

# Level 3 Customer Service Specialist

EPA-Kit

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# How to Use This EPA-Kit

Welcome to the end-point assessment kit for the Highfield Level 3 End-Point Assessment for Customer Service Specialist Apprenticeship Standard.

Highfield is an independent end-point assessment organisation that has been approved to offer and carry out the independent end-point assessments for the Level 3 Customer Service Specialist Apprenticeship Standard. Highfield internally quality assures all end-point assessments in accordance with its IQA process, additionally all end-point assessments are externally quality assured by the relevant EQA organisation.

This guide is designed to outline all you need to know about the end-point assessments for this standard and will also provide an overview of the on-programme delivery requirements. In addition, advice and guidance for trainers on how to prepare apprentices for the end-point assessment is included. The approaches suggested are not the only way in which an apprentice may be prepared for their assessments, but trainers may find them helpful as a starting point.

## Key facts

<b>Apprenticeship standard:</b>	Customer Service Specialist
<b>Level:</b>	3
<b>On-programme duration:</b>	Minimum of 15 months
<b>Grading:</b>	Pass/distinction
<b>End-point assessment methods:</b>	Practical observation with Q&As Work-based project supported by an interview Professional discussion supported by portfolio evidence

## **In this guide, you will find:**

- a section focused on delivery, where the standard and assessment criteria are presented in a suggested format that is suitable for delivery
- guidance on how to prepare the apprentice for gateway
- detailed information on which part of the standard is assessed by which assessment method
- a section focused on the end-point assessment method where the assessment criteria are presented in a format suitable for carrying out 'mock' assessments
- suggestions on how to prepare the apprentice for each part of the end-point assessment
- a practice test that you can use with apprentices
- hints and tips on how your apprentice can get the best out of their end-point assessment

# Introduction

## Standard overview

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The main purpose of a customer service specialist is to be a professional for direct customer support within all sectors and organisation types. You are an advocate of customer service who acts as a referral point for dealing with more complex or technical customer requests, complaints, and queries. You are often an escalation point for complicated or ongoing customer problems. As an expert in your organisation's products and/or services, you share knowledge with your wider team and colleagues. You gather and analyse data and customers' information that influences change and improvements in service.

You will utilise both organisational and generic IT systems to carry out your role with an awareness of other digital technologies. This could be in many types of environment including contact centres, retail, webchat, service industry or any customer service point.

## On-programme requirements

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The period of learning, development and continuous assessment is managed by the employer, in most cases with the support of a training provider. The on-programme pace will be driven by individuals as well as by the breadth of experience an employer can offer. The whole programme will be completed in no less than 15 months. The apprentice may start the end-point assessment at the earliest after 15 months on-programme.

In order to drive quality and consistency through on-programme learning, employers may wish to consider the following:

- use of their normal performance management processes to monitor the progress of the apprentice, provide feedback and guide development
- provide support, ensuring the requirements of the apprenticeship standard are reflected in the above processes, and by filling any gaps through their work with apprentices
- carry out joint reviews of progress at regular intervals, involving apprentices, line managers and others with a direct relationship, e.g. mentors, workplace coaches, etc. They should agree how any issues are to be resolved together

- allow apprentices to develop and maintain, within a portfolio, examples of their work throughout their apprenticeship that cover the full standard. This portfolio will be used by the apprentice to demonstrate to the employer that they are ready for the end-point assessment. Some of the evidence from this portfolio that hasn't been assessed by the independent assessor will be used to support the professional discussion.

## **Additional, relevant on-programme qualification**

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The Customer Service Specialist Standard does not have a mandatory qualification. Employers can include the optional Highfield Level 3 Diploma in Customer Service Skills (RQF) qualification to support learners completing this standard.

## **Readiness for end-point assessment**

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In order for an apprentice to be ready for the end-point assessments:

- the level 2 English and maths components of the apprenticeship must be successfully completed by the apprentice
- the employer must be confident that the apprentice has developed all the knowledge, skills and behaviours defined in the apprenticeship standard along with evidence that the apprentice holds a portfolio to evidence this. The employer along with the training provider will decide if the full portfolio meets the requirements of the standard
- the employer must also be satisfied that the apprentice is working at or above the level set out in the standard. To ensure this, the apprentice must attend a formal meeting with their employer to complete the gateway readiness report
- a proposal form will be completed by the apprentice and brought with them to the gateway meeting where they will set out what the subject of their project report will be. This will be only be signed off by the assessor if it is deemed appropriate enough to satisfy the criteria available
- the apprentice and the employer should then engage with Highfield to agree a plan and schedule for each assessment activity to ensure all components can be completed within a 3 month end-assessment window (the work-based project must

be completed within 2 months from the start of the end-point assessment). Further information about the gateway process is covered later in this guide

## Order of end-point assessments

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The assessment plan recommends that the work-based project is the first assessment, followed by the professional discussion and then finally the practical observation.

## Retake and resit information

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If an apprentice fails any part of the end-point assessment, further learning and development must be completed before a retake can be undertaken. By undertaking this further learning, the apprentice will need to go through the gateway process again. The apprentice can resit without any need to undertake further learning.

Apprentices are able to resit any component where a pass has not been achieved. Apprentices cannot retake any part of the EPA to improve their pass grade to a distinction.

The maximum grade awarded to a resit will be pass, unless Highfield Assessment identifies exceptional circumstances accounting for the original fail.

Apprentices should retake within 12 months.

If the apprentice fails the work-based project, they will be asked to rework their project taking account of the feedback from the end-point assessor. The apprentice will have 1 month to rework their submission. The apprentice should submit previous evidence along with the new additional evidence.

There is no limit to the number of retakes/resits within the 12-month period.