Customer Service Manual

Adapted from materials developed by the faculty of the Mori Hosseini College of Hospitality and Culinary Management.
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Introduction to Customer Service

What Is Customer Service?
Customer service at Daytona State College emphasizes Students First at every step of their journey toward program completion to create a student experience that is second to none. We must all work together to support strategies and tactics to remove barriers, perceived and real, and promote student success.

Daytona State College’s foundation for successful customer service relies on five quality values:
1. Competence – demonstrating proficiency in all areas of responsibility
2. Consistency – delivering a standardized level of service
3. Compassion – providing empathetic, personalized service
4. Coordination – collaborating with others on concerted efforts to enhance service
5. Communication – maintaining an open, honest, and helpful dialog with students

This policy of college-wide customer service at Daytona State is effective through a culture of empowerment and accomplishment among students, faculty, and staff.
Understanding Students’ Needs

To provide quality customer service to students, it is essential to understand the four basic needs every student has and what you can do to fulfill them. Our goal is to make each student feel valued at Daytona State College. In all of your interactions with students, it is critical to make them feel welcome, comfortable, understood, and important.

**Students need to feel as though they belong at the college.**
You can foster a sense of belonging by making students feel welcome and appreciated. Smile and acknowledge each student, even just in passing. When a student approaches you with a question or concern, be patient, reassuring, and forthright in your response.

**Students need to feel comfortable approaching any faculty or staff member with an issue.**
Make an effort to put students at ease and demonstrate a willingness to help. Even if you are not personally able to resolve a student’s question or problem, take time to listen to the request and then direct the student to the appropriate person or resource for assistance.

**Students need to feel that you understand them.**
Be attentive and empathetic when a student has questions or concerns. Do not make assumptions about what the student is asking. If you do not understand the question or are unsure what the student needs, ask for clarification before you respond.

**Students need to feel important.**
Every single student is important to Daytona State College and should be made to feel that way. Students should always be treated with dignity and respect, and should never be made to feel belittled, demeaned, or ignored under any circumstances. Remember that our students are the reason each of us is here, and they are at the heart of all we do.
Professionalism

As a representative of Daytona State College, every member of faculty and staff is expected to demonstrate professionalism in all dealings with students, prospective students, colleagues, and members of the public. While this primarily pertains to the work environment, you should also strive to maintain professionalism when you encounter students off campus.

There are several key aspects that contribute to professionalism in the workplace, including professional appearance, conduct, and etiquette. The following section outlines Daytona State College's standards for professionalism across each of these areas.

**Professional Appearance and Dress**

Be aware of the impression your physical appearance makes on students. A professional appearance commands respect, but it’s equally essential to maintain a friendly and approachable presence. The following points will help you strike the right balance:

**Appearance/Presence**
- The way you carry yourself and approach students is just as important as how you dress for work.
- Hold yourself upright, maintain proper posture, and make eye contact with students when speaking with them.
- Rushing toward students can make them feel startled, hurried, or dismissed, while shambling along may convey laziness or lack of interest. Aim for a steady, confident stride at an unhurried but purposeful pace.
- To create a positive impression on everyone you encounter, your manner and tone should come across as calm, self-confident, reassuring, and friendly.

**Dress Code**
- Good hygiene and clean, professional clothing are mandatory in the workplace.
- Choose outfits that coordinate and are appropriate for the work environment.
- Typically, jeans and shorts are not acceptable work attire.
- Wear comfortable but professional-looking shoes. Typically, sneakers should not be worn to work.
- Always wear your Daytona State College nametag; it will help students get to know you.
- Dresses and skirts should fall no shorter than just above the knee.
- Tank tops and spaghetti straps are not acceptable for work.
- Fashionable sandals (apart from flip-flops or similar styles) are appropriate.
- Shirts should be worn tucked into pants.
- Pants should be belted to maintain a neat appearance.

Guidelines for dress may be varied with approval from the appropriate associate vice president.

**Professional Conduct**

Acceptable standards for social interactions may vary between business and casual settings. At Daytona State College, faculty and staff are expected to adhere to business etiquette at all times, whether interacting with students, colleagues, or members of the public. You should always display courtesy and respect, maintain an approachable and attentive demeanor, and take appropriate steps to resolve conflicts.

