



ECCCO Contact Centre Certification

Certification Scheme

Certification procedure for Customer Contact Centres

pursuant to

EN 15838

ECCCO Contact Centre Certification

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Certification

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0 Introduction

This certification scheme has been elaborated jointly by the European European Confederation of Contact Centre Organisations (ECCCO), www.eccco.org, and Austrian Standards plus Certification.

The purpose of this certification scheme is to harmonise the approach to certify Customer Contact Centers according to the European Standard EN 15838 applied by certification bodies.

Austrian Standards plus Certification (AS+C) is the certification body of Austrian Standards plus Inc. a 100% subsidiary of the Austrian Standards Institute.

ECCCO, the European Confederation of Contact Center Organisations, was established in order to encourage and assist the development of European National Contact Centre Associations by bringing together all the European National Associations / Organisations, fostering free and frank information exchange on issues relating to Call Centre services. ECCCO is a non-profit association the objective of which is to promote the interests and needs of the European contact centre industry.

1 Scope

This certification scheme specifies the procedure employed by certification bodies to certify the services of customer contact centres (CCC) with respect to their conformity with the European Standard EN 15838:2009-11.

Certification is based on the principles of EN 45011 / ISO Guide 65.

2 Application

2.1 The applicant shall file an application using the form provided by the certification body.

2.2 The applicant shall appoint a contact person for the certification process.

2.3 The application shall specify the desired scope of certification in terms of business sites to be covered.

2.4 Together with the application the applicant CCC shall provide documentation on the services to be certified. This documentation shall contain the following:

- the general features of the applicant CCC, including its name and the address(es) of its physical location(s) where customer contact services are provided,
- description of the structure of the applicant, including company profile, any specializations, etc.
- average number (related to the past 12 months) of CC agents working in the relevant sites
- average number of contacts handled per month (related to the past 12 months) in the relevant sites
- description of the kind of services (e.g. hotlines, sales activities, inbound services, outbound services) provided in the relevant sites
- information concerning all outsourced processes, subcontractors etc. used by the CCC that will affect conformity to requirements of EN 15838.

3 Application review

3.1 Before proceeding with the audit, the certification body will conduct a review of the application and supplementary documentation for certification to ensure that:

- the information about the CCC organization is sufficient for the conduct of the audit;

- any known difference in understanding between the certification body and the applicant CCC is resolved;
- the scope of certification sought, the location(s) of the CCCs operations, time required to complete audits and any other points influencing the certification activity are taken into account.

3.2 Based on this review, the certification body will determine the competences it needs to include in the audit team. The audit team shall be composed of a Lead Auditor (and technical auditors, as necessary) who, between them, have the totality of the competences identified by the certification body for the certification of the CCC organization.

Lead Auditors shall meet the requirements in accordance with clause 9.1. Technical Auditors shall meet the requirements in accordance with clause 9.2.

4 Initial certification audit

4.1 The initial certification audit shall audit all requirements specified in EN 15838. The audit shall comprise of the following elements.

- Review of the CCCs management strategy and policy, the CCCs mission, objectives and quality targets. This review shall include interviews with the senior management of the CCC.
- Review of the operational roles and responsibilities assigned in the CCC and relevant job descriptions. Interviews with the CCCs personnel in charge of human resources management.
- Review of the recruitments process for CC agents including checks of records of actual recruiting processes that took place during a period of 24 months preceding the audit. Interviews with the CCCs personnel in charge of human resources management and recruitment processes.
- Review of the CCCs training schemes and programmes, training materials for CC agents including initial training for new CC agents as well as for ongoing training and coaching. Checking of records of trainings conducted for CCCs during a period of 24 months preceding the audit. Interviews with the CCCs personnel in charge of human resources management and the conduction of training relevant of CC agents.
- Inspections of CC agents work places and watching CC agents handling contacts (calls, mail contacts etc.).
- Interviews with CC agents off their workplaces on all aspects of their recruitment, training, on-going training and on their tasks and duties.
- Review of the technical infrastructure of the CCC, its fitness for purpose as related to the CCC actual activities and communication channels. Assessment of the CCCs back-up systems, contingency and disaster recovery plans. Interviews with the CCCs personnel in charge of IT systems and infrastructure.
- Review of the CCCs procedures related to customer satisfaction, complaints handling and customer protection. Checking records of recent customer satisfaction surveys.
- Checking of documentation and review of the CCCs agreement(s) with its client organisation(s). Interviews with the CCC personnel in charge of managing relations to client organisation(s). Checking of reports of services conducted for client organisation(s) in the past 24 months towards the fulfilment of the service levels agreed.

