley service or buffet car open for refreshments. This delay meant that the customer was late for an important meeting, and some explanation is requested.

Response to complaint: write as if the CS Officer for the rail company, apologising for the delay on the journey (which was subject to flooding on the track and speed restrictions for all trains on that route), and for the lack of refreshments. The usual form of compensation for this type of delay is refund of the journey fare and this is often provided by Rail Vouchers.

Appendix 6: Useful forms

On the following pages are suggested forms for an observation report and a witness testimony.

OBSERVATION REPORT

Name of Candidate _____

Details of Situation/scenario

Assessor Comments (on performance in practical situation, fluency of delivery in presentation use of aids and response to audience questions, communication skills demonstrated, confidence of candidate, appropriateness to meet the criteria)

Report	AO

Assessor Name and Job Role _____

Signature of Assessor _____ Date _____

Name of Other Observer (if relevant) and Job Role _____

Signature _____ Date _____

WITNESS TESTIMONY

Name of Candidate: _____

Work Role of Candidate: _____

Name of Organisation: _____

Please identify level of performance of skills demonstrated:

	Excellent	Good	Skills need some development	Skills very weak
Personal presentation				
Oral communication				
Written communication				
Telephone skills				
Cooperates with colleagues				
Follows instructions				
Shows initiative				
Approach to work				
Attitude				
Competent use of IT				
Problem solving				

General report and comment:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness' Name and Job Title: _____