**Courtesy**
- Follow the “Golden Rule”: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Treat students as you would wish to be treated if you were on the other side of the desk.
- Students always come first, even if you are working on another task.
- If a student approaches while you are on the phone or working with another student, take a moment to acknowledge the student who just entered and assure him or her that you will provide assistance as soon as you can.
- Be patient when answering students’ questions. Although you may find yourself repeating the same information multiple times throughout the day, keep in mind this is likely the first time the student is hearing it.
- Remember that students do not necessarily speak our language. Avoid using acronyms, jargon, or internal terms they may not be familiar with.
- Take the time to teach students. Explain what you are doing, and show them how to navigate the portal or find the information they are seeking.
- When assisting students, always take the extra step to make sure they have all the information they need while they are there with you. Try to anticipate the questions they don’t even realize they have yet, which can save them a call or return visit.
- Avoid responding to students’ requests with an outright “no”; instead, focus on what you can do for them.
• Even if the answer is still “no,” explain why you are unable to accommodate the request and offer an alternative solution whenever possible.
• If the student does not accept your solution, refer them to speak with your supervisor for further clarification and to explore other available options.
• Maintain student confidentiality. Make an effort to ensure that students’ personal information/concerns are not overhead by other staff or students nearby.
• Prepare students for their next steps and always offer a helping hand, whether it’s walking them to the next office or calling to make sure someone is available to assist.
• Use referral forms and/or a map when directing students to another building.
• Even if your office just closed, if a student knocks on the door, try to assist them.
  • He or she may just have a quick question you can readily answer.
  • Otherwise, politely inform students the office is closed, take their information, and commit to get back to them when the office reopens—then follow through.

**Respect**

• Always speak to students and colleagues in a mature and professional manner. Sarcasm, condescension, and impatience have no place in the office.
• Be attentive. Do not talk or text on your personal cell phone while working with a student, even if they are filling out paperwork or otherwise engaged.
• Do not eat in front of students or have food out on your desk. Meals and snacks should be consumed in a designated break room.
• Do not complain about students or discuss their personal matters in the presence of other students.
• Even if a student was given incorrect information or forms by another employee, do not speak negatively about that individual or show exasperation in front of the student. Keep your opinions to yourself and try to resolve the student’s issue, then discuss the matter with your supervisor, who can assist in resolving the original misinformation.

**Demeanor**

• Be aware of the impression your demeanor conveys to students. Make an effort to be friendly, approachable, and helpful at all times.
• Personal conversations should be put on hold in the presence of students, especially if your colleagues are assisting them or speaking to them on the phone. Students should always feel like they are our priority and never be made to feel they are interrupting us.
• Your personality and attitude set the tone for your interactions with students; they influence students’ opinion of you, your department, and the college as a whole.
• Maintain a positive attitude and a calm demeanor in all circumstances, especially when a student is upset, angry, or anxious. Show empathy, compassion, and understanding; we want all students to feel the college cares about them and their concerns.

**Conflict Management**

There may be times when differing opinions or perspectives create conflicts between staff members, management, and/or students. While occasional conflicts are to be expected, the important consideration is how you respond to them. Every effort should be made to resolve conflicts in an efficient, effective, and timely manner. The following points provide guidance on how best to respond to and resolve conflicts that arise among students:

**Responding to Conflicts**

• Patiently listen to the student and allow him/her to explain the concern or dilemma.
• Express empathy so the student feels heard and understood.
• Remain calm and do not argue with the student.
• No matter what accusations or complaints a student might make, do not get defensive or blame the student.
• Be courteous and assure the student that every effort will be made to address his or her issues.
• However, avoid making promises to the student unless you are completely sure you can deliver on them.
• If the student asks to speak with a supervisor, don’t take it personally. It’s natural for students to seek further confirmation or intervention from someone with authority.
• Inform your supervisor about any difficult situations or angry students, even if you feel you handled the conflict appropriately. It can provide a learning experience for your team and prepare your supervisor in case the student should escalate the matter further.

