



Customer Service Standards

The following areas will serve as the standards by which we will continuously and consistently appraise our efforts as we serve students and other constituents interacting with Residential Living & Learning at Tarleton State University. All policies, procedures, programs, and staff behaviors are influenced by these standards. Our desire to be good stewards of customer service is not merely an extension of cultural trends and expectations, but also our commitment to the mission of Tarleton State University as we aspire to model a community of engaged scholars and citizens.

SAFETY

The immediate physical safety and security of the resident students, guests, staff and other customers served by Residential Living & Learning are our most imperative and basic concern. Residential Living & Learning staff will remain constantly alert to and will act immediately to address problems that pose a threat to safety.

- ❑ Policies, procedures and programs will be constructed and implemented in a manner that accords a first priority to physical safety.
- ❑ All facilities in which residents live or Residential Living & Learning does business will be set up and maintained in a manner that does not create safety risks.
- ❑ Staff in the conduct of their duties will not engage in any interaction or behavior that would intentionally pose a threat to or ignore real risks to the physical safety of our customers.

COURTESY

Interpersonal interactions that occur between Residential Living & Learning staff and our customers will always be conducted in a courteous, pleasant, empathetic and dignified manner in an effort to gain an understanding of the customer's perspective or problem. In any interactions in which pleasantry is not possible, staff will act in an assertive and professional manner; staff will not engage in adversarial or abusive interactions with our customers.

- ❑ All customers will be greeted by staff in a pleasant, courteous and respectful fashion in the conduct of business.
- ❑ All customers will be acknowledged *immediately* when they present themselves in a point of service setting. If customers must wait, staff will greet them and request politely that they wait until they can be served.
- ❑ The same standards that apply to courtesy in face-to-face interactions will apply to telephone, email and other written contacts with customers.
- ❑ Staff who are aware that a desired service cannot be provided at the immediate time of customer's request will insure that the delay is a reasonable one, either by finding other staff who may help, or arranging an alternate time when staff will be available.

EFFICIENCY

Staff will conduct their duties and implement policies and procedures with efficiency, accuracy, dependability, and timeliness. Staff will prepare themselves intentionally and proactively with knowledge of Residential Living & Learning processes so as to discharge their duties efficiently and serve as effective resources for our customers.

- ❑ Staff will provide accurate and specific answers to customers' inquiries and problems. When no immediate answer is available, staff who receive an inquiry or problem will serve as the immediate contact and follow-up point for a customer until he/she is referred to the most appropriate resource that should handle the inquiry.
- ❑ Customers will leave any point of service location with more information than they had upon arrival. Staff will work actively to direct customers to appropriate resources and will advise that resource of the customer's needs upon referral.
- ❑ All point of service locations will maintain effective hours of availability of staff to provide the assigned services. Special or additional hours will be scheduled during peak service periods or periods where demands will be unusual.
- ❑ Each individual staff member will maintain actively his/her effective knowledge of all processes and services that are delivered in his/her point of service location. In addition, staff will maintain actively their basic understanding of all Residential Living & Learning structures and processes so as to refer customers effectively and quickly to an appropriate point of service location or resource and/or provide accurate answers to questions.

PRESENTATION

Residential Living & Learning will present its staff, policies and procedures and facilities to the customer in a manner that communicates order, credibility and professionalism. The importance of a quality presentation applies to the individual appearance of staff, the organization and order in point of service locations, the cleanliness and maintenance of facilities and the appearance of grounds.

- ❑ The personal appearance and demeanor of individual staff will support a presentation characterized by competence and professionalism. Staff will maintain individual office areas, and service desks in a fashion that communicates order while also serving as a comfortable and inviting environment in which customers can be received.

