



# AIRPORT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ACCREDITATION



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THE ONLY 360° VIEW OF AIRPORT  
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT

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As competition and innovation continues to drive the airport industry, it is becoming increasingly crucial for operators to recognize that customer experience is a key driver of success.

Today, airports are more than just a place from which an airplane takes off. They have become destinations, offering passengers unique experiences as never before. These experiences not only shape customers' expectations. More specifically, they shape how the customer perceives its interaction with your airport and can be defined as the sum of all the interactions a passenger has with the airport community. These interactions can be delivered in person, over the internet, through self-service booths, or through other channels. Together, these all add up to the critical moments—what we call touchpoints or moments of truth—that create an organization's overall customer experience.

## **AIRPORT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ACCREDITATION – THE ONLY 360° VIEW OF AIRPORT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT**



ACI developed this first and only customer experience accreditation in aviation industry, in order to deliver a better service to its member airports and provide 360° view of airport customer experience management. This multilevel certification guides airports to excellence in customer experience management, according to the eight (8) different domains: Customer Understanding; Strategy; Measurement; Operational Improvement; Governance; Airport Culture; Service Design/Innovation; and Airport Community Collaboration.

## WHY IT SHOULD MATTER TO YOUR AIRPORT?

The accreditation programme will help airports to reach new heights in terms of customer satisfaction, providing a direct impact on ASQ results by:

- Enhancing an airport's customer experience management and its communication with stakeholders
- Providing an opportunity to engage stakeholders in improving the customer experience at the airport
- Identifying new practices an airport should develop in their short-term and long-term plans
- Allowing an airport to see all customer experience-related activities comprehensively and enhance their competency with and knowledge of various customer experience management practices
- Providing airports with a communication tool to promote their customer experience milestones to their stakeholders and the communities that they serve



# AIRPORT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MODEL



## WHAT IS AIRPORT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT?

Airport customer experience management is a structured concept and system developed by ACI that allows airport management to achieve the highest level of customer experience in the global airport industry. As airports are interlinked with various organizations and companies which have different business objectives and goals, it is very important for all involved parties to have a common view of the overall standard and experience for passengers alike.

To address this challenge, ACI developed the following Airport Customer Experience Model which includes eight (8) key domains:

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## DESCRIPTIONS OF EIGHT DOMAINS

Domains	Definitions
 <b>CUSTOMER UNDERSTANDING (CU)</b>	Capture the <b>voice of customers</b> to understand what they experience and feel at every moment of their journey and share the findings with employees
 <b>STRATEGY (S)</b>	Define, share and operationalize a <b>customer experience strategy</b> that contributes to an airport specific experience for customers
 <b>MEASUREMENT (M)</b>	Quantify and share the <b>impact of customer experience initiatives</b> on customer satisfaction, employee engagement and airport financial results
 <b>OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENT (OI)</b>	Increase customer satisfaction by <b>improving processes, launching improvement projects</b> and <b>defining service standards</b>
 <b>GOVERNANCE (G)</b>	Manage the customer experience transformation of the airport by <b>assigning responsibilities to individuals and committees</b>
 <b>AIRPORT CULTURE (AC)</b>	Develop <b>employee engagement</b> to deliver a great customer experience through training, recognition, etc.
 <b>SERVICE DESIGN / INNOVATION (SD)</b>	Define and implement <b>innovative services and experiences</b> that will exceed customer expectations
 <b>AIRPORT COMMUNITY COLLABORATION (ACC)</b>	<b>Engage all airport stakeholders</b> in a collaborative approach to deliver a great customer experience


# FIVE LEVELS OF CUSTOMER EXCELLENCE

The Airport Customer Experience Accreditation is structured around a set of management practices designed to transform an airport in the long term, looking beyond the outcomes of such practices. The programme consists of five (5) levels of accreditation, structured around advanced practices on specific levels and domains.

Each domain plays a fundamental role in improving airport customer experience management and are closely connected to each other.

Different accreditation levels involve different numbers of domains: Level 1 requires only three (3) domains (Customer understanding, Strategy, and Measurement), while levels 4 and 5 require all eight (8).

Each level is of **equal importance** and contributes to the overall **success** of the programme.

 More advanced practices on a specific domain	Practices			Advanced practices and outstanding outcome	
	1	2	3	4	5
AIRPORT COMMUNITY COLLABORATION				●	●
SERVICE DESIGN/ INNOVATION			●	●	●
AIRPORT CULTURE		●	●	●	●
GOVERNANCE		●	●	●	●
OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENT		●	●	●	●
MEASUREMENT	●	●	●	●	●
STRATEGY	●	●	●	●	●
CUSTOMER UNDERSTANDING	●	●	●	●	●



## LEVEL 1

At level 1, customer experience is an airport priority that is communicated internally and externally. The airport established a fundamental structure through understanding customer expectations, satisfaction, comments and complaints.