**Resolving Conflicts**

• Focus on finding a solution for each conflict or problem. Even if it is not the exact outcome the student was hoping for, the student should feel you made an effort to address his or her concerns.
• A positive attitude and optimistic, encouraging language can help diffuse tensions and overcome negative situations.
• Do not point out another staff member’s mistake—just fix it. Students are looking for results, not excuses.
Professional Etiquette: Face-to-Face, Phone, Voicemail, and Email Interactions

Professional etiquette refers to the standards for acceptable behavior within the workplace, as well as the implementation of relevant policies and procedures. At Daytona State College, professional etiquette involves always putting students first and treating them with courtesy and respect at all times. The following section outlines the policies and expectations that should govern all of your interactions with students, whether in person, over the phone, or via email.

Face-to-Face Etiquette

The following etiquette guidelines apply when working with students in person, from the initial greeting, to providing assistance, to preparing students for any follow-up steps:

Greeting:
- Acknowledge students as soon as they walk in the door and extend a polite greeting; don't wait for them to approach you before speaking to them.
- Walk over to students if they remain standing near the front of the office; do not yell to them from across the room.

Assistance:
- When students have a specific question pertaining to their academic program, available resources, financial aid, or other such topics, start by asking for their ID number. This enables you to look them up in the system and provide an accurate answer based on their information rather than speaking in general terms.
- If a student requests help with a process that can be completed online, offer your assistance in addition to mentioning the online option. Students may be unaware of the online offerings or unsure how to access them, or they may simply be more comfortable seeking help from a real, live person.
- Ask students if they know how to log into FalconNet before instructing them to do so. If they have not accessed FalconNet previously or do not recall how to do so, walk them through the process and explain each step as you go.
- If you cannot fulfill a student’s request, always present other options. For example, if a student is trying to register for a class that is full, suggest that he or she keep trying until drop/add is over or consider registering for B term.
- In cases where you are unable to assist students yourself, see if you can resolve their issue with a phone call before directing them elsewhere.
- If you must send students to another office, always use a referral form. Be sure to provide clear details on exactly what you are referring them to do, and
include your name and contact information in case they have follow-up questions.

Additional Guidance:
- If students need to take further action, ask them to confirm their next task so you can be sure they understand your instructions.
- Before students leave your office, ask if you can provide any additional assistance: “Is there anything else I can help you with? Do you have any questions or concerns?”

Telephone Etiquette
Proper telephone etiquette encompasses a variety of components: answering and making calls, handling rude or impatient callers, placing callers on hold, transferring calls, taking messages, and courteously ending conversations.

Answering Calls:
- Try to answer incoming calls within three rings.
- Answer the phone with a friendly and helpful tone of voice, and be sensitive to your tone of voice throughout the call.
- Speak clearly, articulately, and at a moderate pace.
- Always use proper grammar, and avoid using acronyms or office jargon that students might not understand.
- When answering the phone, start by identifying yourself, your department, and the college. For example: “This is Jane Doe in the Financial Aid department at Daytona State College.” Follow with, “How may I assist you today?”
- If the caller does not identify himself or herself, inquire whom you are speaking with and request the student’s ID number. This enables you to confirm the caller’s identity and/or current student status.
- If you need additional information to address the student’s request, use the ID number to look up the student in the system and confirm the relevant details.
- Use active listening skills. Paraphrase the student’s statements/request and ask questions to ensure you fully understand what he or she needs from you.
- At all times, devote your full attention to the caller. Do not multitask or engage in other activities that are unrelated to solving the student’s request/concerns.
- Before ending the call, evaluate whether you have satisfied the caller’s needs.
  - If so, thank the student and end the call according to the protocol outlined further on in this section.
  - If not, outline the next step(s) for the caller. If you need to transfer the call to another person or department better able to assist the student, explain who you are calling and provide a direct number. If the student’s case requires additional research, schedule a follow-up call.

