Functional language for dealing with enquiries
Brainstorm phrases into these categories.

Asking people to wait
Saying you don't know
Putting them in contact with someone else

Compare with the phrases under the fold, brainstorm more, then compare your extra ideas as a class.

--fold--

Asking people to wait
- "Just a moment/ minute, I'll (look up the information on my computer/ get a catalogue/ phone my colleague and check/ find the right page/ look for the right section)"
- "Please take a seat and I'll ask you to come up when I've finished"
- "If you can give me some contact details, I'll find out for you and get back to you as soon as I can"

Saying you don't know
- "Unfortunately I don't have that information at the moment"
- "I'm afraid I'm not really very sure."
- "I'm sorry but I don't have any knowledge of that matter."

Putting them in contact with someone else
- "My colleague knows more about this. I'll give you his/ her phone number/ email address"
- "I'll ask my colleague to come over to speak to you"
- "If you give me your phone number/ email address, I'll ask someone with more knowledge of the matter to contact you as soon as possible."

Label these other kinds of typical phrases for dealing with enquiries with headings like the three above and then add more phrases that are used in the same ways.

- "How may I help you?"
- "Please let me know if you have any questions."

- "Was there anything else?"
- "So, as I said I'll email you an up to date catalogue by the end of today."

- "I'm afraid I don't understand what the question is"
- "I'm still not sure exactly what it is you want to know."

- "Do you mean…?"
- "If I understand you correctly, you are asking about…"

- "Is that clear?"
- "… if you see what I mean"

- "Does that answer your question?"
- "Is that what you wanted to know?"

- "Unfortunately (it isn't possible to…)"
- "I'm sorry to say (that information is out of date)"

- "Usually it is not possible, but in this case…"
- "Luckily,…"

- "Actually,…"
- "That used to be true, but at present…"

Compare with the categories and phrases on the next page.

Offering help
- "Can I help you (at all)?"
- "How can I help you?"
- "Do you need any help?"
- "How may I be of assistance?"
- "Please let me know if you can't find the right information"
- "Who's next?"
- "(Of course). Go ahead"
- "Please ask anything you like."
- "No problem. That is what I am here for."

Ending the conversation
- "Is there anything else you'd like to ask?"
- "Does that answer all your questions?"
- "So, if there's nothing else…"

Saying that you don't understand
- "Could you explain again what your question is?"
- "Could you explain that another way?"

Checking if you've understood (paraphrasing etc)
- "So, basically you want to know…"
- "Just to double check, you'd like me to tell you…"

Checking if they've understood
- "Have I explained myself well?"

Checking if you've answered their question
- "Is that of any help?"
- "Is that what you were asking about?"

Giving bad news
- "I'm afraid (we aren't allowed to…)"
- "I'm sorry but (… is fixed)"
- "University policy forbids…"

Giving good news
- "Fortunately,…"
- "I'm happy to be able to tell you that…"

Correcting the information
- "(If you look at this page you will see that) in fact…"
- "Nowadays,…"
- "Since…,…."