

Skillsfirst Assess

Customer Service Policy

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Customer Service Policy

Skillsfirst Assess core values

Communication First – we listen, respond and deliver

Service First – we are all about you

Collaboration First – together, we can make a difference

Quality First – collectively, we strive to be the best

Our commitment to our customers

It is the aim of Skillsfirst Assess Ltd (Skillsfirst) to ensure our customers receive a high-quality service which meets their needs whilst complying with the stringent requirements of our External Quality Assurers (EQA). This statement details our commitment to our customers.

Customer service statement

Skillsfirst is committed to the provision of a value-added service through competent and helpful Skillsfirst staff, utilising efficient quality systems and processes. In delivering a responsive and effective EPA service with courtesy, Skillsfirst aims to:

- maintain effective communication mechanisms, to provide quality information to employers / providers;
- solicit customers' feedback on Skillsfirst's services on a regular basis to establish customer satisfaction levels from apprentices;
- adhere to our established procedures and quality standards to ensure good practice and consistency in EPA;
- ensure Skillsfirst staff are competent and motivated to work to a high standard when assessing apprentices;
- ensure that staff adhere to the Skillsfirst core values to meet Skillsfirst's and customers' expectations;
- treat all current and potential customers equally at all times, regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation or disability;
- act promptly and professionally in all customer operations, providing relevant information and taking appropriate action within specific timescales, where required also;
- freely provide information on services and their costs as well as access to the policies and values that underpin Skillsfirst's work, fostering a climate of mutual respect between Skillsfirst and customers.

Performance

Skillsfirst strives for excellence in the quality of customer service offered. As part of our continuous improvement, Skillsfirst's aim is to constantly ask for feedback on the content and quality of the services provided. Based on established performance indicators, Skillsfirst is committed to continuously monitoring and evaluating performance levels against the targets set and the established quality standards, to increase customer satisfaction. We achieve this through our apprentice feedback forms.

Customer feedback

Skillsfirst is committed to the continual improvement of the quality and responsiveness of services and as such, maintains customers' perceptions, expectations and suggestions at the forefront when reviewing our services. Customers may provide feedback and/or comment on our services via our email address enquires@skillsfirstassess.co.uk. This mechanism has been established to enable effective maintenance of our records and analysis of feedback.

Customer service values

Confidentiality

- All information gathered regarding the personal or business affairs of customers, partners and apprentices will be held in strict confidence for the sole use of Skillsfirst's needs in meeting its objectives and as published in our GDPR Data Protection Privacy Policy. No information will be released to any other third party in a format that will allow identification, without the expressed consent of the provider, or as required by law.

Courtesy

- Skillsfirst employees are trained in the service standards related to the functions Skillsfirst carries out and exhibit customer friendly service skills as well as competency, professional manners and courtesy in meeting customer needs. In an effort to reduce bureaucracy, Skillsfirst strives to diminish the burden of unnecessary paperwork wherever possible, without compromising our quality standards.

Consistency

- As part of the commitment to uphold quality assurance and standardisation, we use performance measurement systems to constantly review the adherence to and effectiveness of, our implemented policies and procedures and to ensure consistency in the service provided to all apprentices, recognised centres and partner organisations.

Communication

In the effort to develop effective communications with a customer and an apprentice, we aim to provide:

- ✓ useful and accurate information;
- ✓ qualification specific and quality assurance guidance to all centres and;
- ✓ centres with an electronic update on any changes or developments to the qualifications or procedures.

Performance indicators

Skillsfirst services aim to:	Timescale:
respond to all enquiries politely and promptly; we aim to have dispatched a response to a request for information	within two working days of receipt
issue a contract once a letter of intent has been received	within five working days of receipt of a letter of intent
provide a service for apprentice registration and the ability to register apprentices on our IT platform	within five working days of receipt of a signed contract
respond / provide confirmation to an EPA booking	within three working days
confirm EPA grade	within ten working days
complete apprentice details on ESFA platform for certification	within ten working days
provide a response to requests for any special considerations and reasonable adjustments	within five working days of receipt of an application
acknowledge receipt of a complaint, appeal or allegation of malpractice	within two working days of receipt of a complaint, appeal or allegation of malpractice
provide a written response to a complaint	within ten working days of the acknowledgement
provide confirmation of an appeal following an initial review	Within ten working days of receipt
provide a response to an appeal following a formal review	within 25 working days of the completion of the initial review process
provide a written response to a complaint of malpractice or maladministration	within 25 working days of receipt
release of on-screen results	immediately
release of paper-based results (only in the event of a reasonable adjustment request)	within two weeks after the question paper has been taken being taken

As part of Skillsfirst's commitment to 'green' systems we will endeavour to carry out the above electronically, through e-pass or the ESFA Portal.

Advisory visits and consultations

Skillsfirst offers visits and consultations by prior arrangement, to provide advice and support to potential and current customers.

The purpose of a consultation may be to:

- provide advice and guidance on the end-point assessment processes and;

- provide support and guidance in the development of quality management systems and related quality assurance procedures.

Consultations are provided using the following fee structure:

Type of consultation	Service provided	Fee
End-point Assessment Organisation visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support customers who are interested in accessing Skillsfirst services 	Free of charge
Head of Assessment and / or Lead End-Point Assessor	advice and guidance relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the delivery and assessment of specific EPA processes and toolkit support 	£275 + VAT

Queries and information sources

Skillsfirst aims to provide accurate information in a variety of formats and media.

Customers are encouraged to make enquiries to the Skillsfirst Assess team. The contact details are the: Skillsfirst Assess on 0121 270 5100 (Option 3) or email enquiries@skillsfirstassess.co.uk

How Skillsfirst will deal with queries

We will aim to respond to all queries within the timescales given above. Where this is not possible, we will contact you to explain why it will take longer to respond and to give you an expected response time.

Complaints

Skillsfirst will endeavour to operate its policies and procedures correctly at all times and to provide excellent customer service. However, if you feel there is a reason to make a formal complaint, please see our Complaints Policy which is available on the Skillsfirst website.

Appeals

Any appeals regarding the way in which Skillsfirst has come to an assessment decision, dealt with a decision regarding reasonable adjustments or special consideration, or decided on action to be taken following a malpractice or maladministration investigation, will be dealt with via our Appeals Policy. This is available on the Skillsfirst website.

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of this policy or wish to give feedback, please contact our Skillsfirst Assess Team on 0121 270 5100 (Option 3) or email enquiries@skillsfirstassess.co.uk

All policies referred to can be located at www.skillsfirst.co.uk