Making Calls:
- Smile! Though it may not be visible over the phone, a smile sets a positive tone for your voice and message.
- Have a plan as to what you will say or discuss prior to making the call.
- Identify yourself and your reason for calling as soon as the call is answered.
- Confirm whether the individual who answered the phone is the person you are trying to reach: “Am I speaking with...?”
  - If not, ask to speak with that person by name.
- Address people formally at first; do not assume a first name basis with students who are unfamiliar to you unless they request otherwise.
- Always speak into the telephone receiver with an even tone of voice and moderate volume, and speak clearly and concisely.
- Be sensitive to the tone of your voice at all times, especially if the person you are speaking with is angry or upset.
- Do not allow yourself to be distracted by other activities while speaking on the telephone.
- Do not eat or drink while you are on a call with a student.
- As noted in the previous section, use active listening skills, paraphrase students’ comments, and ask questions to confirm your understanding of their needs.

Handling Rude or Impatient Callers:
- Do not take a caller’s negative attitude or comments personally; remember that the student is reacting to a frustrating situation and not to you as an individual. Allow the caller to vent about his or her problem, listen without interrupting, and then find a way to help.
- Never argue with a student. Maintain your integrity and a calm tone at all times. If a caller begins to abuse you verbally, explain that you understand the student’s frustration and reassure the caller that you are there to help.
- If you are unable to calm an irate student, respond to the caller with kindness rather than anger. Be sincere, respectful, and understanding; show sympathy for the student’s situation and express empathy for his or her frustration. By remaining calm and controlling your own anger, it may encourage the student to do the same.
- Be patient. Sometimes callers just need time to vent before cooler heads prevail. Do not rush the call, but try your best to keep the conversation on track and direct it toward a successful and mutually agreeable solution.
• Remember that every student and situation is different, so callers may not respond to your tone, approach, or proposed solutions in the same way. It’s important to remain flexible and strive for a solution that is acceptable to all.

• When the time is right, offer a genuine apology to the student for any frustration or misunderstanding, even if you are not personally responsible for it. In many cases, callers just want to feel that someone cares about their concerns, and a simple, sincere apology can go a long way toward making things right.

• Know when it’s time to escalate the call to a supervisor. While you should always try to resolve a student’s issue to the best of your ability, sometimes a caller needs to hear from someone in a position of authority—whether or not that person has the power to do anything differently.

• Find a way to decompress after a difficult call; you don’t want any negative feelings to influence your interactions with other students. If possible, take a short break or a brief walk, get a drink of water, chat with a colleague, or find another pleasant distraction to help you press the reset button on your day.

**Placing a Caller on Hold:**

• If you require some time off the line to research or respond to a caller’s request, ask the student if he or she would prefer to hold or receive a call back. Regardless of the response, apologize for the delay and any inconvenience.
  • If the caller asks to be put on hold:
  • Emphasize that the student’s call is important, explain the reason for placing the call on hold, and provide a timeframe as to when you expect to be back on the line.
  • If you must significantly exceed that timeframe, pick up the call and provide a quick update. Ask if the caller wants to continue holding or would prefer to receive a call back.
  • If the caller wishes to remain on hold, thank the student for holding and apologize again for the delay. Assure the caller you will be back on the line as soon as possible.

• If the student elects to receive a call back:
  • Set a specific time and date as to when you expect to get back to the student. Be sure to record that commitment and follow up as promised.
  • If you are waiting on information from another department, follow up as required so you don’t miss the scheduled callback time.

**Transferring Calls:**

• If you must transfer a call to another person or department, explain why you need to transfer the call—whether the caller reached the wrong number or has questions that only another department can address—and apologize for the inconvenience.

• Give the caller your name and extension in case you get disconnected during the transfer. This shows you are personally concerned about the student’s situation and makes the caller feel important.
• Tell the student the name of the person or department you’re transferring the call to and provide the direct number in case the call gets disconnected or dropped.
• Ask if the student has any other questions and answer them if you can, then ask permission to initiate the transfer. This gives the caller a feeling of control.
• Thank the student prior to transferring the call.

