



Léargas - Quality Customer Service Statement and Action Plan

Léargas.....	1
Mission Statement	1
Values	1
Customer Definition.....	2
Citizens	2
Programme Participants	2
Irish Government Departments	2
Other Agencies	2
European Organisations	2
Quality Customer Service Statement	3
High Level Customer Service Goals	3
Quality Standards	3
Statement of Service	4
Telephone requests	4
Written requests.....	4
Personal requests.....	4
Providing information	4
Language	6
Equality/Diversity.....	6
Grant Payments on Programmes.....	6
Complaints and Appeals	7

Léargas

Léargas is a not-for-profit organisation--registered as a charity (CHY 8317)--that operates under the aegis of the Department of Education and Science. Léargas works on behalf of the Department to manage European, national and international exchange and cooperation programmes in education, training and youth and community work. Léargas has been managing such programmes for over 20 years.

As well as working with the Department of Education and Science, Leargas also works with colleagues in the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Léargas is based in Dublin as is the National Centre for Guidance in Education which operates under the aegis of Léargas. The North South Exchange Consortium is based in Dundalk IT.

Léargas has a Board of Directors appointed by the Minister for Education and Science.

Mission Statement

To enable people to take their place as European and global citizens in a changing world through their participation in international and national collaborative programmes in formal and non-formal education and vocational training.

Values

In carrying out our Mission, we uphold the following core values:

- *Quality*
we aim to provide an effective, efficient and responsive service to all with whom we work
- *Partnership*
both within Léargas and in our work with others in the sector, our approach is one of collaboration and cooperation
- *Transparency*
in all our work we value openness, integrity and honesty
- *Inclusion*
we provide all our services fairly and equitably, with an emphasis on reaching disadvantaged groups and individuals
- *Development*
we bring a developmental focus to all the work we do
- *Support*
we recognise that our staff are our key resource and we support their professional and personal development

Customer Definition

Léargas “customers” can be divided into five types:

Citizens

Members of the public who want to find out more about the programmes we manage.

Programme Participants

Members of the public, organisations and institutions that take part in any of the programmes that we manage.

Irish Government Departments

Colleagues in the Department of Education and Science, the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment and the Department of Foreign Affairs (Irish Aid) who work with Léargas staff, who are on the Léargas board, or who make requests for information.

Other Agencies

Other agencies within Ireland with whom we collaborate on various projects and programmes and also National Agencies who run similar programmes across Europe and beyond.

European Organisations

Colleagues in the European Commission Directorate General – Education and Culture (DG EAC) and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) with whom we work on European programmes.

Quality Customer Service Statement

High Level Customer Service Goals

The high level goals for Léargas are to provide services to our customers that:

- meet our quality standards
- recognise diversity in our customer group and provide equality of service

Quality Standards

The quality standards that inform the Léargas Quality Customer Service statement are:

- Courtesy
 - Be courteous at all times in dealing with all our customers
- Timeliness
 - Respond as quickly as possible to requests for information or support
 - Provide required reports by agreed deadlines
 - Provide payment on contracts to programme participants within agreed timelines
- Informative
 - Supply accurate, comprehensive, relevant and accessible information to all customers
- Supportive
 - Provide technical support on programmes to all customers
 - Provide support on programme and policy issues to colleagues in Irish government departments
 - Provide support on programme management and cooperation to colleagues in other agencies
 - Provide reports as agreed to DG EAC, EACEA and relevant Irish government departments
 - Provide responses to Parliamentary Questions (PQs), requests for observations *etc.* as received on an *ad hoc* basis from colleagues in government departments and other agencies

Statement of Service

Telephone requests

When a customer phones Léargas with a request for information or technical programme support, we will:

- identify ourselves on the phone
- identify the person to whom we transfer the call, if necessary
- deal with the call as quickly as possible and in a friendly and courteous way
- provide the caller with the means to leave a message if the person they wish to reach is not available: this message may be left with another Léargas staff member or on voicemail
- return the call as soon as possible

Written requests

When a customer writes to us requesting information or technical programme support, we will:

- acknowledge the request as soon as possible
- reply within a reasonable time, based on the nature of the request
- include relevant contact details on all our correspondence

Personal requests

When a customer calls to our office requesting information or technical programme support, we will:

- deal with the request as quickly as possible and in a friendly and courteous way
- provide a clean, comfortable and safe environment
- arrange to have meetings with the customer, if necessary, in our office
- arrange to meet the customer elsewhere, if necessary
- if the person the customer wishes to meet is not available, provide the means to leave a detailed message or provide an alternative contact within the Léargas staff

Providing information

Information provision forms a large part of the work Léargas does for all its customers.

