



Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ) (ASECCS2)

Specification

First teaching from June 2008

Issue 2

Edexcel, BTEC and LCCI qualifications

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Acknowledgements

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ISBN 978 1 446 93307 7

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Introduction

LCCI qualifications

LCCI qualifications are widely regarded by employers to prepare students for key functions of modern international business. The qualifications are recognised worldwide by employers, universities and professional bodies.

This qualification is not regulated by any regulatory authority in the UK. It exists on Pearson's self-regulated framework (SRF).

Pearson LCCI offers a wide range of qualifications, which are available at Levels 1 to 4 across the following subject areas:

- English Language
- Marketing and Customer Service
- Business, Administration and IT
- Financial and Quantitative.

This specification is part of the Marketing and Customer Service suite of LCCI qualifications.

Please refer to the Pearson qualification website for details of other qualifications in the suite.

Purpose of the specification

This specification sets out:

- the objectives of the qualification
- any other qualification(s) that a student must have completed before taking the qualification
- any prior knowledge and skills that a student is required to have before taking the qualification
- any other requirements that a student must have satisfied before they will be assessed or before the qualification will be awarded
- the knowledge, understanding and skills that will be assessed as part of the qualification
- the method of assessment and any associated requirements relating to it
- the criteria against which a student's level of attainment will be measured (such as assessment criteria).

Qualification aims

The aims of the Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ) are to enable students to develop:

- a broad understanding of the nature, functions and operations of a Contact Centre
- a clear understanding of the individual's role in acquiring customers and providing reliable customer service
- an awareness of how to improve individual and team performance and the organisation's in order to contribute to business success
- the necessary skills, techniques and knowledge to enable them to autonomously handle inbound and outbound customer calls effectively.

This qualification is aimed at those who are intending to work in a Contact Centre job role where they will be expected to work autonomously handling inbound and outbound customer calls. It is also suitable for those who already working in such a role and who wish to develop further knowledge and skills to support their work.

Additionally, *Unit 2: Handling Inbound and Outbound Calls*, as a qualification in its own right, is suitable for people who may not be working in a Contact Centre but are working or intending to work in customer-facing call handling role such as a receptionist or a customer service assistant.

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Specification at a glance

The Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ) consists of one externally-examined paper.

Title: Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ)

- Externally assessed

**100% of the
total
qualification**

Overview of content

The qualification will be awarded to candidates who successfully complete the learning outcomes and assessments for both of the following units.

Unit 1: Understanding Contact Centre Operations

Unit 2: Handling Inbound and Outbound Calls

Certification is also available at unit level as each unit is regarded as a worthwhile achievement in its own right.

Unit 1: Understanding Contact Centre Operations

- Contact Centre Operations and Management
- Providing Reliable Customer Service
- Acquiring Customers
- Developing Personal and Organisational Effectiveness

Unit 2: Handling Inbound and Outbound Calls

- Handling Incoming Calls Requesting Routine Product or Service Advice/Support
- Handling Inbound Sales Calls
- Making Outbound Sales Calls
- Call Handling Techniques
- Dealing with Challenging Service Situations
- Actions associated with Call Handling
- Follow-up Actions to Call Handling

Overview of assessment

Assessment of the qualification is by a combination of a multiple-choice test and practical call handling assignments.

Candidates must complete the Unit 1 multiple-choice test and the Unit 2 practical call handling assignments in order to be eligible for the full award.

A full Certificate for the Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ) qualification is awarded to those candidates who achieve a Pass, Merit or Distinction in both Unit 1 and Unit 2.

Title: Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ)

A Unit Certificate for the Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ) qualification is awarded to those candidates who achieve a Pass, Merit or Distinction in either Unit 1 or Unit 2.

Unit 1: Understanding Contact Centre Operations

- One written, externally-set and marked multiple-choice test, contributing 50% of the overall grade of the qualification. For each of the 30 multiple-choice questions candidates must mark A, B, C or D on the Candidate Answer Sheet.
- The examination will be 45 minutes.
- The examination will consist of 30 marks.
- Candidates will be graded Pass/Merit/Distinction. A result of Fail will be recorded where candidates do not achieve the required marks for a Pass.
- Candidates answer all questions.

Unit 2: Handling Inbound and Outbound Calls

- Four practical call handling assignments from a total of six, contributing to 50% of the overall grade of the qualification. For each of the four practical call handling assignments (selected from six available) candidates must handle a telephone call, incoming or outgoing, as directed by the Centre Assessor. For some assignments, candidates will also be required to enquire of, or input data to, the computer, produce print outs and fill in forms.
- The examination will be 1 hour.
- Candidates will be graded Pass/Merit/Distinction according to the total marks achieved across the four assignments:
 - Pass — 7–12 errors
 - Pass 50% (Total marks for four completed assignments is between 24 and 28)
 - Merit 60% (Total marks for four completed assignments is between 29 and 35)
 - Distinction 75% (Total marks for four completed assignments is between 36 and 48)

Candidates must score a minimum of 6 marks in each call assignment. Where a candidate scores less than 6 in any assignment, they may re-take that assignment.