## LEVEL 2

At level 2, the airport is promoting a clear customer experience strategy and related tools. They are managed by a customer experience professional who contributes and facilitates a cross-functional group to co-lead the customer experience plan.



## LEVEL 3

At Level 3, the airport has implemented an advanced customer experience strategy through multifaceted engagement: customers, employees and customer experience professionals.



## LEVEL 4

At level 4, the airport has established a customer experience culture. All employees contribute to the understanding, improving and shaping of the airport's customers' journey. Executives are considering customer experience as a major source of profit and are engaging all stakeholders to participate in airport community initiatives to delight airport customers.



## LEVEL 5

At Level 5, the airport corporate strategy is the customer experience strategy. Key indicators, both strategic and operational, are based on what the customer is experiencing daily. The airport community is one behind the airport strategy.

# THE AIRPORT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE DESIGNATIONS

The Airport Customer Experience Professional Designations (ACED) are an integral part to develop staff involved in the ASQ Airport Customer Experience Accreditation programme, and to ensure they are proficient and qualified to lead the implementation of a customer experience strategy.

Additionally, any ACI member or World Business Partner wishing to enhance their customer experience journey may apply to take these designations.



## AIRPORT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE SPECIALIST (ACES)

*Prerequisite: none*  
*Online format*

The Airport Customer Experience Specialist course is an introductory level course that provides students with foundational knowledge on how to design, build and implement a customer experience strategy for your airport.

This designation is required in all levels of the accreditation programme.

- Understand the roles and responsibilities of a customer experience professionals involved in customer experience management;
- Acquire the key competencies to contribute to a customer experience programme;
- Understand the concepts behind the eight (8) domains of the airport customer experience model; and
- Be prepared to accompany the airport towards customer experience accreditation.

## AIRPORT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PROFESSIONAL (ACEP)

*Prerequisite: ACES*  
*Online and classroom format*

Airport Customer Experience Professional is the next level programme that targets ACES graduates who hold a managerial position. For participants to receive this designation, they must successfully complete the programme.

The main objective of the ACEP designation is to encourage airport professionals managing and leading customer experience programmes to attain the highest level of professional proficiency, education and ethical conduct in their respective fields of management, operations, safety and customer experience.

This designation is required in level 4 and 5 of the accreditation programme.

- Increase customer satisfaction;
- Maximize airport performance (revenue, efficiency);
- Identify customer insights & positioning;
- Enhance customer service; and
- Foster customer-centric culture in the airport community.

## ABU DHABI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



We benefited tremendously from participating in this programme by meticulously analyzing the eight domains and identifying which needed our attention. Our notion of “customer-oriented” has evolved from being a “nice to have” to “mission critical” and we want to show our passengers that they are our priority by continuing to progress through the levels. We want to provide the best possible experience for all passing through AUH.

**Ms. Muna AlGhanim**  
Head Airport Service Quality





## HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



Striving to exceed customer expectations is one of our core values at Hong Kong International Airport. Joining the accreditation programme provides us an opportunity to examine and improve our standards of service. Apart from global recognition, achieving different levels of the ACI Airport Customer Experience Accreditation programme is an endorsement of the contribution and collaborative effort of the airport community in the area of service excellence.

**Mr. Chapman Fong**  
General Manager, Terminal 1





## MILANO MALPENSA AIRPORT

SEA is very much committed to putting passengers at the center of its business strategy. Our motivation to join the programme was the novelties and challenges it presents to ensure that we remain current with new guidelines, trends and expectations. We are always looking for ways to improve, and the ACI ASQ Accreditation Programme benefits these efforts greatly. We requested the involvement of all departments across our organization from the start, which helped nurture a true team spirit and a greater sense of belonging from all within our airport community. Seeking tailored and innovative solutions to enhance passenger experience is the collective priority of all Milan's airports personnel.

**Ms. Annamaria Francinelli**  
Customer Care / Service Quality Benchmarking



# SAN ANTONIO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
AVIATION DEPARTMENT

Our airport decided to join the programme because of our commitment to enhance customer experience for our passengers and guests. We believe that success is achieved when customer's expectations and airport standards are exceeded. Becoming an accredited airport reveals our determination to succeed, innovate and collaborate.

**Ms. Karen W. Ellis**  
Chief Customer Experience Officer



# SYD

A I R P O R T

## SYDNEY AIRPORT

By making our customers' priorities our own, SYD have seen customer satisfaction improve. Ensuring that the customer is central to our business processes and standards supports our commitment to providing a world-class experience. We have taken a holistic approach to improving the airport experience and this program has played a role in supporting our broader efforts. We are committed to listening to our customers and investing in what they identify as being important. Aligning with a recognised framework helps form our long-term customer strategy.