- ❑ The presentation of individual student rooms, hallways and stairwells, bathrooms, lounges and other common areas will be characterized by cleanliness, comfort, and order.
- ❑ Facilities that are employed for large Residential Living & Learning processes will be set up and structured in a manner that effectively handles traffic loads, moves students efficiently through a process and provides adequate communication and information needed by customers.
- ❑ Visual communications, ranging from directional signs, postings and mailings to more substantial publications will be polished, well organized and effectively updated so as to provide accurate information and prevent inconsistencies.
- ❑ Information on all policies will be readily available to customers. Policies will be presented with apparent and effective rationale, and wherever possible will be presented with simplicity. Policies will avoid contradictions or the creation of situations that would not withstand the scrutiny of a reasonable individual.

LEARNING

Students will have the opportunity for multiple types of learning as a result of their living experiences.

- ❑ Where desirable and appropriate, Residential Living & Learning policies and procedures will contribute to students' development of personal responsibility and constructive participation in a residential academic community. When implementing Residential Living & Learning processes with individual students, staff will place decisions in the hands of the student wherever it is possible and appropriate.
- ❑ When dealing with individual customer requests from students and parents, Residential Living & Learning staff will seek to balance the individual needs with the interests of the larger community.
- ❑ Residential Living & Learning staff will understand their role as facilitators and supporters of the academic mission of the institution. Policies and educational programs will remain in consonance and avoid competition with that mission.
- ❑ Where possible, the manner in which staff handle behavioral problems with students will contribute to individual learning and development. However, this objective will be secondary to the primary goal of behavior and crisis management in behalf of the welfare, order and benefit of the larger academic community.

TWO IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. Each of us is a customer service advocate at multiple levels - as an individual, as a member of Residential Living & Learning and as a member of the staff of Tarleton State University.
2. The overall quality of our service delivery depends significantly upon our interaction with one another. No one operates in isolation; we are interdependent.

Customer Service Attitudes and Behaviors

ATTITUDE:

Each office, hall and community is a key component to the overall organization. Suggestions will be given and received as opportunities for improvement instead of criticism.

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIORS:

When I observe or experience poor service within Residential Living & Learning, I will bring it to the attention of the appropriate staff.

When a customer reports poor service to me, I will use that information as a basis for improvement.

When a staff member or customer brings an example of poor service to my attention, I will view it as constructive feedback, not as criticism.

ATTITUDE:

All individuals with whom we deal, within and outside Residential Living & Learning are our customers; the quality of effort devoted to our “most important customer” will characterize our efforts with every customer.

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIORS:

I will treat every customer with the timeliness, thoroughness and follow-through with which parents are treated.”

Residential Living & Learning staff members of all levels are customers; therefore, my customer service standards apply to them.

ATTITUDE:

Because we work within an educational environment, we strive to balance customer needs with the needs of the larger community.

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIORS:

When faced with a customer’s request, I will keep in mind that pleasing the individual customer may have ramifications on the larger community that must be considered.

Because policies guide our actions, I am responsible to maintain a thorough knowledge of policies so that I am able to communicate them effectively to my customers.

When I grant an exception to a customer, I will communicate my rationale to appropriate Residential Living & Learning leadership.

ATTITUDE:

Each staff member is always a representative of the entire Residential Living & Learning and Tarleton State University community.

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIORS:

I will at times be called upon to comment on actions or policies of Residential Living & Learning. When this happens, I will accurately represent and support Residential Living & Learning.

Some Residential Living & Learning activities serve large numbers of customers within a brief period of time; I will participate in and support these activities.

ATTITUDE:

Our commitment to customer service is active, ongoing and open to enhancement.

ASSOCIATED BEHAVIORS:

I will constantly assess my customer service attitudes and actions.

Within my area of responsibility, I will regularly assess the tasks and processes with the goal of suggesting improvements.

I will stay current with new trends and resources that can be utilized in order to enhance my delivery of customer service.

This document was adapted from customer service standards published by the Department of Residence Life at the University of Maryland, College Park and Baylor University. Residential Living & Learning at Tarleton State expresses its gratitude to the University of Maryland and to Baylor University for allowing us to learn from their efforts to improve service to college students.