Ending Conversations:
• Before ending or transferring a call, ask the student to repeat his or her next task(s) to ensure understanding.
• Ask if any further assistance is required: “Is there anything else I can help you with? Do you have any questions or concerns?”
• If applicable, check for any holds on the student’s record and advise the caller of the department that has placed the hold on the student’s account.
• If further action or assistance is required, transfer the student to the relevant department.
• When a solution involves multiple steps, prioritize those steps for the student to increase efficiency and reduce frustration.
• Thank the student for his or her time, restate your name and contact information, and extend an invitation to call again if you can be of further assistance.
• Always end each call with, “Thank you for choosing Daytona State College.”

Voicemail Etiquette
Voicemail can be a useful tool for connecting with students when you are unable to meet with or speak to them directly. However, it can lack the immediacy and personal connection of a face-to-face meeting or phone call. It is important to handle voicemails promptly, courteously, and professionally so that students feel valued and respected.

Greeting:
• Use a pleasant tone of voice when recording your greeting, and include your name and the name of your department in your outgoing message.
• If you will be out of the office, make sure your outgoing voicemail indicates whom callers should contact in your absence if they require immediate assistance.

Checking Voicemails/Returning Calls:
• Check your messages regularly and return calls promptly.
• Always respond to voicemails within one business day. If you are unable to do so—for example, if you are out sick or away from campus—ask a colleague to follow up with the student on your behalf.

Leaving Voicemail Messages:
• When leaving a voicemail message, speak clearly, briefly state the purpose of your call, and specify what the student needs to do next.
• Do not leave long or overly complicated messages on voicemail; keep your message simple and to the point.
• State your name, department, and phone number both at the beginning and end of your message so the student has ample opportunity to jot down your information and can contact you directly.

Taking Messages:
• When taking a message from a caller, write down the details on a piece of paper—preferably a phone-message pad. Make sure there is plenty of space to record the entire message.
• Ensure you have a working pen and a backup, so you don’t have to hunt down another if you run out of ink partway through the message.
• Always write down the caller’s contact information, including name and telephone number, and confirm the area code if it is not initially provided.
• Be sure to ask for the correct spelling of the student’s name. This makes it easier for the recipient of the message to recognize the caller’s identity and look up the student’s record or other relevant information.
• Record the date and time of the call on the message slip. This can help you recall the conversation and also provides context for time-sensitive issues.
• Indicate the priority of the message and note any commitments that were made during the conversation. If the caller says the message is urgent, be sure to note that so the recipient will understand an immediate response is requested.
• Before you hang up, read the message back to the caller to verify the details are correct and complete.
• Initial or sign the bottom of the message. This allows the recipient to follow up directly with you if further clarification is required.
• Once you’ve taken the message, make sure the recipient receives and reviews it in a timely manner. Place it in a location where the recipient frequently checks for messages or position it somewhere it will be readily seen, such as on a computer screen or keyboard.
Email Etiquette
When using the Daytona State College email system, remember that emails are a form of business communication and should always be treated as such. There are a number of guidelines to keep in mind when communicating with students via email:

General Guidelines:
- Your Daytona State College email account should be reserved for professional use only.
  - Avoid sending jokes, chain letters, or other non-business emails through your work account.
- For emails that require a reply, always respond within one business day.
  - If you need additional time to look into a matter, reply to the student with an update on the status of his or her request and include an estimated timeframe for follow up.
- If you will be out of the office, set up an auto-reply message to inform students of the dates you will be out and include an alternate contact in case they require immediate assistance.
- Communicate with students the same way you would with a superior or other person of importance, because every student is important to the college.
  - Use black text and standard fonts in your messages.
  - Type out full words and sentences. Avoid using acronyms or jargon the student may not understand, and never use informal text slang in email communications.
- If a topic requires a complex or lengthy explanation, it is best to pick up the phone and speak to the student directly.
  - Encourage the student to ask questions and contact you for further clarification if there is anything he or she does not understand.
- Use the “Reply All” function with discretion.
  - Consider whether every person in an email chain needs to be copied on your response. If not, reply directly to the student and CC only those individuals who need to remain apprised of the situation.
- When forwarding a student’s message to another person or department, be sure to CC the student so he or she is aware the request has been handed off to someone else.
  - Provide the student’s full name and ID number in the forwarded message so your colleague can look up the student’s record/information.
  - Refer to the student by his or her name and not simply as “student.”