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- Practical call handling assignments are administered and marked by the Centre and moderated by Pearson. For each 'sitting' centres will be sent:
 - Level 2 Practical Call Handling Assignments – Handling Inbound and Outbound Calls
 - Level 2 Candidate Guidance for Practical Assignments
 - Level 2 Assignment Marking Criteria
 - Level 2 Candidate Mark Sheet.

Centres will tape record each candidate's telephone call for each call practical assignment. Completed assignments will be marked by the Centre using the Assignment Marking Criteria supplied by Pearson. The tapes, assignment documentation (e.g. database printouts) and the completed candidates' mark sheets should then be forwarded to Pearson.

Pearson will then moderate the centre's marking using the tapes, assignment documentation and mark sheets received. Moderation may lead to an adjustment to the final result. The authenticity of the assignments will be confirmed at moderation and Pearson reserves the right to reject candidates' submissions if the qualifications regulations of the qualifications have been infringed.

These assignments are generic and centres will customise them to meet their own company and database requirements.

Please refer to the Centre Support Pack for the qualification for detailed information on the equipment and resources required for delivery and assessment and for guidance on the marking and the administration of the assessments.

Knowledge, skills and understanding

Content

The following content must be covered to prepare students for the final assessment of this qualification.

Unit 1: Understanding Contact Centre Operations

1. Contact Centre Operations and Management

Subject content	What students need to learn:
1.1 Nature of the Contact Centre Industry	a) Explain the role and importance of a contact centre to an organisation
	b) Describe the types of services that may be offered by a contact centre, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• customer service• direct sales• technical support• emergency call handling
	c) Identify the key sectors and industries that would require the use of contact centres, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• banking• insurance• telecommunications• travel• retailers and suppliers of goods and services• government agencies etc.
	d) Identify the goals and objectives of a contact centre, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide quality customer service and interaction• retain existing customers• attract new customers• increase staff productivity• reduce operational costs etc.
	e) Outline the different roles/responsibilities and teams that may be found in a contact centre and explain how they contribute to the achievement of its goals and objectives

Subject content	What students need to learn:
1.2 Using Contact Centre Technology and Systems	a) Identify the basic equipment and technology/systems necessary for contact/call handling and outline the purpose of each, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • telephone system • personal computer • database • call/case logging system • headset • internet
	b) Describe the more advanced features of a telephone system and explain how they are used to create seamless call flow in contact centres, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conference • agent status • call waiting • call backup • message waiting • call forwarding • voicemail integration etc.
	c) Outline the choices available for electronic communications within a contact centre (e.g. email, SMS, web-based chat/instant messaging) and explain how their functionalities are used to deliver consistent service
	d) Describe the features of a computer telephony integrated system (CTI), e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • automatic screen pops • onscreen phone control; logging on/off • predictive dialling • data transfer • scripting • KPIs statistics and reports etc.
	e) Explain the advantages of integrating the telephone and computer systems
	f) Describe Web Telephony Integration (WTI) and explain how the features (e.g. web page pop up windows, web page call back, email auto response) help to provide timely support and advice to customers

Subject content	What students need to learn:
	<p>g) Describe how an Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system works and explain how it impacts on service levels and business performance in a contact centre</p> <p>h) Explain how Knowledge Management Tools are used in contact centres and identify the type of information that may be included in a contact centre knowledge base, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAQs • problem resolution information • most frequently escalated questions • technical product information • features and benefits of products and services etc. <p>i) Outline the functionality provided by a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software and explain how it helps contact centres to deliver reliable customer service</p>
<p>1.3 Performance Management</p>	<p>a) Describe the call/contact monitoring process and explain how it may be used in performance management</p> <p>b) Identify performance measures/Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are used in a contact centre environment and explain how they are used in the performance management, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Resolution Rate (FRR) • Abandon Rate • Service Level • Average speed of answer (ASA) • Transfer rate • Call quality criteria • Email and document quality criteria • Average handle time (AHT) • Adherence and shrinkage • Attendance and punctuality • Cost per contact • Sales per contact <p>(list not exhaustive)</p> <p>c) Explain how individual performance targets relate to corporate strategy and goals</p>

Subject content	What students need to learn:
1.4 Maintaining Quality Standards	a) Explain why it is important to adhere to set quality standards
	b) Describe recognised basic quality assurance standards and procedures appropriate to the contact centre environment, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data and equipment protection • call monitoring • complaint handling and customer service • contractual agreements • quality systems/benchmarking etc.
	c) Describe legislation and regulations specific to a contact handling work role and explain how non-compliance impacts on the organisation, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data protection legislation • financial services regulations • direct marketing regulations etc.
	d) Identify how to escalate compliance related issues, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using organisational compliance procedures • following reporting process and appropriate escalation points
	e) Explain the purpose of communications guidelines (scripting) and how they help in customer interactions and the maintenance of quality standards
1.5 Contributing to Health and Safety	a) Explain the importance of health and safety practices in the workplace
	b) Identify health and safety requirements and regulations relevant to contact centres, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work station ergonomics • display screen equipment testing • lighting • regular breaks and physical and visual exercises • regular electrical equipment inspection • emergency procedures etc.
	c) Identify how to contribute to a productive and safe working environment, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying common types of hazards that might occur within own operational area, e.g. trailing wires, headset use, open drawers, keyboard work, chairs etc. • using safety violation corrective procedures