Léargas commits to using different media to provide information to our customers so that they have alternative ways to obtain relevant and useful information as efficiently as possible.

Web

Léargas maintains an up-to-date and informative network of websites, which provide relevant material on all programmes that Léargas runs: for example, calls for proposals, upcoming deadlines, background information, links to user guides and application forms.

The sites also provide resources for programme participants such as partner-finding, lists of funding recipients, summaries of current projects, case studies *etc.* Details of career opportunities within Léargas are also provided on the site.

- Léargas commits to continuing its use of the web to publish relevant news, information and resources for all customers.
- Information on our website network will be as timely, clear and concise as possible.
- Links to other relevant sites (such as the Europa site) will be kept up-to-date.
- New sites will be added to the Léargas network when needed (on the commencement of new programmes, for example).
- The design and navigation of the site will be clear and easy-to-use and will conform to at least Level A of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

Print

Léargas provides print material, as appropriate, to all its customers. Some of this material is provided for programme participants by the European Commission, some of it is sourced directly within Léargas.

Léargas commits to the following regarding its own printed material:

- The material will be up-to-date and reflect accurately the information received from the DG EAC, EACEA and our Irish government colleagues
- The information will be presented clearly and in a style appropriate to its audience.
- The means of presentation will reflect a suitable use of resources.

Reporting

Léargas is contractually obliged to furnish regular reports to the DG EAC, EACEA and Irish government departments. Each contract contains specific information about deadlines and commitments.

Assuming all interim and final project reports received from programme participants are accurate and complete and are received on time, Léargas commits to producing 100% of its own reports within agreed deadlines.

If not on time, then Léargas will send a message at least ten working days before the deadline to the relevant person in the Commission/other funder regarding the predicted length of delay and requesting an extension.

Seminars and Workshops

Léargas runs seminars, workshops and meetings to provide extra information on programmes to our customers. Léargas commits to the following regarding its seminars and workshops:

- The material will be up-to-date and reflect accurately the information received from the DG EAC or other relevant authority
- The information will be presented clearly and in a style appropriate to its audience
- The means of presentation will reflect a suitable use of resources
- Where appropriate, Léargas will provide support materials as back-up to the workshops
- Staff will be courteous and professional at all times
- Evaluation of the events will be carried out through feedback forms or other methods as appropriate

Language

Under the Official Languages Act 2003, Léargas will—when requested by the Minister—put a three-year plan in place to cater for meeting the following needs:

- The right of a person to receive an answer in Irish from public bodies if the correspondence is sent to them in that language. (Alt 9(2))
- The duty of public bodies to ensure that any communication providing information to the public - in writing or by electronic mail - is in the Irish language only or in the Irish and English languages. (Section 9(3))
- The duty of public bodies to prepare a scheme that will set out the services which they propose to provide in the Irish language only. (Alt 11)
- The duty of public bodies to ensure that an adequate number of its staff are competent in the Irish language [section 13 (2)(c)]

Equality/Diversity

Léargas is committed to providing equality of opportunity to all customers, paying particular attention to avoiding discrimination on any of the nine grounds (as defined by The Equality Authority/An tÚdarás Comhionannais).

In a number of its programmes, Léargas has specific targets regarding the numbers of disadvantaged groups or individuals that take part. Léargas commits to meeting these targets each year and reporting on same.

Grant Payments on Programmes

Assuming funding has been received by Léargas, then all payments to programme participants will be made within a maximum of 45 days of the receipt of:

- a contract signed by a project promoter

- a complete and accurate interim report (where relevant)
- a complete and accurate final report

Complaints and Appeals

The awarding of grants under the programmes that Léargas manages are made by Grants Selection Committees. While the project contracts specified by the DG EAC do not allow for a formal complaint/appeals mechanism, other than a reference to Irish Law, Léargas endeavours to clarify or discuss promoter/participant concerns regarding its determinations as to the eligibility of grant expenditure on all its programmes.

Regarding provision of services in either of the official languages, Section 21(f) of the Official Languages Act 2003 provides that a person has the right to make a complaint to *An Coimisinéir Teanga* and the Commissioner is obliged to examine that complaint.