4.2 At the end of the audit, the Lead Auditor or the audit team (if applicable) will analyse all information and audit evidence gathered during the audits to review the audit findings and agree on the audit conclusions. In case the audit is conducted by an audit team, decisions on audit conclusions shall be taken unanimously.

4.3 During the concluding meeting with the responsible management of the applicant, the Lead Auditor will present the audit conclusions to the applicant and will specify further steps to be taken.

4.4 The information provided by the Lead Auditor to the certification body for the certification decision will include, as a minimum:

- the audit report,

- comments on the nonconformities and, where applicable, the correction and corrective actions taken by the client,
- a recommendation whether or not to grant certification, together with any conditions or observations.

4.5 In case the CCC operates more than one site, multi-site auditing in accordance with annex A may be applied. Sites operated by sub-contractors by order of the CCC shall be considered as sites of the CCC. Such sites shall be included in multi-site calculations in accordance with annex A.

The certification body shall specify the number and location of the sites to be audited within the scope of the certification applied for.

4.6 The minimum number of auditor days for the initial audit is specified in Annex B.

5 Issuing the certificate

5.1 Based on the audit conclusions and the recommendation of the Lead Auditor the certification body will decide on the issue of the certificate. A positive assessment of the audit pursuant to clause 4 is the prerequisite for the issuing of the certificate.

5.2 The certificate is valid for a period of 6 years subject that the conditions to maintain the certificate are met by the certificate holder.

6 Surveillance activities

6.1 In order to maintain the certificate, surveillance audits shall be carried out on a 2-year cycle.

6.2 Surveillance audits are on-site audits, but are not necessarily full system audits covering all requirements of EN 15838. The purpose of the surveillance audit(s) is for the certification body to maintain confidence that the certified CCC continues to fulfil the requirements of EN 15838 between recertification audits. The surveillance audit(s) programme shall include, at least the following items:

- recruitment, training and on-going training of CC agents,
- sample checking of competence of CC agents,
- checking of performance of the CCC towards the current service level agreements with client organisation(s),
- a review of actions taken on nonconformities identified and recommendations given during the previous audit,
- review of any changes introduced by the CCC affecting the compliance with EN 15838, and
- use of marks and/or any other reference to certification.

6.3 The minimum number of auditor days for the surveillance audits are specified in annex B.

6.4 In case the CCC operates more than one site and multi-site auditing in accordance with annex A was applied during the initial certification audit, the surveillance audit(s) shall be conducted at least at one site, preferably at a site which was not subject to an audit during the initial auditing process. Nevertheless it must be ensured that all items in accordance to sub clause 6.2 can be audited.

8 Re-Certification

In order to extend the validity of the certificate, a re-certification audit in accordance with clause 4 shall be conducted.

9 Requirements for auditors

9.1 Audits shall be carried out by at least one Lead Auditor. Depending on the size of the CCC and the complexity of the audit(s) the Lead Auditor may be accompanied by one or more Technical Auditors in accordance with clause 9.3.

9.2 A Lead Auditor shall be a formally trained auditor who has in-depth knowledge of EN 15838.

9.3 Technical Auditors shall meet the following qualification requirements:

- have a minimum of 5 years experience in a CCC in a leading management position or
- have a proven record of minimum 5 years experience in consulting CCCs or
- have a proven record of minimum 5 years experience in training services with regards to CCC personnel.

Annex A – Multi site auditing

A.1 These conditions apply to the initial certification audit and any re-certification audit.