Subject Line:
- When starting a new message:
  - Include a short subject line that clearly identifies the topic(s) of the email.
  - Proofread your subject line to verify there are no typos.
- Never use all caps or all lowercase text.
- When replying to or forwarding an existing message:
  - Trim the subject line if it becomes cluttered with multiple “Re:” or “Fwd:” prefixes; otherwise, the topic of the message may no longer be visible in message preview.
  - If you are changing the topic of an email conversation or need to signal a new action required by the recipient (such as “Please Review” or “Approval Needed”), edit the subject line accordingly.

Body of Message:
- Start each message with a greeting that includes the student’s name. (For example, “Hello, Michelle.”)
- Briefly introduce yourself if this is your first email to the student.
- If you are responding to a common inquiry or request—such as questions about the transient process, login, reinstatement, or similar topics—use a pre-written script to ensure your responses are consistent.
- Keep your messages and replies simple and to the point, but ensure that you respond to each question or request within a student’s email.
- Maintain a professional level of correspondence. Be sure to use correct grammar and spelling, and avoid using text-message slang or abbreviations.
- Always proofread or spell-check your message before sending.
- Try to avoid replying to emails with a one-word response, such as “Thanks” or “OK.” It’s better to type at least one or two sentences to express your appreciation, demonstrate your understanding, or confirm the next steps.
- When attaching files to an email, make sure the file name clearly indicates the content of the document. If not, rename the file before attaching and sending.

Signature:
- Sign off your message with a common courtesy when appropriate; for example, “Thank you,” “Best regards,” or “Good day.”
- Include a signature line/section that includes your name, title, department, phone number, and fax number. This can be automatically set up for inclusion in every message via your email settings.
- Include a mailing address or the college website address for the convenience of off-campus correspondents.
Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

As a representative of Daytona State College, you are expected to provide quality service to every student at all times. Remember that your interactions with students reflect not only on yourself, but also on your department and the college as a whole. Students should be treated as valued customers, and our goal is to deliver the highest standard of service to ensure customer satisfaction and continuing loyalty.

Service quality is typically evaluated based on five core principles: responsiveness, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and reliability. The following section outlines what you can do to deliver the best possible performance in each of these areas:

Responsiveness
- Display a willingness to help students and provide service in a timely manner.
- Address any issues as quickly as possible. If a problem persists, it will only worsen.
- Make an effort to understand and fulfill the needs and goals of students.
- Provide convenient operating hours, individualized service, and attention to detail.
- Consider students’ entire experience with the college and remain focused on the big picture, not just their dealings with your office.
- Always consult with a supervisor or colleague to ensure you have explored all options before telling a student “no.” Emphasize what you can do for the student.

Assurance
- Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of your department's services as well as proficiency in your own duties to inspire confidence and trust in students.
- Develop at least a basic level of knowledge regarding the services and resources available from other departments at Daytona State College.
- Have commonly used resources readily available for students, and be prepared to provide phone numbers and further information on request.
Tangibles
- Ensure all tangible aspects of Daytona State College make a positive impression on students.
- Facilities and equipment should be kept clean, neat, and well maintained. Any necessary upkeep or repairs should be performed in a timely manner.
- Staff should maintain a professional appearance, a positive attitude, and a helpful, approachable demeanor.
- Marketing collateral and other communication materials should be informative, comprehensive, and attractively designed.

Empathy
- Try to understand the student’s perspective and show genuine care and concern.
- Make every effort to put students at ease, and remember that tone is everything.
- Be honest and forthright with students concerning their status and any issues.
- Offer support and encouragement, but do not promise or guarantee a specific outcome.
- Provide a clear explanation as to why a particular problem or situation occurred and offer an apology, but do not assign blame, react defensively, or make excuses.
  - If you cannot fulfill a student’s request, suggest alternate options for resolution.
- Give students a brief, step-by-step explanation of applicable processes and what they should expect to happen.
- For example, if a student submits an appeal, advise the student to continue to check FalconMail for a decision.
- Even though students may encounter similar problems or issues, keep in mind that every situation is different and should be handled individually on a case-by-case basis.

