CfA Centre for Assessment	Customer Service Excellence Standard Terms and Conditions	Date: 12/11/2026
		Revision: 16

These terms & conditions form an agreement between Centre for Assessment Limited incorporated and registered in England and Wales with company number 04089911 whose registered office is at Lee House, 90 Great Bridgewater Street, Manchester, M1 5JW (**CfA**) and its Client Organisations.

1. General Terms

The services offered are done so under non-discriminatory conditions:

a) The service is accessible to all applicants whose activities fall within the scope of our operations.

b) The service is offered across the United Kingdom and Channel Islands.

c) The service is offered across all sectors.

d) There is no minimum or maximum size of applicant, or required memberships or affiliations, or financial considerations or numbers of certificates issued, required for inclusion.

a) Applicants are encouraged to complete a 'self-assessment' to demonstrate how they comply with the Customer Service Excellence criteria and to consider their responsibility in terms of organising and diary planning forthcoming assessment visits.

b) The customer shall be assessed against the agreed scope for Customer Service Excellence assessment as set out on the application form.

c) The customer has a duty to inform the Centre of any significant changes such as merger that may impact on their Customer Service Excellence status.

d) Organisations holding Customer Service Excellence will often become involved in reorganisation or mergers. In these circumstances' consideration must be given to whether it is still appropriate for the organisation to hold Customer Service Excellence. Holders should inform Centre for Assessment of any significant changes if the position regarding use of the Customer Service Excellence is in doubt. The Centre for Assessment will look at all such cases and gather any necessary information.

e) Customers are advised to retain their assessment reports for improvement purposes and to aid the next assessor.

f) Organisations shall not be used for publicity without the agreement of the customer and Centre for Assessment.

2. Eligibility

a) Customer Service Excellence standard aims to provide public services with a practical toll for driving customer-focused change and it is recognised that in the new delivery landscape such providers can come from public, private and third sectors.

b) There are no restrictions on eligibility. Those organisations in the UK that want to achieve Customer Service Excellence through formal assessment, whether they are in the public, private or third sector, can do so.

3. Availability of Documents

a) Documents that specify the requirements of Customer Service Excellence are made available through the Customer Service Excellence website www.customerserviceexcellence.uk.com.

b) Documents that specify the process of assessment are set out in customer care letters, terms and conditions and the Customer Charter. These are sent out to customers and are available on request.

4. Appeals and Complaints

a) Appeals Procedure

i. If for any reason the customer does not agree with the Lead Assessor's decision after assessment, re-assessment, or review (including suspension / withdrawal of a certificate), they can appeal by contacting the Certification Manager of CfA.

ii. All appeals will be presented to a sub-committee of the Panel of CfA The Panel sub-committee will be made up of independent people who have had no direct involvement with your organisation for at least two years. Also, the sub-committee will be made up of people who have had no direct involvement in the certification decision. They will examine evidence from the customer representative and the Lead Assessor involved. If appropriate, they will approve a re-visit by another independent assessor to gather further evidence. The decision of the Panel is final and should be accepted by either party.

b) Customer complaints against CfA its employees or associates

i. If the customer has a complaint of any nature, it should be addressed to the Certification Manager of CfA All formal complaints should be submitted in writing. If the complaint involves the Certification Manager or Managing Director, it should be addressed to the Impartiality Committee of CfA All complainants will have their complaint acknowledged with 5 working days following receipt of the complaint, with either a solution to the complaint or timescales for a response where a more detailed investigation is required.

ii. If the complaint is against the assessor or a specific member of staff, then to ensure impartiality the complaint will be investigated by someone who is independent. They will provide written feedback on the outcome.

c) Complaints against Customer Service Excellence Customers

i. Where complaints are made against a holder these will be recorded and investigated as appropriate by the Certification Manager.

ii. Holders are given the right to respond to complaints and are copied in on all correspondence regarding the complaint unless the complainant wishes to remain anonymous.

d) Complaints received by the customer organisation

i. All complaints received by the customer organisation must be (a) logged by customers (b) actions must be recorded (c) documented records of complaints must be maintained.

