

Designation: - Option Module – **Customer Relations Management (4264)** - Research, Analysis and Academic Reading

Grade	Research, Analysis and Academic Reading
DISTINCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The candidate undertakes extensive exploration concerning different approaches to developing an internal and external cost effective customer focus in key areas for the organisation and the sectors within which it operates• Research focuses on key internal and external customers' needs and explores any changing expectations, and also investigates the strength and weaknesses in associated 'customer chains' relating to the organisation's products and/or services• Analysis is undertaken to identify any gaps between expectations and reality and their causes, as well as the effect that this is having on the organisation. This may include aspects of Finance, HRM, etc.• Staff attitudes, cultures and understanding are explored to identify their approach to customer service and their understanding of its importance• Analysis is undertaken to identify gaps at organisational level between customers' changing attitudes and requirements and how the organisation's mission, vision, goals and values support customer expectations or are antagonistic to them• The increasing role that technology plays in assessing and analysing customer care management is explored and where appropriate identified as being able to make a contribution to organisational effectiveness• Research explores how the organisation deals with customers' complaints and suggestions and compares this against sector 'best practice' as well as how the organisation promotes CPD to address, at all levels, internal and external customers' needs and changing requirements

Grade	Research, Analysis and Academic Reading
MERIT/PASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate explores different approaches to developing a cost effective customer focus in the key areas for their organisation and the sectors within which it operates. This includes aspects of both internal and external customers' needs • The candidate's research focuses on both 'key' internal and external customers' requirements and explores any changing expectations amongst the organisation's customers. Some reference may be made to customer supply chain but this may not be well developed for both internal and external customers • Some analysis is undertaken to identify any gaps between expectations and reality. This may not be well developed for all the products/services and may focus only on external customers' supply chains. Some attempt should be made to identify the causes of these gaps. For the higher marks, the effects on the whole organisation should be explored, although this may only focus on the financial effects upon the organisation • Attitudes, cultures and understanding within the organisation are investigated and some causal impact in customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction is identified • Some analysis is undertaken to identify how organisational level values and goals may be impacting on customers' changing attitudes and requirements • The use of information technology in supporting customer relations management is explored and needs are assessed against current practice. This may include organisational originated initiatives or response to customer complaints and customers' suggestions • Research explores how the organisation is proactive in identifying customers' existing and possible changing needs. It should suggest changes to the organisation's approaches in terms of its CPD and financial allocations to this aspect of management

Grade	Research, Analysis and Academic Reading
FAIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate explores approaches to developing a cost effective customer focus in the key areas for their organisation and the sectors within which it operates but the depth and details are inappropriate for a Diploma qualification in that it is superficial and lacks usefulness to the candidate's organisation • Internal and external customers are not ascribed equal importance in the candidate's research • The candidate's research ignores, or addresses only fleetingly, key aspects concerning internal and external customers' requirements and does not effectively explore customers' changing expectations. Little reference is made to exploring the key aspects of customer supply chains or communication with and from customers • Some analysis is undertaken to identify gaps between expectations and reality but this is without conviction because of lack of details and because of a focus in a very limited produce/service range. Also, little attempt is made to identify the causes of the identified gaps and their impact upon the organisation • Organisational attitudes, cultures and understanding are only poorly analysed and there is little causality made between these and customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction • Some analysis is undertaken to identify how organisational level values and goals may impact on customers' changing attitudes and requirements but this lacks sufficient detail to be reliable and convincing • The use of information technology in supporting customer relations management is explored but lacks currency or depth • Research does not explore in detail how the organisation is proactive in identifying customers' existing/ changing needs and does not include an account of the changes in the organisation's approaches to deal with these in terms of its CPD, financial allocations, values or practice

Grade	Application of Theory to Practice
DISTINCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate demonstrates a clear understanding of Customer Relations Management by the way in which they extensively explore different approaches to developing an internal and external cost effective customer focus in the key areas of their organisation. This also includes the sectors within which the organisation operates • The candidate’s research that focuses on key internal and external customers should demonstrate very clearly their level of understanding of the importance of key customers and their existing and changing needs. This may be a proxy measure of their ability to apply theoretical models to a wide range of practical situations • The assessment of weaknesses and strengths associated with ‘customer chains’ indicates a strong understanding and practical application of CRM • The identification of gaps between expectations and reality, the causes of these and the impact on the organisation will provide sound evidence of application • The approaches taken to assess how the organisation links the components of this module to others such as Finance and HRM should also provide clear evidence of the candidate’s ability to link theory to a range of realistic management situations • The assessment of staff attitudes, cultures, vision and organisational goals and understanding as they impact on customer relations are explored to the extent that they lead to recommendations for change or consolidation and provide sound evidence of application • The analysis of the current and potential use of technology in customer relations management and any accompanying Cost:Benefit analysis should indicate the application of theoretical approaches to customer care management

Grade	Application of Theory to Practice
MERIT/PASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate demonstrates a good level of understanding of Customer Relations Management by the way in which they explore different ways of developing internal and external cost effective customer focus in the key areas for their organisation • The candidate’s research that focuses on key customers should demonstrate very clearly their level of understanding concerning the importance of key customers and their needs and this should be a proxy measure of their ability to apply theoretical models to practical situations • The assessment of weaknesses and strengths associated with the ‘customer chains’ indicates a good understanding of the application of customer relations theory • The identification of gaps between expectations and reality, the causes of these, and some reference of their impact on the organisation, will provide sound evidence of the candidate’s ability to apply this aspect of customer relations theory • The approaches taken to assess how the organisation links the components of this module to other Diploma modules should provide evidence of the candidate’s ability to link theory to a range of realistic management situations • The assessment of attitudes, cultures and organisational goals as they impact on customer relations are explored to the extent that they lead to recommendations for change or consolidation and provide sound evidence of application • The analysis of the use of technology in customer relations management and any accompanying Cost:Benefit analysis should indicate the application of theoretical approaches to customer care management