Subject content	What students need to learn:
	<p>d) Outline the common causes and indicators of stress; causes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal problems • high workload • weak management • poor working relationships • uncertainty etc. <p>Indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • irritability • absenteeism • anxiety • depression <p>e) Explain how to cope with stressful situations and the techniques used to reduce stress, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking breaks/time out • discussion with colleagues • identifying causes of stress • asking for help and sharing responsibilities • improving time management

2. Providing Reliable Customer Service

Subject content	What students need to learn:
<p>2.1 Customer Care</p>	<p>a) Define customer satisfaction and explain why it is important to contact centre operations</p>
	<p>b) Identify the expectations and needs that contact centre customers might have and explain how knowledge of these is important in achieving customer satisfaction, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • value for money • accuracy and reliability • relevant information and advice • appropriate assistance and help
	<p>c) Explain the implications of customer satisfaction on customer retention, public relations, profitability and corporate image</p>

Subject content	What students need to learn:
	<p>d) Explain why it is important to obtain feedback on customer satisfaction levels and identify the different ways feedback maybe obtained, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formal customer satisfaction surveys • soliciting informal feedback on customer satisfaction • capturing customer’s perceptions of products/services <p>e) Explain how the use of established service and sales procedures and protocols in a contact centre can contribute to customer satisfaction</p> <p>f) Describe the techniques for meeting commitments to customers to ensure customer satisfaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking ownership of problems • understanding customers’ needs • recognising and offering alternatives • accepting responsibility for meeting customers’ needs • meeting response time and resolution time objectives <p>g) Identify organisational and personal limitations in meeting the needs and expectations of customers, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • balancing the needs of organisation and customer • service standards and code of practice • limits of authority
<p>2.2 Service Delivery</p>	<p>a) Explain what is meant by a Service Level Agreement (SLA) and explain its impact on service delivery</p> <p>b) Describe the different types of customer service procedures and guidelines that are used in contact centres and their purposes, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • record-keeping and call logging • authorisation procedures • standards of service delivery • escalation, resolution and complaints handling procedures etc. • compliance with relevant legislation <p>c) Outline recognised documentation good practice and explain how the accuracy of customer and transaction data impact on organisation effectiveness. Examples of good practice include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoiding jargons • avoiding negative references

Subject content	What students need to learn:
	d) Explain what is meant by 'authorisation criteria'
	e) Outline the recognised procedures and methods for confirming a customer's identity
	f) Outline how unauthorised transactions should be handled
	g) Identify signals that may indicate developing conflict when dealing with a customer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raised voice level and tone • strong expression of emotions • hostile/abusive language
	h) Describe techniques that may be used to effectively diffuse conflict and deal with difficult customers, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • letting customer vent their frustration • acting professionally; staying calm and maintaining a 'can do' positive attitude • showing empathy and trying to develop a rapport with customer • apologising where genuine problem exists • removing blame from situation • distinguishing the person from the problem • negotiating and working with customer to come up with appropriate solution
	i) Describe techniques for managing own feelings after handling difficult situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking short pause to allow feelings to dissipate • discussing call with supervisor • learning how to resist own patterns of emotional responses
	j) Describe the techniques used in handling and resolving customer problems and complaints, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information gathering and evaluation • working within limits of own responsibility • working within the legislation • offering alternatives • handling objections • using escalation procedures where necessary etc.
	k) Identify what customer conditions represent special communication requirements and explain how these customers can be assisted

Subject content	What students need to learn:
	l) Give examples of 'positive language' and explain how it impacts on the relationship with customers
	m) Explain how an understanding of the relevant contact centre processes and procedures helps in providing the best recommendation based on customers' needs

3. Acquiring Customers

Subject content	What students need to learn:
3.1 Market Segmentation	a) Explain what is meant by 'customer segmentation' and explain how it is used in the acquisition of new customers
	b) Identify the types of information that may be gathered about customers to segment the market and the sources of this information, e.g.: Type of information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demographic, psychographic and behavioural information Sources of information include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • customers, national statistics, market research, sales records, sales team, internet etc.
	c) Identify the different tools and techniques that may be used to gather customer information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • questionnaires, interviews, loyalty schemes, competitions, website browsers and forms etc.
	d) Explain how data protection legislation affects how customer information is kept and used
3.2 Outbound and inbound sales	a) Outline recognised procedures for making outbound sales contacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning organisational procedures for contact structure • reviewing potential customer information • having relevant scripts • preparing questions etc.
	b) Outline recognised guidelines for handling incoming sales contacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying customer interest in the product • asking probing questions • translating customer contact into sales opportunities etc.