5. Changes to the Customer Service Excellence Scheme

a) Any changes to the Customer Service Excellence scheme such as assessment requirements or use of the Mark will be communicated with an agreed forward date from which the changes are effective.

6. Use of the Certificate and Mark

a) The use and display of the Customer Service Excellence logo must be in accordance with the Customer Service Excellence 'Brand Guide' and Logo and Style Guide.

b) CfA will take all reasonable precautions to ensure that there is no misuse of their certificate in customer advertising.

c) The customer should make claims and use certification marks as appropriate for their assessed scope of registration.

d) Incorrect use of the certificate or logo shall be raised with the customer as non-conformity. Failure to address such non-compliances will result in a major non-conformity and potential removal of Customer Service Excellence status by the Panel / Committee.

e) Only organisations that have achieved Customer Service Excellence status may use the Mark.

f) All organisations which have their certificate suspended or withdrawn are written to requesting the cessation of using the Mark and referring to Customer Service Excellence status in their marketing materials.

g) Certification / Registration Marks may be subject to change. If this occurs, a reasonable period will be allowed during which the superseded Mark can be phased out.

h) Once a certificate has been issued customers have the right to publicise their certification. Appropriate logos can be used on stationery and in marketing or promotional material.

7. The Certification Process (including Granting, Maintaining, Extending and Withdrawing Certification)

a) Application for Assessment

i. On receiving an initial enquiry, CfA will issue a quotation detailing the assessment cost. Customers will be required to submit a signed application/quotation form when proceeding with their application for assessment. The assigned assessor will contact your organisation to agree dates and confirm arrangements for the assessment in line with CfA procedures.

b) Assessment Process

i. A review of the self-assessment and documentation against the standard can either be undertaken at the customer's premises or off-site as required. It is the customer's responsibility to ensure that documents to be reviewed off-site are received by the assessor on or before the agreed document review date. The assessor will also contact you to agree an assessment plan with you.

ii. If the organisation decides to postpone the assessment after the assessor has reviewed the self-assessment the organisation needs to consider the effect of the delay.

iii. Within three months the self-assessment will be considered as current evidence by the assessor. The assessor will review additional evidence presented during this period. If a significant quantity of new evidence is presented a charge will be levied based on the current daily rate + VAT to reflect the cost of this. If this is the case the assessor will give an estimate.

iv. After 3 months the self-assessment will not be considered as current and must be reviewed by the organisation for currency. New evidence presented by the client by the client will be reviewed and this will be charged for based on the current daily rate + VAT in terms of the time taken to review. The assessor will give an estimate.

v. After 12 months the self-assessment evidence is no longer relevant for assessment purposes and a fresh self-assessment should be submitted, this will then be charged for accordingly as a new desk top review.

vi. New evidence (strategy / policy / practices) presented by the organisation must have been deployed (at least partially) for the assessor to modify a rating.

vii. An 'initial summary' report is completed in relation to the document review stage of assessment and the customer is provided with feedback and required to address any findings raised prior to on-site assessment. An on-site assessment date is confirmed taking account of any action arising. On-site assessment is in accordance with CfA procedures and will include the observation of the service delivery. This may incur extra onsite time; any adjustments to the duration of the assessment will be confirmed before the onset of the onsite assessment. After certification, CfA should be informed of any relevant significant changes to the customer's organisation that may affect certification. In the event of this, CfA reserves the right to request that the customer apply for re-assessment.

c) Certification

i. On completion of the assessment the Lead Assessor reports to the Certification Manager of CfA On receiving a report stating that the organisation meets the standard in question, the Certification Manager (after approval from the Panel) issues an approved free electronic certificate. Certificates remain the property of CfA and are valid for three years provided the customer maintains the standard.

ii. Certification is granted by the Certification Manager on the basis of the assessor's report, verification that due process has been followed, in the context of any complaints that may have been received and on the basis of any information in the public domain that may affect certification, and verification by the Panel.

iii. Hard copy certificates are available on request and at a cost of £15 per certificate. Payment must be received prior to the certificate being produced.

d) The Review Process

i. It is a requirement by UKAS that all successful organisations have a review against the standard within 12 months after the initial assessment.