Grade	Application of Theory to Practice
FAIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate's lack of depth of understanding concerning Customer Relations Management will be indicated by a vague account of the different approaches to developing an external and possibly an internal customer focus. It will probably be focused on a very limited number of key areas. This is likely to exclude any detailed analysis of the sectors within which the organisation operates • The candidate's research that should focus on key internal and external customers lacks details and is superficial and therefore will indicate a lack of ability to apply theoretical models in practical situations • The assessment of the weaknesses and strengths associated with 'customer chains' does not relate the theoretical and practical situations • The identification of gaps between expectations and reality are not supported by robust and reliable evidence and any stated causes do not derive from presented evidence and this indicates a poor ability to apply customer relations theory • The linkages of various management components taken from other Diploma modules is inappropriate and indicates the candidate's inability to effectively apply customer relations theory to the wider organisational environment • The assessment of attitudes, cultures, vision and organisational goals as they impact on customer relations is not well explored and indicates poor skills of application • Analysis of current or potential use of technology in customer relations management lacks details and is indicative of the candidate's ability to apply theoretical models in day to day situations

Grade	Overall Quality of the Report
DISTINCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate’s report includes an effective description of the different approaches taken in developing an internal and external cost effective customer focus in the key areas of their organisation and the sectors within which it operates • The report describes key internal and external customers’ needs and their changing expectations, as well as the strength and weaknesses of associated ‘customer chains’ relating to the organisation’s products and/or services • Gaps between expectations and reality are highlighted and the causes of these are explained in detail, as well as the effects on various aspects of the organisation, such as financial efficiency, staff morale, and aspects of HR management. Staff attitudes, cultures and understanding are explained in relation to customer service • The relationship at organisational level between customers’ changing attitudes and their requirements and how the organisation’s mission, vision, goals and values support customer expectations, or are antagonistic to them, is included in the report • The increasing role of technology in supporting customer care management is included in sufficient detail so that findings may be reliably stated concerning their impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation to the extent that they could lead to organisational action for change or consolidation • The report contains a critique in relation to how the organisation deals with customers’ complaints and suggestions and compares this against sector ‘best practice’. This should lead to suggestions for action concerning how to address internal and external customers’ needs and changing requirements • Recommendations and a SMART analysis should be presented in such a way that, if implemented, they place the organisation at the forefront of good practice

Grade	Overall Quality of the Report
MERIT/PASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report includes a description of the approaches taken to developing an internal and external cost effective customer focus in key areas of their organisation and the associated sectors. Such an account may contain bias towards internal or external customers and may not cover in detail the organisation's operating sector • The report describes key internal and external customers' needs and their changing expectations. It also includes an assessment of the strength and weaknesses of 'customer chains' relating to the organisation's products and/or services but may lack the fine details needed for a Distinction grade • Gaps between expectations and reality are identified and the some possible causes of these are presented as well as the effect these gaps may be having on a number of areas within the organisation • Staff attitudes, cultures and understanding are outlined in relation to customer service • The relationship between the organisational mission, vision, goals and values and customers' changing attitudes and requirements and how they support customer expectations, or are antagonistic to them, is included in the report but some aspects may be omitted or lack sufficient detail • The role of technology in supporting customer care management is included in sufficient detail for the findings to be of use to the organisation in its efforts to increase efficiency and effectiveness • The report contains a description of how the organisation deals with customers' complaints, and suggests how current practice should be either improved or consolidated. The report should also suggest organisational training/CPD in order to best meet customers' needs and changing requirements • Recommendations should be at least SMART and possibly be stated in such a way, that if implemented, they enhance the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness in terms of customer care management

Grade	Overall Quality of the Report
FAIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate's report fails to include an effective description of the approaches taken to developing a cost effective customer focus in key areas of their organisation and its associated sectors. The account may contain too much bias in some important aspects of internal or external customers • The report does not fully describe key internal and external customers' needs and their changing expectations. Any assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the organisation's 'customer chains' for products and/or services lacks details and omits important aspects such as time factors, stockholdings etc. • Gaps between expectations and reality are poorly defined and their causes inadequately identified. The impact of the 'gaps' on the organisation are superficially stated • The connection between staff attitudes, cultures and understanding in relation to customer service lacks detailed assessment or description • The relationship between the organisational mission, vision, goals and customers' attitudes, requirements and expectations is omitted and/or poorly analysed • The role of technology in supporting customer care management may be included but lacks sufficient detail for findings to be of use to the organisation in its efforts to increase organisational efficiency and effectiveness • The report contains an inadequate description of how the organisation deals with customers' complaints and their suggestions, in particular when compared against other organisations, and therefore suggestions concerning how this could be improved lack conviction. The report inadequately addresses organisational training/CPD to best meet customers' needs and changing requirements • Recommendations are imprecise and lack conviction; they would not enhance the organisation's effectiveness in terms of customer care management