A.2 In case that a CCC operates more than one site (including sites of sub-contractors) which are to be covered by the scope of the certificate, in order to keep the efforts of auditing at a reasonable level, it is permissible to select a sample of the sites under the following conditions.

1. There is a centralised quality management and process control function which covers all sites operated by the CCC. The site which provides this central quality management and control function shall be audited in any case.
2. The minimum number of sites to be audited shall be \sqrt{X} . X is the total number of sites operated and covered by the scope of the certificate. In case the CCC operates 2 sites, the minimum number of sites to be audited is 1 provided that conditions 3), 4) and 5) are met.
3. The accumulated number of CCC agents employed in the sites to be audited must be minimum $0,4 \times N$. N is the total number of CCC agents employed in all sites covered by the scope of the certificate.
4. The accumulated number of contacts handled in the sites to be audited must be minimum $0,4 \times M$. M is the total number of contacts handled in all sites covered by the scope of the certificate.
5. All different services (e.g. sales, inbound hotline, outbound etc.) provided by the CCC must be covered by the audit.

Annex B Minimum number of auditor days

Depending on the size of the CCC the following minimum numbers for auditor days for initial and surveillance audits apply:

Average number of CC agents	min. auditor time of initial certification audits and re-certification audits	min. auditor time surveillance audits
	[auditor days]	[auditor days]
1 - 50	2	1
51 - 250	3	2
≥ 251	≥ 4 *)	≥ 3 *)

*) Subject to individual calculation by certification body.

The above stated numbers may increase due to multi site considerations in according to Annex A.

Agents = headcount

Annex C Audit criteria – Checklist

EN 15838 – Clause 4 " Management Strategy and Policy" Subclause 4.1 "General"

C4-01 The CCC has established a management system which comprises:

- a) the explanation of structures and responsibilities;
- b) demonstrating interactions within the system;
- c) establishing monitoring systems;
- d) the implementation of the continuous improvement process;
- e) the explanation of the interplay between the vision and mission, strategic targets and operative targets.

EN 15838 – Clause 4 " Management Strategy and Policy" Subclause 4.2 "Job descriptions"

C4-02 The CCC has established a job description for each job or position in the CCC which include at least:

- a) the objective of the position;
- b) the definition of tasks;
- c) the qualification and requirements (e.g. education, experience, and personal qualities);
- d) competences (e.g. communicative skills, people skills);
- e) reporting structures;
- f) deputizing arrangements or functional replacements;
- g) decision making authorization.

EN 15838 – Clause 4 " Management Strategy and Policy" Subclause 4.3 "Operational roles and responsibilities"

C4-03 The CCC has set up, and described in specific documents, a defined organizational and operational structure in which the various roles and responsibilities, as well as the functions to whom they are assigned, are identifiable.

C4-04 The CCC has appointed (a) staff member(s) with HR-responsibility who have required knowledge of the specific recruitment procedures for CCC staff, e.g. telephone interviews and team assessments.

C4-05 The CCC has appointed ICT-responsible persons, who have demonstrated knowledge of all specific running systems and about their usage in that CCC.

C4-06 Quality Assurance. The CCC has appointed (a) person(s) to:

- a) determine action to eliminate the causes of potential poor service in order to prevent their occurrence;
- b) check and report the results of the service supplied against the agreement with the Client organization;
- c) analyze possible deviations and suggest solutions to restore the quality level agreed with the Client organization;
- d) assure compliance of the CCC processes.

C4-07 Training. The CCC has appointed persons entrusted with training of staff and who are familiar with:

- a) the skills set to instruct others;
- b) complaints and issue management;
- c) service advice and support;
- d) outbound and inbound sales;
- e) feedback rules and coaching fundamentals, as relevant.

C4-08 Operations management. The CCC has appointed (a) person(s) with the task to

- define the actions necessary to achieve the aims of the service
- to review periodically the operational structure, service quality check and efficiency and to take action to make improvements as necessary.

C4-09 Planning and control. The CCC has appointed (a) person(s) with the task to

- plan and control agents' working shifts according to the forecast traffic volume and to the service level agreed with the client organization.
- monitor the actual performance and report results to the management.

