



Conditions of Certification

Requirements

Holders of the Customer Service Excellence certificated by Assessment Services must:

- Maintain and, if possible, improve upon levels of service achieved during their Customer Service Excellence assessment cycle.
- Maintain logs of all complaints received relating to Customer Service Excellence Certification and make these records available to Assessment Services upon request.
- Take appropriate action on complaints received with regard to the Customer Service Excellence Certification and record all actions taken.
- Inform Assessment Services of any serious complaint or rise in the number of complaints made against the holder of the services certificate.
- Without delay, inform Assessment Services of any significant changes made to the organisational structure, senior management, or the services provided that may impact its status as a Customer Service Excellence Holder.
- Inform Assessment Services if they wish to extend or reduce their scope of certification arising out of any organisational changes.
- Not undertake or omit to undertake any activity that may cause the Customer Service Excellence Standard to be brought into disrepute.
- Not use the Assessment Services logo except to the restricted usage to the Certificate issued by Assessment Services and cannot be used in any other format, publication, or document.
- Only use the Customer Service Excellence logo for the services certificated and in accordance with the Customer Service Excellence conditions of use issued by Assessment Services Ltd.
- Not use the Customer Service Excellence certification or other associated marks or logos issued by Assessment Services in such a manner as to be different from those for which it is intended, or which may bring Assessment Services into disrepute. Nor must it make any statement regarding its certification, which Assessment Services may consider misleading or unauthorised.
- Ensure in cases where certification is withdrawn the following will take place within 90 days of de-certification; the organisation will be removed from the Customer Service Excellence Holders Directory; the organisation must remove from display any certificates issued by Assessment Services Ltd and must not display the Customer Service Excellence Standard Quality Mark nor refer to being a former holder of the Customer Service Excellence Standard.

- Throughout the period of certification, satisfy Assessment Services that it continues to meet the requirements of the Customer Service Excellence Standard by undertaking annual reviews, which may be achieved by, but not limited to, the submission of:
 - Complaints report.
 - Performance data for service standards.
 - Progress reports against any improvement/development plans.
 - Customer satisfaction data.
 - Pre-Assessment Survey findings.
 - The outcome of a current self-assessment against all 57 elements. (The review will focus on any changes to evidence. The Holder must confirm if no changes have occurred against each criterion.)
 - Sample interviews with senior leaders, managers, front-line staff, service users / customers, and partners.
 - Document review.

Use of the Certification Mark

It is a condition of certification that the *Customer Service Excellence (CSE)* mark must only be displayed by organisations that have been formally certificated under the Customer Service Excellence Standard.

The mark must always be shown in a way that clearly indicates it is a certification mark. It must not be used or presented in any manner that implies ownership of the mark, endorsement by Assessment Services Ltd, or any relationship other than that of a certified organisation.

The mark may be used on stationery, websites, publicity materials, and premises signage, provided it is accompanied by appropriate wording such as “*Certified to the Customer Service Excellence Standard*” or “*Customer Service Excellence – Certification Mark*”.

Unauthorised or misleading use of the mark will be treated as a breach of the certification conditions and may result in withdrawal of certification.

Annual Review

Following initial certification, Assessment Services will carry out review activities within 12 and 24 months after the certification date to ensure that the certificated organisation continues to meet the requirements of the Customer Service Excellence Standard.

The methodology of the ongoing annual reviews will be determined by several factors that may include, but not be limited to:

- The action undertaken by a certificated organisation regarding partial compliance or areas for improvement previously identified.
- Changes of key personnel within the certificated organisation.
- Structural changes within the certificated organisation.
- Negative feedback from users of the service provided by the certificated organisation.
- Changes in the delivery of service or remit of the certificated organisation.

Rolling Review

Alternatively, if the organisation has opted into the Rolling Review process, following initial certification, Rolling Review visits are approximately 12 and 24 months after the original certification date and will follow the Rolling Review certification cycle. This is to ensure that the certificated organisation continues to meet the requirements of the Customer Service Excellence Standard.

The methodology of the ongoing Rolling Review will be determined by a number of factors that may include, but not be limited to:

- Assessment of the organisation against no less than one-third of the elements of the Customer Service Excellence Standard.
- The action undertaken by a certificated organisation regarding partial compliances or areas for improvement previously identified.
- Changes of key personnel within the certificated organisation.
- Structural changes within the organisation.
- Negative feedback from users of the service / customers regarding the certificated organisation.
- Changes in the delivery of service or remit of the certificated organisation.

At the end of the three-year certification period (pending successful assessment), the third Rolling Review visit will function as a full certification review, at which the Assessor will make a certification recommendation. This Rolling Review process will then repeat indefinitely with two visits, approximately 12 and 24 months after the certification committee date.

All compliances will be reset at the beginning of a new certification cycle.

All assessment activities will be agreed upon between the certificated organisation's representative, the Certification Body (Assessment Services) and the Assessor.