Subject content	What students need to learn:
	c) Describe typical objections that customers may have and how these may be resolved
	d) Explain the difference between the features and benefits of a product/service and why this distinction is important in the sales process
	e) Explain how to make the transition from product/service benefits into selling messages
	f) Explain how key brand messages can be used to promote a product or service
	g) Define the terms 'cross selling' and 'up selling' and explain how these are important in meeting business objectives
	h) Identify signals that indicate when a customer is willing to buy and explain how the sale should then be progressed

4. Developing Personal and Organisational Effectiveness

Subject content	What students need to learn:
4.1 Personal effectiveness	<p>a) Describe the personal aptitudes and professional skills that are required for a call/contact handling work role and explain how each contributes to personal effectiveness, e.g.:</p> <p>Aptitudes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confidence • initiative • credibility • empathy • integrity • earning ability • tolerance • positive attitude etc. <p>Professional skills include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • problem solving • team working • negotiation

Subject content	What students need to learn:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attention to detail • numeracy • conflict resolution • industry awareness etc. <p>b) Outline the interpersonal and written communication techniques that are needed to carry out the work role effectively, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verbal (intonation, tone, feedback, types of questions) • non-verbal (smiling while talking on the telephone, body language) • active listening, reducing listening barriers • positive and negative language • writing (spelling, grammar, business styles)
	<p>c) Identify ways in which individuals can work effectively in the contact handling environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listening and following instructions • adhering to timescales and schedules • following organisational procedures and methods • flexible working • team working <p>d) Explain how receiving feedback on own performance can help in identifying areas for improvement and outline different types and sources of feedback, e.g.:</p> <p>Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • colleagues • appraisals • customer surveys • performance data • team briefings • self-assessment • peer-group analysis etc. <p>e) Describe how to put together a Personal Development plan and explain how it can help in improving performance and personal effectiveness</p>

Subject content	What students need to learn:
	f) Identify development activities that can improve an individual's and organisation's effectiveness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning and training activities (job shadowing, coaching, seminars, workshops etc.) • reading manuals and journals • attending team meetings • having training needs analysed
4.2 Teamwork	a) Explain the difference between a team and a group and explain why teams are important in contact centres
	b) Outline how good team relationships contribute to the achievement of performance targets and organisational effectiveness
	c) Identify how individual team members can contribute to building positive working relationships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicating effectively • supporting and encouraging each other • supporting equality and embracing diversity • resolving conflicts etc.
	d) Explain the importance of providing constructive feedback to colleagues and peers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develops their professional growth • contributes to team development and positive relationships • maximises team performance
	e) Outline the guidelines for giving and receiving feedback effectively

Unit 2: Handling Inbound and Outbound Calls

1. Handling Incoming Calls Requesting Routine Product or Service Advice/Support

Subject content	What students need to learn:
1.1 Call Introduction	a) Pick up calls and use the most appropriate style of introduction, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• picking calls up within agreed timescale• using a positive, concise and clear greeting accepted by organisations• encouraging the continuation of the call by using an offer of help phrase• responding to the customer's initial statement• obtaining customer's name and relevant details• verifying customer's identity in line with any legislation or data security procedures• advising customer if call is being recorded, where necessary
1.2 Identifying Customers' Routine Needs	a) Gather information on customer's routine needs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• using 'please' and 'thank you' when requesting and receiving information• gathering all relevant and necessary information using appropriate questioning techniques• confirming or reading back information provided• responding to customer problems and queries quickly, accurately and pleasantly• confirming understanding of details• confirming customer's requirements• meeting the level of service and quality required by organisations

Subject content	Candidates must be able to:
1.3 Meeting Customers' Routine Needs	a) Find and offer solutions to routine calls that benefit the customer and the organisation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing accurate and comprehensive information to customers in a clear and organised manner • introducing product and service features and benefits to customers • demonstrating knowledge of services and procedures • complying with any relevant regulations or procedures • explaining policy and procedure and the need for these where necessary • offering options and alternatives that benefit both the customer and the organisation • suggesting the best recommendation based on understanding of the customer's needs • providing the customer with the opportunity of stating their preferred resolution before reaching agreement • gaining customer's commitment to, and satisfaction of, agreed outcome • managing the customer's expectations • meeting response resolution and resolution time objectives
1.4 Call Closure	Demonstrate the most appropriate style of closure, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summarising agreed outcomes, actions and timescales • providing confirmation information where necessary • making a final offer of assistance • thanking customer for calling • using a positive, concise and clear closure • using words and standards accepted by organisations