ii. After the initial review, the next review will be an annual on-site assessment, agreed in advance with your assessor. There are two annual surveillance assessments as part of the certification cycle, and these must take place for your certification to remain valid. The first surveillance assessment must take place within twelve months of the last date on-site of the initial assessment.

iii. On-site review visits may be agreed at any time to support the customer.

iv. Where the customer has had significant change e.g. merger, change of ownership, a site visit can be requested. Where significant change has occurred, such as merger, this will trigger a decision by the Certification Manager as to whether a site visit is required. All organisations have the right to request an on-site visit.

e) Re-assessment

i. A full re-assessment takes places every three years. The process is similar to initial assessment. This re-assessment must take place at least two months before the certificate expiry date to allow sufficient time for the organisations to address any issues that arise during the assessment and also to allow CfA sufficient time to send the documentation and case to Panel for verification.

8. Change or extension to the scope of certification

a) Merger of a Customer Service Excellence certificated organisation with another leading to a site visit:

i. Where a merger takes place, the customer should write to CfA explaining the nature of merger and the size of the organisation with which they are merging.

ii. In practice there will usually be two scenarios:

(1) the holder is by far the largest or major partner in the merging organisations; or

(2) the holder is a lesser partner in the merger or reorganisation.

iii. Where the holder is the major partner, the Customer Service Excellence can be retained as long as there is a clear action plan, to a defined and short deadline, to integrate the smaller unit into the culture and practice of the holder organisation.

iv. Where the holder is not the major partner, the Customer Service Excellence may be retained by the holder unit only, if it can be demonstrated that it remains a distinguishable management unit within the new organisation. It must also demonstrate that users are clearly able to distinguish to which part of the services of the newly merged organisation the Customer Service Excellence applies.

b) Change in service offered

i. If the service the organisation provides to customers changes in such a way that it no longer reflects the definition stated on the original Customer Service Excellence application, there are two possible scenarios:

(1) a site visit will normally be required to extend the certification to cover the new activities / sites.

(2) a reduction to certification where activities cease may be voluntary.

ii. The customer should write to CfA to apply for an extension or amendment to their approved certification. Adequate time should be allowed prior to re-assessment or surveillance to enable:

(1) the assessment centre to properly plan and resource the assessment.

(2) an assessment will to be carried in those areas not previously assessed.

iii. A small charge may be made for the amendment and re-issue of certificate(s).

c) Changes in Personnel or Internal Reorganisation

i. Any major changes in key personnel or internal reorganisation of senior management teams, which may have an effect of the delivery of service, must be communicated to CfA in writing.

ii. Where changes will affect certification, all evidence will be submitted to the Customer Service Excellence Impartiality Committee for review.

9. Certification Requirements and Changes

a) The client shall comply at least with the following:

i. The certification requirements, including implementing any appropriate changes when communicated by the certification body.

ii. Any ongoing product requirements applicable for continuous service/production.

iii. Making all necessary arrangements for the conduct of certification activities.

iv. Full investigation of complaints.

v. The participation of any additional observers or technical experts or other additional personnel on site.

vi. In the event of the client issuing assessment documents to others, the document will be issued in its entirety, or as per scheme requirements.

10. Suspension / Withdrawal of Certification

a) The certificate may be withdrawn or suspended for the following reasons.

i. Suspended due to:

(1) breach of any of these terms and conditions of registration.

(2) failure to apply necessary corrective actions as a result of non-compliances found at assessment or review visits.

(3) continued logo misuse.

ii. When there is the possibility that the Customer Service Excellence may be withdrawn, the holder in question will be fully notified of this and given the reasons in writing by the Impartiality Committee. The holder will be given a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate whether they are continuing to meet the Standard and rectify any non-compliances.

iii. Withdrawn due to:

(1) failure to respond to reasonable requests from CfA following suspension of certification.

(2) failure of the customer to settle any outstanding CfA invoice.

(3) failure to provide copies of documentation required by the Assessor(s) to undertake re-assessment or surveillance assessment via CfA.

iv. The Certification Manager can only remove Customer Service Excellence status.

v. Customer Service Excellence may not be withdrawn from a holder for reasons of political expediency or public relations unless there is also evidence to show that the cause is a failure to meet the Customer Service Excellence Standard.

