SOP Template: Refund, Exchange, or Store Credit Issuance Protocols

This SOP details the **refund, exchange, or store credit issuance protocols**, encompassing the conditions for eligibility, step-by-step procedures for processing returns, criteria for issuing refunds or exchanges, guidelines for providing store credit, and documentation requirements. The purpose is to ensure consistent, fair, and efficient handling of customer returns and credits while maintaining customer satisfaction and compliance with company policies.

1. Eligibility Conditions

- Item must be returned within **30 days** of original purchase date.
- Product must be unused, in original packaging, and include all accessories/manuals.
- Proof of purchase (receipt or order confirmation) is required.
- Some items are non-returnable/non-refundable (e.g., sale, personalized, perishable goods).
- Items with manufacturer defects may be returned at any time within the warranty period.

2. Return Processing Procedures

1. **Customer Initiates Request:**
   Customer contacts support via email, phone, or in-person.
2. **Verify Eligibility:**
   Review eligibility based on conditions above.
3. **Issue Return Authorization (RA):**
   Provide Return Authorization Number and instructions for returning product.
4. **Receive and Inspect Item:**
   Upon return, inspect product for condition and completeness.
5. **Approve/Reject Return:**
   Approve if product meets eligibility; otherwise, notify customer of rejection and reason.

3. Criteria for Refund, Exchange, or Store Credit

- **Refund:** Issued if the item is returned within the return window, unopened/unused, and customer prefers refund.
- **Exchange:** Offered if customer requests a replacement for a defective or wrong item.
- **Store Credit:** Provided for returns outside the standard return period (at company discretion), partially used items, or as an alternative to refund/exchange.

4. Store Credit Issuance Guidelines

- Store credit is added to the customer's account as a non-expiring voucher, unless otherwise set by management.
- Credit value is equal to the item's purchase price, minus any restocking or shipping fees (if applicable).
- Customer is informed of store credit issuance via email or printed receipt.
- Store credit cannot be redeemed for cash.

5. Documentation Requirements

- Maintain a digital or physical record for each return, including:
  - Customer details (name, contact info, order number).
  - Product(s) returned including SKU/barcode.
  - Date of request, return, and resolution.
  - Return Authorization Number, if issued.
  - Reason for return and type of resolution (refund/exchange/store credit).
  - Staff member(s) involved in processing.
- Documentation should be retained for a minimum of **one year** or as required by company policy.

6. Compliance & Customer Communication

- Follow all company policies and applicable consumer protection laws.
- Communicate clearly and promptly with customers throughout the process.

- Provide written confirmation upon refund, exchange, or credit completion.

7. Revision & Review

- SOP to be reviewed annually or upon policy change.
- Revised versions are distributed to all relevant staff.