2. Handling Inbound Sales Calls

Subject content	What students need to learn:
2.1 Call introduction	<p>a) Pick up calls and use the most appropriate style of introduction, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • picking calls up within agreed timescale • using a positive, concise and clear greeting accepted by organisations • encouraging the continuation of the call by using an offer of help phrase • responding to the customer's initial statement • obtaining customer's name and relevant details • verifying customer's identity in line with any legislation or data security procedures • advising customer if call is being recorded, where necessary
2.2 Identifying and Developing Customers' Interest in the Products/ Services	<p>Gather information to identify and develop customers' interest in the products/services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responding appropriately to customers' queries • asking effective and appropriate probing questions to understand the underlying needs of the customer • confirming and reading back information provided • discussing key features and advantages of products and services with customers • translating product/service features into customer benefits and selling messages • articulating key brand messages • handling routine customer objections and questions • matching customer needs to products/services • identifying potential customer interest in similar products/services of a higher value (up selling) • identifying potential customer interest in other related products/services (cross selling) • managing customer expectations • maintaining control of the customer interaction • complying with any relevant regulations or procedures • explaining policy and procedures and the need for these where necessary • using effective call handling technique

Subject content	What students need to learn:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing best recommendation based on understanding of the customer's needs • recognising and effectively reacting to buying signals
2.3 Closing the call/sale	<p>Demonstrate how the sale is closed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirming customer requirements • 'asking' for the sale • reaching agreement about preferred products/services with customer • performing routine cross selling or up selling where opportunities exist • explaining and agreeing sale or next stage with customer • gaining customer's commitment to and satisfaction with the outcome

3. Making Outbound Sales Calls

Subject content	What students need to learn:
3.1 Call Preparation	<p>a) Make preparations for selling or the generation of sales leads by telephone including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defining objectives for calls • reviewing customer information • having all relevant scripts, documents and materials ready • preparing questions which will help achieve call objectives • considering likely objections and questions and preparing responses which will assist in sales process
3.2 Identifying and Securing Customer Interest in the Sale	<p>a) Demonstrate how to identify the customer's needs and evaluate their interest, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making appropriate introduction according to organisation standards • verifying customer's identity in line with any legislation or data security procedures • checking with customer that it is convenient to talk now • using a 'hook' to gain customer's attention

Subject content	What students need to learn:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asking effective and appropriate probing questions to understand the underlying needs of customer • confirming and reading back information provided • responding appropriately to customer queries • evaluating customer's buying needs and level of interest in products/services • managing customer expectations • staying focused on the customer and the sale • providing accurate and comprehensive information in a clear manner • complying with relevant procedures and regulations • explaining policy and procedures and the need for these where required • offering options and alternatives to the customer • overcoming objections effectively • assessing customer's view of competitor products/services and any agreements already made with competitors • identifying likelihood of the sale based on customer reaction and proceed accordingly • concluding the call positively where no interest is expressed
	<p>b) Effectively promote features and benefits during the telephone sales process, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using effective call handling techniques • matching benefits to identified customer needs • educating customer on features and benefits of relevant products/services • clarifying the difference between features and benefits if required • encouraging customer to discuss and assess the features and benefits • articulating key brand messages • recognising and effectively reacting to buying signals

Subject content	What students need to learn:
3.3 Closing the Call/Sale	a) Demonstrate how the sale is closed, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirming customer requirements • 'asking' for the sale • reaching agreement about preferred products/services with customer • explaining and agreeing next stage with customer, i.e. agreed sale/referral or further sales contact • gaining customer's commitment to and satisfaction with the outcome

4. Call Handling Techniques

Subject content	What students need to learn:
4.1 Questioning techniques	a) Correctly select and apply the different types of questioning techniques, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • open questions to gather information • closed questions to control the customer interaction and obtain succinct responses • probing questions to gather more detailed information • hypothetical questions to check or test the customer's views or perceptions
4.2 Showing interest and sensitivity	a) Demonstrate the techniques to show sensitivity to, and interest in meeting, the customer's needs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listening in an active/supportive/reflective manner • catching customer's points first time • acknowledging customer's points • identifying, and effectively responding to, customer's points and feelings • addressing the customer by name • allowing the customer to speak without interrupting • maintaining appropriate pitch, pace, tone, volume, clarity, energy, articulation and projection • displaying willingness to help and maintaining professionalism • mirroring and matching customer's style, manner and level of language and wording

Subject content	What students need to learn:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing reassurance to customer through positive 'can do' attitude and language • remaining calm and patient • pausing to allow silence, where appropriate • checking customer's understanding • building trust and demonstrating empathy and rapport • minimising and explaining delays, e.g. during data entry, system response time or information retrieval • explaining any need to put customer on hold and asking permission prior to holding • limiting hold time to a maximum of 60 seconds before going back to caller • checking if customer is prepared to continue to hold if longer than 60 seconds • thanking customer for holding • paraphrasing points to summarise and clarify • keeping the call focused and optimising contact time
<p>4.3 Overall Style of Communications</p>	<p>a) Adopt an overall style of handling the communications interaction which meets the needs of customers and the business, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using simple language in communications and avoiding jargon • avoiding hesitant and negative language • using correct grammar and wording • adhering to typical organisational call handling standards • personalising communication guidelines as appropriate to ensure interaction seems natural • maintaining a professional and friendly manner • managing and adapting emotions to communicate calmly • maintaining customer's participation and conversation flow • meeting the level of service and quality required by organisations • controlling the interaction to meet the customer's and organisation's objectives