Should Assessment Services have any reasonable grounds to suspect that the Customer Service Excellence Holder certificated by Assessment Services is failing to meet the criteria of the Standard, requirements of Certification or is likely to bring the Standard into disrepute then Assessment Services retain the right to carry out a visit to ensure compliance against the Customer Service Excellence Standard at any time during the three-year certification period.

All review activity will be charged at our standard daily rate, and expenses and VAT will be charged at the current rate.

Suspension and Withdrawal of Certification

Customer Service Excellence Certification Holders will be suspended:

- If during 12 and 24 month reviews it is identified that the certificated organisation has non compliance or exceeds the maximum number of partial compliances of the scheme.
- Pending the investigation of a serious complaint against the organisation regarding the service delivery for which the certificate was awarded.
- Pending the investigation into any action or inaction by the certificated organisation that may cause the Customer Service Excellence Standard or the Certification Body (Assessment Services) any disrepute.
- Any initial certification and/or ongoing certification will only be released by Assessment Services Ltd on receipt of payment of any outstanding invoices due.
- Assessment Services Ltd reserves the right to remove any certification and/or certification previously applied if payment is not received for services provided.

Upon the Customer Service Excellence Holder being suspended:

- The organisation does not have to remove the Customer Service Excellence logo(s); however, it cannot actively promote its status as a Customer Service Excellence Holder until the outcome of the investigation / retaining certification decision has been made.
- All actions requested by the Assessment Services Certification Committee members must be actioned and recorded appropriately.
- The investigation decision must be completed within 28 days after the decision of 'Suspension' has been applied. If the decision to retain certification was applied at Annual Review / Rolling Review, the organisation must return to the Customer Service Excellence Standard within 90 days of the last on-site / evidence collection date.

Customer Service Excellence certification will be withdrawn:

- Should the investigation into a serious complaint regarding the service delivery for which the certificate was awarded be found against the organisation?
- Should the investigation into any action by the organisation reveal that it may result in bringing disrepute to the Customer Service Excellence Standard or the Certification Body (Assessment Services).
- Should the organisation fail to comply with annual reviews.
- Following any organisational changes, for example, a number of departments or services within a customer have merged. Some are holders of the CSE Standard, and others are not.

Once the Customer Service Excellence Holder has been withdrawn from certification:

- Effective immediately, the organisation will no longer appear on the Customer Service Excellence Holders' Directory.
- The organisation is not entitled to display the Customer Service Excellence Quality Mark and must, therefore, be removed from any electronic platform (such as a website) with immediate effect and from all company documents, including all signage, stationery, and promotional items, within 90 days of withdrawal.

Appeals and Disputes

The organisation may find it beneficial to discuss the matter with the Assessor prior to lodging an appeal against the outcome of an assessment.

Should an organisation dispute or wish to appeal against the decision of the Assessor or Certification Committee, then the following procedure will apply:

- The appeal should be made in writing to Assessment Services within ten working days of notification of the assessment's outcome.
- The appeal must state clearly the grounds upon which they are appealing against the outcome of the Assessment.
- In the first instance, the Quality Manager will investigate the appeal.
- The organisation will be informed of the outcome of the investigation in writing, within ten working days of receipt of the appeal.
- If the organisation is not satisfied with the decision after receiving the appeal's outcome, the Quality Manager will conduct the second-stage investigation. This should be made in writing within ten working days of receiving notification of the original investigation.
- If the organisation is not satisfied with the decision after receiving the outcome of the second stage appeal, it should make this known in writing within ten working days of receiving notification of the second investigation. The Impartiality Board will conduct the final investigation.
- The Impartiality Board consists of independent, neutral third parties who have no financial or operational connection to Assessment Services Ltd. The Board supports the Quality Manager at the final stage of the complaints process and provides an independent view on any unresolved matters.
- The decision of the Impartiality Board is final.

Notification of Organisation Changes

To maintain the conditions of certification, Customer Service Excellence organisations are required to notify Assessment Services of any significant changes within their organisation or service delivery that can impact their certification scope, such as:

- Mergers or Acquisitions.
- Changes in service delivery.
- Change of identity / legal ownership or structure.
- Additional significant contracts are being awarded.
- Contracts are being lost / ending.
- Feedback received from third parties indicates that the integrity of the Standard is at risk.
- Changes of personnel at a strategic level.
- Changes could impact the organisation's values, strategy or culture.

Each change will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis; however, it is anticipated that in most mergers and takeovers, a complete initial assessment of the new legal identity will need to occur within six months of the change.

If, upon completion of an 'Organisational Changes' proforma by the certificated organisation, Assessment Services believes that a Transition Review Assessment is required as opposed to a full assessment, then it must take place within three to six months of the change. If this is not completed and / or the outcome of a Transition Review Assessment gives concern that any Criteria within the Customer Service Excellence Standard are no longer being satisfactorily maintained, a complete initial assessment will need to take place, or the certification will be withdrawn.

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