11. Assessor's need for information

a) If the assessor does not feel they have sufficient information to proceed with the assessment, they have the right to ask for more information documentation, as part of the information requirements.

12. The provision of assessment information

a) Should an organisation wish to provide an auditor with information by sending providing devices such as laptops or memory sticks or any other hardware device, the organisation remains responsible for the device and the information contained on the device. Centre for Assessment and their auditors will not accept any liability should

the device be lost, stolen, or broken. The auditor will agree to treat the device with a level of care that can be deemed as reasonable and will not knowingly damage the organisations property in any way.

b) Any hard copy documentation should be sent directly to the assessor allocated to carry out the assessment. The organisation remains responsible for the information sent, Centre for Assessment and the assessors do not take responsibility for and documentation not reaching the assessor or being lost in transit.

c) The Assessor will confidentially destroy all hard copy evidence sent to them unless stated by the customer that they would like it returned to them. The organisation is responsible for arranging for the return of the documentation when required.

d) Any hard copy documentation sent to Centre for Assessment head office will incur a fee to the customer to send onto the Assessor. This may also delay the assessment until the evidence can be arranged to be forwarded onto the assessor.

13. The Achievement Level

a) The Cabinet Office has set the Customer Service Excellence achievement level at 80% for each of the Criteria 1-5. From time to time this will be subject to Cabinet Office amendment.

b) Applicants that do not meet the required level shall not be certificated as Customer Service Excellence organisations.

c) Cabinet Office scheme documentation sets out the scoring mechanism and the definition of non-compliances.

d) Where an applicant has no major non-compliances in Criteria 1 to 5 and is between 70% and 80% overall, documentary evidence may be sent to the assessor to close the non-compliances without the need for a further site visit within 3 months. If the customer has more non-compliances, a re-visit will be conducted within 3 months.

14. Contacting the customer's Parent Organisation

a) Where the organisation is owned by a parent organisation or body, CfA shall contact the parent organisation at the start of the assessment process to:

   i. inform them that an application has been made.

   ii. to ask if there are any facts or factors relevant to the application that they wish to raise.

   iii. consider these facts or factors in the context of the Customer Service Excellence criteria.

   iv. make it clear to the parent organisation via the assessor that comments are not given in confidence and may be shared with the applicant.

b) Parent organisations cannot give approval for the application or veto decisions. It is an opportunity to provide facts, not opinion.

c) The applicant is responsible for defining who their parent organisation is when they submit an application.

15. Data held and Data in the Public Domain

a) Centre for Assessment maintains the following information on database:

   i. Organisation Name.

   ii. Address.

   iii. Contact Details, phone number, e-mail address, fax number.

   iv. Contact person.

   v. Date of application.

   vi. Date of certification.

   vii. Period of certification.

viii. Scores.

ix. Status (New/renewal).

x. Sector/Region.

b) Assessment Reports

i. Records are maintained for a minimum of 7 years after each assessment.

ii. Information of Customer Service Excellence holders is uploaded onto the National Holders Directory and is available to the public domain. Organisations are able to opt out of providing personal information such as individual contact names, e-mail addresses and direct telephone numbers by indicating on the application form in the field provided.

16. Data Protection Statement

a) All information gathered by CfA in the delivery of its services is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. For further information on how we process your personal data please see our privacy policy which is located on our website Centre for Assessment Privacy Notice.

b) Both CfA (CfA) and the client organisation (The organisation being audited by CfA) will act as controllers for the purpose of these terms and conditions

c) The data processing provisions attached [here] are incorporated into these terms and conditions.

17. The Scheme Documents

a) A full copy of the Scheme Documents issued by the Cabinet Office for Assessment Bodies is available on request.

18. Corporate Programmes

a) Large departments or organisations may agree a reduced rate for assessment with the Centre where the assessment is part of a corporate programme. Where a corporate programme exists, an assessment plan with timescales for each submission should be agreed.