5. Dealing with Challenging Service Situations

Subject content	What students need to learn:
5.1 Customers with special communication requirements	a) Adapt call handling style to meet the communication requirements needs of customers with special communication requirements such as hearing, listening or language difficulties, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaking slowly and clearly • speaking at a higher volume • repeating the information as frequently as required • agreeing to forward the information by email, fax or post
5.2 Difficult customers	a) Demonstrate how to handle difficult customers effectively, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allowing callers to vent their feelings while listening actively • displaying patience and understanding with customers who are emotionally upset • asking effective probing questions to identify the complaint/issue • being assertive with customers who make unreasonable demands • delivering difficult messages to customers and explaining the 'why' behind the action • maintaining composure and consistent communication style throughout situations • apologising for errors without placing blame • putting the customer at ease as soon as possible • maintaining a supportive and a 'can do' atmosphere • assessing the priority of the issue • negotiating with customer for a suitable resolution • terminating the call politely • following up on customer problems

6. Actions Associated with Call Handling:

Subject content	What students need to learn:
<p>6.1 Entering information into a computer system</p>	<p>a) Demonstrate how to enter all necessary information (e.g. reason for call, caller’s details, agreed resolution, follow-up actions required etc) into a computer while maintaining the dialogue with the customer, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selecting the correct system • obtaining all relevant details from customer • verifying details are accurate • entering and recording all necessary numerical and alphabetical data relating to calls and callers accurately in appropriate fields • completing record of customer interaction and actions taken • recognising and correcting errors in data input, i.e. adding new data and modifying and cancelling existing data
<p>6.2 Retrieving information from a computer system</p>	<p>a) Demonstrate how to retrieve information from a computer system while maintaining the dialogue with the customer, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selecting the correct system • navigating through sequence of events/screens/systems • locating and retrieving numerical and alphabetical data accurately and within specified timescales • using appropriate methods for searching and locating information
<p>6.3 Call handling security</p>	<p>a) Demonstrate the good practices that organisations can take to ensure call and caller security during the interaction, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adhering to relevant data protection legislation • adhering to relevant guidelines on disclosure of recording and monitoring calls • adhering to organisational procedures relating to data security and confidentiality, e.g. identification of caller • maintaining confidentiality in line with the caller’s requirements

7. Follow-up Actions to Call Handling

Subject content	What students need to learn:
7.1 Prepare follow-up actions	a) Prepare for follow-up actions on behalf of a customer after the call has been completed successfully, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewing the customer’s needs and follow-up requirements • prioritising follow-up actions in line with customer’s and organisation’s needs • updating computer system with details of follow-up actions
7.2 Sending and receiving electronic communications	a) Demonstrate how to receive and send electronic messages (email, SMS, fax) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • checking for messages at regular intervals • processing received messages in line with procedures • saving messages in line with procedures • composing and completing the message to meet customer’s and organisational requirements and expectations • communicating with the correct formality for medium • selecting and sending to single or multiple recipients, as required • using automated checking facilities to minimise errors in emails • using automated responses when appropriate • correctly attaching files, where necessary and appropriate • transmitting message successfully and in line with procedures • seeking support where transmission difficulties are experienced i.e. online help or following escalation procedures • filing messages in line with procedures

Subject content	What students need to learn:
<p>7.3 Drafting documentation</p>	<p>a) Demonstrate how to draft documentation to meet caller requirements following on from calls, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • correctly identifying the information requirements of callers • gathering relevant information from computer systems, paper records or people • determining the best way to provide information based on requirements and intended uses • producing electronic and hard-copy word-processed documentation to meet requirements • adhering to agreed standards and styles for document production • meeting required standards of language, spelling, punctuation, grammar, length and clarity • ensuring that all information contained within documentation is valid and accurate • completing work within agreed timescales

Assessment

Assessment summary

Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ)

Availability: On demand

Overview of content

The qualification will be awarded to candidates who successfully complete the learning outcomes and assessments for both of the following units.

Unit 1: Understanding Contact Centre Operations

Unit 2: Handling Inbound and Outbound Calls

Certification is also available at unit level as each unit is regarded as a worthwhile achievement in its own right.

Unit 1: Understanding Contact Centre Operations

- Contact Centre Operations and Management
- Providing Reliable Customer Service
- Acquiring Customers
- Developing Personal and Organisational Effectiveness

Unit 2: Handling Inbound and Outbound Calls

- Handling Incoming Calls Requesting Routine Product or Service Advice/Support
- Handling Inbound Sales Calls
- Making Outbound Sales Calls
- Call Handling Techniques
- Dealing with Challenging Service Situations
- Actions associated with Call Handling
- Follow-up Actions to Call Handling

Overview of assessment

Assessment of the qualification is by a combination of a multiple-choice test and practical call handling assignments.

Candidates must complete the Unit 1 multiple-choice test and the Unit 2 practical call handling assignments in order to be eligible for the full award.

A full Certificate for the Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ) qualification is awarded to those candidates who achieve a Pass, Merit or Distinction in both Unit 1 and Unit 2.

Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ)

A Unit Certificate for the Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ) qualification is awarded to those candidates who achieve a Pass, Merit or Distinction in either Unit 1 or Unit 2.

Unit 1: Understanding Contact Centre Operations

- One written, externally-set and marked multiple-choice test, contributing 50% of the overall grade of the qualification. For each of the 30 multiple-choice questions candidates must mark A, B, C or D on the Candidate Answer Sheet.
- The examination will be 45 minutes.
- The examination will consist of 30 marks.
- Candidates will be graded Pass/Merit/Distinction. A result of Fail will be recorded where candidates do not achieve the required marks for a Pass.
- Candidates answer all questions.

Unit 2: Handling Inbound and Outbound Calls

- Four practical call handling assignments from a total of six, contributing to 50% of the overall grade of the qualification. For each of the four practical call handling assignments (selected from six available) candidates must handle a telephone call, incoming or outgoing, as directed by the Centre Assessor. For some assignments, candidates will also be required to enquire of, or input data to, the computer, produce print outs and fill in forms.
- The examination will be 1 hour.
- Candidates will be graded Pass/Merit/Distinction according to the total marks achieved across the four assignments:
 - Pass 50% (Total marks for four completed assignments is between 24 and 28)
 - Merit 60% (Total marks for four completed assignments is between 29 and 35)
 - Distinction 75% (Total marks for four completed assignments is between 36 and 48)
 - Candidates must score a minimum of 6 marks in each call assignment. Where a candidate scores less than 6 in any assignment, they may re-take that assignment.
- Practical call handling assignments are administered and marked by the Centre and moderated by Pearson. For each 'sitting' centres will be sent:
 - Level 2 Practical Call Handling Assignments – Handling Inbound and Outbound Calls
 - Level 2 Candidate Guidance for Practical Assignments
 - Level 2 Assignment Marking Criteria

Level 2 Candidate Mark Sheet.

Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ)

Centres will tape record each candidate's telephone call for each call practical assignment. Completed assignments will be marked by the Centre using the Assignment Marking Criteria supplied by Pearson. The tapes, assignment documentation (e.g. database printouts) and the completed candidates' mark sheets should then be forwarded to Pearson.

Pearson will then moderate the centre's marking using the tapes, assignment documentation and mark sheets received. Moderation may lead to an adjustment to the final result. The authenticity of the assignments will be confirmed at moderation and Pearson reserves the right to reject candidates' submissions if the qualifications regulations of the qualifications have been infringed.

These assignments are generic and centres will customise them to meet their own company and database requirements.

Please refer to the Centre Support Pack for the qualification for detailed information on the equipment and resources required for delivery and assessment and for guidance on the marking and the administration of the assessments.

Aims of assessment

The multiple-choice test will assess the candidate's ability to:

- describe the role, functions and operational activities of a Contact Centre, including the technology and systems used, performance and quality management and health and safety practices
- explain the principles and procedures used in the provision of reliable customer service to meet the needs and expectations of customers
- outline the concept of customer segmentation and the processes and principles in acquiring customers through inbound and outbound sales
- identify the personal aptitudes, professional skills and the individual and group development activities that contribute to personal and organisational effectiveness.

The practical call handling assignments will assess the candidate's ability to:

- handle routine incoming requests for product or service advice/support, dealing effectively with challenging situations where necessary
- handle inbound sales calls and perform routine up selling and cross selling where opportunities exist
- undertake basic outgoing sales calls and sales lead generation activities
- undertake activities associated with call handling including the use of electronic communications and computer applications to manage and support customer interactions.

Entry and assessment information

Please see the *Pearson Information Manual* and the *Pearson LCCI examination regulations*, available from our website: qualifications.pearson.com/lcci

Student entry

Details on how to enter students for the examination for this qualification can be found on our website: qualifications.pearson.com/lcci

Combinations of entry

There are no forbidden combinations of entry for this qualification.

Age

The qualification is intended for learners aged 16 and above.

Resitting the qualification

Candidates can resit the examination for the Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ).

It is strongly advised that candidates do not register to undertake a resit until they have received the results from their previous examination.

Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration

Access arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow students with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to:

- access the assessment
- show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment.

The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual student with a disability, without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Access arrangements should always be processed at the start of the course. Students will then know what is available and have the access arrangement(s) in place for assessment.

Reasonable adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding organisation to make reasonable adjustments where a person with a disability would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. The awarding organisation is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage.

A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and therefore might not be in the list of available access arrangements.

Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of factors, including:

- the needs of the student with the disability
- the effectiveness of the adjustment
- the cost of the adjustment; and
- the likely impact of the adjustment on the student with the disability and other students.

An adjustment will not be approved if it involves unreasonable costs to the awarding organisation timeframes, or affects the security or integrity of the assessment. This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

Special consideration

Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a student's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment in an assessment.

Further information

Please see our website or email internationalenquiries@pearson.com for further information on how to apply for access arrangements and special consideration.