**Ms. Claire Donnellan**  
Manager Service Strategy and Customer Experience



## QUITO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



At UIQ we are proud of our airport and our services; our employees are trained to always have a positive attitude, provide solutions to problems, strive for excellence and ensure that our passenger experience is the best possible. ACI has always developed programs that help airports achieve greater results faster, and after learning about the Airport Customer Experience Accreditation Programme we knew it was also going to be a success. We see it as the perfect complement to our customer service strategy as it will allow us to improve our current programs as well as implement new ones. It is helping us improve and shape some of our strategies to ensure we are at the forefront on customer service excellence.

**Mr. Andrew O'Brien**  
President and CEO



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR AN AIRPORT TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE ACCREDITATION?

This programme is the first worldwide customer experience management accreditation programme, designed specifically for the airport industry and it is dedicated to ACI members. The accreditation programme is to assist airports reach new heights in customer experience management, which will have a direct positive impact on customer satisfaction and an airport's ASQ results. The programme will also guide airports to excellence in customer experience management through identifying new practices to implement within short- and long-term plans. The accreditation programme can provide opportunities to further engage key stakeholders and employees in the improvement of customer experience within the airport. Lastly, the accreditation will be a powerful marketing and communication tool for airports to communicate customer experience operational excellence to their stakeholders and the communities that they serve. Upon receiving an accreditation, ACI World will highlight this achievement through an official award ceremony at the annual Customer Experience Global Summit.

## IS THERE ANY RESTRICTION FOR AIRPORTS TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE ACCREDITATION?

Airports that are ACI members are eligible to join the Accreditation Programme. The Accreditation is a complementary programme to ACI ASQ, applying airports are required to subscribe to the ASQ Departures Programme, either in Main, Regional or Unique.

## HOW LONG IS THE ACCREDITATION PERIOD VALID FOR?

Each level of the accreditation is valid for twelve (12) months. Airports can upgrade to the subsequent level or renew the current level before the expiration of its accreditation.

## WHAT IS THE PROGRAMME SUBSCRIPTION FEE?

The accreditation programme subscription fee varies, starting at CAD 3,200 for level 1.

## ARE THERE EXTRA CHARGES THAT AIRPORTS NEED TO PAY ABOVE THE SUBSCRIPTION FEE?

There is no extra charge for airports. The subscription fee is an all-inclusive price. It includes all verification costs and designation training programme fee. With an exception with on-site verification which is required for Level 4 and 5, only the verifier's travel expenses (flights, accommodation) will be charged separately.

## CAN WE APPLY FOR LEVEL 5 DIRECTLY?

The goal of the accreditation programme is to gradually improve customer experience management through continual steps, starting at level 1. Each, individual, accreditation level is valid for a twelve (12) months period and needs to be renewed or upgraded prior to its expiration. To accelerate the upgrade process for levels 2 and 3, an airport can submit their application at any time once they have been successfully accredited for the previous level. For levels 4 and 5, applications are only permitted twelve (12) months after the airport has been officially accredited for the previous level.

## HOW CAN WE PROVE THAT OUR AIRPORT IS QUALIFIED FOR CERTAIN PRACTICES?

At each level, participating airports are to complete an assessment form and return it to ACI for verification. The assessment form provides the descriptions and principles of each required practice, and suggests evidences or explanations that are required to prove that a practice was followed. Various materials can be accepted as evidence: screen-capture; abstracts from documents and diagrams, tables, images, annual report, internal documents, publications, link to airport website, etc. All provided documents and information by participating airports are treated with strict confidentiality. As per ACI Airport Customer Experience Accreditation Agreement, documents exchanged during the assessment process are not to be used for any purpose other than assessment itself.

## WHAT IF WE DO NOT HAVE ANY DOCUMENT OR EVIDENCE IN ENGLISH?

If the evidence is in a language other than English, you are required to submit the original version of the evidence together with the explanation or translation of key elements in English. The form has optional comment boxes for participating airports to provide more evidence or descriptions if they wish. In the future, ACI is planning to deliver the programmes with different languages including verification process in different languages.

## HOW DOES THE VERIFICATION PROCESS WORK?

Remote verification is done at every level. ACI Verifier validates compliance with each practice by reviewing the airport's assessment form and supporting evidences. Only at Level 4 and 5, an additional on-site verification is conducted.

## IF MY AIRPORT DECIDED TO RENEW A SPECIFIC LEVEL OF ACCREDITATION, SHALL WE SUBMIT THE EVIDENCE AGAIN?

The assessment form was designed to take one to three weeks to complete. The length of time will depend on the airport's engagement in completing the assessment form and the level of accreditation being applied to.

## WHAT IF THE EXPLANATION AND EVIDENCE WE PROVIDE IS NOT ADEQUATE?

In instances where provided evidence is insufficient, the airport will be requested to provide additional documents or explanation.

**ACI will continuously support all airports who embark on this Airport Customer Experience Management journey with us. Let's take the 360 view together.**

Please send us an e-mail to [customerexperience@aci.aero](mailto:customerexperience@aci.aero) to receive more detailed information.



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