



Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture and Arts

**POLICY IN**  
**CUSTOMER SERVICES AT THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OFFICES AND**  
**SCHOOLS**

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## **1.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE**

The Customer Service Policy aims to provide clear guidelines and the foundation for all officers' interactions with the general public for the delivery of services at all offices or business sections/units of the Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture and Arts (herein after abbreviated to MoENHCA) or wherever MoENHCA business is delivered to our stakeholders and customers. The policy draws the attention of MoE officers to the statement that people are not an interruption of their work; they are an integral part of the work of MoENHCA.

Therefore, in the execution of our service delivery, whether through telephones, e-mails, fax, letters, minutes, and or face to face, MoENHCA officers shall strive to offer excellent customer services that are friendly, efficient and accurate at all times. This includes a welcoming facility, and well informed service delivery, where service quality and professionalism are maintained at all times for the customer who is of ultimate importance.

## **2.0 POLICY**

### **2.1 MoENHCA's Customer treatment**

All officers at MoENHCA shall strive to meet the needs of the customers in a professional and ethical manner with a courteous and efficient service.

### **2.2 MoE policies and procedures**

All officers at MoENHCA shall be familiar with and be able to articulate and explain the rationale behind MoENHCA policies and services.

### **2.3 MoE's Service undertakings**

All officers at MoENHCA shall aim to project a professional image at all times. MoENHCA will provide efficient, effective and timely advice.

### **2.4 Types of customer service**

Customers contact MoENHCA for a wide variety of issues ranging from enquiries, requests for information to advise on certain provisions and initiatives.

#### **2.4.1 Telephone Calls**

MoENHCA recognizes the importance of telephone calls and shall answer all calls promptly and efficiently, providing clear and concise information in response to caller enquiries, or quickly referring calls to the appropriate officer.

#### **2.4.2 Written**

MoENHCA recognizes the importance of correspondence [letters, facsimiles, and e – mail messages] and will provide clear and concise response promptly. In addition MoENHCA shall respond to media queries providing essential specifics in a timely and professional manner.

#### **2.4.3 Face to face**

MoENHCA recognizes the need to provide service promptly to members of the public who come to seek information or transact official matters. MoENHCA will endeavor to have staff available to serve during official hours and at designated times

### **2.5 Dealing with difficult customers**

It is certain however, that whatever standard of professional and positive customer service MoENHCA achieves, there will always be a small percentage of customers whose issues cannot be dealt with to their satisfaction. This may be due to refusal by the customer to accept MoENHCA's decision, demands placed on MoENHCA which are not within permissible scope or resources to meet, or level of rudeness or aggression shown to staff by the customer that make it unsafe or unreasonable to proceed.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The Public Service Commission holds an awards night annually to recognize and reward Ministries for their commitments and achievements in Service Excellence. However, it has become widely recognized and understood that the success of a service provider organization's rests heavily upon how well it understands its customers' needs and is then responsive to delivering excellent service that is required. Since MoENHCA is a service provider, it can finally realize the top award with a stronger customer service focus. To do that, six explicit measures have been proven as the foundation to delivering and managing excellent service. These include:

- 3.1.1 setting a clear vision which all MoENHCA officers take ownership of
- 3.1.2 the customer's voice must be heard, understood and MoENHCA should respond to their evolving needs and constantly shifting expectations
- 3.1.3 concrete standards of excellent service quality should be established and regularly measured

- 3.1.4 empathetic people should be recruited and coached carefully and extensively so that they have the knowledge and skills to achieve service standards required
- 3.1.5 customer serving processes and systems should be widely understood and consistently improved by motivated and enthusiastic teams of employees across the organization
- 3.1.6 employees who go "one step beyond" for their customers are recognized and rewarded for service accomplishments

## **3.2 Rationale**

- 3.2.1 Courteous customer service is something that MoENHCA want when seeking service, no matter the setting. It is a part of providing good customer service care. It is important that MoENHCA officials remain positive because being negative will impact service delivery in an undesirable way. It will be a challenge to remain positive, but it is worth the effort. Customers and stakeholders should benefit from such positive efforts. The most important point of customer service is to remember that the customers are the primary reason for our being here at MoENHCA. Assisting customers to achieve maximum customer satisfaction is the main goal. If this goal is achieved with a courteous, caring, respectful approach, customers will be satisfied and this will create a sense of satisfaction for a job well done.
- 3.2.2 However, when talking about customer service, people often limit it specific tasks such as handling calls, or greeting the public. It certainly includes these various tasks but it is much more than that. It is a whole approach to providing service to customers. It is having knowledge and skills to handle troublesome situations. Courteous customer service is treating people in a way so they feel their needs are met and they are respected.
- 3.2.3 The policy was first endorsed by the Minister for Education (herein after abbreviated to ME) in 2010.