For further information about access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration please refer to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website: www.jcq.org.uk/examination-system/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration

Equality Act 2010 and Pearson equality policy

Equality and fairness are central to our work. Our equality policy requires all students to have equal opportunity to access our qualifications and assessments, and our qualifications to be awarded in a way that is fair to every student.

We are committed to making sure that:

- students with a protected characteristic (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) are not, when they are undertaking one of our qualifications, disadvantaged in comparison to students who do not share that characteristic
- all students achieve the recognition they deserve for undertaking a qualification and that this achievement can be compared fairly to the achievement of their peers.

You can find details on how to make adjustments for students with protected characteristics in the policy document *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations*, which is on our website: qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/exams/special-requirements.html

Malpractice

Cases of alleged, suspected or confirmed malpractice must be dealt with in accordance with the latest Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) *General and Vocational Qualifications Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments Policies and Procedures*, available on the JCQ website: www.jcq.org.uk

Pearson cares greatly about the integrity of its qualifications and is aware that incidents of malpractice threaten that integrity, adversely affect learners and undermine public confidence in the delivery and awarding of qualifications. For this reason, Pearson takes malpractice incidents extremely seriously and investigates all allegations it receives as fully as possible. Where malpractice is proven Pearson will impose appropriate penalties and/or sanctions on those found to be responsible, which can include debarment from delivery of Pearson qualifications (for staff) and disqualification (for learners).

Candidate malpractice

Candidate malpractice refers to any act by a candidate that compromises or seeks to compromise the process of assessment or which undermines the integrity of the qualifications or the validity of results/certificates.

Candidate malpractice in examinations must be reported to Pearson using a *JCQ M1 Form* (available at www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice). The form can be emailed to pqsmalpractice@pearson.com or posted to Investigations Team, Pearson, 190 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH. Please provide as much information and supporting documentation as possible. The final decision regarding appropriate sanctions lies with Pearson.

Failure to report malpractice constitutes staff or centre malpractice.

Staff/centre malpractice

Staff and centre malpractice includes both deliberate malpractice and maladministration of Pearson qualifications. As with candidate malpractice, staff and centre malpractice is any act that compromises or seeks to compromise the process of assessment or which undermines the integrity of the qualifications or the validity of results/certificates.

All cases of alleged or suspected staff malpractice and maladministration must be reported immediately, before any investigation is undertaken by the centre, to Pearson on a *JCQ M2(a) Form* (available at: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice). The form, supporting documentation and as much information as possible can be emailed to pqsmalpractice@pearson.com or posted to Investigations Team, Pearson, 190 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH. The final decision regarding appropriate sanctions lies with Pearson.

Failure to report malpractice itself constitutes malpractice. More detailed guidance on malpractice can be found on our website at <http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/exams/examination-guidance/malpractice-and-plagiarism.html> and in the latest version of the JCQ *General and Vocational Qualifications Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments Policies and Procedures*, available at: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice

Language of assessment

Assessment of this specification will be in English only.
Assessment materials will be published in English only and all work submitted for examination must be in English only.

Other information

Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

Guided Learning Hours: the number of teacher-led contact hours required to support student achievement for a qualification.

For the Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ) we recommend 80–120 GLH.

Centres should ensure students have additional time for self-study and preparation for the final examination, which is in addition to the GLH stated above.

Student recruitment

Pearson follows the JCQ policy concerning recruitment to our qualifications in that:

- they must be available to anyone who is capable of reaching the required standard
- they must be free from barriers that restrict access and progression
- equal opportunities exist for all students.

Prior learning and other requirements

There are no formal entry requirements for this qualification.

However, due to the technology-based nature of the qualification, candidates may find it beneficial to have completed units such as Email, Internet and IT Security and Database or Spreadsheets from the Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Practical ICT Skills (VRQ) qualification.

Students may be studying in a local language but the assessment will be in English. Candidates should also have a standard of English to enable them communicate effectively in a business context. Pearson recommends that students have a level of English equivalent to LCCI IQ Level 3 English for Business (CEF B1/B2). This will support access to the assessment materials and enable students to communicate responses effectively.

Progression

Learners may progress to the Pearson LCCI Level 3 Certificate in Contact Centre Supervisory Skills (VRQ).

Using appropriate internal processes, centres must ensure they choose the most appropriate qualification level for their students' needs.

Exemptions

We are seeking exemptions for our qualifications from a number of professional bodies. For the latest list of exemptions, please visit our website and choose your relevant qualification:

qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-for-you/international-wbl/professional-bodies.html

Codes

The subject code for the Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ) is: ASECCS2. The subject code is used by centres to enter students for a qualification.

Support, training and resources

Training

Pearson offers support and training to teachers on standard of delivery and preparing students to meet the assessment requirements.

Specifications, sample assessment materials and teacher support materials

The Pearson LCCI Level 2 Certificate in Contact Centre Skills (VRQ) sample assessment materials can be downloaded from our website.

To find a list of all the support documents available please visit our website:
qualifications.pearson.com

March 2017

**For more information on Pearson and LCCI qualifications please
visit our website: qualifications.pearson.com**

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Registered Office: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL.
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