Reliability
- Hold yourself accountable to the students that come to you for assistance, whether your interactions with them are in person, over the phone, or via email.
- If you tell a student you will call back, be sure to follow through in a timely manner.
- If you are unable to resolve a student’s issue, direct the student to the appropriate resource or department and follow up to ensure the issue has been resolved.
- Strive for consistency and fairness in all that you do.
Service Failures and Recovery

By working together, all of us at Daytona State College can help to deliver a consistently high level of service to students. However, there may be times when that service falls short of expectations. The key is to identify those service failures as soon as they happen, make an effort to resolve them as quickly as possible, and take steps to prevent similar service failures in the future.

Service failure recovery differs from the day-to-day handling of complaints in that the former is proactive whereas the latter is reactive. A recovery plan will generally take a long-term approach and may involve ongoing enhancements or adjustments, while addressing complaints typically requires an immediate response to achieve short-term customer satisfaction.

**Service Failures**
If a student is unhappy with any of the services Daytona State College provides, then a service failure has occurred. It is important to identify and document these types of service failures whenever they happen.

- Common Service Failures:
  - Long wait times
  - Inadequate training
  - Insufficient staffing or resources
  - Inconsistent responses or treatment of students
  - Communication issues
  - Misinformation
  - Unnecessary repeat visits
  - Slow service
  - Confusing or overwhelming the student

**Service Recovery**
A service recovery plan should be initiated and implemented when a service failure occurs. The time and effort required for recovery depends on the severity of the failure as well as the student's loyalty to the college. Regardless of the severity of the failure, service recovery should consist of five key steps:

**Evaluate**
- Listen to the student and solicit information to determine exactly what went wrong, as well as what can be done to fix it.
  - Is the student feeling frustrated, irritated, upset, or angry? How can you help them overcome these feelings?
  - Do you need to diffuse the situation before attempting to resolve it?
  - Are you communicating effectively?
  - How severe is the failure?
  - Can you conduct the service recovery on your own, or does the situation need to be transitioned to someone in a position of higher authority?

**Apologize**
- Sincerely apologize for the failure and acknowledge the student’s concerns.
- Take ownership of the situation, even if it is not your fault.
- Do not place blame, respond defensively, or make excuses.
- Display empathy for the student; make him or her feel heard and understood.

**Review**
- Review the service failure with the student to ensure you’re on the same page.
- Make sure you understand what the student perceives to be the problem/shortcoming.
- Don’t bring your own opinions or biases into this step; the goal is to see the failure through the student’s eyes.
- Involve the student in deciding how the issue should be resolved.

**Resolve**
- The buzzwords for this step are “fix” and “follow up.” Make an effort to fix the issue within the next 20 minutes; or, at the very least, follow up within 20 minutes to update the student on the progress you have made.
- Talk with peers who may have experienced similar situations and discuss alternative solutions to the problem.
- If you are unable to resolve the problem on your own, escalate it to a superior or another department if necessary. However, you should maintain ownership of the situation while coordinating contact with someone who can resolve it.
- Follow up after you have resolved the issue to demonstrate continuing concern for the student’s satisfaction.
- Express appreciation to the student for his or her patience, for choosing Daytona State College, and for remaining loyal to the college in spite of the service failure.

**Document**
- Finally, document the failure, the solution, and the steps involved in recovery.
- This can serve as a valuable learning tool for others within the organization.
- Maintaining a record of the failure and the resolution process can help you and your colleagues spot failure trends and prevent similar failures in the future.
Service Failures and Recovery

We are operating in a time where most people have to contact some sort of call center to accomplish even minimal tasks. Our job is to make people inquiring about an education at Daytona State College feel like they are already a part of our community. We need to communicate our respect for their goals and challenges while providing them with the information they need to complete the enrollment process. Every inquiry should be met with the same enthusiasm even if the caller is unsure of their level of commitment to DSC.

