



Institute of IT Training

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR TECHNICAL SUPPORT CENTRES

A guidance document for Technical Support Centres





Code of Practice for Technical Support Centres

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Code of Practice for Technical Support Centres

It is an Institute objective to assist in the raising of standards in IT training across the board, and the Technical Support Centre Accreditation Programme (TSCAP) is a key component of this. Note that the TSCAP accredits the company: it does NOT accredit individual courses.

This Code of Practice provides the basis for the Institute of IT Training's Technical Support Centre Accreditation Programme through which the Institute will maintain and monitor a register of approved Technical Support Centres. Organisations which undertake voluntarily to abide by the terms of this Code of Practice and can demonstrate that they do so are eligible to be accredited by the Institute.

Definitions

In this code of practice:

- A 'Technical Support Centre' is an entity that exists with the purpose of providing remote technical support to the users of a particular system or product. An External Technical Support Centre provides services to organisations under terms of payment - and Service Level Agreements. An Internal Technical Support Centre provides services to staff members within the same organisation and may work under the remit of internal Service Level Agreements or staff charter.
- 'Client' means any person or organisation that enters into a contract with a TSC for the provision of support services. In the case of an Internal TSC 'client' implies any member of staff who has an entitlement to the support services of the Internal TSC by virtue of their terms of employment.
- 'Caller' is any person requiring and entitled to the support services of the TSC.
- A 'Support Analyst' works within the TSC in the capacity of providing remote technical support to clients on behalf of the Centre. May be known as Call Handlers, Technical Support Specialists, Help-Desk Specialists etc.
- 'The Accredited Organisation' means any enterprise, institution or organisation accredited by the IITT as an Accredited Technical Support Centre under the terms of this programme.

Publicity and promotion

- In promotional literature, the Accredited Organisation shall express itself clearly and without ambiguity so that clients may know exactly what is being offered and what levels of service are to be provided.
- The Accredited Organisation shall not give false or misleading indications, whether by words, illustrations or other means, in relation to the service which is to be provided to the client, neither shall it make any statement which cannot be substantiated.

- The Accredited Organisation shall not publish or display any advertisement that may be confused with any other organisation.
- Fictitious testimonials shall not be used, neither shall testimonials from other parties with interests in the business of the Accredited Organisation without declaring this interest within the testimonial.
- The Accredited Organisation will make all of its clients and prospective clients aware of its Accredited status and hence its conformance to the IITT's Code of Practice, usually by including such reference within promotional materials. However, such references are only permitted for the duration of the Accreditation and must be in a form approved by the IITT.

Service level agreements

- The scope of the support available in terms of products, services, and technologies.
- The level of service to be provided to the client in terms of complexity and technological competence in whatever form will provide a meaningful and unambiguous definition to the client.
- The level of service to be provided to the client in terms of hours, response times, calibre of staff etc.
- The target audience for the support service.
- Any constraints or exclusions which may affect the service provision (e.g. service only provided to callers who have attended previous training, support not provided to third party organisations, support only provided to individuals who can supply necessary security word etc).

Support analyst competencies

- The Accredited Organisation will ensure that Support Analysts possess the necessary technical and soft skills expertise to adequately deliver the level of service as implied or stated within any undertaking with its clients.
- The Accredited Organisation will ensure that Support Analysts are fully aware of their responsibilities at any escalation level and are provided with all facilities and support to secure their effectiveness in meeting these responsibilities.

Internal controls

The Accredited Organisation shall ensure that:

- Support Analysts possess the necessary technical skills and product/service awareness to provide the level of support implied through

their specific job responsibilities.

- Support Analysts are fully competent in the appropriate skills of call handling and remote coaching, verifiable by either holding the IITT's Certificate in Technical Support Skills, or another certificate in call handling as recognised by the IITT, or by demonstrably working towards the attainment of same.
- Support Analysts are participating in a recognised Continuous Professional Development (CPD) scheme as administered by an appropriate external professional body or formally defined internal procedure.
- Resource levels are sufficient to provide a timely escalation of a call, when, in the opinion of the Support Analyst, escalation is an appropriate action.
- Support Analysts are provided with a work situation that is conducive to effective call handling and problem resolution from the aspects of:
 - noise levels, space and privacy
 - efficient call logging system
 - ability to mirror/simulate the user enquiry where possible
 - information/enquiry database
 - access to online or paper-based tutorial and support documentation
 - remote communication with clients and/or internal support

External controls

- The Accredited Organisation shall make available to the IITT such statistical, documentary and other information that the IITT may reasonably require to be assured that the Code of Practice is being observed.
- The Accredited Organisation will co-operate with scheduled IITT monitoring visits and will facilitate access to Technical Support Centres by IITT assessors and/or verifiers.
- The Accredited Organisation is aware that IITT assessors and/or verifiers may use unannounced and fictitious role play as a method of sampling the call handling and coaching skills within the Technical Support Centre. The Institute will be provided with necessary telephone numbers, security codes, etc., to facilitate this activity.

The Institute of IT Training Complaints procedure

A statement of the procedures for making and responding to complaints shall routinely be made available by providers to clients with whom they have contracted.

Providers shall respond to client complaints in a prompt and courteous manner.

Should the provider not satisfy the complaint to the satisfaction of the client, the provider will advise the client of the right to notify the IITT of the outstanding complaint. A form, together with a Complaints Procedure form, available from the IITT, shall be supplied by the provider.

Complaints by clients shall then be made direct to the IITT and must generally be made within 30 days of the provider having given an initial response to the complaint.

If the IITT is satisfied that a complaint against a provider is justified, the provider shall be bound by the IITT's decision on the matter.

The Institute's complaints procedure

This procedure is administered in conjunction with the IITT Code of Practice for Training Providers. It provides a mechanism for making, receiving and examining complaints by clients against providers in respect of any matter covered by the Code of Practice.

Complaints committee

- The executive of the IITT shall establish a three-person committee which will manage the detailed operation of this procedure.
- The CPD director of the IITT shall be the Chairman of the Committee and the Membership Secretary of the IITT shall be its Secretary. The third member will be a current member of the council.

Notification of complaints

- The secretary shall take such steps as are necessary to clarify and define the complaint, at the same time ensuring that the complainant has fully taken up the matter with the training provider before invoking the IITT Complaints Procedure.
- The secretary shall refer the complaint to the provider who shall be required to make written response within fourteen working days setting out a detailed explanation.
- The secretary shall refer the response made by the provider to the client. If the client is not satisfied with the provider's response, the secretary will refer the matter to the Complaints Committee.
- The Complaints Committee shall consider the complaint within fourteen working days, requesting further information if required, and shall notify the client and the provider of its findings.
- Either party may, within 30 days of being notified of the findings of the Complaints Committee, appeal to the Board of Directors of the IITT.

- The secretary shall keep the Chief Executive of the IITT informed of all complaints received and actions taken on such complaints and shall also keep the parties involved in a complaint informed at all stages.

Appeals procedure

- The secretary shall submit to the Chief Executive of the IITT all appeals together with all relevant material considered by the Complaints Committee.

- The Board of Directors of the IITT will consider the appeal and will advise the parties of its decision within fourteen working days. The decision of the Board will be final.

Further Information

For further information, please contact the Standards Secretary on 0845 006 8858 or email standards@iitt.org.uk