C4-10 The CCC has appointed (a) person(s) with the task to be responsible for the relations with the client organization concerning the operational aspects of the service (e.g. methods, workflow, results, performance, periodical reports, checks, meetings).

EN 15838 – Clause 5 "Contact Centre agents"

Subclause 5.1 "Tasks and functions with regard to CC agents"

C5-01 The CC ensures that following tasks and functions with regard to CC agents are carried out:

- a) specification of selection criteria for CC agents;
- b) creation of job descriptions for CC agents;
- c) carry out selection processes for CC agents;
- d) specification of requirements for and delivery of basic training (inter personal skills, technical skills, product knowledge);
- e) feedback of information from CC agents;
- f) employment scheduling;
- g) coaching of CC agents;
- h) supervision of CC agents;
- i) training of CC agents;
- j) executive functions (specification of aims for the CC agents' tasks, appraisal interviews, planning of operating figures concerning quality);
- k) management of CC agents on the basis of operating figures.

EN 15838 – Clause 5 "Contact Centre agents"

Subclause 5.2 "Requirements for CC agents"

C5-02 The CCC has specified a profile of competences for CC agents depending on specific tasks (e.g. information contacts, ordering contacts, complaint contacts, advice contacts, outbound contacts, etc.). The profile includes:

- a) the professional requirements concerning the tasks;
- b) the requirements concerning personal skills and abilities.

C5-03 CC agents employed by the CCC have at least the following skills and abilities:

- a) communication skills;
- b) adaptability (i.e. flexibility in handling different situations and customers);
- c) problem solving skills;
- d) service and customer orientation (i.e. approach and attitude towards customers);
- e) target orientation and coping with demand.

CC agents employed by the CCC have the following technical skills:

- a) ability to handle the applied communication systems;

b) ability to handle the applied IT-solutions.

C5-04 The CCC ensures that CC agents receive basic and ongoing training to acquire the skills required to handle tasks specific for their CCC and its current goals. This includes 'minimum skills' testing.

C5-05 CC agents have skills and knowledge dependent on special fields of application and requirements on the part of the CCC. CC agents have the relevant knowledge of the legal requirements, e.g. on laws on customer rights.

EN 15838 – Clause 5 "Contact Centre agents" **Subclause 5.3 "Recruitment process"**

C5-06 The recruitment process is conducted on the basis of the established profile of competences. The selection criteria are measurable and documented. The degree of attainment of competences is explicit.

C5-07 The recruitment process is used to determine the principal competences of the candidate in accordance with the requirements in accordance with EN 15838 clause 5.2.

C5-08 The recruitment process contains, and is able to provide evidence of, at least the following elements:

- a) illustration of requirements and tasks of a CC agent by the CCC;
- b) the conducting of a job interview with the candidate;
- c) methods of assessment and evaluation of the candidate's skills and potentials concerning the requirements (see clause 5.2.2, 5.2.3 and 5.2.4).

EN 15838 – Clause 5 "Contact Centre agents" **Subclause 5.4 "Training of CC agents"**

C5-09 The CCC has a defined training programme.

C5-10 Every CCC agent is assessed against the required competences as specified in clause 5.2. If necessary, appropriate training is provided.

C5-11 The training programme comprises at least:

- a) defined objectives of the training programme;
- b) the means by which the programme is delivered;
- c) the methods by which the effectiveness of the programme will be evaluated.

C5-12 The CCC ensures that CC agents receive training on an ongoing basis, which is documented and focused on each individual CC agent. Ongoing training includes:

- a) specific training relevant to the CC agent's job if required;
- b) appropriate annual examination of the relevant professional knowledge;
- c) training when gaps in the agent's knowledge and skills are found;
- d) training in advance when changing processes;
- e) training in advance when changing the range or scope of tasks.

C5-13 The CCC maintains an individual training and development plan for every CC agent, together with proficiency levels achieved by that agent.

