

Customer Service is a priority at Washington State University.

University employees provide timely advice and guidance. University faculty and staff provide accurate, reliable information and options available, including risks involved, to the appointing authority or other appropriate individuals to make an informed choice. We are respectful and professional in all our actions.

The following serve as examples and should be modified to meet each areas customer needs.

Best Practice Examples for Positive Customer Experience

- Do not send a customer away (in person or by phone) without asking them if the issue is urgent, if someone else can help them, or if they would like to leave a message.
- If a non-urgent issue and meeting can be coordinated with appropriate university faculty and staff within a reasonable time frame, it is fine to do so.
- Response times how/when/why – Departmental goal: For example 24 hour response time. Note that a 24 hour response time may not be feasible for your department when you factor in weekends, holidays, and overtime eligible vs. non-eligible employees. Set a realistic and timely goal for your department.
- Make certain there is appropriate staffing over the noon/lunch period, during high volume times and during summer hours to adequately meet the needs of our customers.
- It is okay to indicate “I received your message and will get back with you by xxxx.” It is critical to follow-up and get back to the individual.
- Automatic email or voice mail responses are to be professional and provide relevant information to the individual. When possible messages should be updated each week.

Common Communication Etiquette

- Meetings here vs. there – Customer preference
- Discretion with information - “need to know basis”
- Confidentiality/Privacy – “time and place”
- Limit opinion and stick to facts
- Objectivity – get the facts – two sides or more to every story
- Don’t jump to conclusions
- OKAY and preferred to say “Let me look into this, I will get back to you”
- Reliability and accuracy of information provided to our clients is critical
- Case Load – if overwhelmed or unable to respond to clients in timely manner, notify your supervisor
- Adhere to and follow Federal, State and University policies and practices
- Share relevant and important information with team members

Phone Etiquette: Proper telephone etiquette is very important in that you are representing your department and the University. Remembering to use proper telephone etiquette, whether answering the phone or making phone calls, leaves callers with a favorable impression of you, your department, and WSU in general.

Answering Calls:

- Answer with a friendly greeting. (Example - "Good Afternoon, Washington State University, Information Desk, how may I help you?").
- If the caller has reached a wrong number, be courteous. Sometimes a caller is transferred all over campus with a simple question and the caller gets frustrated.
- Use the hold button when leaving a line so that the caller does not accidentally overhear conversations being held nearby.
- When putting a caller on hold, always ask permission. Examples: "Would you mind holding while I check?" or "Can you hold briefly while I see if Mr. Jones is available?" When taking a caller off of hold, always thank them for holding. Provide them the phone number for the individual you are transferring them to in case the call is disconnected.
- Using phrases such as "thank you" and "please" are essential in displaying a professional atmosphere.

Cisco Phone Guide:

- Can be located [here](#).

CougTech Frequently Asked Questions

- [FAQs](#)

Out of Office messages on phone and email: When out of the office for an extended period, your phone and email should have an out-of-office message which includes who the caller can contact for assistance and a primary office phone number.

Unexpectedly away from the office: Update your automatic reply while you are away by accessing your email account via connect.wsu.edu

Voicemail/Phone messages:

- In your greeting, include your name, and department so that people know they have reached the correct person.
- Depending on call volume, outgoing message should be updated:
 - Daily or weekly
- If you are unable to check your messages regularly and/or your mail box is full, please let your supervisor know so we can consider other options.
- It is unacceptable for University faculty and staff not to respond in a timely manner.

Email messages:

- Include a clear, direct subject line
 - For Example: "Meeting date changed," "Quick question about your presentation," or "Suggestions for the proposal."
- Think twice before hitting "reply all."

- Sample greetings: Hi, Hello, Good Morning, Good Afternoon
- Sample closings: Thank you, Sincerely, Best Regards, Thank you for your time

It is recommended that each University employee have an automatic signature for email messages and the ability to add confidentiality statement to sensitive emails. (Sample provided at the end of this section.)

If appropriate add confidentiality language for email signature. The following is a sample:

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This communication, including any attachment, contains information that may be confidential or privileged, and is intended solely for the entity or individual to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you should delete this message and are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, or distribution of this message is strictly prohibited. Nothing in this email, including any attachment, is intended to be a legally binding signature.

Formatting Email Communication:

- Remember that capitalization and bolding in emails is often interpreted as shouting and is perceived negatively.

Office Greetings:

- Greet people clearly when they enter
- Make sure visitors feel comfortable – offering water, let them know where the restroom is located etc.
- Keep visitors informed about their meeting

WSU Websites:

- Websites should be reviewed for ease of navigation by the customer
 - Is commonly requested information easy to find?
 - Is the contact information located in the same area on all websites e.g., bottom of webpage
- Areas should include contact information on their websites – the committee recommends WSU have standard guidelines for all areas to have the following:
 - Contact Number
 - Contact Email – recommend a generalized email for the area
 - Address and Physical location