19. Confidentiality/Personnel

a) CfA will treat all aspects of the Assessment as 'commercial in confidence' and any information/evidence outside of the public domain that is gained during the Assessment, or from parties other than the client, will be used for the purpose of certification processes only.

b) Neither CfA, nor its agents and/or subcontractors will use and/or disclose any confidential information to a third party without the written consent of the client or individual(s) concerned, save for fulfilling its obligations under the contract(s) or in circumstances where:

i. It is required to do so by any governmental, local government or regulatory authority or by law (but only to the extent it is strictly required to do so).

ii. It is necessary for obtaining professional advice in relation to the contract(s).

iii. It is agreed between the customer and Centre for Assessment i.e. for the purpose of dealing with complaints.

iv. It was already known to the client or individual prior to the time of disclosure by the client or individual where Centre for Assessment can prove the same with documentary evidence.

v. Information which subsequently becomes public knowledge other than by breach of the contract(s) by the recipient.

c) The Assessor or any observer present agrees to treat as secret and confidential and not at any time, for any reason, to disclose or permit to be disclosed to any information reviewed or seen during the Assessment, other than for internal verification purposes in the process of granting, extending or withdrawing certification.

d) CfA will provide suitably qualified personnel for Assessment and Surveillance work.

e) Sub-contracted assessors are selected and monitored in line with our internal competence criteria and processes.

f) All sub-contractors are required to sign contracts, which contain confidentiality agreements, requiring them to strictly treat all information outside the public domain as 'commercial in confidence' (as above).

g) CfA and/or The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), may be required to accompany Assessors on assessments in order to evaluate consistency and quality of practice within the assessment team.

h) Trainee Assessors may also periodically shadow/observe the Lead Assessor for training and quality purposes, as part of their professional development.

i) The organisation will be informed in writing prior to the assessment that the Assessor will be accompanied by any of the above. Any personnel in attendance will be subject to confidentiality agreements and their presence will have no impact whatsoever on the duration, cost, or outcome of your assessment. The customer does not have the right to refuse a reasonable notice of accompaniment.

j) The applicant has the right to request change of the assessor(s) allocated to conduct the assessment.

20. Impartiality

a) CfA (CFA) provide an object and fair assessment and certification process. Impartiality is at the core of our business ethos. CfA has put in place procedures, practices and policies to safeguard the impartiality of its activities. We strive to deliver assessment certification services which provide the marketplace with confidence, while maintaining the professionalism and credibility of not only our own audit and certification processes, but those of the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS).

b) Centre for Assessment's full impartiality policy is available in full on our website https://www.centreforassessment.co.uk/impartiality-policy/. If you are unable to access this for any reason, a copy can be requested from our head office.

c) There are no restrictions on eligibility. Those organisations in the UK that want to achieve Customer Service Excellence through formal assessment, whether they are in the public, private or third sector, can do so.

21. Fees

a) Travel Expenses

   i. Reasonable travel expenses may be applicable dependant on the customer's location, number of sites and local assessor availability. Mileage will be calculated at £0.55 per mile; and any overnight expenses and all other applicable expenses will be charged at cost. These costs will be included in the final invoice.

b) Terms of Payment-UK

   i. Payment of Invoices: Payment for assessment and certification services is requested within 30 days of the invoice date. Late payment of invoices will automatically be referred to our legal department for perusal and may result in certification being removed.

   ii. All outstanding Invoices must be paid prior to certificates being issued.

c) Terms of Payment-NON-UK

   i. All assessments that take place outside of the UK will be required to be paid for in advance at least 10 working days prior to any assessment work taking place.

d) Cancellation: If an assessment or surveillance visit is cancelled by the customer within 30 days of the agreed visit date(s), CfA reserves the right to claim the appertaining daily assessment charge for each scheduled day on-site. All cancellations must be made in writing to CfA head office. Offsite preparation that has already taken place prior to receiving the cancellation request will be charged for.

e) VAT: All quotes and estimated costs for all services will be plus VAT. Customers who are VAT registered outside of the UK but within the EU must provide their VAT registration number to CfA before any work takes place. If this is not received, then VAT will be added to their invoice.

