

RIAM Customer Service Plan

1 Introduction

The Academy is committed to improvements in service standards including more extensive consultation with and feedback from the users of services.

The Academy has a wide range of customers, including students, parents, teachers, exam candidates, individual members of the public, Government Departments and offices, partner organisations and other groups whose business interacts with the Academy. The concept of quality customer service also applies to the relationship within the Academy itself and we therefore regard our staff as our internal customers. This plan applies to all customers both internal and external.

2 Principles of Quality Customer Service

The following principles set out how Academy offices will deal with Customers and Clients of the Academy:

2.1 Quality Service Standards

Publish a statement that outlines the nature and quality of service which customers can expect.

2.2 Equality/Diversity

Ensure the rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation, and accommodate diversity, so as to contribute to equality for the groups covered by the equality legislation (under the grounds of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community).

2.3 Physical Access

Provide clean, accessible public offices that ensure privacy, comply with occupational and safety standards and, as part of this, facilitate access for people with disabilities and others with specific needs.

2.4 Information

Take a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate and meets the requirements of people with specific needs. Ensure that the potential offered by information Technology is fully availed of.

Continue the simplification of rules, regulations, forms, information leaflets and procedures.

2.5 Timeliness and Courtesy

Deliver quality services with courtesy, sensitivity and the minimum delay, fostering a climate of mutual respect between provider and customer.

Give contact names in all communications to ensure ease of ongoing transactions.

2.6 Complaints

Maintain a well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided.

2.7 Appeals

Similarly, maintain a formalised, well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of appeal/review for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to services.

2.8 Choice

Provide choice, where feasible, in service delivery including payment methods, opening hours and delivery times.

3 Adoption of Principles

This part of the plan sets out how the Academy is adopting the Quality Customer Service Principles. For each principle, we outline what the Academy intends to achieve over the period of the Plan and how we proposed to measure the achievements of these targets.

3.1 Quality Service Standards

The Academy is committed to providing a very high quality of service to its customers. This Customer Service Action Plan sets out our approach to achieving this commitment.

What we shall do:

We shall:

- *Ensure that the Customer Service Action Plan is available at the reception*
- *Ensure that posters outlining our service delivery targets are placed at appropriate locations throughout the Academy offices*

To assess the achievement of these targets, we shall:

- *Use questionnaires on an ongoing basis to obtain customers' views on our quality service standards*

3.2 Equality/Diversity

The Academy is committed to treating all customers equally while at the same time respecting individual differences and needs. Diversity and difference on the basis of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, religious belief and membership of the Traveller Community will be taken into account where appropriate.

The Equality/Diversity Principle cuts across all of the Quality Customer Service Principles and it informs the targets set for each Principle.

What we shall do:

We shall:

- *Ensure that our services reflect different needs and requirements that flow from a customer's gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, religious belief and membership of the Traveller Community*

To assess the achievement of these targets, we shall:

- *Seek the views of customers on our approach to equality/diversity*

3.3 Physical Access

The Academy is committed to providing appropriate physical access to its offices.

What we shall do:

We shall aim to ensure that:

- *All offices are kept clean*
- *All offices comply with occupational and safety standards*
- *Access for people with disabilities and others with specific needs will be provided via the car park*
- *Customer's privacy is respected and that private interview rooms will be available*

To assess the achievements of these targets, we shall:

- *Seek the views of our customers on physical access to our offices in any customer surveys being carried out by the Academy.*

3.4 Information

The Academy is committed to providing information on its services, activities and programmes and this is being achieved through a number of different media – electronic, publications, forms etc.

What we shall do:

Over the period of the Plan, we shall:

- *Upgrade the Academy's website and ensure that information available is clear, timely and accurate*
- *Keep all forms under review to ensure that:*
 - *Only necessary questions are asked*
 - *Forms use clear language and are clearly laid out*
 - *The design of forms meets the requirements of both the customer base and modern IT based systems*

- *Keep all information leaflets under review to ensure that:*
 - *Information is up-to-date, accurate, comprehensive and easily understood*
 - *Details of the complaints and appeals procedures are included on all information leaflets, where appropriate*

To assess the achievement of these targets, we shall:

- *Review forms and information leaflets on a regular basis*
- *Seek the views of customers on the accessibility of information in any customer surveys being carried out by the Academy*

3.5 Timeliness and Courtesy

The Academy is committed to delivering a quality service to all its customers by ensuring that customers are dealt with in a timely fashion and treated with courtesy and sensitivity.

Our standards for dealing with telephone callers, personal callers and correspondents are detailed below.

What we shall do:

We shall:

- *Ensure that all customers are dealt with properly, fairly and impartially*

For customers who telephone the Academy offices, we shall ensure that:

- *Staff give their full name and the name of their section when answering the telephone*
- *A helpful and courteous service is provided to telephone callers*
- *Staff are available to answer telephone calls at all times during the normal working hours*
- *All telephone calls are answered within 10 seconds (i.e. 4 rings)*

For customers (personal callers) who visit the Academy, we shall ensure that:

- *All personal callers are treated with courtesy and sensitivity*
- *Where practicable, facilities for meetings to be held with officials in private are provided*

For customers who correspond with the Academy by letter or email, we shall:

- *Acknowledge all correspondence within 3 working days*
- *Issue a definitive reply within 15 working days – if such a reply cannot issue within this time frame, then an interim reply will issue, informing the sender that the matter is continuing to receive attention*

- *Ensure that replies are clear using technical and official terms only where this is absolutely necessary*
- *Ensure that all replies carry a contact name, telephone number and email address (if available)*
- *In addition, all examination notifications to issue a minimum of 2 weeks before examination date*
- *All examination results and examination certificates to issue a maximum of 4 weeks after examination date*

To assess the achievement of these targets, we shall:

- *Seek the views of customers on the timeliness and courtesy of our services in any customer surveys being carried out by the Academy*

The Academy is committed to delivering a quality customer service. Customers also have an important role to play in assisting the Academy achieve its commitment.

In this respect, customers should:

- Quote reference numbers, where available, in all correspondence and communication with us
- Complete all applications/forms carefully, accurately and legibly
- Provide all necessary supporting documentation
- Check all applications forms are fully complete and signed before submission
- Ensure applications/forms are submitted in sufficient time
- Respond quickly to any queries raised including supplying any additional information requested in support of applications

3.6 Complaints

The Academy is committed to dealing with complaints about the quality of the service provided. Customers have a right to complain if they consider that they have not received an appropriate level of service.

While it is our aim to deliver a high quality service, we recognise that mistakes or delays will occasionally occur. We accept that from time to time some customers may be dissatisfied and wish to make a complaint about the quality of service, which they received.

What we shall do:

We shall:

- *Provide guidelines to assist staff in handling customer complaints where necessary*
- *Keep the Customer Complaints Procedures under review in light of experience gained in dealing with complaints*

To assess the achievement targets, we shall:

- *Analyse and measure the number of complaints received*

3.7 Appeals

The Academy is committed to ensuring that customers are aware of the options available to them when they are dissatisfied with the Academy's decision in relation to the service, which they received.

What we shall do:

Over the period of the Plan, we shall:

- *Review the provision of information available to customers in relation to the options available to them when they are dissatisfied with the Academy's decisions in relations to the services*

To assess the achievements of these targets, we shall:

- *Seek the views of customers on the availability of information when they are dissatisfied with the Academy's decisions*