EN 15838 – Clause 5 "Contact Centre agents" **Subclause 5.5 "Performance"**

C5-14 The CCC has established performance indicators for CC agents as quality objectives, which are clear and comprehensible for each individual agent. Performance indicators are evaluated regularly (at least yearly).

C5-15 The performance of each CC agent is assessed and documented regularly using appropriate techniques. The CC agent is informed about the results. The CCC carries out an annual performance assessment against the job descriptions.

EN 15838 – Clause 5 "Contact Centre agents"
Subclause 5.6 "Agent's satisfaction"

C5-16 The CCC ensures that agents' satisfaction measurements is carried out regularly, using at least the following criteria:

- a) statistics on training (e.g. per employee, for professional and personal development);
- b) attrition rate of agents;
- c) statistics from the measurement of agents' satisfaction.

EN 15838 – Clause 5 "Contact Centre agents"
Subclause 5.7 "Agent's privacy"

C5-17 The CCC has established clear procedures on protecting CC agents' privacy regarding monitored data.

EN 15838 – Clause 6 "Infrastructure"

C6-01 The CCC has defined the available communication channels.

C6-02 The CCC uses a contact management system that includes at least the following features:

- a) traceability: to enable the agent to recover a past contact, if necessary, during the handling of the contact;
- b) easy accessibility to data and information: to enable the agent to deliver a quick and accurate answer to the customer;
- c) statistical data: to report the CCC activity and understand any critical features;
- d) data back up: to restore all the collected information.

C6-03 The CCC has security systems in place to protect customer data.

C6-04 The CCC has created a working environment which promotes health, effectiveness and well-being of the employees.

C6-05 The CCC has provided back-up systems to replicate and restore data in the event of any malfunction outage or failures leading to data loss and to respond to any requirements agreed with the client organization.

EN 15838 – Clause 7 "Processes"

Subclause 7.2 "Agreement with client organization"

C7-01 The CC has written agreements with client organizations which comprise:

- a) aims of the service;
- b) the policies relevant to the CCC identified by the client organization;
- c) aims monitoring (e.g. control methods and frequency, verification meetings, ...);
- d) processes and operating methods (e.g. operational procedures, communication guidelines);
- e) service scheduling;
- f) escalation processes;
- g) forecasting and planning;
- h) reporting.

EN 15838 – Clause 7 "Processes"
Subclause 7.3 "Service statistics"

C7-02 The CCC documents trends and performance levels of the service compared to the service levels agreed with the client organization for each channel of contact.

C7-03 The CCC is able to provide at least the following data for inbound activities:

- a) number of contacts received;
- b) number of contacts handled;
- c) contacts managed within service levels;
- d) number of abandoned contacts (for telephone contacts);
- e) abandon time (for telephone contacts);
- f) speed of answer;
- g) duration of contact.

C7-04 The CCC is able to provide at least the following data for outbound activities:

- a) number of qualified contacts managed;
- b) contact result.

EN 15838 – Clause 7 "Processes" **Subclause 7.4 "Handling deviations"**

C7-05 The CCC runs a check on the activity referring to the parameters (Key Performance Indicators/KPIs) agreed with the client organization and report to the latter any situation deviating from the agreement indicating the need of a change in the operating methods.

C7-06 Deviations in the results when compared to the service aims agreed with the client organization are analyzed to discover the cause. Relevant corrective actions are taken. The CCC has a documented corrective action process or method, which includes the following steps:

- a) problem definitions;
- b) analysis;
- c) implementing action needed;
- d) evaluation.

EN 15838 – Clause 7 "Processes" **Subclause 7.5 "Monitoring process quality"**

C7-07 The CCC monitors the processing of contacts ensuring that:

- a) there is a minimum of variation in the previously agreed output of the contact or in the processing of the contact;
- b) a minimum of mistakes are made in the processing of the contact or in the previously agreed output of the contact.
- c) staff responsible for monitoring regularly performs calibration sessions;
- d) if the CCC and the client organization both monitor separately, there shall be a joint calibration procedure to ensure a standard valuation;
- e) KPIs which are monitored have clear and defined targets (thresholds) and are defined prior to the start of the monitoring;
- f) the results from the monitoring process quality are analyzed and appropriate action taken, in order to prevent unacceptable service delivery.