You may experience callers that are already frustrated. Perhaps they have been trying, unsuccessfully, to get in contact with us either by mail, email or phone. They may also have trouble understanding communications they have received thus far. Try to convey empathy for their situation without being condescending. Phrases like “I can understand how ____ may have frustrated you, I’m happy to help you find a solution,” or “We appreciate your feedback and are committed to constantly improving the new student experience,” are examples of effective ways to communicate that you are listening to their concerns, and are willing and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Say This, Not That!</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do Not Say</strong></td>
<td><strong>Do Say</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“No Problem”</td>
<td>“You’re welcome, and thanks for calling”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Please Hold,” or “hang Up,”</td>
<td>“do you mind if I place you on a brief hold?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I Don’t Know”</td>
<td>And wait for their response before putting the call on hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Just go to our website”</td>
<td>“I will find out the answer for you”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I Can’t”</td>
<td>“Can I email (or tell) you where that is located on our website?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You’ll have to ...”</td>
<td>“I wish we could,”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Just a sec,”</td>
<td>“We will need to...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Here’s what I’m gonna do...”</td>
<td>“One moment please while I check on that for you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Let me pull you up...” (on my screen)</td>
<td>“I would be happy to assist you...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Hold on...My computer is going slow”</td>
<td>“I am happy to take a look at your...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“That is not my department”</td>
<td>“While my computer is loading, let me tell you more about...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You have to” or “You should have”</td>
<td>“Please allow me to connect you to the correct person that can assist you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You’ve got the wrong number”</td>
<td>“You would want to” or “You could.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“He/She’s not here right now”</td>
<td>“I’m sorry, you’ve reached the ______ Department. I would be happy to connect you to...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“He/She is very busy right now”</td>
<td>“He/She’s in a meeting now and I expect her back by three. I’ll see that he/she receives your message then. Or, if you prefer, I would be happy to put you through to his/her voicemail.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“No,”</td>
<td>“He/She is not available at the moment, can I take a message an he/she will call you back as soon as possible?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Let’s see what we can do.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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In order for us to continue to improve our customer service experience, we need to translate frequent complaints or questions into responsive action. The following are examples of the dashboards will be used to understand data at the micro and macro level. These dashboards allow us to see which components of our communications are effective and those that need improvement.

### Customer Service Performance Metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Service Performance Metrics</th>
<th>Success Metric &amp; Instructions</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Escalations &amp; Explanations</th>
<th>Follow-Up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recorded Quality Assurance Telephone Calls</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greetings</td>
<td>Adherence to the appropriate telephone greeting guidelines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verify Recorded Line</td>
<td>Acknowledgment that the call is being recorded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection/Problem Solving</td>
<td>Accurately accessed &amp; verify the caller’s information</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protocol Compliance</td>
<td>Identify &amp; address situation for the most optimum solution</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Call Handling Skills</td>
<td>Identify &amp; address situation for the most optimum solution</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide the appropriate service &amp; information</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adhered to the correct call interaction procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Record Face to Face Interactions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greetings</td>
<td>Adherence to the appropriate in-person greeting guidelines</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>Accurately accessed &amp; verified the student’s information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Collection/Problem Solving</td>
<td>Identify &amp; address situation for optimum solution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Action</td>
<td>Clearly confirm students’ next steps &amp; provide further guidance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protocol Compliance</td>
<td>Provide the appropriate service &amp; information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter Personal Skills</td>
<td>Adhered to the correct in-person student interaction procedure</td>
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<td><strong>Email Interactions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greetings</td>
<td>Using the appropriate email greeting etiquette</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>Accurately squired &amp; verified the student’s information</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Identify &amp; address situation for optimum solution</td>
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<td>Protocol Compliance</td>
<td>Provide the appropriate service &amp; information</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Guidelines</td>
<td>Adherence to the appropriate email guidelines</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Training &amp; Competence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Knowledge</td>
<td>* Understands job requirements &amp; responsibilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Processes required skills &amp; knowledge for the job</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Continuing compliance education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning &amp; Problem Solving</td>
<td>* Works in an organized manner</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Requires minimal supervision</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Can identify problems efficiently &amp; respond ad-hoc to inquires</td>
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<td>Productivity</td>
<td>* Achieves established goals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Can multi-task</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Meets productivity standards</td>
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