## **4.0 DEFINITION**

### **4.1 Customer**

A customer of MoENHCA is any person or persons who calls the Ministry or whom we call. They are the most important people in MoENHCA and they are not dependent on MoENHCA but more so it is MoE that is dependent on them and they are part of operation (business) in MoENHCA. Customers deserve our most courteous and attentive treatment that MoENHCA can give.

## 4.2 **Customer Service**

Customer service is anything that needs to be done for the customer that enhances the customer experience. It is a relationship with people who are essential to MoENHCA and meeting their needs and expectations; and a proactive attitude that can be summed up as: I care and I can do. People skills are at the root of good customer service. People skills include interpersonal relations, problem solving, teamwork, leadership, a positive attitude; effective communication, being courteous, respectful interaction and the ability to remain calm and in control in challenging situations.

## 4.3 **Workstation**

It refers to a table where an officer conducts his/her official duties. The table can include a desktop computer and/or other official responsibilities related accessories.

## 4.4 **Business section**

It is a section under a directorate within the overall MoENHCA distinguishable from other sections because it serves a defined purpose and where management conducts its own strategic planning in relation to products and services. MoENHCA Business sections include:

4.4.1 Corporate Services

4.4.2 Asset Monitoring Unit

4.4.3 Technology Employment Skills Training

4.4.4 Examinations and Assessment Unit

4.4.5 Fiji Higher Education Commission

4.4.6 National Substance Abuse Advisory Council

4.4.7 Primary Section

4.4.8 Secondary Section

4.4.9 National Héritage, Culture & Arts

#### 4.5 **Business units**

These are the minor divisions of the business sections of MoENHCA under principalities. Examples include the Human Resource Management (HRM), Post Processing Unit (PPU), Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), Technology Employment Skills Training (TEST), Fiji Teachers Registration Board (FTRB), and Human Relations (HR).

#### 4.6 **Officers**

Officers of MoENHCA include administration officers, teachers, professional staff and ancillary staff of MoENHCA offices and schools.

### 5.0 **RELEVANT LEGISLATIONS AND AUTHORITIES**

- 5.1 Republic of Fiji Constitution-2013, Chapt. 6—State Service Part A—Public Service 123 -1(a)-(i)
- 5.2 Fiji the State of the Nation and the Economy Report – August 2008
- 5.3 Ministry of Education Service Charter 2011-2014
- 5.4 People’s Charter for Change, Peace and Progress 2008
- 5.5 Public Service Code of Conduct, 1999
- 5.6 General Order, 2011

### 6.0 **PROCEDURES**

#### 6.1 **MoENHCA’s Customer treatment**

MoENHCA officers shall:

- 6.1.1 provide service and access to all customers regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, nationality, educational background, religious affiliations physical limitations or any other criteria shall be of the same quality and not discriminatory.
- 6.1.2 greet customers appropriately with a smile, treat them politely, promptly, and with helpful attention.
- 6.1.3 listen to what customers have to say and determine the exact nature of the request.
- 6.1.4 respond to customers enquiries promptly and efficiently
- 6.1.5 act with integrity and honesty when dealing with customers
- 6.1.6 provide relevant and timely feedback to the customer

6.1.7 maintain a friendly contact with customers without engaging in lengthy conversations.

## **6.2 MoENHCA policies and procedures**

MoENHCA officers shall

6.2.1 provide customers with advice and information that are clear and concise.

6.2.2 take appropriate action to respond in accordance to MoENHCA's policies and procedures with minimal inconvenience to customers.

6.2.3 make decisions using processes that are consultative, impartial and otherwise ethical.

6.2.4 adopt fair, lawful and appropriate procedures when making decisions, carrying out activities and performing events.

## **6.3 MoENHCA's Service Undertakings**

To give customers consistent service experience, MoENHCA shall:

6.3.1 demonstrate respect, courtesy, patience, attentiveness, consideration and sensitivity to customers at all times that is appropriate to age, culture and linguistic background

6.3.2 identify customers' needs and expectations.