EN 15838 – Clause 7 "Processes" **Subclause 7.6 "Workforce Management"**

C7-08 The CCC has a forecast and a deployment scheduling process.

C7-09 The CCC evaluates forecasts against handled contacts. The CCC has established a schedule adherence process.

EN 15838 – Clause 7 "Processes"
Subclause 7.7 "Access channels"

C7-10 The CCC is able to provide advice to the client organization related to customer service issues such as:

- a) subject of the service;
- b) type of channels and customer access details;
- c) working days and hours;
- d) any costs charged for accessing the service provided by the CCC;
- e) service access requirements (e.g. subscription, purchase of a specific product or card).

C7-11 The CCC has defined its capabilities in terms of accessibility and provide this information to the client organization, its customers, personnel and other interested parties.

EN 15838 – Clause 7 "Processes"
Subclause 7.8 "Complaints processing"

C7-12 The CCC has established a complaints handling process.

C7-13 Information concerning the complaints handling are be made readily available to customers and other interested parties.

EN 15838 – Clause 7 "Processes"
Subclause 7.9 "Privacy"

C7-14 The CCC has established procedures and responsibility on protecting customers' privacy. These procedures and responsibility are known to and adhered to by the agents.

EN 15838 – Clause 7 "Processes"
Subclause 7.10 "Business continuity plan"

C7-15 The CCC has established a business continuity plan, so as to be able to guarantee the service according to the terms agreed with the client organization in emergency conditions. How and to what extent continuity of service might be guaranteed is defined.

EN 15838 – Clause 8 "Customer satisfaction"
Subclause 8.2 "Customer satisfaction survey"

C8-01 The CCC measures and reports customer satisfaction periodically and based on that report the required actions are taken. The CCC provides representatives samples based on recent contacts with the CCC, in order to illustrate customer ratings and comments. The sample considered for this measurement is statistically representative, indicating the error margin related to the chosen sample size.

C8-02 The CCC ensures that results of customer satisfaction surveys carried out by the CCC be shared and assessed by the client organization and the CCC together, with a view to improving performance.

EN 15838 – Clause 8 "Customer satisfaction"
Subclause 8.3 "Complaints analysis"

C8-03 The CCC ensures that the results of the complaints review are shared with the client organization in order to raise the level of performance in meeting customer expectations and to increase the competencies of the CCC.

C8-04 The CCC ensures that the results of the complaints review are shared with the agents in order to meet the customer's expectations and increase the competencies of the agents.

EN 15838 – Clause 8 "Customer satisfaction" Subclause 8.4 "Customer protection"

C8-05 The CCC ensures that the identity of the client organization is given at the beginning of each communication.

C8-06 The CCC ensures that:

- a) a contact that is not wanted by the customer is terminated. If a contact is not wanted, the address, e-mail address and phone number will not be used again;
- b) adequate procedures are in place to minimize aborted contacts by a dialler;
- c) the customer is informed before the call about the likely cost of a call to any service number;
- d) the customer in a queue is informed of the fact that there is a queue and of charges in addition to normal line charges where they apply;
- e) marketing calls are not disguised as market research;
- f) for outbound: the purpose of the contact is given at the beginning of the contact.

C8-07 The CCC does not use pressure selling tactics. The CCC does not exploit vulnerable and inexperienced customers.

EN 15838 – Annex A "Mandatory KPIs"

CA-01 The CC measures the following KPIs regarding CC agents:

- CC agent attrition
- Absenteeism
- Satisfaction

CA-02 The CC measures the following KPIs regarding customers:

- Customer satisfaction
- First contact resolution

CA-03 The CC measures the following KPIs regarding processes:

- Service level
- Forecast accuracy
- Abandonment rate
- Average handling time

CA-04 The CC measures the following KPIs regarding contact quality:

- Contact quality
- Factual accuracy

CA-05 The CC measures the following KPIs regarding contact infrastructure:

- Service availability