f) Additional Visit: A fee which is proportionate to the additional work required should be agreed by both parties in advance. (An additional visit may be required when a site visit identifies either a major issue to be addressed, or information, which differs from that contained in the initial application, such as the scope of operation, number of sites or number of employees).

g) Fees for assessment and surveillance work will be agreed in advance between CfA and the customer.

h) Invoices will be sent via email from our finance department finance@growthco.co.uk.

i) Purchase order numbers

   i. If your organisation requires a purchase order number for an invoice to be paid, it is the responsibility of the organisation to supply this to CfA in writing, prior to the assessment taking place. If an organisation has not provided a purchase order number prior to the invoice being raised, then the organisation must agree to pay the invoice without a purchase order number within the timeframe stated on the invoice.

22. Information Technology Systems

a) The assessor(s) may need to connect to the Customers Wi-Fi during the assessment. All assessment personnel are required to keep their personal IT system virus free, but should a problem arise, Centre for Assessment cannot accept responsibility for any corruption of the customer's IT systems. The customer has the right to refuse access to their IT Systems.

23. Prevention of harassment of CfA Personnel

a) The Client Organisation acknowledges that Centre for Assessment Limited (CfA) has obligations under the Employment Rights Act 2025, including section 21, and the Equality Act 2010 to take all reasonable steps to prevent the harassment of its employees by third parties.

b) For the purposes of this clause, CfA Personnel means CfA's employees, auditors, assessors, contractors and associates involved in the delivery or administration of the Services.

c) The Customer shall ensure that its employees, officers, workers, agents and contractors, and any other persons under its control who may interact with CfA Personnel in connection with the Services (Customer Personnel), treat CfA Personnel with dignity and respect and do not engage in harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination, threatening or abusive behaviour, or other inappropriate conduct towards CfA Personnel.

d) The obligations in this clause apply to all communications and interactions between CfA Personnel and Customer Personnel, regardless of location and whether in person, by telephone, email, video conference, messaging service or through any other communication channel.

e) The Customer shall promptly notify CfA if it becomes aware of any allegation or incident of conduct falling within clause 23 c) involving Customer Personnel and CfA Personnel. The Customer shall co-operate reasonably with CfA in investigating any such allegation or incident and shall implement appropriate measures to address the matter and prevent recurrence.

f) Where CfA reasonably considers that conduct towards CfA Personnel is unacceptable, or that there is a risk to their safety or wellbeing, CfA may take such reasonable action as it considers necessary to protect CfA Personnel.

g) Where the provision of the Services is suspended, terminated, rearranged or rescheduled as a result of conduct falling within clause 23 c), the Customer shall be responsible for any reasonable additional costs incurred by CfA as a result, subject to any other applicable provisions of these Terms and Conditions.

h) The Customer shall indemnify and hold harmless CfA against all costs, claims, damages, or expenses incurred by CfA arising from any act of harassment or other such conduct of a similar nature committed by the Customer's Personnel against CfA's Personnel.

i) Serious or repeated failure by the Customer to comply with this clause may constitute a material breach of these Terms and Conditions and may result in CfA suspending the provision of the Services or exercising any other rights or remedies available to it under these Terms and Conditions.

24. Requests for Information

a) Requests for information not covered in this document should be made via email enquiries@centreforassessment.co.uk.

25. Liability

a) Assessments undertaken on behalf of CfA address only a sample of the customer's compliance with the standard. Reported findings do not imply that the non-compliance raised are the only ones that exist. Any action taken as a result of assessment findings and assessment work undertaken on behalf of CfA is the responsibility of the customer.

26. Indemnity

a) The customer will indemnify CfA against any claims or loses suffered by CfA as a result of misuse by the customer of certification given to the customer by CfA. CfA reserves the right to change these terms and conditions without prior notification.

27. Terms and Conditions

a) The terms and conditions form a legally binding contract. Any validity and performance of the contract shall be governed in all respects by English Law; in connection with any disputes between the parties relating to or connected with the assessment contract' both parties shall agree irrevocably to submit to the non-exclusive jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Judicature in England.

28. Terms and Conditions Variation

a) CfA reserves the right to change these Terms and Conditions. Current versions will be maintained on our website www.centreforassessment.co.uk.