6.3.3 present a positive image of MoENHCA to the customers.

6.3.4 demonstrate professionalism when dealing with difficult customers.

6.3.5 respond to customers' enquiries and provide services promptly and efficiently.

## **6.4 MoENHCA Helpdesks and Offices**

All MoENHCA helpdesks and offices shall have:

6.4.1 MoENHCA's Vision and Mission clearly displayed.

6.4.2 MoENHCA's Customer Service Charter clearly displayed.

6.4.3 a customer log book to keep a record of all customers served.

6.4.4 a customer suggestion/complaints box.

6.4.5 a customer friendly and inclusive environment.

## **6.5 Types of Customer Service**

### **6.5.1 Telephone service**

6.5.1.1 Telephone calls shall be answered before the third ring in a pleasant manner. For example, "Good morning" and "May I help you?" go a long way.

6.5.1.2 Personal phone calls and extended customer related calls shall be taken away from workstations and in a non-public area.

6.5.1.3 For a follow up of a customer's request, officers shall call the customer when the information is available instead of the customer calling the officer.

### **6.5.2 Written**

6.5.2.1 Provide response to all matters within 10 working days of receiving the correspondence and within 1 day for e-mails if it requires a response. MoENHCA's official letterhead shall be used for formal correspondence outside MoENHCA.

6.5.2.2 Ensure that all outward correspondence includes the name and contact details of the officer dealing with the matter.

6.5.2.3 Use English that is simple, clear and concise

### **6.5.3 Face to face**

6.4.3.1 All MoENHCA officers shall have a name tag which should be worn when in the office or on official business.

6.4.3.2 Service shall commence at the advertised hour MoENHCA opens and full service is available until the hour MoENHCA Office closes.

6.4.3.3 When referring a customer to another officer, the first officer shall ensure that the customer is attended to instead of leaving the customer to fend for him/herself.

6.4.3.4 A customer shall be trusted unless the customer's individual history shows he/she is not trustworthy.

6.4.3.5 For complaints, customers shall be referred to the officer's immediate supervisor if they are available.

### **6.5.3.1.1 Voice, conversation and language**

6.5.3.1.1.1 Transactions shall be conducted in a helpful, pleasant tone of voice and any impatience, annoyance or implication of ignorance shall be kept away from the officer's voice.

6.5.3.1.1.2 Officers shall keep their voice low so that they do not disturb other customers/officers.

6.5.3.1.1.3 Conversation with other officers shall be kept to a minimum.

6.5.3.1.1.4 Plain language shall be used when speaking to customers.

### **6.5.3.1.2 Officer behaviour**

6.5.3.1.2.1 Officers shall look up and around periodically and notice if there are people who might need help. Being helpful to customers takes precedence over designated duties.

6.5.3.1.2.2 Unless there is a specific discipline problem, officers shall not reprimand or scold customers.

### **6.5.3.1.3 Friendly, Helpful Manner**

Every officer/customer interaction should be a positive one for the customer. A friendly, helpful manner usually ensures a positive experience even when the message conveyed is not a pleasant one and will ensure that the customer will walk away feeling that their experience with the MoENHCA has been a positive one.

### **6.5.3.1.4 Confidentiality**

All interactions and transactions between a customer or group of customers and the MoENHCA will be considered confidential and will be discussed only in a professional context.

## **6.6 Dealing with challenging Customers**

6.6.1 MoENHCA officers' should keep an open mind of situation and listen carefully to the pressing issue being raised.

6.6.2 For customer complaints, it is advisable that customers are asked to put their complaint in writing.

- 6.6.3 When there is an incident of unacceptable customer behaviour the officer in attendance shall document and refer the case to the immediate supervisor. For teachers, the officer's report should be entered into the teacher's personnel file.
- 6.6.4 For instances where the Section Heads are satisfied that every effort has been made by the staff to address a customer's needs, he/she may make a decision that there is not a reasonable prospect of reaching a position where a particular customer is satisfied with MoENHCA's actions and services. In such a case, Section Heads may stop or limit responses to the customer in relation to the issue in question.
- 6.6.5 Service to customers supersedes all other designated responsibilities. A customer shall only be referred to another officer if the task at hand is urgent.
- 6.6.6 Finally officers shall always remain positive and strive to ensure amicable solution is achieved.

