



Apprenticeship & Advanced Apprenticeship in Customer Service (Apprentice Guide)

What is the course about?

An apprenticeship offers you the chance to earn a wage while you are employed and learning the practical skills required for the job. Once employment is secured within an organisation that can offer a customer service role, you will be trained and given the opportunity to develop your customer service skills.

Who is the course for and am I qualified to join it?

The apprenticeship is targeted at those over 16 years of age who would like the opportunity to pursue a vocational career and want an alternative to a formal academic course. The apprenticeship recognises that employment in the customer service sector involves a diverse range of functions, tasks and activities, such as communicating with customers in writing, face to face or by telephone; dealing with requests, queries or problems and ensuring that the customer service provided is consistent and to the highest standard. The apprenticeship is suitable for candidates who have an interest in pursuing a career in a customer service or administrative job role or who are already working in a customer service environment and whose role is to provide a service to customers. You will need to be conscientious, mature, reliable, self-motivated, committed and enthusiastic. Apprenticeships are very popular and you will need to be sure that you are ready to begin your career. Any employment is challenging, however, an apprenticeship carries the extra demands of gaining your qualifications and being willing to continually learn new things and update your skills.

Minimum requirements:

Apprenticeship

4 GCSEs at grade E including English and Maths preferably at grade C or First Diploma Pass or Introductory Diploma at Merit.

Advanced Apprenticeship

4 GCSEs at grade C including English and Maths or an appropriate NVQ2 or First Diploma at Merit. Applicants without formal qualifications will be considered if they have relevant work experience.

You will need to have good 'people skills' and be a good communicator. Depending on the type of work-based training you will be undertaking you may need to upgrade your computing and IT skills first. The college could offer you a place on the Gateway to Using IT with Web Design course, which you should be able to complete in 18 weeks. See separate leaflet.

What will the course cover?

In order to achieve the apprenticeship you will be required to complete a Level 2 National Vocational Qualification in Customer Service and a Level 2 Certificate in Customer Service as well as key skills in communications and application of number at Level 1. In order to achieve the advanced apprenticeship you will be required to complete a Level 3 National Vocational Qualification in Customer Service and a Level 3 Certificate in Customer Service as well as key skills in communications and application of number at Level 2. In addition, you will learn about your rights and responsibilities as an employee and legislation relevant to the customer service industry and the organisation you work in. You will cover how to deliver good customer service, understanding the importance of the image and impression you present to the customer, how to handle and resolve problems and take it a stage further by implementing improvements.

What will I be able to do as a result of the course?

1. You should be able to understand how your organisation works to provide reliable customer service and your role within it.
2. You should be able to deal with customers face to face, or by telephone or in writing/using ICT.
3. You should be able to process customer service information
4. You should be able to recognise and deal with customer queries, requests and problems.
5. You should be able to support customer services improvements

How will I be taught?

You will be given the necessary on the job training by your employer to cover the organisation's specific operational needs and you will be required to attend training sessions as necessary. When you come into college for 2 days per month, you will attend key skills classes in application of number (Level 1 or 2) and communications (Level 1 or 2). In addition you will be allocated an assessor who will provide guidance through one to one workshops, using ICT equipment and worksheets to gain further knowledge necessary to demonstrate your competencies.

How will I know I am progressing and how is the course assessed?

It is the assessor's role to evaluate your competencies directly, they must be sure that you have met and shown evidence for all required performance and knowledge criteria. When your assessor is satisfied that you have met all of the requirements for a unit, they will confirm this by signing the evidence record sheet for that unit to show that the assessment process is complete. Your assessor will need to agree a number of issues with you including: finding the best source of evidence to use for particular units, finding the best way of assessing you and confirming the best times, dates and places for your assessments to take place.

Will I have a chance to give my own views on the course?

You will have constant contact with your assessor throughout the course. In addition, quarterly reviews with your assessor and workplace supervisor will give you the opportunity to provide feedback on any aspect of the course. There will also be an opportunity to evaluate your course at the end.

What could the course lead to?

From an apprenticeship, you could progress on to an advanced apprenticeship in customer service and eventually on to a Foundation Degree in Business Professional Administration or full time employment.

How much will it cost?

The cost of recruitment, training for the relevant qualifications, assessment and monitoring is funded by the South London Learning and Skills Council for 16-18 year olds. For anyone over 19, employers are required to make a contribution towards the cost.

What are the qualities I will need for the course?

Firstly you will need to be conscientious, mature and reliable. Apprenticeships are very popular and there are never enough placements to satisfy demand. Your employer will be committing time and resources to your training and you must be equally committed.

You will need to be absolutely sure that you are ready to begin your career. Any full time employment is challenging while an apprenticeship carries the extra demands of gaining your qualifications and being willing to continually learn new things and update your skills. You will need to be punctual, organised and able to meet deadlines.

How do I join the course?

Applicants should complete and return an application form, which should include an up to date reference after which an interview can be arranged. As this is a roll-on roll-off course, interviews take place throughout the year, including over the summer period.

If you would like to apply or just make some initial enquiries telephone our **Apprenticeship Hotline on 020 8607 8368**.

It may sometimes be necessary to modify the information in this leaflet. 12/08

This PDF can also be provided as a leaflet (large print or audio cassette also available).

Richmond upon Thames College

Egerton Road, Twickenham, TW2 7SJ

General course enquiries:

Tel: 020 8607 8305/8314 Email: courses@rutc.ac.uk

Employer Engagement Office:

Tel: 020 8607 8171 Email: apprenticeships@rutc.ac.uk

Fax: 020 8607 8338 Website: www.rutc.ac.uk