## **7.0 GUIDELINES**

### **7.1 Greeting customers**

Politely acknowledge the customer with the appropriate

7.1.1 Greeting - *Ni sa bula, ram ram*, hello

7.1.2 Farewell – *Ni sa moce, namaste*, good bye

### **7.2 Focus on the situation, issue or behaviour, not on the person**

Blaming people does not solve problems. MoENHCA officers' should focus on the situation, issue or behaviour when faced with challenges. It helps effective resolution to the problems; better decisions are reached, and help maintain constructive relationships with co-workers. Therefore it is vital when focusing at the big picture to consider others' point of view with an open mind.

### **7.3 Maintain others' self-confidence and self-esteem**

Contributing fully is easier in an atmosphere of acceptance and approval. When people feel free to express their ideas without fear of ridicule or personal criticism, they are more willing to take risks and stretch their capabilities. By showing respect for others and recognizing the contributions of co-workers, gives people the self-confidence to share their ideas openly and to ask for feedback and help in expanding their knowledge and skills on the job.

#### **7.4 Maintain constructive relationships**

Best work comes about when co-workers support one another's efforts. It does not necessarily mean being "close friends" with everyone at work. Work interactions will be smoother, however, if the approach is taken with a positive attitude and communication of support and confidence in the other person's ability. Sharing information, acknowledging problems, and sorting out conflicts earlier on, create strong relationships that is based on mutual trust and respect.

#### **7.5 Take initiative to make things better**

By surveying the local area and identifying improvement opportunities, not only increase the organization's chances for success, but also increase individual's satisfaction by taking control of the work and creating visible improvement. Initiative follows naturally when well informed and being alerted to changes, focusing on ways to avoid similar problems in the future, and expect to find solutions to the current problems.

#### **7.6 Lead by example**

As organizations face new challenges, everyone is expected to be a leader. Being a good leader means setting a good example. Modeling the expected kind of behaviour is the surest way to influence employees. By actively honoring commitments made, admitting mistakes, and staying receptive to new ideas, will motivate others to do the same.

#### **7.7 Choose your attitude**

Attitude is a choice one has to make. If the attitude chosen is unfriendly, not helpful or indifferent, it will have a negative impact. In contrary, pleasant, helpful, friendly and energetic attitude will create a positive impact on everyone.

#### **7.8 Be there**

Be committed to the work, like

- 7.8.1. Listening and responding need of the people (your customers)
- 7.8.2. Remaining positive and productive
- 7.8.3. Being aware of issues to be resolved and offering suggestions as to how to improve the current services offered.
- 7.8.4. Talking to another department about how to do things better
- 7.8.5. Showing a willingness to be part of the work team

## **7.9 Make their day**

*"It's the little things that matter most."* Make 'someone's day' by doing something above and beyond their expectations like:

- 7.9.1. Recognizing and rewarding co-workers by saying, "Thanks, the achievement is appreciated!"
- 7.9.2. Greet officers and customers politely.
- 7.9.3. Assist customers, and direct them to their destination.
- 7.9.4. Taking the time to talk to the customers about how they feel and assist them accordingly.

## **7.10 Have a sense of humour**

Take every opportunity to share a smile or a joke and to find the humour in shared humanness since customer service is a philosophy on how to approach and deal positively with the customers.

## **7.11 Dress code**

Dress respectably. Near naked and revealing attire will not be tolerated and neither will shabby/unkept looks.

## **7.12 Others**

- 7.12.1. Find a convenient area to hold discussions in areas proximate to the workstations as a normal discussion on MoENHCA business can be interpreted by the public as socializing and too busy to assist.
- 7.12.2 Acknowledge a customer's presence by looking up and making eye contact. Respectfully acknowledge the waiting customer while currently serving an existing customer and help out when available.
- 7.12.3 Each staff member, while at work, is a representative of the MoENHCA. The impression made on the customer profoundly affects the MoENHCA's image and on-going support.
- 7.12.4 Discussion of confidential customer issues should be limited to non-public areas.
- 7.12.5 Officers shall not point but direct customers to appropriate areas.

8.0 EFFECTIVE DATE.....18<sup>th</sup> November 2013

9.0 REVIEW DATE.....18<sup>th</sup> November 2016

10.0 KEY SEARCH WORDS

Customer Service, Name Tag, Business Section, Business Unit

11.0 APPROVED BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, NATIONAL HERITAGE, CULTURE AND ARTS, AMBASSADOR FILIPE BOLE

  
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